MARSHAL VAUBAN AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF FORTIFICATIONS UNDER LOUIS XIV (TO 1691)

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * *

The Ohio State University
1993

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To the Memory of My Grandmother, Annabelle Smith
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any work that is over twenty years in the making is bound to incur many debts of gratitude along the way. When I began research on Vauban in the early 1970s, I expected to finish my degree in a few years; the lack of academic positions during that decade, however, sent many of us scurrying to secure other employment. Forced to set aside historical research, I turned to another love, teaching. The daily hubbub of over a decade of high school teaching only increased my chronological and mental distance from the seventeenth century. However, the example of Carmen Schmersahl, a friend who returned to graduate school to finish her Ph.D., and the encouragement of family, friends, and colleagues led me to recommence my studies on the reign of Louis XIV. Despite the long hours balancing duty to my students with duty to Clio—which, fortunately, largely coincide—the return to scholarly studies has been a pleasant adventure.

Professor John C. Rule deserves special acknowledgment for his friendship and unflagging support over the twenty-year gestation of this paper. Even when I was most removed from the concerns and scholarship of the seventeenth century, he continued to treat me as a colleague. Professor Rule helped me to remember that being a historian is not primarily a function of where you teach but how you share with your students your own love for and understanding of the past. His insights, patience, and kindness will not be easily forgotten.

It is with long-delayed but great pleasure that I thank those who assisted my research during the 1970s. In France these included MM. Étienne Taillemite and Charles Hubert of the Archives Nationale, and especially Mlle Nellie Lacrocq of the Bibliothèque and Archives du Génie, whose kindness and assistance went beyond what any researcher could hope for or ever repay. Thanks also goes to my fellow researchers in Paris,
including Claude Bell and Peter Murdza. Support and encouragement at The Ohio State University History Department came from Professors John A. M. Rothney, Joseph H. Lynch, and Allan R. Millett. I am especially grateful to Professor Millett and the Mershon Center for a grant for microfilm. Among my fellow graduate students at the time, Thomas J. Schaeper, Gary McCollim, E. Stewart Saunders, and R. Douglas Montanaro shared research and wisdom without complaint. Professors Geoffrey Symcox, John Bromley, and George Rothrock offered insights at various points of my research. Valuable assistance was also provided by Clara Goldschlager and other staff of the Inter-Library Loan Service at The Ohio State University Libraries. Further financial support came from the Ohio Bureau of Services for the Blind.

More recently, I have incurred further debts of gratitude for various kinds of assistance with this paper: to my sister Robin Trotter; to friends Jorge Carrasco (who created the maps), Gino Casassa, Abe Khadivi, Judy Montanaro, Woody Harris, James Brady; to fellow graduate student David Stewart; to Elizabeth Brockman, Bexley High School colleague and fellow graduate student; to Scott Bushman of the Bexley City Schools for emergency technical assistance; to Bexley High School librarian Joan Miller for the use of a microfilm reader; and to former Bexley student Johanna Brown for sending me material from the Harvard Library. I have drawn a great deal from the support of Bexley High School Principal Kip Greenhill, Bexley Schools Superintendent Dr. Philip Tieman, and the many teachers, support staff, and students who have offered words of encouragement and put up with my moments of pre-occupation or panic, especially as deadlines neared.

Finally, I cannot adequately express how much the support of my family and friends has meant to me over the years, and especially during the past two years of writing. Heart-felt thanks are due to my mother Jo-Ann, my father Jack, my brother John, sister Robin, sister and brother-in-law Kathy and Rick Roe, and niece Stephanie.

Despite the number of individuals and institutions who have added to my efforts during the past two decades, I still remain responsible for any errors contained in this paper. Without their help, however, the errors would have been more numerous and the paper likely would never have been written.
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A.I.G. Archives de l'Inspection du Génie
A.G. Archives de la Guerre
A.N. Archives Nationales
B.I.G. Bibliothèque de l'Inspection du Génie
B.N. Bibliothèque Nationale
A.N. Marine Archives Nationale, Archives de la Marine
r Recto of a folio
v Verso of a folio
NOTE ON SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ORTHOGRAPHY

The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation of the French language of the seventeenth century was anything but settled, although Richelieu’s Académie française was striving valiantly to remedy this. In this paper, I have not attempted to correct the language of the primary sources except where necessary for purposes of clarity. Accent marks were used inconsistently in the sources from which I have quoted, and I have made no effort to add them where they are missing. I have tried to follow the conventions of current historiography when selecting among the spelling variations of proper names. Where there is no established form, I have selected one and tried to use it consistently except when quoting.
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INTRODUCTION

While strolling the streets of numerous towns along the boundaries of France, one is apt to encounter a Rue, Place, Hôtel, or even more pleasantly, Café Vauban. As proudly as American citizens of towns in New England or the mid-Atlantic states have claimed—with or without historical foundation—that "George Washington slept here," patriotic French men and women have boasted much the same about the great military engineer Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707). Great cities and small towns alike have rendered full civic honors to whatever remnants of his fortifications have survived the ravages of nineteenth-century city growth and twentieth-century warfare.

Robert Bornecque's recent book, La France de Vauban, offers some beautifully reproduced photographs of a number of the engineer's fortresses. Bornecque's sensitive camera has captured these places in their settings in such a way as to make the viewer forget that these stone structures were a part of the deadly game of warfare as played by the princes of the seventeenth century. Indicative of the strong feelings the French have for the great engineer and his work is a map labeled "La France de Vauban": it shows the famous hexagon of France with Vauban's face emerging from the center, and the places he labored upon along the frontiers encircle his head like a great wreath. As the preface to Bornecque's volume contends and many in France still believe, not without some exaggeration, "Nul homme n'a davantage marqué le sol de sa patrie."  

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1Robert Bornecque, La France de Vauban (Paris: Arthaud, 1984). For the map of "La France de Vauban" and the prefatory remark quoted, see ibid., 31 and 5. The latter is from one of the best of the largely laudatory works written over the past two centuries, Daniel Halévy's Vauban (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1924), a work that mixes literary flights of fancy with some solid reading of the printed sources and numerous insightful interpretations.
Besides furnishing his own homeland's frontiers with a protective ring of fortresses, Vauban methodically sapped and stormed the bastions of the enemies of France. He always conducted his sieges so as to keep the loss of lives among the common soldiers to a minimum, which has been regarded as uncharacteristic of that age. Vauban's humanity and his relatively humble origins among the minor provincial nobility were remarked upon by his contemporaries. His elevation to the honor of Marshal of France in 1703 was a result of his widely recognized merits, yet it was considered an exceptional achievement for a "mere" engineer. All these qualities endeared him to the generations after 1789 schooled in the ideal of "career open to talent." Yet, monarchists of the nineteenth century could find comfort in Vauban's dutiful homage to God and service to sovereign, and nationalists of all stripes could evoke his legacy whenever the enemies of France knocked too loudly at the frontier gates that Vauban had sought to close to intruders. Perhaps the most telling mark of the almost mythic image of Vauban that has remained with the French people down to our own day is a book for young readers entitled simply Vauban, ingénieur du roi. This novel details a bright-eyed lad's encounter with "la haute figure de Vauban, soldat et ingénieur, homme de paix jusque sur les chemins de la guerre."3

Besides his fortresses and his lofty reputation, another aspect of Vauban's legacy are the many writings he left behind. These are comprised not only of formal works on his engineering craft, detailed plans and instructions for building projects, and volumes of administrative and personal letters of remarkable candor, but also memoranda and reform

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schemes addressed to the king, his ministers, or to no one in particular. These assorted writings treat a whole range of matters relating to foreign policy, religious toleration, demography, social issues, forestry, and animal husbandry, to name but a few. At the end of his life Vauban selected what he considered to be the best of these and had them carefully copied, lavishly illustrated, and then arranged and bound together in twelve volumes, fancifully entitled "Mes Oisivetés," which is roughly translated as "my hours of idleness." Best known among these and almost universally celebrated has been his radical proposal for a variable income tax in kind to be paid by all the king's subjects, including the normally exempt clergy and nobility. Entitled Projet d'une dixième royale, it has not been without its critics, who usually deride various of its practical underpinnings, but nonetheless join the general applause for its bold concern for the unprivileged masses who lived perpetually on the economic edge.  

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5. Besides Rochas, whose first volume contains selections from the "Oisivetés," see also Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, Oisivetés de M. de Vauban, ed. Antoine-Marie Augoyat, 2 vols. (Paris: Corréard, 1842-45), which is the only printing of many of these works. On the manuscripts of the "Oisivetés," see Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 81-96.  

A steady stream of works on Vauban poured forth from French and other European authors during the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this became a flood as antiquarians and professional historians explored various aspects of Vauban’s life and work. This wellspring did not dry up during the less idealistic era that followed the First World War. And Vauban’s story continues to be re-written to serve new ideological and nationalistic causes. Recent works have clustered around the three hundredth anniversary of his birth, celebrated in 1933, and the three hundred and fiftieth commemorations, marked in 1983. Jean Chagniot has offered an insightful review of Michel Parent and Jacques Verroust’s lavishly illustrated and passionately argued contribution to the latest anniversary celebration. Chagniot observes that historians studying Vauban and his works have spilled more ink than did the engineer.

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8 See the typically adulatory accounts from a variety of viewpoints throughout the volumes commemorating the three hundredth anniversary of his birth: Société d’Études d’Avallon, Vauban, vol. 1, Commémorations du Tricentenaire de 1933 (Beaune: Mad. Girard, 1937); ibid., vol. 2, Commémorations du Tricentenaire de 1933 (Beaune: Mad. Girard, 1940); ibid., vol. 3, Commémorations en ses Châteaux de Bazoches-en-Morvand, 1933-1953: Le Maréchal de Vauban (Clamecy: Imprimerie Générale de la Nièvre, 1953).

9 Among the works appearing in connection with the 1983 anniversary of Vauban’s birth are Michel Parent and Jacques Verroust, Vauban (Paris: Fréal, 1971); Borneceque, La France de Vauban; and Bernard Pujo, Vauban (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991). Pujo is the first historian to enjoy an extensive look into the valuable but still largely inaccessible "Papiers du Maréchal de Vauban" from the Archives du Château de Rosanbo. A microfilm of this collection is housed in the Archives Nationale in Paris. Like most other historians, I was unable to obtain permission to examine this rich fonds when I did my research in Paris in 1975-76.
himself in all his voluminous writings. But Chagniot was wrong when he contended that with the historical Vauban, "on ne le découvre plus, on l'interprète."^{10}

The numerous articles and books written about Vauban's skill at besieging, defending, and constructing fortresses would seem to support Chagniot's contention. Gaston Zeller, for instance, provided the classic examination of the part Vauban played in concert with the king and the war secretary Louvois in the strategic planning for France's defensive perimeter of stone.^{11} George A. Rothrock performed a service for the English reader by his translation of Vauban's early mémoire on attack and defense. This text and the accompanying plates give the reader a feel for what siege warfare must have been like for soldiers and officers ensconced within or facing a stout bastion.^{12} Christopher Duffy offers an insightful overview of siege warfare. He charts a moderate course that manages to honor Vauban's genius and yet avoid the pitfalls of an exclusive focus on France. Although he is largely concerned with the strategic use of fortifications, Duffy places Vauban and his work squarely within the context of Early Modern statecraft and warfare, noting that "fortress warfare...was fundamentally a matter of politics rather than technology."^{13}

But none of these works deal with Vauban as a fortifications bureaucrat in other than a cursory manner. Potentially more useful on this issue are the two monumental

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^{11}Zeller, Organisation défensive.

^{12}Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, A Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification, trans. and intro. George A. Rothrock (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968. This is a translation of Vauban's Mémoire pour servir d'instruction dans la conduite des sièges et dans la défense des places (Leiden: 1740), which was printed from the manuscript only at that late date. Rothrock notes that the publisher thought he was printing Vauban's treatise on the same topic composed between 1697 and 1706 for the Duke of Burgundy, Louis XIV's grandson and heir; in fact, it was actually an earlier work, written between 1667 and 1672, that this Dutch editor published.

volumes compiled and written by Anne Blanchard. Rich in information and
discernment, these tomes deal with the entire corps of engineers. But Blanchard focuses
only somewhat—and often rather inaccurately—on administrative arrangements.
Moreover, her two works concentrate on the years after 1691 and encompass a good deal
of the next century. Thus, while it is true that many of Vauban’s military actions and
reform proposals are widely known, his role as an administrator has remained largely
neglected.

The same can be said of Vauban’s relationships with the ministers of Louis XIV:
we know less than one might imagine. Vauban’s best known relationship was built
around his collaboration with the king’s great war minister Louvois; however, this
relationship began only in the later 1660s. Yet the earliest years of the reign, which
began in 1643 when Louis was nearly five years old, were dominated by Cardinal
Mazarin, who served as mentor and chief minister to the king until his death in 1661.
Mazarin was assisted by men such as the war minister Michel Le Tellier, Louvois’s
father. While the administrative arrangements of this period are now coming into
sharper focus, thanks to such scholars as Richard Bonney, Vauban’s place in them has
never been very clear. For Vauban’s activities during the Mazarin era, most scholars
have relied on Camille Rousset’s mid-nineteenth century article, but this study is
incomplete and perpetuates several myths about Vauban’s early life. It is not surprising

14Blanchard, Les ingénieurs du "roy" de Louis XIV à Louis XVI (Montpellier: 1979)

15This relationship was explored at some length by Camille Rousset, Histoire de
Louvois et de son administration politique et militaire, 4 vols. (Paris: Didier, 1862-63),
and Zeller, Organisation défensive, 49-127. A more recent work, André Corvisier,
Louvois (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 359-74, offers a thoughtful summary of this relationship.

16Richard Bonney, Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1624-

17Camille Rousset, "La jeunesse de Vauban," Revue des deux mondes 52 (1864):
665-91. An earlier source of myths about Vauban’s early years is Fontenelle, "Eloge
that Vauban's relationships with the ministers at the end of the reign are likewise cloaked in obscurity or largely ignored, for the activities of these royal servants have only recently received serious consideration. In addition, our pictures of these statesmen have been somewhat distorted by the animosity of the Duc de Saint-Simon, the bitter but much-quoted memorialist.  

Yet even in the better-known middle period that extended from the beginning of Louis XIV's personal reign until the death of Louvois in 1691, there remains much that is unclear. Vauban's dealings with the powerful financial and naval minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, and his son and successor, the Marquis de Seignelay, are only vaguely and often incorrectly known. The engineer's important service to these two has been obscured by missing sources: while the archives contain a generous portion of the letters exchanged between Vauban and Louvois, we have only the copies of the letters the Colberts sent to Vauban and just a few of his replies. Additionally, the earliest letter from Vauban dates only to 1667, and the earliest to Colbert to 1670.

Compounding this paucity of sources is a pervasive confusion about the administrative structure of Louis XIV's fortification departments before 1691, when a single department was created outside the war ministry. Although correct in noting that

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there were two separate departments from 1661 to 1690, the standard accounts wrongly assume that these arose as a result of a partition of control between Michel Le Tellier and Colbert in 1661. They also offer few details on the workings of the department of the Colberts, presuming that Vauban played in it the same administrative role he did in Louvois's department. And it is assumed that Vauban did so from a very early date. The tendency of several authors to write their narratives as morality plays further impedes a clear understanding of these administrative structures. Colbert and Louvois are cast either as the embodiment of good or evil, depending upon the prejudices of the particular author. All these errors and attitudes must be put aside if we are to make any sense of the fortification arrangements of Louis XIV's reign. The best way to do that is to place these developments in their proper historical context.

When Vauban entered the king's service in 1653, it was during a period of unrest and transition. Active French participation in the Thirty Years' War (from 1635 to 1648) and a related conflict with Spain (ending in 1659) had provoked a series of crises and a flurry of institutional improvisation as the royal government scrambled to keep armies on the frontiers and to quash rebellions at home. Richelieu showed the way and his successor Mazarin built on this achievement. With the death of this second cardinal-minister in 1661, Louis XIV continued to alter, rationalize, and consolidate the legacy of these two resourceful prelates. But neither the cardinals nor Louis XIV and his ministers approached the management of the realm's frontier defenses with a tabula rasa. The royal government operated within a context shaped by the administrative practices and offices that had evolved since the Middle Ages. And this legacy was rich enough in experiments to offer many precedents from which to choose. After peace had been established in 1648 and 1659 and Louis had taken direct responsibility for the supervision of his affairs in 1661, the hurried arrangements of the earlier decades could be sorted out, at least for a time, at a more leisurely pace.

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19 Corvisier, Louvois, 278-89, warning against caricaturing the two men, presents a balanced view of their rivalry.
The structures used by Louvois and the Colberts for administering fortifications were part of this institutional inheritance. But whereas the administrative arrangements employed by Louvois remained largely unchanged from the early 1660s, those used by Colbert were subjected to a fairly long period of experimentation. Vauban, who became Louvois's chief assistant and inspector for fortifications in 1668, served as the secretary's primary link with his engineers on the frontier. Colbert, however, had no assistant who played this role, and his engineers had to contend with ever-changing supervisory arrangements.

Although Vauban's collaboration with Louvois is well-known, it is worth re-examining the origins of this relationship. It is true that it began late in 1667 with Vauban's victory over a rival engineer for the assignment to build the citadel of Lille. But historians generally offer few details or assume that Vauban's ascendancy in Louvois's fortification department was immediate. They also fail to see the element of self-promotion in Vauban's rise. The sources present us with a different picture.

Vauban owed much of his ascent within the military hierarchy to merit; nevertheless, he often benefited from the currents of patronage and clientage that flowed throughout seventeenth-century society and government. He was enough of a realist to appreciate the need to act as his own best advocate, often seeking means to promote himself in the king's service. He was not ashamed to make use of his credit with the monarch and his ministers for the advancement of his own clients and family, even when certain of the latter were clearly lacking in merit. Thus, to see Vauban in isolation from such clientage systems is to overlook an important aspect of the man.

When Vauban entered Louvois's service during the War of Devolution in 1667, he abandoned the patron-client network of Colbert. This change of allegiance is one of the keys to understanding Vauban's subsequent service to Colbert, which began again in 1670. The relationship between these two was further complicated by the animosity Vauban bore Colbert himself and by the clan rivalry that raged between the Le Telliers and the Colberts.

Historians have typically treated Vauban's relations with the Colberts in a cursory manner. Most scholars mention Vauban's conflict with Colbert's cousin in Alsace,
although some have curiously ignored it. But those who do note this pivotal episode largely repeat the mistakes made by the historians who first uncovered it. And almost all works on Vauban usually ignore his subsequent dealings with Colbert and his son. Fortunately, the valuable letter registries for fortifications left behind by the Colberts not only offer insights into these relationships but they allow us to draw a clearer picture of the evolving bureaucratic context in which they occurred.

Louvois’s and Colbert’s new administrative arrangements, although forged in a period of peace, were soon re-fashioned and tempered by the pressures of an era of renewed warfare. The king of France was a young ruler anxious to make his mark on the kingdom and the world. Surrounded by eager and ambitious youths like himself—Vauban, born in 1633, was the king’s senior by only about five years—Louis XIV embarked upon a series of wars from 1667 until the end of his reign that altered the frontiers of the realm.20 In the process, the necessities of war shaped the two departments responsible for the construction and upkeep of the many fortresses that guarded the state’s expanding borders.

It is the thesis of this paper that by the early 1670s Vauban had come to serve as the vital link between the two fortification departments that had emerged in 1661. These separate bureaucratic entities were finally joined together in 1690-91 after the deaths of the ministers who headed them. Prior to that official merger, however, there was a crucial period during which a semblance of unity—or at least some uniformity of administrative procedures—was achieved. This development took place several years before Vauban’s formal authority over the fortifications of the realm was enhanced by the office of commissaire-général des fortifications, which he received early in 1678. The process of consolidation had begun prior to that date, but not because of a desire on the part of the king to join the two departments together. Vauban himself also had no such ambition, although his patron Louvois did cast covetous eyes on the administrative possessions of his rival. The primary impetus toward administrative unity, however,

20On this era of youthful exuberance, see John C. Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," in Craft of Kingship, 52.
came from the necessities of war as interpreted by Louis XIV; despite the general desire to preserve the autonomy of the two fortification departments, these pressures could not be safely ignored.

The most important single event pushing Louis XIV toward requiring greater uniformity in the administration of fortifications took place in December 1672, the first year of his Dutch War (1672-1678/79). Flush with the success of his bold invasion of Holland, stopped only by the flooding of polder lands by the desperate Dutch, Louis was not prepared for the equally daring allied siege of Charleroi. The French king was surprised and shaken by this threat to one of his frontier posts, especially one so far to the rear of his advancing troops. This new invasion scare shook Louis, who was accustomed to visiting the ravages of war beyond his own frontier provinces. He had not expected to relive the fears that had swept the court of his father in 1636, the terrible year of Corbie when the Spanish threatened Paris itself.

Although the Dutch and their allies were forced to lift the siege of Charleroi and no invasion of France took place that winter, Louis XIV reached two important conclusions early in 1673. First, he found himself burdened with a surplus of fortresses too numerous to garrison and too weak to be worth the effort; those judged to be superfluous had to be demolished. Second, the monarch discovered that those places under the care of Colbert were not in a proper state of preparedness for the protracted war he feared might result if his 1673 campaign did not force the Dutch to the peace table.

From the late 1660s, Colbert had experimented with various administrative systems in his fortification department, but none had worked satisfactorily. This became increasingly apparent from 1673, and especially in the crucial frontier province of Picardy. This failure caused the king to turn for help to Vauban, Louvois's chief technical collaborator and fortifications administrator.

It was also during the opening years of the Dutch War that Vauban's credit with the king increased greatly, due primarily to the remarkable success of the sieges he conducted under the sovereign's orders. For example, the capture of Maastricht on 30 June 1673 earned him much acclaim. In addition, Louis was satisfied with the apparent strength of the strongholds Vauban had designed and constructed in the war secretary's
provinces. Contrasted with the triumphs Louvois and Vauban secured for the king, the inadequacies of Colbert's fortification agents in Picardy and Alsace opened that minister's whole department to question and closer scrutiny. Louis chose Vauban to carry out an inspection and to rectify whatever disorder he found.

The results of Vauban's visits and his new administrative procedures were so successful that they were eventually expanded throughout Colbert's department. When Colbert died in 1683, this process continued under his son and successor, who had actually supervised fortifications for his father since 1677. Because we have known so little about how and why these changes took place and what role Vauban played in them, this paper will focus on the fortification department of the Colberts. This will also serve to clarify Vauban's relationships with that great ministerial family.

Vauban's earlier experience administering fortifications for the secretary of war had resulted in a highly effective distillation and consolidation of the practices of the past. But he and Louvois added a crucial innovation: a general inspector for fortifications. This position, like that of the famous Martinet, inspector-general of the king's infantry, was aimed at greater royal control over and uniformity in the army. Earlier offices entrusted with the supervision of fortifications had either a limited geographical jurisdiction or, when they covered the whole kingdom, had been given to royal servants already burdened with other important duties. A minister in Paris or another great officer of state could not devote his full attention to the almost constant tour of frontier fortifications necessary to insure administrative unity. Louis XIV created a commissaire général des fortifications in 1662, but its occupant served merely as a consultant for special projects or as a troubleshooter. Thus, when Vauban assumed that post in 1678, he re-fashioned an office that had never lived up to the promise of its name. It was not just his designs for fortifications that put its imprint upon the French frontier. His almost unceasing visits to fortifications assured that his ideas were translated into actions that conformed to the wishes of his masters in the capital. These trips, more than anything else, partially knitted together the separate fortification services at least a decade before they were officially joined in 1690.
After the 1691 death of Louvois, who enjoyed less than a year as head of a unified fortifications service, Vauban continued to play the role of roving administrator. Even though the department was no longer part of the war ministry and had a new chief administrator, it appears to have functioned effectively during Louis XIV's last two wars. This suggests that the crucial bureaucratic link between Paris and fortifications in the provinces was Vauban. Yet, it was not just his charismatic personality and energy that animated this organization. Rather, it was the set of administrative procedures and the role of inspector that he had fashioned from years of experience and reflection. Perhaps the true test of his bureaucratic achievement came after his own death in 1707, when the department continued to operate along the lines he had first traced nearly three decades earlier.
CHAPTER I
THE EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF FORTIFICATIONS BEFORE THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV

Les fortifications des places sont de grands ouvrages dont la construction...demande des soins infinis, une activité perpétuelle, une grande conduite, beaucoup d'expérience et du bon sens...

Vauban, Le Directeur général des fortifications

Vauban was France’s greatest military engineer, but he was by no means the first or last to labor on the bastions of the famous French hexagon. Dozens of engineers were part of the Early Modern building program that transformed towering medieval walls into low-relief fortifications in the Italian manner. The king’s technicians were organized and supervised in a variety of ways during the century and one half before Vauban. These administrative arrangements issued from a royal government that was itself being transformed by the exigencies of internal disorder and external wars. If we are to assess Vauban’s impact on these developments, we must first describe the organization of France’s military engineering service prior to his advent.

This is a difficult undertaking due to the fluidity of this evolving structure, the gaps in the documentation, and the very imprecise nature of bureaucracy in the ancien régime. There is always the challenge of attempting to compare the structures outlined in royal edicts with the structures of actual practice, even when we are sure we possess all the relevant legal documentation. In addition, the standard descriptions of the administration of fortifications under the Sun King are frequently without dates, floating in a chronological limbo that fails to account for the significant modifications that occurred over time. Compounding our bewilderment, many authors have been confused. When
generalizing about the period of Louis XIV's personal reign, they have failed to
distinguish clearly between the department of the Le Telliers and that of the Colberts. 21

Any study of the origins of the fortification service must begin in the Middle Ages,
where so much was done to shape the various royal institutions of France. The great
medievalist Robert Fawtier stressed again and again that the territorial and administrative
growth of the Capetian kingdom was no linear development or the projection of some
royal plan of longstanding. Instead, he underscored the evolutionary and pragmatic
elements of a formation that came about by fits and starts, and whose numerous wrinkles
have only been ironed out by historians who too often view them in the greater expanse
of centuries rather than in the more mundane units of decades or even years. 22

This same slow, uneven process was at work in the administration of the strongholds
of the realm. Medieval French kings struggled frequently with both feudal nobility and
town dwellers to assure that their walls, towers, and moats did not become barriers to
the royal writ and refuges for rebels opposed to it. The royal baillis and sénéchaux were
officials who held their power directly from the king and had administrative, judicial,
and financial responsibilities for districts that retained a certain fluidity. They kept a
watchful eye on château and ville alike. These same officials exercised direct
supervision over royal fortifications and the personnel who built and maintained them.

A maître des oeuvres, assisted by a contrôleur des oeuvres, labored in most bailliages

21Gaston Zeller, Organisation défensive, 2, observed that "Vauban n'a travaillé sur
une table rase." For the difficulties involved in the study of this subject, see Blanchard,
Ingénieurs, especially 57, 60 n. 129. See also Jacques Guttin, Vauban et le corps des
ingénieurs militaires (Paris: By the author, 1957), a useful attempt to describe the
workings of this system, although it too suffers from chronological confusion. For such
problems in general, especially those of comparing royal intentions with actual practice,
see Douglas Clark Baxter, Servants of the Sword: French Intendants of the Army, 1630-
70 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), xii-xvii, and especially 60. For a
comprehensive mise au point of the administrative structure under Louis XIV, see Rule,

22Robert Fawtier, The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation (987-1328),
227.
to prepare estimates for construction projects and supervise the awarding and execution of building contracts. These maîtres des œuvres were frequently drawn from the ranks of the technologically proficient or at least business-wise contractors.\textsuperscript{23}

Financial arrangements for fortifications also experienced an evolution during the Middle Ages. Towns usually had responsibility for the upkeep of their walls, but when these funds were supplemented by revenues drawn from the royal domain, the receveur des domaines attached to the baili disbursed the necessary funds. These expenditures of royal funds were overseen by the Chambre des Comptes, which had become the chief auditing agency for the crown. As the power of the trésoriers de France grew in the later Middle Ages, they were assigned various responsibilities involving fortifications. These financial officers entrusted with the king's "ordinary" revenues (land and rights connected with the royal domain) could visit cities and strongholds and order any repairs they thought necessary, as well as seeing to it that the requisite funds were either supplied by the towns or delivered from the treasury of the royal domain. Additional funds came from the trésoriers de l'extraordinaire des guerres, who collected such taxes as the taille and then dispensed them to garrisons, who often supplied the labor for repairs on fortifications. Not surprisingly, the accompanying bureaucratic oversight led these various trésoriers to shoulder some of the responsibility for the upkeep of the king's ramparts.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23}Guttin, 	extit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 12-16. These contractors were also called entrepreneurs.

\textsuperscript{24}Guttin, 	extit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 17-18; Colonel [Antoine Marie] Augoyat, 	extit{Aperçu historique sur les fortifications, les ingénieurs et sur le corps du génie en France}, 2d ed. (Paris: Tanara and Dumaine, 1860), 1: 2-5. For a clear and concise description of these arrangements, see Gaston Zeller, 	extit{Les institutions de la France au XVIe siècle} (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), 327-28, and 249-95 for a lucid chapter on "Les Finances"; for a brief discussion of financial institutions, see Marcel Marion, 	extit{Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe} (1923; reprint, Paris: Picard, 1969), 60-61 and 81-82. Many of the administrators in Colbert's later fortifications administration were trésoriers de France, which demonstrates the surviving connection of this group to their ancient responsibility, even when by-passed by new arrangements.
But it was a technological development that effectively pushed the construction and
defense of fortifications to the national level: the growing potency and effectiveness of
heavy artillery. From the end of the Hundred Years' War, it was increasingly expensive
to construct new or modify old fortifications to resist the assault of these new siege guns,
which were themselves quite costly items. In addition, artillery and architectural
specialists of varying levels of skill had become a necessary component of this growing
"military revolution." Many were soldiers attached to the royal army, but civilian
architects also emerged as royal engineers, especially in the various cities where
practitioners of their arts were much in demand. The soldiers tended to concentrate on
the taking of enemy bastions wherever French arms ventured, while the civilian
architects were more sedentary, usually serving the king by constructing and repairing
defensive works in their own home regions. But the most proficient of these architects
were usually Italians, following a path of service to French kings most notably trodden
by Leonardo da Vinci. They were largely itinerant. Sometimes they had the title of
commissaire général pour les fortifications for a particular area, and traveled about
functioning as planners and designers on a grander scale.23

The Sixteenth Century Crises

The Habsburg-Valois conflict and the Wars of Religion occupied France during most
of the sixteenth century and led to the building of new fortifications or the redesign of
several older strongholds. Both conflicts put many city walls to the test of actual assault.
The Valois kings were anxious that these fortified towns hold out against external and
internal enemies alike. To assure that these defenses were properly maintained and
augmented, these monarchs promulgated a variety of edicts and ordinances, and sent out

23Geoffrey Parker, The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the
West, 1500-1800 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 6-10; Blanchard,
Ingénieurs, 48-52; Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 5-13 (he includes a list of the Italians
who worked under the Valois). Augoyat, ibid., 1: 3, and Guittin, Corps des ingénieurs,
11-17, 22, remind us of the existence of specialized engineers in the pre-gunpowder era.
In those days, a siege train consisted of such items as trebuchets, ballistas, catapults, and
battering rams.
sundry officials to see to their enforcement. The royal government also feared that municipalities were diverting the taxes and duties they collected by royal permission from their intended use, the maintenance of fortifications, and into other municipal projects or the pockets of the city magistrates.\textsuperscript{26}

The second half of the sixteenth century thus witnessed the emergence of two more specialized types of royal officials to work directly on the construction and repair of fortifications: the contrôleurs généraux des fortifications and the trésoriers des fortifications. The former exercised administrative functions, especially in the negotiation and execution of contracts, and visited building sites in order to monitor both the progress of the work and the entrepreneurs engaged upon it. In addition, they kept an eye on the trésoriers to assure that those financial officials paid out funds properly and only as authorized. These specialized trésoriers disbursed funds directly to the work sites, where monies were kept under lock and key, only to be paid out when the trésorier or his commis, along with the captain of the place (also called capitaine chastelain or, from the sixteenth century, governor of the place) and a representative of the city pooled their keys to open the triple-locked strong box.\textsuperscript{27}

Although the data for this era is spotty, it appears that a contrôleur général des fortifications came to be assigned to each generality (tax collection district) where there was frequent activity on the king’s bastions, whereas the trésoriers des fortifications were


\textsuperscript{27}Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 21-22; Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 4-9; Zeller, Institutions de la France, 328. On governors of cities and fortresses, see Zeller, ibid., which indicates that the title of "captaine" was still common in the sixteenth century, and Roland E. Mousnier, The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979-84), 2: 472-75, 477-79, which also describes the 1696 edict that attempted to regularize these appointments.
far fewer in number. In 1567, an edict of Charles IX regularized earlier, temporary commissions into two venal offices of trésorier: one "du côté de Piément," to guard the mountainous frontier with Savoy and the routes leading to and from Italy, and one "du côté de Champagne et de Picardie," to cover the vulnerable northern and eastern frontier with the Spanish Netherlands and the Holy Roman Empire. In 1575, Henri III, the last Valois king, added to their company a "Commissaire Général alternatif de la Marine du Levant, des mortes-payes, réparations et fortifications de Provence," who exercised a similar function on the Mediterranean coast.

During the sixteenth century the powers of the baillis and sénéchaux declined due to the amputation of some of their administrative functions and to the creeping venality that permeated the royal government. At the beginning of the century the king had come to rely on governors to carry his writ into the provinces, or gouvernements as they were called, especially those along the sensitive frontiers with France’s powerful enemies. According to a royal ordinance of 1499, these royal commissioners, drawn from the ranks of the upper nobility, came to the provinces armed with administrative, police, and military authority, including a responsibility to "visiter les places et forteresses."

Although not the chief judicial officer of the province, the indistinct line between justice and administration gave the governors significant influence in that area. In the military hierarchy, however, their preeminence was without question. The same 1567 edict that created the two trésoriers des fortifications announced that henceforth contracts for construction would have to be approved by the provincial governor or his lieutenant,

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29 Guttin, *Corps des ingénieurs*, 18-23; Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 7-9. Zelier, *Institutions de la France*, 138-39, explains the system of "alternatif": from 1554, as part of the spreading venality, all offices were doubled, with both holders furnished with the same rank and title, but only exercising the duties of their charge for six-month, alternating periods. The mortes-payes referred to the soldiers, either aged or in poor health, who had been placed permanently with reduced duties in lesser fortifications, especially those where a strong enemy attack was unlikely (ibid., 328-29).

The final Valois legacy to the administration of fortifications was the creation of a royal deputy to steer this emerging and growing fortification bureaucracy. But since this service was not itself the product of a planned, rationalized effort, it is not surprising that an over-all coordinator also materialized in a piecemeal and tentative fashion. It has been alleged that in 1556 Henri II named Jacomo Castriotto d’Urbino, a famous Italian engineer charged with a number of projects along the frontiers, to serve as a surintendant général des fortifications, which he did until his death at Calais in 1561. Augoyat, however, found no evidence for this in a book written about Castriotto by one of his contemporaries. Another contender for the honor of being the first such royal servant, this time in the reign of the short-lived Francis II, also seems unlikely, since his commission appears to have been limited to the Italian frontier. The first *Surintendant général des fortifications* for all of France appears to have been in the reign of Charles IX, a certain de Serré who commanded the attacks in that capacity in 1563 when royal forces besieged the Huguenots holed up in Orleans. Yet even this information is not certain, as Augoyat noted, although Zeller accepted this particular appointment as the genesis of the *surintendant*.\footnote{Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 6-11; Zeller, *Institutions de la France*, 327-28. See ibid., 142-45, on commissaires, intendants, and surintendants, and the metamorphosis of some of them into venal offices.}

According to an undated document examined by Augoyat, the *surintendant général des fortifications* kept an eye on all royal bastions in a number of ways. The *surintendant*
acted as the head of the whole fortification service by having under his orders the *contrôleurs*, *trésoriers*, mapmakers, and engineers who were deployed along the frontiers. They had to be examined by him prior to receiving their positions and he received their oaths of loyalty to the king. The *surintendant* also served as chief financial supervisor for fortifications, drawing up a detailed budget and verifying all expenditures. But engineers who served in the military were not under his command when away from building sites since he had no rights over the conduct of sieges.\(^{32}\)

Thus, the sixteenth century was a period of increased building activity and royal control over the funding and supervision of the realm’s strongholds, and this led to the appointment of a number of *commissaires* and the creation of several venal offices. But it remained to Henri IV and his chief collaborator, Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully (with this title from 1606), to pull together these diverse and often uncoordinated creations into some semblance of an organized system, as they did throughout the royal administration at the close of the Wars of Religion.

*Henri IV and Sully*

Henri IV and Sully pursued a vigorous building program along the frontiers. Their aim was to close those *portes* that had too often stood open to the enemies of France during the disruptions of the past decades. Picardy, Champagne, Dauphiné, and Provence received most of their attention; less was done along the Atlantic and Channel coasts or in Burgundy, which were apparently already satisfactorily defended. They also dismantled many fortifications they deemed useless or even dangerous to the state. Sully was himself a skilled gunner and engineer, and in 1600 the king rewarded and equipped him for service with the revived office of *surintendant des fortifications de France*, which had remained vacant during the ill-fated reign of the last Valois, Henri III. Sully joined this to his other charges of *Grand-maître de l’artillerie* (1599), *surintendant des bâtiments* (1600), and *surintendant des finances* (1600), making him the most powerful

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man in France after the king.\textsuperscript{33} Sully devised a *Grand règlement*, instituted by an *arrêt* of the king’s council on 26 May 1604, that defined the duties and procedures of the *ingénieurs du roi*, the *conducteurs des desseins* who served as their deputies, and other fortifications personnel.\textsuperscript{34} It remained largely in force even beyond the reign of Louis XIV. A further *arrêt* of 7 February 1608 supplemented this with details on the awarding of contracts to *entrepreneurs*\textsuperscript{35}.

The engineers—of which there were probably no more than twenty-four during the whole reign, and only about a half dozen or so active at any one moment—were clearly placed under the direction of the provincial governors at the local level, while the *contrôleurs généraux des fortifications* assigned to each of the important frontier provinces (Picardy, Champagne, Dauphiné, and Provence) supervised the technical and financial activities of both the engineers and the *trésoriers des fortifications*.\textsuperscript{36} The

\textsuperscript{33}Zeller, *Organisation défensive*, 25-27; Zeller, *Institutions de la France*, 327-28; Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 20-28. Details of their collaboration are offered in by David Buisseret, *Sully and the Growth of Centralized Government in France, 1598-1610* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), 120-32, 140. David Buisseret, *Henry IV* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 151-53, observed that while other expenditure categories fluctuated during this reign, those for fortifications were more stable, which resulted in a much-improved system of frontier defenses by the death of the king. He also noted the increased cartographic efforts of the engineers and their assistants, which meant that many of the frontier provinces were among the best mapped in the kingdom.

\textsuperscript{34}“Règlement que le Roi veut que l’on observe pour les fortifications de chaque province du royaume,” 26 May 1604, Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 25-27. Guttin, *Corps des ingénieurs*, 23-24, regarded this compilation of rules as a codification of previously evolved practices and regulations rather than an innovation, and Buisseret, *Sully*, 124, agrees with this conclusion. Augoyat also noted that the governors of the particular fortresses were involved in some of the proceedings, and that there was a special *Commissaire général des fortifications et réparations* for Provence, who seemed to occupy a position below the provincial governors and the governors of particular fortresses but above the engineers and *contrôleurs-généraux*. See Figure 1 on p. 31 below for a chart representing this administrative hierarchy.


\textsuperscript{36}“Règlement que le Roi veut que l’on observe pour les fortifications de chaque province du royaume,” 26 May 1604, Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 25-27.
surintendant exercised a general authority over these provincial fortification personnel. Buisseret says he supervised them "closely," but Blanchard argues that Sully did not organize the engineers into a "organisme commun." The engineers themselves were not centrally or formally trained as they would be in a later age, but were instead initiated into their craft as apprentices to an experienced engineer. Thus, as Blanchard warns, we should not exaggerate the extent and success of the centralization efforts of Sully and his king.39

**Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu**

The assassination of Henri IV in 1610 threw France into turmoil once again. The Regency of the nine-year old Louis XIII was dominated by his mother, Marie de' Medici, and her favorites until 1617. The Queen Mother and the great nobles resented the power of the late king's Huguenot chief minister, and so Sully was forced to resign as surintendant des finances, retiring to his estates until his death in 1641. Nevertheless, his son, the Marquis de Rosny, continued to exercise the offices of surintendant des fortifications and Grand-maître de l'artillerie that his father had resigned in his favor in 1605 (Sully had continued to guide his son and his department until 1610). In 1620 Rosny resigned the former so he could devote himself to artillery matters; like his father, he had a special attachment to the technical challenges and power connected with this semi-independent military fiefdom. Yet, Rosny may not have been terribly effective at either position, for he lived a raucous, scandalous life that freely mixed his pleasures with an accumulating debt and frequent legal squabbles. When he died in 1634, his own


37 Buisseret, Sully, 120-32, 140.

38 Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 53.

39 Ibid.
father grimly noted that Rosny had lived a "sale et profuse vie." Louis XIII appointed Armand Léon de Durfort, Seigneur de Born (or Borne) and a lieutenant-general of artillery, to fill the office of surintendant des fortifications, but it does not appear that this office played much of a subsequent role.  

It was during the tenure of Léon de Durfort that Cardinal Richelieu emerged as Louis XIII’s chief advisor, a status the wily prelate had definitively secured by 1624. Louis and Richelieu tore down more bastions than they raised. The king himself had enunciated in 1620 a policy that largely shaped the attitude of his own and his son’s reign: "he wished to allow no fortified places at all except on the frontiers of his kingdom, so that his subjects’ courage and fidelity would act as citadels and guardians of his person." His resolve was especially tested in the struggle to tame the Huguenots, who had been dangerously empowered by Henri IV’s Edict of Nantes of 1598. During the Huguenot revolt that broke out in 1625, the royal government repeated its intention to pull down all walls and fortifications "non situées en lieu de conséquence, soit pour

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40 Claude des Presles, Les Sully (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1987), 159-60. See also Buisseret, Sully, 120, 140.

41 Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 28-29. Even the most basic details about Durfort, including the date of his death, have proven elusive. This reinforces the notion that Durfort’s tenure marked the complete decline of the office of surintendant des fortifications. In 1625, for instance, it was the secretary of state Remond Phélypeaux d’Herbaut, supervisor of the Aunis region, whose countersignature is found with Louis XIII’s on orders for fortifications on the Isle de Ré; the engineer Argencour and Marshal Toiras are mentioned, but not Durfort (ibid., 40-41).

42 A. Lloyd Moote, Louis XIII, The Just (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 126. Moote argues that this was not a policy exclusive to the cardinal. The king often surpassed the prelate in his zeal for the destruction of fortifications that had resisted his will (ibid., 185-86, 197, 204). Zeller, Organisation défensive, 28-43, amid rich detail, repeats the older view that ascribes the leading role to Richelieu. See letters of Richelieu to Léon Bouthillier, 18 August 1634, and to Bullion and Claude Bouthillier, 17 March 1634 (summary), that suggest the role of both monarch and minister in these decisions to raze various fortresses. These are printed in Armand Jean de Plessis, Cardinal and Duc de Richelieu, Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du cardinal de Richelieu, ed. [Georges d’] Avenal, 8 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1853-77), 4: 591-93, 783.
frontières ou autres considérations importantes..." The king also extended the offices of contrôleurs and trésoriers des fortifications to those provinces where they had not been previously established (arrêt of 28 June 1627). Two months after the fall of the great Protestant city of La Rochelle, which had held out fourteen months against a siege personally supervised by Richelieu, orders were given (January 1629) that "les places fortes étant de dedans de notre royaume, qui se trouvent inutiles, seront démolies, afin que, par ce moyen nous soyons déchargz de la dépense des garnisons qui y sont entretenues sans besoin..." Because of this activity, the number of royal engineers increased and their duties were spelled out further.

It must be reiterated that the growth of the power of the state over its fortifications was by no means steady. Two examples from the same period illustrate this point. First, the very arrêt of June 1627 that had extended the system of fortification contrôleurs and trésoriers additionally extended venality into this nascent administration. A certain number of these positions ceased to be given out as revocable royal commissions and were now sold as offices.

Second, a royal order of May 1635 added another layer to the fortification bureaucracy by creating three contrôleurs-généraux and three trésoriers généraux to supervise those already established in the provinces. The trésoriers généraux kept general books and saw to it that provincial funds as well as those "ordinary" and "extraordinary" monies from the royal Treasury earmarked for fortifications actually made it to the provincial trésoriers. This trio of contrôleurs-généraux verified the work

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43July 1626, Isambert, Recueil des lois, 16: 192-94.

44Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 29-30.

45Isambert, Recueil des lois, 16: 315. This same edict forbade the construction of any new fortification works at chateaux or towns "sans notre expresse permission..." (ibid., 275).

46Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 54-56; Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 24-25.

47Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 25.
of their financial counterparts each year by auditing their accounts. In addition, they oversaw the provincial contrôleurs. These latter made contracts in conjunction with the provincial governors, monitored the work sites, and evaluated and officially received completed work. They also oversaw the accounts of the provincial trésoriers. The contrôleurs of the particular fortresses gave their oaths of office to these provincial contrôleurs. These new offices may have been created merely for the profits to be reaped from their sale or they may also have been intended to correct the many faults of the current system. In a November 1631 letter to Marshal Toiras, charged with fortifying the important Alpine outpost of Pignerol, Richelieu assured him that the financial agent he had sent was only intended to “aviser les longueurs et la mauvaise conduite dont les trésoriers des fortifications usent souvent en ce qui est de leurs charges.”

It was during this same era that there emerged another contender for an influence over fortifications: the secretary of state for war, who was in reality a specialist whose control of war had been wedded to one of the established administrative positions of the state. This office was usually filled by a capable bureaucrat, not a mere master of clerical procedures and governmental infighting, but a tested manager of men and money who had labored in far-flung fields as an army intendant. Although the first war secretary had definitely emerged by 1624, it was Louis XIII and Richelieu’s open and armed participation in the Thirty Years’ War that accelerated and shaped this development.

François Sublet de Noyers was an experienced financial and military administrator on the Picardy frontier who came to power at a moment of crisis. Abel de Servien, the previous secretary of state for war, had been exiled by Richelieu in 1636, who was not convinced by Servien’s excuses for the disappointing military reversals of the previous year. During that latter year Richelieu had written Sublet to urge him to push ahead

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49 Bonney, Political Change, 15-18.
with the construction projects at Corbie and the other frontier places while taking care that they were not surprised by enemy troops. The cardinal expressed his understanding that most of the places were in poor condition, with many new works already spoiled due to bad construction. But Sublet and Argencour, the engineer who assisted him, were not blamed; indeed, the cardinal noted:

Nous aurions besoin, pour remédier à ces désordres, de plusieurs M de Noyers et d'Argencour, ce qu'il est impossible de trouver; mais je ne doute point que votre vigilance ne supplée à tout.\textsuperscript{30}

With the full confidence of the cardinal, Sublet assumed the office of secretary of state for war on 12 February 1636, holding it until 10 April 1643. It is a tribute to his skills that he retained it at all, for his tenure began on the eve of a bold Spanish campaign that took advantage of the weakness of Corbie and the other border posts, and very nearly netted the French capital.\textsuperscript{31}

Taking advantage of Richelieu’s risky strategy, which had divided French forces into five scattered armies, Imperial and Spanish forces capitalized on the failure of France and her allies on two of these fronts. In 1636, they counterattacked with vigor, pushing across the frontiers into Picardy and Burgundy. The Cardinal-Infante, Don Fernando de Austria, younger brother of Philip IV of Spain, led the troops from the Spanish Netherlands. They captured Corbie on 15 August after an investment of only nine days, and quickly advanced across the Somme as far as Compiègne, creating a panic in the capital, whose fortifications had been pierced at several points due to various civilian construction projects. The invaders only withdrew across the frontier when the French counterattacked, heroically led by Louis XIII, who ignored advice to seek safety and instead hastened to the forefront of battle accompanied by his own brother, the recently-reconciled rebel Gaston of Orleans. Together they struck the forces of the Habsburg

\textsuperscript{30}Richelieu to de Noyers, in Richelieu, \textit{Lettres}, 4:751-52.

sibling with a large, new army, although it was composed primarily of militia; their Dutch allies assisted by noising about a possible attack on the Spanish Netherlands itself. Thus ended the infamous "Year of Corbie," which served as a long-remembered object lesson to that generation and the next on the dangers of weak and unprepared frontier defenses. The ensuing years witnessed numerous operations of siege warfare along the borders with the Spaniards and the Empire. The balance tilted one way and then another, although the French, led by the brilliant Huguenot commander Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne de Turenne, did capture Brisach, an important city commanding the Rhine corridor, late in 1638.\footnote{For a handy summary of the events of war, see R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 540-43. Richard Bonney provides an analysis of the French entry into the war in a chapter entitled "France's 'War by Diversion,'" in Geoffrey Parker, *The Thirty Years' War*, 2d ed. (New York: Military Heritage Press, 1987), 144-53. Louis XIII's support for war and his role after Corbie are discussed by Moote, *Louis XIII*, 241-45. A fascinating study of the rivalry and parallels between the Bourbon and Spanish Habsburg monarchies, including the problem of restive siblings, is provided by J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; Canto, 1991). For the Cardinal-Infante Don Fernando, who governed the Spanish Netherlands in relative autonomy from Madrid from 1634 to 1641, see R. A. Stradling, *Europe and the Decline of Spain: A Study of the Spanish System, 1580-1720* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 20, 93-94, 140. Zeller, *Organisation défensive*, 41-45, argued that while "l'année de Corbie" was critical and not soon forgotten, the lessons learned from that experience were quickly disregarded as work on frontier defenses advanced only slowly under Richelieu and his successor. Indeed, Zeller contended that "La principale contribution de Mazarin à la défense de nos frontières, ce sont les traités qu'il signa" (ibid., 45).}
apparently languished in abeyance. Instead, it appears that some of the functions of the surintendant were absorbed by the four secretaries of state, especially those for fortifications seized outside the boundaries of the realm, which fell under the increasingly powerful war secretary. The ground was prepared for this development in 1626, when the office of constable of France was abolished. With the removal of this traditional head of the military, the supreme power over the royal army fell to the civilian who increasingly managed the king's correspondence on such matters, the secretary of state for war. Augoyat cited letters of provision for contrôleurs that seem to back the contention that the post of surintendant des fortifications had been left aside in the ensuing bureaucratic shuffle: written in 1631, after Léon de Durfort had vacated his office (at an undetermined date), they mention that the contrôleurs must see to the execution of the plans that had been approved by the secretary of state. It is worth noting that although Augoyat assumed that this referred to the secretary of state for war, there is no reason to believe that this was the case, as we shall see further on.

33According to Hélion de Luçay, Les origines du pouvoir ministériel en France: Les secrétaires d'État depuis leur institution jusqu'à la mort de Louis XV (Paris: 1881; repr. Geneva: Slatkine-Megariotis, 1976), 589-90, Sublet became surintendant des fortifications in 1634, but Luçay did not list this office among those held by Sublet's predecessor, Abel de Servien, Marquis de Sablé, secretary of state for war from 11 December 1630 until 11 February 1636. Augoyat (Aperçu historique, 1: 30) noted that Allent, an earlier writer, had assumed that both men actually held the office of surintendant, but Augoyat found no corroborating evidence. Zeller, Organisation défensive, 38-39, agreed with regards to Sublet (saying nothing about Servien), specifically citing Luçay's attribution as erroneous. Despite this, Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 56, repeats this apparently baseless contention about Sublet. Perhaps this confusion is the result of mistaking Sublet's closely related position of surintendant des bâtiments with the office charged with fortifications (the former office is discussed by Ranum, Richelieu and the Councillors, 115).

34See Figure 2 on p. 31 below for a chart representing this administrative hierarchy.

35For the 1631 provisions, see Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 29-31. On the constable and his role, see Zeller, Institutions de la France, 120-21. Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 103-05, describes its lingering powers as inherited by the marshals of France, that official's ancient assistants. On the importance of the secretaryship of Sublet, see Ranum, Richelieu and the Councillors, 100-19, that the
The civil wars and dynastic struggles of the sixteenth century made it imperative that medieval walls be replaced by low profile fortifications in the Italian manner. But these new demands were put on the royal government at the very moment when it was undergoing a series of crises. Although the Valois monarchs sporadically struggled to create a new administrative structure to cope with the increased fortification responsibilities, there was no master plan guiding their efforts. Henri IV and Sully tried to rationalize the administrative procedures and personnel of the past century once the civil war had ended. They knit them together as a whole and codified their creation into law, but their system came unraveled after Henri’s assassination in 1610.

Louis XIII worked with an administrative structure that was part inheritance from his father and part improvisation. The king and Richelieu adopted a series of bureaucratic expedients as they struggled to defend the realm during their increasing participation in the Thirty Years’ War. Many of the measures they took worked at cross-purposes with one another. But the pressures of war did not allow time for reflection nor did the royal government have a bureaucratic blueprint guiding their efforts. It would take the conclusion of peace and another reign before the various wartime measures could be again sorted out and somewhat reconciled with one another.

 contributions of Sublet to the emergence of the war department have overshadowed those of Le Tellier. Baxter, Servants of the Sword, xii, 15, 81, 84-85, 91, agrees. He notes, for instance, that prior to Sublet, the army intendant of Germany in the 1630s, Robert Arnauld d’Andilly, was offered his commission by Servien, but he received his instructions from and generally reported to Bullion, the surintendant des finances. Carl J. Burckhardt, Richelieu and His Age, vol. 2: Assertion of Power and Cold War, trans. Bernard Hoy (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), 161-63, also painted a sympathetic picture of Sublet, stressing his hard work and competence, especially on the fortifications of Picardy.
HENRI IV AND SULLY (by 1610):

The King

Surintendant des fortifications

Contrôleur général des fortifications of the province*

Governor of the province

Lieutenant-général

Trésors des fortifications (financial supervision)

Engineers

Governor of the fortress

Conducteurs des travaux

* In Provence there was a commissaire général des fortifications et réparations

Figure 1. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy under Henri IV and Sully (by 1610).

UNDER LOUIS XIII (by 1643)

The King

Chief Minister

Secretary of state (4)

Contrôleurs généraux des fortifications (3)

Intendant*

Trésors généraux des fortifications (3)

Trésors provinciaux des fortifications

Contrôleurs provinciaux des fortifications

Contrôleurs particuliers des places

Engineers

* Either an army intendant, intendant of a conquered province, intendant des fortifications (usually venal), or provincial intendant (intendant de justice, police et finances).

Figure 2. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy under Louis XIII (by 1643).
CHAPTER II

AN ERA OF EXPEDIENTS: THE MINORITY OF LOUIS XIV
(1643 to 1661)

I began, therefore, to cast my eyes over all the various parts of the state....Disorder reigned everywhere....[there was] no governor of a stronghold who was not difficult to govern.

Louis XIV, Mémoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin, entry for 1661

Richelieu succumbed to illness early in December 1642, and was followed to the grave by his royal master in May of the next year. But while Louis XIII still lay dying, Cardinal Mazarin, who had been recommended to the king by Richelieu, gradually assumed control of the powerful administrative apparatus left behind by his ecclesiastical predecessor. There were others who hoped to fill the vacancy left by Richelieu’s death, but with some adroit maneuvering the clever Italian cardinal eliminated his rivals in the approaching regency for the young Dauphin Louis.

Michel Le Tellier and Fortifications

During the king’s final month, Michel Le Tellier was appointed successor to Sublet de Noyers, one of Richelieu’s faithful creatures who had hoped to inherit his late master’s primacy in the royal council but who fell into disgrace during the ensuing power struggle. Although he was not actually able to hold the office of secretary of state until Sublet de Noyer’s death in 1645--this was due to the latter’s refusal to sell it--Le
Tellier had the full confidence of the new chief minister and so was able to exercise the functions of his de facto secretarship by royal commission.\(^{36}\)

Le Tellier was serving in Italy as an army intendant and special envoy of the king when he was summoned to court in 1643 to serve the fast-fading Louis XIII. Backed by Mazarin, godfather and chief minister of the four-year old Louis XIV, and the Queen Mother Anne of Austria, Regent and intimate of the cardinal, Le Tellier undertook the immensely important and onerous burden of marshaling the kingdom's resources for the continuing war. Le Tellier straightaway began to push aside former officials and replace them with new men of talent who admittedly possessed another essential attribute for office: ties of kinship and loyalty to his clan. The new war secretary labored with vigor and tenacity to assure a French victory in her struggles with the Habsburgs. But the series of princely and parliamentary challenges to royal authority, known collectively as the Fronde, that raged from 1648 until 1653 were a perilous ordeal for Le Tellier as well as for the rest of the royal administration. Nevertheless, Le Tellier's loyalty and skill ensured his survival. Indeed, his ascendancy over the other three secretaries of state had been so great that they stumbled over one another in confusion during his absence. After the Frondeurs were pacified, Le Tellier's position was assured, not only in the bureaucratic framework but also in the esteem and confidence of both Mazarin and Anne. It was only then that he was able to pursue reforms and reorganization on any large scale.\(^{37}\)

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Yet, even prior to the closing of the Frondes in 1653, Le Tellier tinkered with the administrative structure of his charge and sought to increase his control over matters of fortification. But one should not be hasty to make more of Le Tellier’s efforts than he himself intended. According to Louis André, Le Tellier never aspired to create a corps of engineers dependent upon the king or upon himself. It was true that since the abolition of the office of constable in 1626, the engineers in the field besieging fortresses were in theory supposed to serve under the orders of the war secretary. Nevertheless, his influence over sieges was shared with the Grand Maître de l’artillerie, even though this hereditary office itself continued to be brought increasingly under the control of the war secretary. More importantly, the engineers—whether drawn from the ranks of French officers or foreign experts—were still almost completely subordinate to the various army commanders who recruited and employed them. The great captains of that age required their engineers to carry out their every order, for it was expected that any worthy officer would know something of siege warfare and ought to keep tight reins on his technicians, especially if they were civilians. Some commanders, such as Condé and Turenne, were highly respected practitioners of the arts of le génie. Adding to the power of the military commanders over officers serving as engineers was the realization that at the conclusion of an operation these subalterns would return to their regular duties, that is, if they had been fortunate enough to have been excused from them for the duration of the siege in the first place. Confronted with this lingering feudal notion of field commanders as independent captains, the secretary’s nominal powers over siege engineers in the field were largely meaningless, and there is no evidence to suggest that Le Tellier was anxious to alter the status quo.  

Martin, "The Army of Louis XIV," in Reign of Louis XIV, 112-13, offers a recent summary of Le Tellier’s efforts with the military.

André, Organisation de l’armée, 523-36; Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 46-47, 49. On Condé’s expertise with fortifications, see Zeller, Organisation défensive, 52, and for Turenne, see Henry Guerlac, "Vauban: The Impact of Science on War," in Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler, ed. Edward Mead Earle (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 43. Even as late as 1667, Vauban had to petition the
Indeed, one has only to look to a document dating from either 1642 or 1643 for strong evidence of the secretary of war's limited role in fortifications. Entitled "Mémoire de ce qui concerne les affaires et expéditions de la charge de secrétaire d'État de la guerre," it was written by an unnamed person who instructed the new secretary Le Tellier in the extent and nature of his responsibilities. In addition to the regular duties of a secretary of state managing the communications of the government with the various royal officials dispersed in the provinces entrusted to him, the author details the military responsibilities of the secretary. These are largely connected with the multitudinous tasks necessary to placing and maintaining an army in the field, but when it was a matter of "garnisons anciennes et ordinaires appelées mortes payes"—troops stationed for long periods of time within the existing boundaries of France, as opposed to troops in "garnison extraordinaire," over which he exercised complete control—the war secretary was to share his authority and "baille des extraits [of the "estat général" of each garrison] à MM. ses frères pour expédier les estats particuliers en chacune des provinces de leur département." The only direct mention of sieges has to do with his oversight of the artillery. Luçay, who examined the entire document, noted that fortifications remained a matter for the attention of each secretary of state.  

Thus, instead of regarding the secretary for war as the sole heir of the surintendant des fortifications, it would be more accurate to envision a fragmented inheritance shared among the four secretaries of state. From a strategic standpoint, it would seem that the king's strongholds were regarded less as part of a national war effort or defense system, war minister to be excused from his regular guard duties after the capture of Lille while he prepared a project for the creation of the important new citadel at that city (Vauban to Louvois, 15 October, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 3). Commanders such as Louis Crevant d'Humières, elevated to the marshalate just a few days after Vauban's 1667 letter, and also recently named governor of Lille, gave advice on technical matters, but Vauban thought little of Humière's understanding of the finer points of masonry (Vauban to Louvois, 5 July 1668, Archives de la Guerre, Chateau de Vincennes, Paris [this manuscript collection of incoming letters and drafts of outgoing letters is cited hereafter as A.G.] A1 227, p. 220).

59Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 46 n. 3-48.
and more as an integral part of a locally-coordinated and sustained system of protection against internal and external threats. While the four secretaries of state served as the link between the capital and the provinces, the governors and later the provincial intendants did the actual on-site supervision and coordination of a province’s military preparedness.⁶⁰

Despite these limitations to his authority and his own modest ambitions, the direction of sieges nonetheless received attention from the war secretary. Le Tellier recognized the problems raised by the employment of peasants to do the vast amount of digging attendant upon most siege operations. Unaccustomed to laboring under fire, they did so only under a duress that frequently proved counterproductive. Thus, Le Tellier increasingly utilized the more fire-tested soldiers for this kind of work, and issued a règlement on 14 May 1646 to govern the work, its cost, and the officers and engineers who supervised the troops. Additionally, the same system was extended to supply the labor for the demolition of fortresses no longer deemed valuable or repairable. It was especially in the tasks of demolition and construction that the French officer/engineers acquired more direct links with the secretary of war during the Regency. Their increasing absences from their regiments allowed them an independence—or perhaps a new dependence—that was not possible when serving their commander at a siege. Le Tellier was able to use the resources of the crown to distribute assignments and rewards to these engineers, drawing many into his clientage and that of his own patron, Cardinal Mazarin.⁶¹

Whether civilians or soldiers, engineers engaged in pulling down or raising up bastions in the provinces worked under the supervision of the contrôleurs des fortifications, who in turn reported to the provincial governors. But this administrative

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⁶¹André, Organisation de l’armée, 528-30. It would be left to his son to generalize the practice of putting officers on half-pay so they could be freed of regular duties to pursue more technical undertakings (see Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 105-08).
structure, which had evolved over the past century in bits and pieces, was never a highly coordinated whole and often slipped from the moorings that bound it to the will of the government in Paris. This tendency was abetted by the venality that was either originally or later a part of many of the positions created. The governors, great nobles who owned their offices, controlled the military affairs of their provinces to such an extent that they often acted independently from the ministers. Indeed, many a rebellion had one or more provincial governors at its locus.42 The office of surintendant des forifications had been created to pull the various parts together, at least in the rather vague manner in which such centralization was accomplished during the birth pangs of the modern state. But only Sully had been able to accomplish this, and his efforts and success must not be exaggerated. The office itself seems to have fallen and remained vacant fairly early in the reign of Louis XIII.

As usual, the central government endeavored to render the old structure more pervious to its orders by creating a new tier of royal servants either to overlay or bypass the unresponsive office holders already entrenched.43 Richelieu, drawing on practices of the previous reign, had charted this course by his ever-increasing use of a variety of intendants to carry the royal writ to resistant or rebellious provinces and extract from them the financial resources needed to pursue the war with the Habsburgs.44 Around the year 1645, perhaps as part of these efforts, the government installed a certain number of intendants des forifications in key provinces.45

42Bonney, Political Change, 286.

43See ibid., 448, 450, on venal offices as obstacles to reform. André, Michel Le Tellier et Louvois (Paris: Armand Colin, 1942), 315-17, sketched the secretary’s up-hill battle against venality in the military, noting that it was too deeply entrenched and was often added to by Mazarin, for both personal and political reasons.

44Bonney, Political Change, 29-51, for the origins of intendants and Richelieu’s role in their development.

45Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 58-60.
The Question of Intendants in 1645

Before discussing these specialized intendants des fortifications, it is essential to sort out the various kinds of intendants employed by the royal government during this period, especially those concerned with military control. In general, the first intendants were trusted royal commissioners, often maîtres des requêtes who were sent forth from the court to gather information, represent the king in the provinces, investigate fiscal misappropriation and mismanagement, oversee such projects as the repair or dismantling of fortifications, and generally reassert the central authority that was constantly eroded during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The titles they were given were often of fleeting endurance and of such a variety that historians have despaired of categorizing them in any coherent fashion. Under Richelieu and Mazarin, however, intendants were increasingly sent to the provinces for longer periods and with greater powers to gather taxes for the war effort. The Frondes were aimed at destroying these representatives from Paris who had nudged aside the venal officeholders as the king’s agents in the provinces. But the failure of this series of rebellions against the new administrative and fiscal arrangements only made them more necessary to the war effort and centralized control. The provincial intendants had become a permanent feature of royal government by the middle of the seventeenth century.66

Other commissioners had been sent to serve with royal armies, originally not to supplant the traditional military hierarchy but rather to supplement it by assisting in the struggle against the chronic flouting of royal administrative, fiscal, and disciplinary policies. But as one group of commissioners were able to pay the royal treasury for the right to convert their charges into hereditary offices—often at the initiative or willing connivance of a royal government hungry for sources of revenue—they would cease to be useful to the king as agents directly dependent upon his pleasure with their

66On the origin and articulation of the provincial intendancy, see Bonney, Political Change, especially chaps. 1, 2, 3, and 7.
performance. And so the cycle continued, and a new type of commissioner would emerge, although the by-passed office was usually not abolished.67

The work of Louis André on the military reforms of Le Tellier is monumental but does not focus on the rise of military intendants.68 If we want a fuller treatment of their evolution, we must turn to the valuable study by Douglas Clark Baxter. Making a distinction that many historians have not been careful to observe, Baxter points to the similar origins but the different development of the provincial intendants and the army intendants. Especially during the 1630s and 1640s, special and temporary commissioners from the royal court—intendants des finances from the surintendant des finances and intendants de justice from the chancellor—were dispatched to the French armies struggling to defeat foreign and domestic enemies alike. These army intendants often remained in the conquered or pacified provinces after the main forces had departed.69 In the latter, they endeavored to liquidate the remnants of rebellion and prevent a reoccurrence, especially since the governors were often too entrenched and entangled with local interests to be responsive instruments of the royal will. Certain governors were targeted by both Richelieu and Mazarin, who either weakened their power or removed them from office. After the Frondes, Mazarin limited them largely to military

67Baxter, Servants of the Sword, vii, 5 n. 4, 8-12. He describes how this process occurred with the commissaires des guerres.

68André, Organisation de l’armée, 526 n. 1, listed various kinds of intendants concerned with fortifications without any discussion of the differences among them as later delineated by Baxter.

69Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 13-19.
matters. 70 Many of the army intendants were transformed into provincial intendants when they filled the resultant administrative vacuum.

The army and provincial intendants were typically concerned with many of the same military matters: payment and discipline of troops, acquisition of provisions for men and beasts, care for the wounded, fiscal oversight and accounting, lodging and quartering of troops, and supervision of fortifications. But the provincial intendants came to be permanent fixtures in particular provinces and were invested with responsibilities that went well-beyond military concerns. Their commissions came to embrace matters of police, local justice, and taxation, whose collection had often brought them to the province in the first place. 71 The army intendants, by contrast, continued to hold temporary commissions that were limited to a particular campaign, and which expired or were readjusted to other temporary purposes at the end of military operations. Yet, as might be expected, the army intendancy was not so distinct that it could not be simultaneously joined to the other duties of a provincial intendant. 72

Fortifications were often a special concern of these various kinds of intendants, who by-passed the existing officials charged with their care. Sublet de Noyers, before serving as war secretary, had held a commission as intendant des finances in the office of the

70 See Bonney, Political Change, 281-317, on the eclipse of the governors. See Bordes, Administration provinciale et municipale, 25-26, on the fate of the governors, who did not, however, always accept these new arrangements without resistance. On 13 September 1672, Colbert had to write strongly to Duc Mazarin, governor of Alsace, who was resisting the authority of the intendant in ordering corvées for the construction of fortifications. See Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, ed. Pierre Clément (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale/ Nationale, 1861-73), 5: 64-65. For a different perspective on the role and decline of governors, see Harding, Provincial Governors, 199-217, who stresses the patrimonial nature of their office, whereas the provincial intendants were more bureaucratic and legal in their administration. He also sees more cooperation than has been traditionally supposed, regarding the early intendants as royal agents bent on restoring order. But Harding sees this lessening after 1633, when France entered the Thirty Years' War. Governors were more often absent and the intendants began a fiscally-driven program of centralization.

71 Bonney, Political Change, 135-59, discusses the evolution of their powers.

72 Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 63-85.
surintendant des finances, and then served from 1632 to 1636 as "commis-naire député par Sa Majesté pour les fortifications et envictuaillements des places de la province de Picardie."73 Assisted in technical matters by the engineer Argencour, he did impressive work on that frontier in renovating fortifications.74 Later, when secretary of war, Sublet de Noyers decided to make even wider use of military commissioners.75 He sent Le Tellier to Italy as army intendant from 1640 to 1643, where he exercised control over fortifications as well as other matters.76 This development was especially significant in the provinces of France where the fortification responsibilities of these various intendants undermined those of the governors.77

Even though the intendants des fortifications created around 1645 fit into this general pattern of administrative evolution, it is not clear what exactly that fit is. Significantly, 

73This title is quoted in André, Organisation de l’armée, 524-25.

74See Richelieu’s advice to Louis XIII, dated at the end of March 1632, recommending "un bon intendant de justice, le s’ Desnoyiers pour les finances..." for a projected move against Lorraine (Richelieu, Lettres, 4: 273). See also Richelieu to de Noyers, January or February 1633, on the work at the recently captured fortress at Moyenvic (ibid., 775 [summary]), to Bullion and Bouthillier, 10 January 1635, ordering funds for Sublet’s work (ibid., 648), to de Noyers, 23 April 1635, on the need to press the work at Péronne and the other building sites (ibid., 726-27) and another the same day on the work at Mount Olympe (ibid., 727). For the work of Argencour, who was apparently much in demand for his skills, see Richelieu to Bouthillier, 11 January 1634, sending another engineer to Provence since Argencour cannot go (ibid., 782 [summary]), to Servien, 21 March 1635, instructing him to obtain the engineer’s advice on Pignerol (ibid., 684), to Argencour, April 1635, on his designs for Saint-Quentin (ibid., 743-44), Richelieu’s "Mémoire pour M. d’Argencour," 3 May 1635, asking him to rectify the faults the cardinal found at Péronne. Richelieu’s "Projet d’ordre à donner pour toute la France, sur lequel il plaira au roy résoudre ce qu’il estimera plus à propos," 15 March (?) 1635, describes the work of Sublet and Argencour at Rocroi, Stenay, Charleville, Mézières, and the whole of Picardy (ibid., 681). For Avenel’s short biographic sketch of Argencour, see ibid., 743 n. 3.

75Bonney, Political Change, 263, 272, discusses their use in preference to the governors. See also Harding, Provincial Governors, 215-17.

76André, Organisation de l’armée, 525.

77For examples, see Bonney, Political Change, 144, 301.
there has been some debate as to what the royal government hoped to accomplish by establishing these positions. Augoyat regarded the *intendants des fortifications* as a new type of office, even though he was unable to verify this because he failed to find the edict Allent had earlier said was issued April 1645 to create them. But Augoyat did uncover the letter of provision issued to François Le Camus in 1645 making him "intendant des fortifications et réparations" for Picardy, Champagne, and other places. Louis André, however, has since argued later that Le Camus’s was only an extraordinary position given to a valued and venerable servant for his thirty years of toil, which included service in Italy with Le Tellier when the latter was the army intendant. The absence of the text of the edict itself, coupled with the striking resemblance between Le Camus’s letter of provision and those issued to the provincial intendants in matters of fortifications, led André to conclude that it was these latter, and not any new category of specialized fortification intendants, who became the war secretary’s primary agents to the engineers scattered about the provinces. But when writing several decades later about the joint administration of Le Tellier and his son and successor, the Marquis de Louvois, André had moderated his stance. Alongside the provincial and army intendants that had existed for some time, he had come to recognize the creation of several specialized "intendants des contributions et fortifications dans une place nouvellement conquise" who operated from 1645 and who were again to be found in several conquered places in 1668. Nevertheless, André did have it basically right when he argued that

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80 André, *Le Tellier et Louvois*, 389, 414-15, for his later revision; Guttin, *Corps des ingénieurs*, 26, agreed with André’s later analysis. In his work of 1901, André may have been mislead by the laudatory language contained in Le Camus’s letter of provision, but according to Baxter, *Servants of the Sword*, 62, such formulas in the letters of provision for army intendants were “standard and often trite.” Baxter, ibid., vii, notes that a clear delineation of the intendant’s evolution was not a focus of André’s work; this may explain his lack of precision in this matter. Baxter also argues that intendants of conquered areas were not an innovation under Le Tellier, but certainly proliferated due to the many French victories that followed in the wake of Rocroi in
the true masters of fortification personnel at the local level came to be the provincial intendants; it is just that he portrayed the process of evolution to this point as too quick and too neat. Matters were more complicated. Le Camus and the other intendants des fortifications alluded to in his provisions of office were quite different from the provincial and army intendants we have been discussing.

Part of the confusion in this matter is due to Augoyat’s assigning to Le Tellier the responsibility for the creation of these new intendants des fortifications. Augoyat offered no evidence for this contention, perhaps making a superficially reasonable inference based on the connection of such matters with war and on Le Camus’s past association with Le Tellier in Italy. The letter of provision granted to Le Camus gives no indication of a connection with the secretary of war. And when other intendants des fortifications are referred to in this document, it is only to those that "ont été et sont établis aux autres provinces du royaume..." André did not directly dispute that this commission came from Le Tellier, although he expresses skepticism as to its wider intent when he noted "Ce que fit Michel Le Tellier fut tout différent," basing his line of criticism, as we have seen, on the false notion (later revised) that this was a unique appointment.

The position created for Le Camus was one for a relatively more tranquil area than a newly conquered area or a rebellious province in the process of being reduced to obedience. These territories received specialized intendants such as the army intendants or intendants of conquered territories. But Le Camus’s commission was directed at "la conservation des places de Picardie, Champagne, etc.," and made no mention of any connection with an army in the field or in garrison. Indeed, his powers extended no

1643 (ibid., 104).

Quoted in Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 58-60. It is worth noting that Augoyat (ibid., 59) found Le Camus’s provisions in the archives of L’École d'application de l’artillerie et du génie (carton 24), not at the war archives. Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 26, followed Augoyat in seeing these offices as Le Tellier’s creations.

André, Organisation de l’armée, 523-25, 536.
further than to matters of fortifications, even though within that jurisdiction they were fairly wide. His letters of provision noted that in matters of fortifications, he

\textit{en avoir l'entièr conduite et direction, nous en rendre compte quand besoin sera, en dresser ou faire dresser les dessins, plans, modèles, devis, passer les marchés des ouvrages qui y seront à faire en présence des gouverneurs des places et conjointement avec eux, faire bien et fidèlement exécuter les ouvrages, les faire toiser et payer par ordonnances}...\textsuperscript{83}

This new office was apparently intended to re-establish order in the fortifications of frontier provinces that had suffered the ravages and disruptions of enemy troops in the past, but since the victory at Rocroi in 1643 had seen combat less often. At least prior to April 1645, the theater of war continued to distance itself from the Bourbon realm as the French advanced into the Germanies.\textsuperscript{84} Mazarin's desire to attend to the fortifications of this frontier was complicated, however, by the chronic struggle with the governors. The deaths of both Richelieu and Louis XIII had forced Mazarin to pursue a policy of reconciliation with the powerful magnates and restore many to their honors. In Picardy, for instance, this pitted the governor of the past decade, a loyal supporter of Richelieu, against the restored former governor.\textsuperscript{85} Thus, it is noteworthy that Le Camus was empowered to conclude contracts, officially accept finished projects, and report directly to Paris, all without reference to the provincial governor, who officially held primary responsibility for fortifications according to Sully's 1604 \textit{Règlement}.\textsuperscript{86} But this power was increasingly undermined by the ministers in Paris.

What the war minister in particular was about during this period seems to have been something rather different. His efforts and intendants were directed toward occupied lands or frontier regions in the combat zone rather than toward the established provinces

\textsuperscript{83}Augoyat, \textit{Aperçu historique}, 1: 59.

\textsuperscript{84}For French optimism in the years after Rocroi but before things began to fall apart after 1646, see Bonney, \textit{King's Debts}, 195.

\textsuperscript{85}Bonney, \textit{Political Change}, 288-94, discusses the general policy toward governors and the affairs of Picardy in particular.

\textsuperscript{86}"Règlement que le Roi veut que l'on observe pour les fortifications de chaque province du royaume," 26 May 1604. Augoyat, \textit{Aperçu historique}, 1: 25-27.
of the kingdom. On 18 January 1644, for instance, Mazarin commissioned the engineer Le Rasle to inspect the places of the Champagne frontier from "Rocroy jusques à Verdun." As a result, an ambitious plan was adopted to protect the region with a series of thirty-eight redoubts to be thrown up at the principal fords of the Meuse, but work began only in 1646. An assortment of royal agents with a variety of titles worked on this scheme: the engineer Pierre I de Chastillon (later an intendant des fortifications) designed the system, while Dosny, brother-in-law of Sublet de Noyers, executed what he could of the project in his role as "intendant de noz finances, fortifications, munitions et envictuallement" for Champagne and the Three Bishoprics. Other such intendants of conquered provinces were commissioned by the war secretary and similarly entrusted with fortifications as well as other concerns vital to the establishment and maintenance of French power in new territories. 87

Army and provincial intendants were commissioners who served at the royal pleasure, and indeed this was what made them so useful to the king. 88 What about the intendants des fortifications? The wording of Le Camus's letter of provision indicates that this charge was one already utilized because it stipulated that he would enjoy all the honors and prerogatives exercised by "les autres intendants desdites fortifications qui ont été et sont établis aux autres provinces du royaume." 89 For instance, Sully's codification of 1604 mentioned a separate commissaire général des fortifications et réparations de Provence already in existence in the south, which appeared to date back to an office created by Henri III in 1575. 90 André noted that the engineer Argencourt (or Argencour)

87Zeller, Organisation défensive, 44-45, describes this project on the Meuse and quotes Dosny's title. For intendants of conquered provinces, see Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 104-13. Baxter clarifies Dosny's commission by noting that in its various permutations it was specified for the "frontier of Champagne" (ibid., 105).

88Bonney, Political Change, 442.

88Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 59.

90"Règlement que le Roi veut que l'on observe pour les fortifications de chaque province du royaume," 26 May 1604, Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 8, 27.
held the office of *intendant des fortifications* in 1636, according to a document in the war archives; and although André did not specify the area of his jurisdiction, Augoyat’s account of his work suggests that it may have been for the Atlantic regions of the west. Significantly, both Le Camus and Argencour held venal offices, not commissions. As Le Camus’s letter of provision noted, the king "érigéons ladite charge en titre d’office aux gages de 4000 livres." Augoyat reported further that Le Camus was succeeded in his office by Pierre I de Chastillon (Châtilon), who died 10 December 1668, in turn succeeded 4 May 1669 by a nephew, Pierre II de Chastillon (the two are often confused), who had the *survivance* of the office but sold it to Renart du Fuchsiaenberg in 1683.\footnote{Richelieu’s "Mémoire pour M. d’Argencour," 3 May 1635, asks him not to go to Flanders but rather to remain close to the king to serve in his army, adding soothingly that "ce n’est pas que personne luy puisse contester l’exercice de sa charge, mais par pure affection qu’on luy porte et par estime qu’on fait de sa personne" (Richelieu, *Lettres*, 4: 749). This suggests that the engineer was being asked to postpone exercising a venal office in order to accept a commission from the monarch. For further activities of Argencour (or Argencourt), see Zeller, *Organisation défensive*, 44 n. 1, and Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 40-42.}

\footnote{Ibid., 59.}

\footnote{On Chastillon, see ibid., 59-63, 68; Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 4 n. 1. It has been suggested by Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 68, that the venal office of *intendant des fortifications*—at least for the land frontier of the north and the east—survived until 1690, when Louvois briefly united all the fortification service under his control and finally abolished these specialized intendants. This rests on a faulty interpretation of the letter of Louvois to Chauvelin (provincial intendant of Picardy), 17 November 1690, announcing that "Sa M° a trouvé bon qu’il n’y auroit plus d’Intendants particuliers des fortifications," and transferring the work in Artois to his care (Collections du Ministère de la Défense [France]-Archives de l’Inspection du Génie, Article 2, section 1, carton 1, piece 2, which appears to be a contemporary copy; Augoyat, *Aperçu historique*, 1: 68, reproduced a portion of this). Collections du Ministère de la Défense [France]-Archives de l’Inspection du Génie is a rich mine of fortification information housed at the Chateau of Vincennes, Paris. It will be cited hereafter as A.I.G. The lack of a printed catalog which has been partly responsible for its neglect by many scholars in the past has now been remedied. See Nelly Lacrocq and Nicole Salat, *Guide des Archives du Génie* (Vincennes: Atelier d’impression de l’Armée de terre no. 4, 1981).}
Thus, unlike the provincial and army intendants and the intendants of conquered territories, Le Camus's charge was a specialized office and not a revokable commission. This fact, more than any other, proves that the *intendants des fortifications* were not part of the *commissaire* system used by the war secretary to facilitate armies in the field and administer occupied enemy territories. Rather, they were a part of the administration of the provinces long or recently incorporated into the kingdom, where yet another venal creation was perhaps more tolerable—if not optimal—than in those areas that might have to be returned to their original holders in a peace settlement. The vicissitudes of war, particularly enemy invasions and chronic lack of funds, had disrupted the constant effort required to maintain fortifications, not to mention augmenting them or constructing new ones. The long-established *contrôleur des fortifications* and provincial governors had, through the venality of the former and the entrenchment of the latter, increasingly turned deaf ears to the orders issuing from Paris. These new charges of *intendants des fortifications*, perhaps meant to remedy this situation or to raise revenue for the royal treasury, had quickly if not immediately succumbed to venality. Although the reasons for selling this charge of *intendant des fortifications* are not hard to uncover given the crown's almost constant search for revenues of any kind to prosecute its war effort, it would seem unlikely that in 1645 one specialized intendency was created as an office in the war department when Le Tellier generally opposed venality in the military, and all the other military intendants he employed were *commissaires*, not *officiers*. It is not clear where else these offices were established. But if they were established in provinces other than Picardy and Champagne, they must have suffered a fate similar to the *commissaires des guerres*, who were gradually superseded in most areas by the provincial intendants, especially after the Frondes.⁹⁴

⁹⁴On royal finances during this period, see the portion of the aptly-named chapter on "Bankruptcy and the Fronde, 1643-1653," in Bonney, *King's Debts*, 193-202. For a related example of the transformation of a commission into an office, see Henri Legohérel, *Les Trésoriers généraux de la Marine (1517-1788)* (Paris: Cujas, 1965), 36-49. See also Baxter, *Servants of the Sword*, 12, on the *commissaires des guerres*, and 18, on intendants. André, *Le Tellier et Louvois*, 315-17, describes his attacks on venality, although these were often blunted by the financial requirements of war.
Finally, since Le Camus's jurisdiction of "Picardie, Champagne, etc." were not provinces normally entrusted to the secretary of state for war but rather to one of the other secretaries of state, there is no reason to believe that Le Tellier suddenly took control of their fortifications, especially since that area of the French kingdom was not then a war zone. If Le Tellier made such a far-reaching bid in 1645 to control all the fortifications within the borders of the realm, he had certainly failed by 1661, for in that year he clearly did not oversee the fortifications of Picardy and Champagne. In truth, in 1661 and in the decades prior, the war secretary never controlled more than a few of the realm's provinces and their fortifications.

The Role of the Secretaries of State

At the same time Paris was recovering its supervision of frontier fortifications by means of sundry intendants, royal supervision over municipal monies assigned to fortification upkeep had increased. Here, the primary agents were the provincial intendants, who conducted investigations into urban fiscal practices, always driven by a cash-starved royal treasury. In 1647, this process had advanced far enough and the needs of the state were so pressing that Mazarin appropriated a portion of the octrois (duties on certain consumer goods entering towns) and various other municipal funds to the royal treasury. Ostensibly, this was to last only until the exigencies of war ceased, but such "temporary" measures normally transformed themselves into permanent arrangements, and this expedient was no exception. The towns were permitted to double the octrois, but half of the proceeds were to go to the crown. These encroachments on municipal liberties and revenues continued during Louis XIV's personal reign. As Jacques Guttin noted, Vauban began his career just as the royal government had consolidated its control over the provincial officials who supervised and the financial apparatus that funded the construction and repair of the king's ramparts.93

93Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 18-21; Marion, Dictionnaire, 402-03; Bonney, King's Debts, 201. On the decline of municipal independence, see Mousnier, Institutions of France, 1: 569-74. Colbert further removed these funds from the towns but also from their original purpose when he joined them to the Ferme générale des aides in 1663. Vauban objected to this development in some notes penned around 1700 (Guttin, Corps
Yet, despite these promising steps toward administrative and financial centralization taken during the Regency, the control mechanisms for fortifications remained complicated, and central authority over the king's bastions remained largely dispersed. This issue has been obscured by the confusion that has led most historians to conclude that the war minister had come to control all fortifications prior to 1661.\(^9\) As we have already observed, whether soldiers or civilians, engineers involved in construction duties had long served under the orders of the provincial governors, but with the rise of the provincial intendants under the two cardinals the engineers passed increasingly under the sway of these agents from the capital. Yet, these provincial intendants were not themselves responsible to the same official at the court. Each of the four secretaries of state had an approximate quarter of the kingdom under his supervision, and the provincial intendants each looked to one of these secretaries for orders and support. These same four secretaries--whose original and continuing role managing the king's correspondence and expediting royal orders to the provinces had been a geographic division of labor--had also evolved a specialization of duties focused on particular issues, largely tied to the major concerns of the Maison du Roi, foreign affairs, the Huguenots (officially, the R.P.R., or Région prétendu réformé), and war.\(^7\) Nevertheless, when Louis XIII issued an order in 1626 fostering this greater specialization, he added at the very end, "Et pour le regard des fortifications, chacun en fera les états en ce qui sera de

des ingénieurs, 82-83).

\(^9\)For examples of this confusion, see Colonel P[aul] Lazard, Vauban, 1633-1707 (Paris: Alcan, 1934), 33, 37-38, and Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 56-60.

\(^7\)For the secretaries of state and the changes of their duties and provinces over time, Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 579-602, may be used with caution. See Zeller, Institutions de la France, 117-19, for their origin in the previous century, and Bonney, Political Change, 12-19, for their role under the cardinals. Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 143-46, is a recent and sweeping account of almost the entire structure of the state. On the over-all evolution of Louis XIV's administration, see Rule, "The Administrative History of the Reign," 102-03, 106. Bluche, Louis XIV, 655-61, provides a useful listing of the most important of the ministers and heads of departments during Louis's reign.
son département." The king’s action either announced or ratified a division of the central government’s supervision of fortifications that had resulted from the decline and virtual disappearance of the surintendant des fortifications after Sully. This fragmented arrangement persisted in one form or another until nearly the end of the seventeenth century.

The division of intendancies among the four secretaries of state had become fairly stable by the beginning of the personal reign of Louis XIV in 1661. Loménie de Brienne, secretary of state for foreign affairs and the Marine du Ponant (the Atlantic and Channel coasts) from June 1643 to April 1663 (although the actual power was in the hands of Hughes de Lionne from March 1661), oversaw intendancies that were on the extremities of the kingdom: Brittany, Provence, Champagne, the Three Bishoprics (transferred to Louvois in 1679), and Alsace (transferred to Louvois in 1673).

Henri de Guénégaud held the office of secretary of state for the Maison du Roi from February 1643 until February 1669, when he resigned in favor of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. His department was almost wholly comprised of a compact group of generalities in the ancient heart of the kingdom, clustered around the capital: Paris and the Île-de-France, Orleans, Soissons, and Berry. The only non-contiguous piece of this administrative compilation was the generality of Béarn/Navarre, in the western Pyrenees. This

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98 For the text of Louis XIII’s regulation, see Luçay, Secrétaires d’État, 587-88.

99 See the three maps at the end of this chapter beginning on p. 54 below. They show which generalities were under the supervision of which secretary of state for the years 1661, 1669, and 1690 (Figures 3, 4, and 5). The 1669 map marks changes that took place that year. The 1690 map summarizes changes up to that year and notes the particular year of each change.

100 Luçay, Secrétaires d’État, 593-97, provides summative charts for 1644, 1661, 1669, and 1715, as well as listings of offices, titles, and career dates for the secretaries of state. He also discussed the various trades that were made, although he must be used with caution, as we shall see further on. Generalities and intendancies were practically coterminous by this date.
province, as well as Berry, were given to the foreign secretary in 1669 as compensation for that official's loss of the navy.\textsuperscript{101}

Le Tellier, who had served as war secretary since April 1643, controlled generalities that were in the south or in the west: the Lyonnais and Dauphiné, Roussillon (definitively annexed in 1659), Saintonge, La Marche, Angoumois, Limousin, and a portion of Poitou. He and his son Louvois traded away Limousin, Angoumois, and Saintonge for Alsace in 1673, Dauphiné for the Three Bishoprics in 1679, and Poitiers and La Marche for the port fortifications and the haras, or horse stud farms in 1690.\textsuperscript{102}

The rest of the generalities were under the direction of Louis Phélypeaux de la Vrillière, Marquis de Châteauneuf, who held his office from 1629 until his death 5 May 1681. He had a rather vague responsibility for the Huguenots as well as supervising the provincial intendants of Picardy, Normandy, Touraine, Guyenne, Languedoc, Montauban, Auvergne, and Burgundy.\textsuperscript{103}

Not surprisingly, the intersection of these two systems of distribution of duties—one geographic, the other functional—multiplied the jurisdictional struggles and quarrels inherent in any bureaucracy. This was especially the case since the assignment of areas of specific responsibility was still fairly fluid, and the specialized departments with their attendant bureaucracies were just developing. One also cannot ignore the power of the chancellor, especially in Louis XIII's reign.\textsuperscript{104} In the case of fortifications, political

\textsuperscript{101}Ibid. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 1: 104-05, contains the text of the 1669 exchange between Colbert and Lionne.

\textsuperscript{102}Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 593-97. For the Rhône as a frontier river and a corridor between the north and the more exotic south, and for Lyon as a regional capital, economic center, and frontier city that was the gateway to Italy (for the Alps were less of a barrier than is often supposed), see the masterful work by Fernand Braudel, The Identity of France, vol. 1, History and Environment (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 265-95.

\textsuperscript{103}Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 593-97.

\textsuperscript{104}For this evolution and its inherent contradictions, see Bonney, Political Change, 12-19.
maneuvering would reduce the supervisors in Paris to two when Louis XIV grasped the reigns of government in 1661. But thus bifurcated system would last nearly three decades and result in two engineering and administrative services developing along different lines and in frequent conflict. This contentious arrangement would end only with the demise of first one and then the other of the bureaucratic dynasties that ruled the two fortification departments.

The Wars of Religion had led to a weakening and fragmentation of the power of the royal government. The power of France’s monarchs was already limited by its reliance on locally-connected officials, many of whom were venal officeholders, whose often inadequate resources to enforce the king’s will were stretched thin over too wide an area to be effective. The rise of Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation in France generated further strife that fed into the crown’s traditional conflicts with noble, urban, and provincial privileges. The reign of Henri IV provided a respite, but it ended too soon with his tragic murder. Henri left behind an child-king to carry on his work, which Louis did only when he had grown into manhood and had availed himself of the services of Cardinal Richelieu. Louis XIII likewise left an under-aged heir when he died in the midst of a difficult and costly war, but Mazarin continued the work of rebuilding the central power of the government. When Louis XIV decided not to replace the late cardinal and chief minister in 1661, he was able to do so thanks to the efforts of the first two Bourbons and their cardinal-ministers.  

The administration of fortifications paralleled this larger pattern. The last Valois kings strove to arrest the fragmentation of their power at the same time they were locked in a century-long struggle with the Habsburgs abroad and various rebels at home. They issued many regulations, established various fortification trésoriers and contrôleurs, and created a surintendant to supervise this system, but they ultimately failed. Henri IV and Sully tried to consolidate these efforts and were able to bequeath a legacy rich in

legislative and practical accomplishments. Under Louis XIII, however, there was no surintendant des fortifications to maintain this consolidation, and central power was dispersed among the king’s closest collaborators. Yet, control at the provincial level was reasserted as a variety of intendants replaced unresponsive governors and other fortification personnel. By 1661, Louis XIV could attempt a further consolidation of this power as he vastly augmented his realm’s defenses of ditches and bastions.

It is unlikely that Le Tellier wanted to increase his supervision over fortifications and engineers as much as many historians have supposed. But to the extent that he did, his efforts were limited by the earlier development and continued use of provincial intendants as the crown’s chief supervisors. Although intended to increase the power of the center, in the administration of fortifications they reinforced the splintering of supervision since they reported to different secretaries of state rather than to one official.

Before we marvel too much at the inconsistency of such developments, it must be reiterated that the centralization of this period was hardly the product of a master plan rationally conceived. Instead, it was a series of ad hoc measures that were judged successful at the pragmatic rather than the theoretical level. Richelieu himself, for instance, was driven to expand the use of provincial intendants more by necessity than any cherished scheme of innovation. Even in our own time, in a nation whose government issues largely from written constitutions, sorting out the functions and jurisdictions of the multilayered structure of American government can be daunting, given the overlapping federal, state, county, and municipal units and special districts. This is especially apparent when we seek a solution to a seemingly simple problem of everyday life. Before shaking our heads at the seemingly erratic arrangements of the ancien régime, perhaps we should reflect on those albeit more familiar inconsistencies of our own supposedly more rational age.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{106}Beik, \textit{Absolutism and Society}, 339, discusses the over-emphasis some historians have placed on the modern elements of Louis XIV’s government. See also Rule, "The Administrative History of the Reign," 107.
Figure 3. The Generalities of the Four Secretaries of State--1661.
Figure 4. The Generalities of the Four Secretaries of State—1669.
Figure 5. The Generalities of the Four Secretaries of State—1690.
CHAPTER III

MOVES TOWARD CONSOLIDATION: LOUIS XIV, COLBERT, AND LE TELLIER (1661)

Les fortifications des places étant des ouvrages Royaux, bâtis pour la défense des États, il est indubitable que les premiers Officiers qui en doivent prendre le soin sont les Souverains eux-mêmes, comme ceux qui y sont les plus intéressés...

Vauban, Le Directeur général des fortifications

In 1661 the leaders of the French state could look back at the past several decades with some sense of relief. While they could bask in the glory of what they had accomplished—chiefly the two treaties signed at Westphalia (1648) and in the Pyrenees (1659)—they also shuddered at what they had sometimes only barely survived—internal revolts of nobles, parlementarians, provinces, and peasants, and military disasters followed by enemy invasions that approached dangerously near to the capital. Yet, internal opposition had been blunted, if not completely vanquished, although at the price of dangerous expedients and compromises that would exact repayment at some later date and with consequences that reached far into the next century.107 And the mighty,

107For the compromises that were the price of victory and stability, see Beik, Absolutism and Society, 10-17, where he modifies the typical "triumphant" view of the absolutist "victory," and 30-32, where he convincingly lays out his thesis that absolutism rested on a "restructured feudalism." François Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981), 109-11, makes similar arguments in his analysis of the weakness and compromised nature of seventeenth-century absolutism.
encircling power of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs had been delivered solid blows, while France had added valuable territory to her frontiers with nearly all her neighbors.

The two cardinals had served their royal masters well by the mutually beneficial system of government by créatures, to employ Mousnier's phrase. This was comprised of a network of patrons and clients, largely relatives by blood or by marriage, and friends who were linked with one another by reciprocal arrangements of services and benefits, freely mixing state and personal funds and favors in a system that did not necessarily strike contemporaries as odd. Although ministers, secretaries of state, and other royal officials often had formally defined responsibilities, these were more fluid than one might suppose, and a political figure's actual power was often more directly tied to his standing with his patron. Thus, although it would be wrong to minimize the participation of the monarchs themselves, the dominant political figures in France from the 1620s until 1661 were the two ecclesiastics who served Louis XIII and the young Louis XIV as chief ministers. It was largely the favor these two political cardinals enjoyed with their royal masters that empowered and protected the other royal servants who helped them govern the kingdom.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, neither Richelieu nor Mazarin attempted to sweep aside the basic inherited structure of government, but continued to employ traditional forms and offices to exercise their hegemony, albeit with some important realignments of responsibilities and greater roles for certain of the numerous and various commissaires created throughout the past reigns. Indeed, it must be recalled that an insistence on traditional forms, far from imposing a rigid prescription on the present, actually offered up a varied menu from which to select because of the richness of the past and the--sometimes purposeful--weakness of historical memory.¹⁰⁹ As Orest Ranum noted, Richelieu did not

¹⁰⁸ Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 148-51. Moote, Louis XIII, 241-45, 255, offers a revisionist picture of the king, arguing that he was a more active player than most have said he was.

¹⁰⁹ On the system of and essential continuity from Richelieu to Mazarin, see Bluche, Louis XIV, 30-32, 47, and Bonney, Political Change, 3-28.
relegate the royal council to an inferior role, but rather used it as "the means whereby he came to dominate the central administration."\textsuperscript{110} Chancellor Pierre Séguyier, for instance, had the confidence of Louis XIII, Richelieu, and Mazarin from 1633 until he forfeited it in 1649 by joining the Fronde. This support, added to the inherited power of his ancient office, which included the supervision of the king’s councils, permitted Séguyier to install his own clients in the provinces and in the army as intendants, and made him a rival to the power of Le Tellier.\textsuperscript{111}

The administration of fortifications that Louis XIV possessed in 1661 was the product of these several decades of evolution, although this latter term implies more steady development in a particular and positive direction than is warranted. In fact, several processes were at work at the same time. Despite the persistence of highly personal clientage relationships in the workings of the state, there was also a growing specialization of function in a number of positions within the government, even though this was often transcended when officials accumulated seemingly unrelated offices or took on temporary assignments outside their normal area of authority. Some measures taken by the crown were directed at centralization, but others, driven perhaps by limits of transportation and communication or by wariness of creating overly powerful underlings, seemed to counter this. The same is true with the use of commissaires to bypass recalcitrant or incompetent officiers. The crown frequently undid its own progress in controlling its agents by converting commissions into venal offices for the quick cash or political dividends to be gained. Thus, by the end of several decades of conflict, the secretary of state for war had extended his role in setting policy for the capture, repair, and construction of bastions and for the various royal agents employed on this work, but this power was shared with field commanders and colonels of regiments, governors and intendants of provinces, fortification administrators and fiscal officials who were venal officeholders or who acted on royal commission, as well as

\textsuperscript{110}Ranum, Richelieu and the Councillors, 4; see also 5-7, 10-26.

\textsuperscript{111}Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 136.
with the three other secretaries of state, the chancellor, and the surintendants des finances. And the war minister, along with all the others who labored on any aspect of fortifications, ultimately had to acknowledge the power of the chief ministers who controlled access to and largesse from the king.\textsuperscript{112}

The Ministerial Revolution of 1661

The highly complex and fluid administrative arrangements for the supervision of fortifications were somewhat simplified and solidified beginning in 1661 as a part of the general "ministerial revolution" Louis XIV instituted with his personal direction of the affairs of state. When Cardinal Mazarin, his long-time mentor and first minister died in early March, the king had confirmed what was being whispered at court—although it still surprised many—by not naming a replacement and by returning to the narrower Conseil d’en haut of the days of Henri IV and Richelieu. Henceforth, membership in the inner circle of royal advisors was to be by invitation only, which meant the general exclusion of those who had often played a great role in it in the past, namely, the royal family, the ancient and chief officials of the court (such as the chancellor), important ecclesiasics, and military commanders. Those who were included were called ministers

\textsuperscript{112} A. Chéruel, Histoire de France sous le ministère de Mazarin (1651-1661) (Paris: Hachette, 1882), 3: 70-72, 148-49, 188-91, 198, details Mazarin's activities at sieges, provisioning the army, and consulting with commanders, and Turenne's work taking and constructing fortifications. Zeller, Organisation défensive, 52, stressed Condé's role in construction decisions, which continued into Louis XIV's personal reign. See, for instance, Colbert to Aspremont, 11 February 1673, Collections du ministère de la Défense [France]-Bibliothèque de l'Inspection du Génie in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 59, in which the minister informed him that the king wanted to postpone a decision on the work proposed at Auxonne until he had conferred with "Mgr. le Prince [de Condé]." Bonney, Political Change, 275-81, demonstrates that both Sublet de Noyers and Le Tellier worked closely with the surintendants of finance in their efforts to reorganize the army and use the intendants to carry out their policies. The Collections du ministère de la Défense [France]-Bibliothèque de l'Inspection du Génie is located in Paris and is a rich deposit of manuscripts relating to fortifications in general and Vauban in particular, including the letter registries of both Colberts (the in-Fo 205 series). It is cited hereafter as B.I.G.
of state, and comprised a small group of dedicated and skilled bureaucrats dependent upon the king.

At first, this inner circle of royal advisors was comprised of the war administrator Le Tellier, the skillful diplomat Hugues de Lionne, and Nicolas Fouquet, the surintendant des finances. The latter, however, was arrested in September 1661 for alleged abuses of power. He was quickly replaced by his rival Jean-Baptiste Colbert, formerly Mazarin’s personal intendant and chief assistant in the general affairs of state, and recently (16 March) named intendant des finances. Colbert now dominated the revived Conseil royal des finances. It is noteworthy that only one of the three in Louis’s inner circle, Le Tellier, was a secretary of state.¹³

On the domestic front, the two great poles of power after the death of their patron Cardinal Mazarin were Le Tellier, long entrusted with war, and the rapidly-rising financial wizard Colbert, who early in his career had held the office of commissaire ordinaire des guerres and later served as commis to Le Tellier himself. The actual arrangement of responsibility for fortifications that emerged between Le Tellier and Colbert is difficult to document, for it was not a matter of a royal edict but rather an evolving structure that mixed elements of forethought with factors of coincidence and the personal power of the particular men involved. Many historians, putting aside the precision of chronology, have treated this so-called division as an event when it was actually more of a process, and one that was a part of a larger realignment of responsibilities. But it was clear, especially by the next decade, that the grand officiers such as the constable, admiral, and chancellor, whose charges had either been abolished, bypassed, or weakened, were being replaced by new men, bureaucrats not of the sword nobility, but robe nobility basing their power in the secretariat, the fiscal bureaus, and especially in the confidence they enjoyed with their actively governing monarch. After decades of either independent or shared noble control over naval and army affairs, Condé rightly observed with obvious aristocratic chagrin that the king intended to end

this aristocratic ascendency and "faire M. Colbert amiral et M. de Louvois connétable." Thus, it is important to trace this general evolution before focusing directly on fortifications.\textsuperscript{114}

Within this basic framework, the \textit{imperium} of both Le Tellier and Colbert increased with the general expansion of governmental activity after 1661 and the emergence of these two as the most important domestic advisors to the king. Although there was a widespread desire to keep the affairs of war outside the kingdom and at the expense of the subjects of as many other princes as possible, the domestic effects of its financial and material needs and of the disruptive movements of soldiers were far from minimal. Even Lionne, the other member of this "Triad," who had himself supplanted the titular secretary for foreign affairs in the king’s councils, frequently gave way to the expansion of the power of his colleagues in internal affairs. But it was Colbert in particular who "insisted on being an expert on everything," and seemed to be the ascendant royal minister in the years immediately after 1661.\textsuperscript{115}

Michel Le Tellier had nearly succumbed to the turmoil and uncertainty created by the Frondes, yet it was that tumultuous period that made him an indispensable advisor to Anne of Austria during Mazarin’s time in exile. Indeed, his own banishment from the court between July and December 1651 put the other secretaries of state in a panic and left them disoriented. The activities of "Le Fidèle," as he was dubbed in the secret exchange of letters between Mazarin and the Regent during the Frondes, extended


\textsuperscript{115}Nicolas Pachau, chief \textit{commis} of Lionne, made this observation about Colbert to his master in August 1667; it is quoted by Sonnino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 12. See also Antoine, "Colbert et la révolution de 1661," 108-09.
beyond the war effort against the Habsburgs as he joined with the cardinal in cajoling, surveilling, arresting, and finally vanquishing the Frondeurs. Returning to a focus on supplying French armies, Le Tellier successfully pushed the war effort until the lifting of the siege of Arras in 1654 forced the Spanish to begin contemplating peace. Le Tellier participated in these negotiations, which Lionne conducted at the Spanish court, and he served as liaison between Mazarin and the court while the cardinal personally put the finishing touches on the Peace of the Pyrenees.

So great was Le Tellier’s power and influence, not to mention his credit with Anne of Austria, that when Mazarin fell ill in August 1660, it was widely speculated that the war secretary would succeed his master as the king’s chief minister. By January 1661 the rumor was about that the monarch intended to rule directly. Not quite a week before Louis’s actual announcement of this revolutionary move, Anne confided to a friend her son’s intention that Mazarin’s principal assistants and créatures—Le Tellier, Fouquet, and Lionne—“étaient destinés non pas pour gouverner, mais pour servir le roi.”116 According to André, whose affection and respect for Le Tellier is undeniable, the secretary for war took this check to his ambitions—if he ever had such lofty hopes as becoming chief minister—with genuine good grace and self-effacement. Or perhaps he knew the young king well enough to see that Louis was a prince anxious to escape the tutelage of a first minister and was therefore in no mood to gain a new one. Whatever Le Tellier really thought, observers of the court in 1661 and into the next year must have regarded Le Tellier, for all his continued power in the king’s council, as somewhat of a diminished man. As chief among the royal servants inherited from the days of the cardinal, he had failed to rise enough above the others to make them his créatures. This circumstance was surely aggravated when by the end of 1661 it was clear that a powerful rival had emerged, and it was none other than his former client, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who

116 André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 42-47 (Anne’s remark is quoted on 47).
demonstrated just how well he had learned the lessons of centralization practiced in the
bureaus of the war ministry.\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, 47-51. Taillemite, \textit{Colbert, Secrétaire d’État}, 33-34, cites evidence showing Colbert directly referring to the methods developed by Le Tellier to gain control of the army, and his own desire to apply them to the navy. See also Jean Meyer, \textit{Colbert} (Paris: Hachette, 1981), 35, 65.}

\textbf{Colbert Creates an Administrative Empire}

Colbert’s supervision of the king’s complex fiscal machinery allowed him to extend
his power into the areas of commerce, colonies, the navy, building, bridges and
highways, forests, and indeed almost all other spheres of government. Since most of the
activity of state was concerned with either the raising of money or receiving enough of
it to operate a particular department, there was little into which Colbert could not seek
to insinuate himself and his fiscal bureau. One has only to peruse the voluminous
sampling from his vast correspondence and other papers, extracted and published by
Pierre Clément, to appreciate the range of his preoccupations and the attention to detail
he lavished on all his concerns. As Mousnier aptly observed, "the king made the
\textit{contrôle général} the motor of the kingdom."\footnote{Mousnier, \textit{Institutions of France}, 2: 153-56, 192-96.}

The secretary of state for foreign affairs (which office Lionne acceded to only in
1663 after purchasing it from its former occupant, Loménie de Brienne), whose
specialization was one of the first to emerge during the previous reign, largely preserved
his control over foreign affairs, although Colbert’s commercial and consular interests led
to some encroachment. The direction of war, which accounted for the single greatest
expenditure by the state, remained under the control of that secretary of state, the other
specialist that had arisen under Louis XIII. But the other two secretaries of state,
excluded as they were from the king’s inner circle of advisors, were fairly weak
politically. They did little beyond expediting the paperwork of state. This was,
however, an important task that made the office potentially powerful regardless of the
standing with the king of its current occupant. Further, the weakened office of
chancellor lost the right to name the provincial intendants, and this authorization to nominate these ever-more powerful agents of central power fell to Colbert, except for those of certain border provinces, who were usually clients of the war secretary. It is safe to say that all royal officials who were not in the direct employ or clientage of Colbert felt threatened to varying degrees by the pervasive power of the royal fisc, which opened doors to otherwise closed areas of administrative activity with its invasive demands for information, regulation, supervision, and accountability, not to mention its more benign carrot of funds amply and speedily supplied. Even Le Tellier and Louvois cannot have felt safe, for Colbert’s eye took in much, and he had been, after all, an ambitious and rising military administrator in his youth.119

Colbert, for example, assumed greater and greater control over the navy, even though it was officially in the department of the foreign secretary. The means by which he accomplished this are instructive. This process is described in detail by Etienne Taillemite, who demonstrates that prior to Colbert there was in fact no naval department connected with the secretaries of state charged with naval affairs. In 1626, there were two secretaries with responsibilities for paperwork connected with the marine: one for the Levant (Mediterranean Sea), who also had charge of war, and another for the Ponant (Atlantic and Channel waters), who was the foreign secretary. But neither secretary had decision-making power in marine business, serving merely as "agents de transmission." The real power over the navy had rested in the hands of the admiral. When that great hereditary office of the crown was suppressed in 1626, Richelieu transferred most of its

119See J.-L. Bourgeon, "Balthazar Phélypeaux, Marquis de Châteauneuf, Secrétaire d’État de Louis XIV (1638-1700)," in Le Conseil du Roi de Louis XII à la Révolution, ed. Roland Mousnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 145, on the minor political role played by this secretary. On Le Tellier’s clientage, see Corvisier, Louvois, 130-38. See André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 415-22, on the war secretary and the intendants. Colbert’s 1669 initiative to assign two regiments of infantry to service on board ships elicited strong complaints from Le Tellier and Louvois, who saw Colbert’s control over them as a dangerous encroachment on their authority. Colbert backed off and allowed the officers to receive their commissions from the war department, but the obvious problems attendant upon such divided command led to the end of the experiment in 1671. On this episode, see Taillemite, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 57.
attributes to himself as Grand-Maître, chef et surintendant de la navigation et commerce de France. This officier had titular and effective control over the fleets, their officers, and the construction, manning, equipping, and provisioning of royal ships. The power of the Grand-Maître, like that of the admiral, extended to navigation and commerce overseas, along the coasts, and on the rivers, and included naming the officers who commanded the troops that protected the coastal regions of the kingdom, called gardes-côtes. Fishing, the entry and exit of ports, and marine justice were also under his jurisdiction. He had wide administrative, police, and judicial powers, and these were exercised by admiralty courts and numerous officials under his sway. The Grand-Maître added to this mix responsibility for the colonies and commercial companies that were being promoted as part of France’s overseas expansion.\(^{120}\)

But Richelieu’s efforts to connect the maritime rim of the kingdom more firmly to the center did not survive him. In 1650, the office of Grand-Maître was bestowed on César de Vendôme, bastard of Henri IV. Mazarin, desperate during the Frondes to win over and keep a hold on this rebellious subject, was forced to give away his predecessor’s creation to one of the first cardinal’s implacable enemies. Thus, when Louis XIV began his personal reign, there was no naval department under the control of one of his secretaries of state. In 1644, Loméni de Brienne had briefly expedited dispatches and official letters for both the Levant and the Ponant, but these responsibilities were soon divided once again, and responsibility for the flow of papers for the Levant fell to Le Tellier. When Lionne assumed the direction of foreign affairs in 1661 (but not officially becoming secretary of state until 20 April 1663, when he

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\(^{120}\)Taillemite, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 5-16. Actually, there were separate admiralties for France (the coasts under the authority of the Parlement of Paris), Brittany, Provence, and Guyenne. Henri de Montmorency, the last admiral, had accumulated the titles for all but Provence between 1612 and 1614; hence, his threat to the crown.
purchased the office from its previous holder), he managed the paperwork for the Ponant. The real power, however, continued to rest largely with the *Grand-Maître*.\(^{121}\)

Almost immediately after the arrest of Fouquet in September 1661, Colbert assumed what limited powers the central government had heretofore exercised over the administration of both halves of the maritime regions of the realm. These were joined to his growing responsibilities as chief financial advisor to the king, to which was added the influential and lucrative post of *surintendant des bâtiments* in 1664. Even before 1661, as Mazarin’s faithful agent, Colbert had been occupied with the affairs of the galleys of Toulon. But certainly, by 1664 when an *arrêt* styled him "conseiller audit Conseil royal et intendant des finances ayant le département de la Marine," Colbert had extended his grip over naval, colonial, and commercial affairs. It is not clear exactly when Le Tellier ceased expediting royal documents concerning the *marine du Levant*, but he had done so perhaps before 11 May 1667, when a *règlement* referred to Colbert as already having care for all naval affairs, colonies, and commerce which, however, still officially remained under the secretarship of Lionne. This rather strange arrangement of 1667 specified that Colbert was to continue to draft orders, read them to the king, send them on to Lionne to be drawn up officially, and then dispatch them to their recipients, accompanied by his own instructions; in-coming letters went first to Colbert, who then passed them on to Lionne "pour en rendre compte à Sa Majesté," but this was actually accomplished by Colbert when consulting privately with the king on naval and related business. Colbert also continued to encroach on the powers of the *Grand-Maître* who nevertheless maintained a strong hand in most marine business.\(^{122}\)

In 1669, as Taillemite observed, "enfin la théorie devenait conforme à la pratique."\(^{123}\) In February, Colbert replaced Guénégaud as secretary of state charged with

\(^{121}\)Ibid., 12-16. Legoherel, *Trésoriers généraux*, 49-55, noted an evolution toward unity of the financial apparatus for the Ponant and Levant from 1626, even though it was not completed until Colbert’s new position of naval secretary was created in 1669.

\(^{122}\)Taillemite, *Colbert, Secrétaire d’État*, 17-21.

\(^{123}\)Ibid., 21.
the Maison du Roi when the latter resigned his charge and sold it to Colbert for 700,000 livres. His position was further consolidated later that year by the fortuitous death of the Duc de Beaufort, the Grand-Maître, while serving against the Turks on the island of Crete. Colbert quickly moved to sweep away all vestiges of the power of this independent official whose authority he had whittled away at for nearly a decade. But the king was not ready for such a radical move. Instead, he suppressed the office of Grand-Maître and revived that of admiral, which he then stripped of most of its prerogatives but left with its revenues; he proceeded to fill it with a succession of royal bastards who were minors. Louis’s sons thus honored were under the tutelage of a chief assistant and—at least in theory—subordinate, the secrétaire général de la marine, who were Colbert clients, although the last, Valincour, later surprised Seignelay, Colbert’s son and successor, by encouraging a reassertion of his theoretical rights by the young Count of Toulouse in the late 1680s.  

The year 1669, then, signified a noteworthy turning point. As Taillemite observed, it marked "une étape décisive" and a fundamental transformation in French naval administration, and all in a fairly short time span. It also signaled the emergence of an actual secretary of state for the navy, something that had not really existed until Colbert’s efforts bore fruit. Measures to organize provisions, recruit sailors, and establish naval gunnery all issued from the minister and his scriveners in Paris, although not always with the desired success. Nevertheless, Colbert pushed on with his earlier initiatives, based on the intentions of Richelieu, to consolidate the power of the men of the pen over the men of the sea by extending bureaucratic supervision, and controlling the commissions to and the table of ranks governing naval officers. Like Le Tellier, he wanted the civilians to be the ultimate masters of the warriors.  

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125Taillemite, Colbert, Secrétaire d'État, 28-61, provides a valuable survey and evaluation of his activities.
The "Partition" of Fortifications in 1661

Augoyat’s contention that the administration of fortifications was "partagée entre Colbert and Le Tellier" in 1661 has been echoed by most subsequent historians. But it is highly misleading and often based on a confused understanding of both previous and subsequent arrangements. A more careful and chronological reading reveals that there is no evidence that Le Tellier controlled the fortifications in any but a small portion of the kingdom either before or in the years after Louis XIV began his personal reign.126

Poitou, Saintonge, and Limousin, all provinces Le Tellier attended to in execution of his duties as one of the secretaries of state, were not important areas of fortification activity in 1661. The one area in his western holdings in which building activity was increasing—the Aunis region around La Rochelle, Brouage, and the soon-to-be-built new facility at Rochefort—was separated from Poitou around 1659 and given to Colbert du Terron as intendant général dans la province d’Aunis, îles adjacentes et mers du Ponant. Ostensibly reporting to secretary of state La Vrillière, in actual practice Colbert du Terron looked largely to his cousin Jean-Baptiste Colbert for guidance. Le Tellier

126Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 65. See also Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: xi, who dated this "partage" from 1669, and added rather incredibly that fortresses "dépendaient toutes auparavant du Surintendant des fortifications," apparently forgetting that there had not been one in decades; his description also ignored changes over time. Lazard, Vauban, 22, 37-38, thought that Le Tellier had the care of all fortifications because the post of surintendant had been absorbed by the war secretary around 1630; thus, he saw 1661 as the partition of a unified administration already enjoyed by Le Tellier. His list of provinces is incomplete and not chronologically nuanced. Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 61, also refers to a 1661 "partage." Rothrock and Hebert, Soldier of France, 62, note rather vaguely that "in general the defenses of the western part of the country and the coast were [Colbert’s] concern. Louvois as war minister was responsible for the land frontier on the east but also, as a recently acquired territory, for Roussillon." The account in Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 575, is almost a complete muddle, largely repeating Lazard’s errors, and sees the 1661 division as being "between the war department and the navy department." Luçay’s earlier study (Secrétaires d’État, 60) suggested that prior to 1669, frontier fortifications had been placed under the secretary of state for war, since nothing was mentioned concerning them in the 7 March 1669 règlement creating Colbert’s new department of the navy; he appears to have assumed that only from that moment did Colbert supervise coastal fortifications. See the three maps beginning on p. 54 above.
controlled the important frontier places of Dauphiné, but this generality already reported to him in his role as a secretary of state, and not as minister of war. Roussillon, formerly a part of Spanish Catalonia, was his as well, and here Le Tellier’s authority flowed from his control of the war department, for this province had been officially incorporated into the kingdom only in 1659; prior to that date it had remained a conquered province administered by the military. The same held true for Artois, Hainaut, and the few places captured in Flanders in the past decade and confirmed to the French crown in 1659. These areas, which had been controlled by the army and its special intendants who were largely the creatures of Le Tellier, perhaps might have fallen naturally to the war minister after the conclusion of peace as subjugated territories, but in reality at least one place in conquered Artois, the fortress at Hesdin, upriver from Montreuil on the River Canche, came to be supervised by Colbert. Another recent French gain, Alsace, did not remain in Le Tellier’s hands, and it fell under the sway of Colbert and his clients after the death of Mazarin, even though its intendant officially reported to the foreign secretary. Likewise, although isolated Alpine fortresses such as Pignerol and Exilles, wrested from the Duke of Savoy in 1631, were assigned to Le Tellier’s care, their location on the borders of his province of Dauphiné almost dictated this arrangement, as confirmed by the fact that when that province was later traded away to the department of Colbert, those mountain strongholds were part of the package. Significantly, important treaty gains joined to the string of French fortresses on the frontiers of the Three Bishoprics and Champagne were allotted to Colbert as well.127

According to Blanchard, Colbert supervised the strongholds of the royal domain and those provinces long attached to the French crown, whereas Le Tellier had the care of

those "des acquisitions territoriales les plus récentes." Experience as recent as the Frondes had taught that those fortifications in the former group could be neglected only at great risk, and Vauban himself on more than one occasion reminded the war minister of this fact. Nevertheless, without a closer look at the actual breakdown of provinces or a careful definition of just what "les plus récentes" means, this formulation would seem to imply that Colbert's department was comprised primarily of places in the kingdom's interior regions, or at least those borderlands less exposed to enemy attack than the strongholds in Le Tellier's charge. Yet as we have just seen, the formulation implied by Blanchard is not really accurate. One need only recall that it was Colbert who exercised responsibility for the defensive work in Alsace, an area in which France acquired the emperor's rights over the Decapole (Ten Imperial Cities), the Sundgau in Lower Alsace, two important posts on the German side of the Rhine (Brisach and Philipsbourg), and other jurisdictions at Westphalia in 1648. This largely German-speaking collection of independent cities and ecclesiastical and lay principalities was assuredly a frontier province, especially since one could reach it only by traversing the Three Bishoprics, fingers of French territory that reached east through the often unfriendly Duchy of Lorraine, and which themselves were finally recognized by the emperor in 1648 as belonging to the king of France, even though French troops had occupied them since 1552. Alsace could easily be cut off from the rest of France by an incursion launched from any of the German principalities between the Moselle and the Rhine in the north, and in the south from the Spanish province of Franche-Comté, which was actually much further west than Alsace. As to the other fortresses added to the French crown during the Thirty Years' War, Stenay (1641) and Sedan (1642) fell under the control of Colbert's specialists. Strongholds added along the frontiers of the Three Bishoprics and Champagne in 1659 (Thionville, Montmédy, and the smaller posts around them) were likewise supervised by Colbert, as were those places given up by the Duke

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128 Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 60-61.

129 On this danger to internal security, see the typical letter of Vauban to Louvois, 22 December 1673 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 98).
of Lorraine by the Treaties of Vincennes in 1661 (Jametz and Moyenvic, with Stenay confirmed) and Nomény in 1663 (Marsal).  

The Duchy of Burgundy, which had been returned to royal obedience since the late fifteenth century, shared its eastern frontier with the Free County of Burgundy, better known as the Franche-Comté, territory held by the Habsburgs of Spain since the same era. Although this province’s intendant reported to secretary of state La Vrillière, for matters of fortification he looked to Colbert. The same was true of Béarn (Navarre) in the western Pyrenees, whose integration into the kingdom had commenced earlier in the century, following in the wake of an invasion by Louis XIII and his army in 1620. Still subject to Spanish threats, the province’s fortifications were supervised by the intendant for Guyenne, residing at Bordeaux, who worked with Colbert on these and the other fortifications in his care.  

Thus, any attempt to suggest that Colbert’s fortification activity was limited to sensitive frontiers only on the seacoasts and not on the land perimeters flies in the face of the evidence. Indeed, during the Frondes when Mazarin was forced to recall the hated intendants from the provinces, he was allowed to spare those operating with the armies in areas commonly regarded as "frontier" provinces, which included Picardy, Champagne, Burgundy, Provence, and Languedoc, all of whose fortifications came to be supervised by Colbert, not the secretary of state for war. When the conflict with the

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131For Burgundy and its intendant’s fortification activities, see Colbert’s letters in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1, fol 325, and vol. 11, fols. 100v-101 (*r* and *v* after folio numbers refer to recto and verso pages), and Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 39, 71.

132For Béarn, see ibid., 105 n. 1 and 111-12. A letter of Colbert to de Séve, intendant at Bordeaux from March 1673 until December 1678, and dated 17 March 1674, in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 57v-58, confirms this. For a general discussion of this province, see F. Loirette, "L’administration royale en Béarn, de l’union à l’intendance (1620-1682): Essai sur la rattachement à la France d’une province frontière au XVIIe siècle," XVIIe siècle 65 (1964): 66-108.
Empire officially ended in 1648, some conquered territories were abandoned by French armies while others were legally and permanently occupied. During hostilities, these conquered areas had been governed by specialized intendants sent out from Paris: army intendants who supervised and facilitated the presence of the French military on campaign, and intendants of conquered territories, who administered those regions held by French forces. Increasingly, these military intendants came to be clients of Le Tellier, who was himself one of Mazarin’s *fidèle*. By the time the cardinal passed from the scene in 1661, Le Tellier had used the prelate’s patronage to fill the ranks of specialized intendants with his own creatures, many of whom were his relatives. Yet, although these army intendants became a thinly disguised substitute for the provincial intendants when the abolition of the latter was forced upon the crown during the Frondes, at the conclusion of the rebellion in 1653 and with the approach of peace the next year, these specialized intendants ebbed away with the French armies returning home. As we have seen, those places incorporated into the realm in 1648 ceased to report to the war secretary and were now allotted to one of the other secretaries of state, although these areas seem to have been directly dominated by Mazarin through his assorted *créatures*. And even though the administrative division of the spoils of 1659 left some areas in the hands of Le Tellier, who had them assigned to his peacetime duties as secretary of state, important acquisitions fell to the other secretaries of state. In any case, all these new territories were now entrusted to provincial intendants, who were emerging in the aftermath of the Frondes as the chief royal agents throughout the provinces.  

Thus, Le Tellier’s supervision of fortifications prior to 1661 was quite limited.

Again, it is helpful to recall the role of the cardinals in matters of fortifications. Richelieu wrote detailed instructions on fortifications to trusted governors as well as to

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the engineers executing the work. Mazarin, for instance, was intimately involved in supervising the construction on the Château-Trompette in Bordeaux. When Mazarin died early in March 1661, there was a period of uncertainty as to what the new division of labor would be, which was resolved only in the aftermath of the arrest of Fouquet and the triumph of Colbert. Of course, as Mazarin’s intendant, Colbert already exercised a great deal of state business in an unofficial capacity. But until he entered the king’s Conseil d’en haut in September, Le Tellier took up the slack by sending out the king’s resolutions on such fortifications as Château-Trompette, which had been under Mazarin’s special direction. His supervision of fortifications outside his customary provinces was merely temporary and was exercised by order of the king in his council.

134Richelieu to Argencour, 15 July 1635, in Richelieu, Lettres, 5: 117, and "Mémoire pour M. le Prince [Henri de Bourbon de Condé]," 25 July 1635 (ibid., 120-21).

135Mazarin to d’Estrades, 12 September 1653, in Cardinal Jules Mazarin, Lettres du cardinal Mazarin pendant son ministère, ed. Pierre-Adolphe Chéreau and Georges d’Avenel, Collection de documents inédit sur l’histoire de France (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1872-1906), 6: 22-23; 21 June 1654 (ibid., 181); 14 August (ibid., 181); 8 October (ibid., 342). His letter to Le Tellier, 21 July (ibid., 228-31), also suggests Mazarin’s over-all control in matters of fortifications. See also Mazarin to Rochemont, 30 September 1656 (ibid., 7: 690 [summary]), and to Migneux, 11 October (ibid., 693 [summary]), both of which show him writing to engineers at particular places to instruct them in details of their projects.

136Meyer, Colbert, 134, 165-81.

137See entries from the minutes of the Conseil d’en haut for 15 June 1661, Jean de Boislisle, ed., Mémoriaux du conseil de 1661 (Paris: Renouard, 1905-07), 2: 49. The entry for 3 May (ibid., 1: 250) indicates that the provincial intendant will "aura inspection". Other entries are confined to places already under Le Tellier’s control: Marville in Lorraine (2 April, ibid., 133, 141, and 26 April, ibid., 219, 222); Limoges (26 April, ibid., 173, and 15 June, ibid., 2: 51); Arras (23 June, ibid., 2: 92, and 19 August, ibid., 3: 71); Gravelines (19 July, ibid., 2: 198-99). It is significant that when expenditures were authorized for the fortifications at Marseille and Fort Saint-Jean, they were to be disbursed through the trésoriers de la marine, whereas those for Château-Trompette were to be paid out by the trésoriers des fortifications (3 May, ibid., 1: 250).
If anything, the so-called division of 1661 was in actuality part of a grab by Colbert of the supervision of nearly all the fortifications of the provinces of France, including those along the Atlantic, Channel, and Mediterranean coasts. Major portions of the other administrative business of the provinces were still supervised by the four secretaries of state. But as intendant des finances and, at least officially from 1665, controller-general, Colbert used his financial authority to insinuate himself increasingly into these matters, and in the realm of fortifications in particular he quickly subtracted responsibility from three of the secretaries. Even though he was not yet a secretary of state himself, Colbert was a minister of state who clearly had the king’s ear and confidence.138

It is important to underline the contention of this paper that Colbert took charge of a large portion of the fortifications of the eastern border in his capacity as the king’s chief financial advisor and not as naval secretary, as is usually assumed.139 Although we might rule out a thesis based on his power as naval secretary due to the obvious fact that these were land fortifications, it should be remembered that the ancien régime was replete with logic-defying peculiarities. Thus, it is at least theoretically possible that this arrangement was an outgrowth of the naval secretaryship. But there are several reasons why this was not so. First, as we have just seen, there was not an actual naval secretary prior to Colbert’s creation of that position in 1669, when he joined his growing accumulation of powers over the marine to the secretaryship for the Maison du Roi. A second piece of evidence comes from a set of instructions Colbert drew up for his heir Seignelay, outlining the extent of his responsibilities and powers as secretary of state.

138 Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 193, on Colbert as controller-general. According to Taillemité, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 18 n. 2, Colbert received de facto exercise of this position 16 November 1662, when the king ordered the trésoriers de France to obey Colbert’s directives. See Meyer, Colbert, 14, 21, 185, 192, 300.

139 Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 65, 83, 93, 95, implies that Colbert’s control over fortifications flowed from his secretaryship for the Marine and that Louvois’s came from his secretaryship for war. She uses this dichotomy to label many sections and charts in her study of the two departments.
This detailed document is notable for what it does not include: it says nothing about Colbert's responsibilities for land fortifications.\textsuperscript{140} This reinforces the notion that his control over these royal bastions had come about due to the financial dominance he enjoyed at the beginning of Louis XIV's personal reign. But this is not to say that the care for land fortifications was not eventually joined to the secretary's naval duties. Indeed, when Seignelay succeeded to that office upon Colbert's death in 1683, fortifications remained in his charge even though the controller-general's position fell to Claude Le Peletier, a client of Louvois.

Another piece of Colbert's non-naval administrative empire helps us solve this puzzle concerning fortifications. From 1661, Colbert had taken control of the administration of the \textit{Ponts et chaussées}, charged with maintaining the bridges and highways that linked the various parts of the kingdom to Paris.\textsuperscript{141} The relevance of this charge to fortifications is obvious, given the strategic needs of communications with and transportation to and from frontier posts. Additionally, it provided employment for numerous engineers and contractors, whose expertise and experience could be useful in the minister's related departments of \textit{bâtiments} and fortifications.\textsuperscript{142} The connection between these three concerns was underlined in visible fashion, at least from 1669, by their inclusion, along with his supervision of the Canal du Midi and mines, in the same registry of outgoing letters maintained in Colbert's bureau. As with fortifications, these assorted

\textsuperscript{140}Colbert, "Instructions pour mon fils, pour bien faire la première commission de ma charge," 1671 (Clément says after 1 January 1671, based on internal evidence), in Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 3 pt 2: 46-64.

\textsuperscript{141}Taillemitte, \textit{Colbert, Secrétaire d'État}, 18 n. 2, notes Colbert's responsibility for bridges and highways. Antoine, "Colbert et la révolution de 1661," 108. For a general discussion of Colbert's activities in this area, see Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 4: cii-cxii, who also drew from the Archive des Ponts et chaussées, Correspondance de Colbert, 1669, for letters of that year related to fortifications and published in his vol. 5.

\textsuperscript{142}Blanchard, \textit{Ingénieurs}, 113, gives a glimpse of an interconnection between these activities and fortifications. Buisseret, \textit{Sully}, 132-39, shows that Sully did the same.
responsibilities were clearly a result of Colbert’s direction of the king’s finances and predate his rise to a secretariaship of state.143

143Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 9 n. 3, reported that “nous n’avons pu retrouver les volumes contenant la correspondance de 1664 à 1669,” implying that these fortifications volumes are missing. But René Mémain, La Marine de guerre sous Louis XIV: Le matériel, Rochefort arsenal modèle de Colbert (Paris: Hachette, 1937), 285-86, argued convincingly that they never existed since the practice of transcribing the minister’s outgoing letters into register books dates only from Colbert’s assumption of the secretariaship of state for the Maison du Roi and the marine in 1669. Indeed, Clément himself had to look in various archives to find Colbert’s scattered correspondence relating to fortifications prior to 1670. Thus, for the nearly one dozen letters from Colbert 1662-63, he used the Recueil de diverses lettres in the Archives de la Marine of the Archives National. Livet used letters from the Mélanges Colbert in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (cited hereafter as B.N.) and from the Archives des Affaires étrangères [Paris, France], Fonds Alsace, although these contain only letters to the minister (Georges Livet, L’intendance d’Alsace sous Louis XIV, 1648-1715 [Paris: Société d’édition Les Belles Lettres, 1956]). As already noted, Clément was unable to find Colbert’s outgoing letters from 1664 until early 1669, but a registry book for that latter year began with an entry for 4 May, and Clément found it in the Archives des Ponts et chaussées, Correspondance de Colbert, which appears to consist only of this one volume (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 1-25). For the subsequent register books preserved at the B.I.G., see Ministère de l’Instruction Publique et des Beaux-arts, Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Bibliothèque de la guerre (Paris: Plon, 1911), 260 (the library was known during that period as the Bibliothèque du Comité technique du Génie). According to the catalog, all eighteen volumes in this series are an “Enregistrement des ordres, instructions et lettres concernant les fortifications, les ponts et chaussées, etc. (1670-1690).” A careful examination of these volumes reveals that from at least 1670—and probably 1669 since the volume at the Archives des Ponts et chaussées is likely the first of this series—a portion of Colbert’s out-going letters were recorded in volumes labeled “Registre contenant les ordres, instructions et lettres expédiées par Monseigneur, touchant les fortifications, ponts et chaussées, Canal de communication des mers, et mines de Languedoc en l’année 1670” (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1). This grouping of related subjects does not appear to have lasted, however, for by 1679 there is again a separate volume for highways, bridges, canals, and mines (Archives des Ponts et chaussées, Dépêches concernant les ponts et chaussées, which embrace two-year periods, according to indications in Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 477, 516, 556). The minister’s outgoing correspondence concerning the Canal du Midi entered and exited this common registry with fortifications in precisely the same years, May 1669 and 1679 (ibid., 322, 388), but soon branched off from the other non-fortification matters, for there is a separate volume marked “Canal du Languedoc et port de Cette” for 1683-86 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13).
Le Tellier either was not able or did not care to absorb the long-established fortification duties of his fellow secretaries of state. Indeed, as we have seen, there was no precedent for the war secretary controlling the fortifications within the whole kingdom, as they were already in other hands and he had had quite enough to keep him busy supervising those in the various theaters of war beyond the borders of France. Moreover, as André Corvisier has observed, after the signing of the great mid-century peace treaties with the Habsburgs, "le ministère de la Guerre s'organisait comme un service civil et l'époque 1661-1666 fut particulièrement féconde." It was during those years that he sought to generalize and regularize the tentative moves toward reform and consolidation of the past decades. The frenetic pace of managing a war effort that continuously cried out for more men, materials, and money had kept such reform efforts fragmented and uncertain, but from 1659 Le Tellier pushed his program with a flurry of legislation and vigorous action: military officers and civilian administrators were brought under closer control; discipline of troops increased; and improvements were made in the recruiting, training, arming, supplying, and lodging of soldiers. He also apprenticed his son to succeed him, gradually allowing the young Marquis de Louvois a greater role in day-to-day operations and longer-range decision making. Yet all this activity took place within the framework of a military machine that had returned home (except for the new territories) and was being reduced in size. If it was now subject to fine-tuning, it was nonetheless in the context of a period of relative peace. Consequently, Le Tellier's fortification concerns actually shrank in the aftermath of the treaties of Westphalia and the Pyrenees. His normal responsibility for the ramparts of provinces under his secretaryship only expanded because he was allotted a portion of the conquests confirmed by the treaty of 1659. In the early 1660s, both in numbers of places and geographic expanse, Colbert's was in fact the larger of the two departments,

144 Corvisier, Louvois, 118.
even if the comparison excludes coastal fortifications and is limited just to those areas along the land frontiers.\textsuperscript{145}

Although his father may have been content with these limitations to his power over fortifications, Louvois was not. In the early and mid 1660s, Colbert was strongly ensconced in his bureau directing most of the repair of old and the construction of new bastions intended to preserve the king's recently augmented borders. There was not much immediate likelihood of dislodging him. But there was another way for Louvois to expand his power over royal fortifications, and one calculated to appeal to the taste for war that the young war secretary shared with his royal master: simply by-pass both Colbert and his string of defensive places by new conquests in the long-coveted Spanish Netherlands. Thus, Colbert's collection of largely older fortifications and re-worked battlements would be left behind an advancing frontier, one along which new citadels would be built to awe all Europe with the might of the Most Christian King.

Clearly, Louvois's portion was augmented--and quite dramatically--only by the territorial gains made in the War of Devolution, and not by any alleged 1661 partition. Later additions to his department of fortifications came as a result of further wars and a careful policy of exchanges that exploited the failures of some of Colbert's clients. For instance, Franche-Comté was captured in 1674 and confirmed by the Treaty of Nijmegen in 1678. Colbert's cousin Colbert de Saint-Marc and the Chevalier de Clererville made such a muddle of matters in Alsace, Louvois was able to use this and a sojourn as interim secretary of state for foreign affairs to extend his influence in this province and gain official control of it and its fortifications in 1673, along with Lorraine, which had been occupied anew by French troops since 1670. Although it was rumored in 1673 that Louvois would also grab the Three Bishoprics, the new foreign minister,

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., 75-118. Baxter, \textit{Servants of the Sword}, 138-63, describes the decreasing activity of the army intendants with the onset of peace, and reveals that Le Tellier's most promising administrators now gained their experience as army intendants with armies on smaller foreign operations, such as the expeditions to Crete (1660-62), Northern Italy (1663), North Africa, Hungary, and Erfurt (1664), and Holland (1665), until war resumed again in 1667. Martin, "The Army of Louis XIV," 112-13, reminds us of the limits of Le Tellier's accomplishments.
Arnauld de Pomponne, was able to frustrate Louvois's desires. But in 1679, when Pomponne was disgraced, a transfer was accomplished and the foreign secretary was indemnified with Dauphiné. All this exchange activity served to increase the control of the secretary of state for war over frontier defenses.146

As Louvois had surely foreseen and intended, Colbert's department of fortifications, at least on the land frontier, lost some of its leverage in the competition for material and financial resources as the conquests of subsequent wars pushed the borders further and further from the traditional perimeters of the realm. Shortly after the War of Devolution, Colbert signaled this growing reality to his fortifications director in Picardy by stressing that the strengthening of Saint-Quentin was the critical project under his care, for that fortress plugged the gap between the separated chunks of Artois and Hainaut gained in 1659. It is no coincidence that this was the place in Colbert's department where Vauban first labored following his earlier transfer of loyalty from that minister to young Louvois. A further recognition of this process came in 1677, towards the end of the Dutch War, when Colbert wrote to one of his agents that "Comme toutes les places de Picardie sont à présent couvertes par les conquêtes du Roy," only one place, Calais on the coast, warranted any major efforts that year. Thus, many of the fortifications in Picardy were left behind and others throughout Colbert's department were slated for demolition because of Vauban's emerging vision of a defensive pré carré on the northeastern frontier, a system of lines of fortified posts rooted in the conquests of the War of Devolution and the Dutch War. Nevertheless, some of Colbert's strongholds, such as Mézières and Rocroi in Champagne and Calais and Dunkirk on the coast, figured into the engineer's overall plan. Colbert was not without building activity to occupy his cares, employ his clients, and please his royal master, for the construction of a naval infrastructure of fortified ports and arsenals continued apace from the 1660s

146For Louvois's general ambitions, see Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 29-30. For an example of some of the older, less useful fortifications of Champagne, see Zeller, Organisation défensive, 30 n. 3. On Louvois gaining Alsace, Lorraine, and the Three Bishoprics, see ibid., 64 n. 3, Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 363-75, and André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 302.
on. And when Louvois gave up Dauphiné to the foreign secretary in 1679 in order to gain the Three Bishoprics and fill in the gaps of Lorraine, the fortifications of the former, along with those places in the Alpine valleys such as Pignerol, came under the control of Colbert. Consequently, even though Louvois's responsibilities continuously expanded with further war and the Reunions of the early 1680s, he by no means possessed a monopoly or even a marked preponderance over fortifications. That came only after the death of Seignelay in 1690, when the two departments were joined together.¹⁴⁷

But let us return to what had occurred nearly thirty years earlier in 1661. It has been argued above that, contrary to most standard accounts, there was no partition of fortifications between the secretaries of state for war and the navy at the outset of Louis XIV's personal reign. Instead, what transpired was more a mark of the growing power of Colbert and his financial apparatus. At least in the area of fortifications, his waxing authority and the waning of that of three of the secretaries of state did not represent an elevation of that latter office, but instead a challenge to its pretensions to a role greater than that of expediting paperwork. The passing of the chief ministers and the system by which they governed through their créatures, who exercised power from a variety of

¹⁴⁷For Colbert's letters of 12 July 1669 and 30 April 1677 on the work at Saint-Quentin and in Picardy, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 14-15 and 188. For the flurry of demolitions, most of which occurred in Colbert's department, see Zeller, Organisation défensive, 51-64. On the pré carré, see the discussions in ibid., 59-64, and Colonel Rocolle, "La réalisation du 'pré-carré'," in Actes du colloque "Vauban réformateur," Paris-Musée Guimet, 15-16-17 décembre 1983, by Association Vauban, Musée des Plans Reliefs, and Hotel des Invalides-Paris (France: Association Vauban, 1985), 49-56er. See the map of the pré carré in Rocolle's larger work, 2000 ans de fortification française, (Limoges: Charles-Lavauzelle, 1973), 2: 125. For Colbert's control of fortifications for Dauphiné and the places on the Italian border, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 140 n. 1, which indicates that Colbert's engineer Niquet moved from the Three Bishoprics to Dauphiné in 1680. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 2-3 n., quotes Bussy-Rabutin as saying that the exchange of the Three Bishoprics for Dauphiné took place in 1679, and this is confirmed by Zeller, Organisation défensive, 64 n. 3, who cites a letter from Louvois to the intendant at Metz, 29 November 1679, notifying him that he was expecting Seignelay to send him the plans of these fortifications. Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 596-97, gave a date of 1681, which is clearly too late.
offices and which did not always put the secretaries of state at center stage, had opened the possibility of the secretaries strengthening their dual roles as links with the provinces and centers of administrative specialties such as war, foreign affairs, and the *Maison du Roi*.

The king had quickly closed the door on any such bid for greater authority, however, when he forbade the secretaries to sign orders without his specific authorization. Moreover, as Bonney has observed, the secretaryship was not usually a stepping stone to ministerial rank and a greater role in the king’s government, whereas those called to the *Conseil d’en haut* as ministers eventually—and often not without delays and difficulties—purchased a secretaryship. Thus, it is possible to discuss Le Tellier and Louvois’s control over fortifications as emanating from two related though separable sources of authority: the secretaryship and the ministry of war. Although contemporaries might not have expressed this separation in terms so seemingly distinct as these, the cases of Lionne for foreign affairs, Colbert for the marine, and even Le Tellier himself the first few years as minister of war showed the dual nature of these charges as offices and commissions. Hence, Colbert’s creation of an administrative power base not tied to one of the secretaryships once again challenged the future of that institution. This was clearly demonstrated when three of the secretaries of state lost the supervision of their fortifications to him in 1661.148

This challenge was met, however, and the uncertainty about the future of the secretaryships was partially resolved in 1669 when Colbert himself became a secretary of state and reinvigorated that venerable office by joining it to his other charges. In this, he followed Lionne, who had done the same six years earlier. Still, Colbert’s power over fortifications represented a victory not so much for the office of secretary of state but for that of controller-general. The *règlement* of 7 March 1669 enumerating the

148 Zeller, *Organisation défensive*, 64 n. 3, mistakenly supposed that Colbert gained control of all the fortifications of the other secretaries, save those assigned to Louvois, only in 1669, when he himself was able to purchase a secretaryship. On the relationship between the office of secretary of state and the ministerial rank, see the valuable discussion in Bonney, *Political Change*, 12-19.
powers of the new secretary of state (since February, when he purchased the office) made it clear that it was Colbert’s hold on the financial apparatus of state that justified this official subtraction of naval affairs from Lionne’s department. The newly augmented secretariat added the following to its existing responsibility for the Maison du Roi: the marine in all the provinces of the realm; the galley fleet; the colonies in the "Indes orientales et occidentales," and the companies operating in them; internal and external commerce, and "tout ce qui en dépend"; French consulates abroad; and all royal manufacturing and horse-breeding (haras) operations wherever established in the kingdom. 149

As Luçay noted but explained incorrectly, there was nothing mentioned about fortifications, even though this règlement represented an effort to codify other ad hoc assignments accumulated by Colbert during the previous decade. 150 Zeller also took note of this and added that almanacs of the court and government continued, up to 1676 and beyond, to repeat the old formula that each secretary of state was charged with the fortifications in his department, even though he observed that his reading of Clément clearly indicated otherwise. 151 And given the fact that the bulk of Le Tellier and Louvois’s increased responsibility for fortifications resulted from their war responsibilities rather than the provincial supervision inherent in all the offices of secretary of state, it is fair to conclude that the 1660s marked the decline of the secretary of state per se in the field of fortifications and the rise of specialists whose authority did not rest primarily on the domestic responsibilities of the office of secretary, as they had since at least the 1620s.

This view is reinforced by what transpired upon the death of Louvois in 1691: responsibility for all fortifications was entrusted to the intendant of finance Michel Le Peletier de Souzy, a former provincial intendant who in 1684 had entered the service of

149Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 1: 104 and n. 1-105, contains the text of the règlement and Colbert’s 7 March 1669 letter announcing it to the intendants of the ports.

150See Luçay, Secrétaires d’État, 60, on the 1669 arrangements.

151Zeller, Organisation défensive, 64 n. 3, for the almanac listings.
his brother Claude Le Peletier, controller-general from 1683 until 1689. With the exception of engineers on campaign, Souzy controlled the entire fortification apparatus and by-passed the secretaries of state, having direct access to the king by means of his own day with the sovereign (Monday’s after dinner). All the while in this post, he continued to advance in the bureaucracy of the controller-general.\textsuperscript{132}

Returning again to the 1660s, it now seems more accurate to contend that Louis XIV allowed this emergence of a lopsided apportionment of responsibility for fortifications between his two most powerful domestic advisors. The sovereign did not entrust the supervision of all the frontier bastions to his war secretary in 1659 or 1661, instead allowing that official’s traditionally related but somewhat distinct responsibilities—provincial administration and foreign war—to determine his share. Colbert’s portion, however, resulted from the pervasiveness of finance in the evolution of the government’s structure. Many historians have viewed this development as a step away from consolidation instead of as a step toward it, in part because they assumed mistakenly that Le Tellier supervised all fortifications prior to 1661, or because they postulated that any such merger must have proceeded in a linear fashion and been based on the war department. But even once admitting the possibility of a multi-polar and non-linear evolution, to the modern observer perhaps, Louis XIV’s reform still appears to have been an absurd half-measure, a missed opportunity. In defense of the king’s thinking, it must be recalled that there was already a strong tradition of division of fortification supervision among the four secretaries of state. Moreover, given the persistence of a certain dilettantism in the arts of fortification and the large number of civilian engineers and architects employed in construction, and the continuing control over siege engineers by their field commanders, it is less surprising that all engineers and all fortification functions remained dispersed.

\textsuperscript{132}On Le Peletier de Souzy’s administration, see Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 72-77, although the day he met with the king was at one time on Saturdays. Boisisle, Conseil de 1661, 1: vii-x, also discussed the eclipse of three of the secretaries of state in 1661. This whole development fits with the broad outlines suggested by Mousnier in Institutions of France, 2: 154-56, 192.
Money was what stoked the engine of state, and Colbert was the king's closest confident in both obtaining and disbursing funds. He was also an experienced hand at managing large-scale building projects, both as Mazarin's intendant and in later posts supervising royal buildings, bridges, and roads. Thus, it was not unnatural that he assumed the management of the vast construction projects along so large a portion of the frontier, especially in those provinces now a part of the kingdom as opposed to those areas held in occupation by French armies. The experienced Colbert was amply aided by a host of architects and other technical advisors, including such widely if not universally respected experts as the Chevalier de Clerville, along with assorted technicians drawn from Italy, Holland, and the rest of Europe. And as was the way with much administrative evolution in the ancien régime, changes in practice usually proceeded official structural re-alignments. Hence, for fortifications, the official recognition of this evolution toward centralization came only at the beginning of the 1690s with the death of Seignelay and then Louvois, and the emergence of a new department—outside the war department, it must be noted—under the direction of Le Peletier de Souzy.  

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153 Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*, 1: 241-42 and n. 1, said that "un partage intelligent" would have been to give the naval secretary maritime provinces and the war secretary the frontier provinces; he was unaware that from at least 1661, Colbert supplanted three of the secretaries of state in the control of fortifications, saying that because of the supervisory role, for example, of the secretary of state for foreign affairs over Brittany and Provence, Colbert had been "Exclu d'une partie si importante du littoral...." Clément also implied that Colbert controlled coastal fortifications because that was a part of the attributions of the secretary of state for the marine, whereas Taillemitre has demonstrated that there was no real marine secretary until Colbert assembled various powers and in essence created the office, officially recognized only in 1669 (Taillemitre, *Colbert, Secrétaires d'État*, 16-29). And as we have shown, the naval secretary came to control these coastal fortifications because Colbert, who already controlled them in his role as chief financial assistant to the king, came to be the first real head of a department of the marine. Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*, 1: 242, did, however, recognize the limited area under the control of the Le Telliers prior to the War of Devolution. Rochas, *Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: xii labels this a "partage bizarre," but Corvisier, *Louvois*, 278-87 perceptively sees the wisdom in the king's reorganization.
In 1661, as Louis XIV asserted his right to rule, he was motivated by still fresh memories of over-mighty subjects, which included not just the various Frondeurs of his youth, but even his powerful mentor and first minister Cardinal Mazarin. As a monarch in the prime of his life, he desired to be more than a nominal commander-in-chief of his military. In this light, his failure to resurrect Sully’s charge of *surintendant des fortifications* or anything like it in 1661 gains further merit and certainly paralleled his actions with regard to the offices of *surintendant des finances* and, later, *Grand-Maître* charged with marine matters. In addition, it must be stressed that the art of fortification was part of the craft of Louis XIV. The *roi-bureaucrate* was intimately involved in planning and overseeing the construction of his realm’s ring of stone, brick, and mortar. Perhaps it might give us a better glimpse into the monarch’s thinking if, instead of regarding the direction of fortifications as divided, we see the two ministers managing specialized departments that were united under the supervision of the king himself. If the monarch could serve as his own *surintendant des finances*, he could

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156Zeller, *Organisation défensive*, 118-27, and H. Chotard, "Louis XIV, Louvois, Vauban et les fortifications du Nord de la France d’après des lettres inédites de Louvois adressées à M. de Chazerat...," *Annales du Comité Flamand*, 18 (1889-90): 28, 30, 34, 36-37, both stressed the important creative and coordinating role played by the king in these early years; see also Duffy, *Fortress in the Age of Vauban*, 6. For examples of the king’s activities and the minister’s awareness of his key role, see Louvois to Vauban, 3 Dec 1669, A.G. A1 244, p. 127 and Louvois to Vauban, 9 Dec 1670 in Rochas, *Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: 38.
certainly do the same for fortifications. Vauban's later assertion, quoted at the outset of this chapter, is worth recalling, for it echoed the sentiments of Louis himself and most of his subjects, who desired a 'hands-on' king who kept his bureaucratic servants firmly under his control.

**Clerville, Commissaire général des fortifications**

It might also have been the case, as Blanchard has suggested, that the appointment of Louis-Nicolas, Chevalier de Clerville, as *commissaire général des fortifications* was intended to provide some semblance of technical unity to this divided service of fortifications. According to Vauban's later reflections, the charge of *commissaire* was created to "suppléer au défaut" of the venal office of *intendant des fortifications* which normally exercised "les premiers et principaux soins sous les Ministres." Later evidence, to be examined further on, confirms this. Mazarin had appreciated the efforts of Clerville, an experienced officer who emerged as an able engineer in 1644 while serving under the Prince de Condé in Germany. In 1646 Clerville participated in the failed French attempt to penetrate Tuscany, and while still in Italy in 1648 or 1650 was named *maréchal (or sergeant) de bataille*, which involved the crucial responsibility of deploying troops on the battlefield following the general's Order of Battle. He may also have fought the Spanish in Gascony in 1651. The chevalier, who was a skilled courtier and loyal client of the cardinal, advanced further up the military hierarchy to become a *maréchal-de-camp* in 1652. Both during and after the Frondes, Clerville did not abandon Mazarin, but served his generals at numerous sieges and provided the prime minister with plans for fortifying several posts. Clerville also contributed his engineering skills to the military efforts of the ex-Frondeur Turenne, who gradually out-

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157 See Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 60-64, and Bluche, *Louis XIV*, 76-78, for modern and favorable appreciations of Louis's abilities and his knowledge of his kingdom.


generated the rebellious Condé and his Spanish allies in a series of sieges that led to the decisive Battle of the Dunes and the capture of the much-coveted port city of Dunkirk in 1658.

Colonel Allent had written in the early nineteenth century that Clerville had been made commissaire général des fortifications by Mazarin in 1658 as a reward for his efforts at this important siege. Colonel Augoyat, acknowledging no source other than Allent, repeated this contention, which has been echoed by a number of subsequent writers. But Zeller, and more recently Blanchard, drew on or echoed archival data published at the beginning of this century that recorded this advancement as officially taking place on 28 April 1661. Clerville and his new position were not, then, part of the legacy of Mazarin, but instead another sign of the king’s unhappiness with some of the arrangements of the Regency. The chevalier’s post was yet another manifestation of the king’s desire to rule by asserting his authority in all matters.

Clerville’s new position was not a revival of the office of surintendant des fortifications, but rather a new office awarded to a faithful courtier who was to act as the king’s agent in putting his frontiers in order. Le Tellier, keeping the official record for the 21 April 1661 session of the Conseil d’en haut, wrote "commissaire général des

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160 For Allent’s conclusions, see Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 54-55. Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 610, said that Clerville was given this position by a much pleased Mazarin in "1662" (apparently having forgotten that the cardinal had expired on 9 March 1661!). Lazard, Vauban, 52-53, accepted Allent and Augoyat’s date of 1658, as did Rocolle, 2000 ans de fortification française, 1: 212. Roman d’Amat, in an otherwise useful and informative entry on Clerville in M. Prevost and Roman d’Amat, eds, Dictionnaire de Biographie française (Paris: Letouzey, 1959), 8: 1526, implied that the date was 1665. The recent work by Rothrock and Hebbert, Soldier of France, 21, clearly implies that Clerville held his post as early as 1653, but without offering any evidence.

161 Zeller, Organisation défensive, 48 and 50, said that Clerville’s post was created for him in 1662. Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 61-62 and 76 n. 26, dates it after the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659) and then more specifically as having been given in 1661.

162 This matter was clarified by documents published and painstakingly annotated by Boislisie, Conseil de 1661, 1: 224-25.
fortifications" in the minutes as Clerville’s new charge, but Boislisle noted that it appears that the war minister had started to put "surintendent" and then crossed it out. Was this a mere slip of the pen or had there been a last-minute decision to down-grade this post? The surintendent des fortifications was an office once powerful and connected with the memory of Henri IV’s chief minister Sully, whereas what Clerville was actually given was less prestigious, although, despite its title, it was an office and not a revocable commission. Was this, perhaps, an early warning—unheeded by Fouquet—of the king’s growing impatience with surintendants of all sorts? Whatever the case, the Conseil directed the procureur général to "donner toutes les expéditions nécessaires" for Clerville’s salary (gages) of 6,000 livres from the domain ceded to the king by the Peace of the Pyrenees, "lesquels gages seront attachés à la charge de commissaire général des fortifications." Boislisle noted that these provisions of office were finally issued on 30 June 1662, which seems not to have been an uncommon delay with venal offices.

Le Tellier made use of Clerville, but apparently he was not pleased with the results. As already noted, the choice of engineers at a siege was largely a matter of the

163 Ibid., 224-25.
164 Ibid., 224-25.

165 Ibid., 224-25. For instance, although he succeeded Clerville by a letter of provision issued 4 January 1678, Vauban was still having difficulties registering the letters of his charge of commissaire général in 1684, as indicated in Louvois to Vauban, 11 April 1684 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 229), and their registration was only accomplished on 20 July 1684, in the Chambre des Comptes of Provence (ibid., 1: 67, on the letter of provisions for this charge). Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 3 n. 5, contends that on 30 June 1662, Clerville had received the charge—specially created for him—of "commissaire général des fortifications et réparations des villes de France," but his cross-reference to his own volume on industry (ibid., 2 pt. 2: 435 n. 3) mentions nothing about responsibility for the repair of cities. In a certificate Clerville issued for Vauban on 16 November 1666, the Chevalier styled himself simply "commissaire général des fortifications du royaume" (see Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55). Perhaps Clément was confused on the exact wording, for Vauban’s commission in 1678 was as "commissaire général des fortifications et réparations des places du Royaume vacante par le décès du sieur chevalier de Clerville." See Mousnier, Institutions of France, 1: 431-33, on the lengthy legal procedures involved in the transferral of a venal office.
preferences of the field commanders; it was only in the destruction, repair, and construction of French or captured fortifications that the secretary of state for war had a hand in the selection of engineers. Thus, when French troops and technical experts were sent into Lorraine in 1661 to oversee and assist in the dismantling of the defenses of Nancy in accordance with the treaty signed between the duke and Louis XIV, Le Tellier selected Clerville to direct the work.\textsuperscript{166} On 8 May, two days after receiving this assignment from Le Tellier, the chevalier penned a letter to Lionne just prior to departing for Nancy to join the troops that had arrived there the previous month. In it, Clerville agreed with the resolution of the king and his advisors that it was more sensible to demolish the bastions of the ducal capital rather than to incur the expense of garrisoning the place for four years, but he repeated his earlier proposal that Nancy’s walls should be spared if the Duke of Lorraine could be persuaded to yield up Marsal to the French in its stead. Clerville hoped to win over both Lionne and Le Tellier to his suggestion.\textsuperscript{167} This option, however, was at odds with the king’s desire to open Nancy to future French incursion, for their’s was a principality which French kings had long coveted, not to mention that its princes had deviled the eastern frontier of the kingdom for decades. Le Tellier’s blunt reply to Clerville’s suggestion was that “c’est pure crédulité, et que les choses sont au même état.”\textsuperscript{168}

If the king’s new commissaire général des fortifications was kept busy after the completion of the work at Nancy, it was not due to his employment by Le Tellier, but instead to the numerous assignments he was given by his new protector Colbert, who as


\textsuperscript{167}Boislisle, \textit{Conseil de 1661}, 1: 159-60.

\textsuperscript{168}Quoted in ibid., 160. Clerville, as already noted, became a protégé of Turenne due to serving under him at several sieges in the final days of the war with Spain. It is possible that this connection worked against him with the Le Telliers, who increasingly clashed with Turenne during the period leading up to and throughout the War of Devolution. See André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 152-73, for this deterioration of relations between Louvois and Turenne.
political heir of Mazarin had inherited much of his clientage. From January 1660, after a short visit to inspect the defenses of Nancy, the chevalier had been assigned to Marseille and the construction being undertaken there to secure its obedience to the king. He labored intermittently in that city for six years, punctuated by the supervision of the demolition work at Orange in May 1660 and Nancy in 1661, and inspection tours along the coasts of Normandy, Brittany, and the Atlantic in 1663, 1664, and 1665. While in the south, he also scoured the Mediterranean coast for a new port between Marseille and Spain to shelter French ships from natural and human dangers, eventually recommending the site of Sète (Cette).  

Although his title suggested a role overseeing all the fortifications of the kingdom, Clerville served at the pleasure of whichever minister chose to employ him. For the most part, especially after 1661, this was not Le Tellier, whose low opinion of the chevalier gave him little opportunity in the department of the war secretary. Clerville was primarily if not entirely an agent of and collaborator with Colbert. Either because of the king’s desire, or the nature of the commissaire’s office, or the necessity for immediate technical advice, Le Tellier and Louvois were forced to consult Clerville when beginning to put their conquests in Flanders in order in the autumn of 1667, but they did so without great confidence or pleasure. Clerville had little or no experience in their department, and they were not anxious to alter that fact. In the day-to-day operations of fortifications, the reality was division at both the administrative and technical levels.

Despite this general lack of employment from the Le Telliers, however, Clerville was fully occupied during the 1660s, scurrying from one end of the kingdom to another

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109 Josef W. Konvitz, Cities and the Sea: Port City Planning in Early Modern Europe (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 78-81, argues convincingly that Clerville chose Sète over nearby Agde for reasons of personal glory and financial gain. Vauban was highly critical of this selection. The work at Marseille was of sufficient importance for the king to mention it, along with the demolition work at Nancy, in his recollections for 1661. See Louis XIV, Mémoires for the Dauphin, 44-45, 53.

170 For further comments from Louvois on Clerville, see below, p. 213.
and assisting in a variety of construction projects that included and extended well beyond fortifications. His master, Colbert, had amassed an administrative empire that embraced the largest share of the fortresses of the kingdom, running as it did along the coasts, across the left flank of the Spanish Netherlands, and down the western edge of the Holy Roman Empire. It included several territories added to the crown by the treaties of 1648 and 1659, indicating that it was not just an aggregate of places far from the frontier or long under French domination. By comparison, the fortification responsibilities of the Le Telliers had contracted in the aftermath of these mid-century peace settlements. The army intendants who had supervised the many fortresses in occupied territories usually surrendered them at the end of the wars, either to their original owners or, if retained by France, to provincial intendants. All that the war secretary held on to at the end of hostilities were Artois and Roussillon, two Spanish territories not happy with their legal incorporation into France—indeed, both resisted this process of absorption, especially on the cultural level, into the next century. Although the so-called partition of 1661 has been a historical commonplace for well over a century, no such division took place. In fact, it would take another war to reverse the trend which had seen the control of royal bastions fall increasingly to the controller-general during the years of peace that had marked the beginning of Louis XIV’s personal reign.
CHAPTER IV


C'est donc une nécessité indispensable aux Souverains qui font fortifier leurs Places, d'en commettre le soin à des personnes fidèles, d'une probité éprouvée, & très intelligentes....

Vauban, Le Directeur général des fortifications

How were the royal bastions administered in the decades following Louis XIV's "ministerial revolution" of 1661? Because the service of fortifications had not been a unified department since the days of Sully, this question cannot be answered simply by describing its organization at that time and then tracing the divergences resulting from the division of 1661 that has been imagined by so many historians. Again, no such separation occurred in 1661. What we must do instead is clarify whatever common elements there were that had survived from the days of good king Henri and his surintendant des fortifications and then move on to the different modes of administration that had sprung up during the era of the two cardinals and their war against the Habsburgs of Spain and Austria.

Sully's great 1604 codification of the procedures to be followed by fortification personnel still held sway in 1661, and indeed largely throughout Louis XIV's long reign. This compilation of royal laws was concerned with administrative and especially accounting procedures. It also set up a basic framework of administrative roles, which remained largely unchanged in their functions and relations to one another in the hierarchy. For instance, the conclusion of contracts with the various entrepreneurs was always a matter reserved for those royal officials at the highest levels of the hierarchy.
The same was true with regards to police and judicial powers, and administrative authority to organize such complex undertakings as corvée labor when drawn from an area wider than the limited jurisdiction enjoyed by the governor of a fortress. What did change over time, however, were the particular administrators who occupied the top positions in the fortifications bureaucracy.

The earlier arrangements of Sully’s day were transformed during Louis XIII’s reign by the disappearance of the surintendant des fortifications and by the decline of the provincial governors: the coordinating role of the former was split among the four secretaries of state, while the supervisory duties of the latter fell increasingly on the provincial intendants. Yet, the idea of a royal agent with responsibility for the whole kingdom or a large portion of its frontiers did not fade completely. In addition, the whole fortifications administrative apparatus was experimented with as a wide assortment of new personnel, both commissioners and venal officers, were established to fill the needs of the moment. The long-term results, whether intended or not, were a variety of new, often incompatibile administrative arrangements. These coexisted beside one another, but not always comfortably. It would take a good portion of the reign for these structures and over-lapping jurisdictions to sort themselves out. And this would be based on experience, reflection, and the vagaries of personnel, whose individual preferences or performances often played a role in such matters. Only in the 1690s had these structures been reconciled and greatly streamlined, although the process had begun as early as the 1660s.

171 Although the governor of a fortress had some control over the immediate surroundings of his place, it was limited. In January 1629, as part of the famous Code Michaud, the king issued a number of edicts treating abuses committed by "gouvernors, capitaines des places, leurs lieutenants ou autres commandants en leur absence." One such royal law enjoined these officials from inflicting upon the monarch’s subjects "aucunes corvées sous prétexte de fortifications ou réparations desdites places, à peine de privation de leurs desdites charges, et autres plus grandes peines s’il y échet" (Isambert, Recueil des lois, 14: 281).

172 See Figures 1 and 2 on p. 31 above.
The greatest differences occurred at what can be described as the level of the primary modes of control. These were the officials and procedures by which the ministers in Paris made the king's wishes known in the kingdom's many strongholds. As to the administrative and financial procedures observed by engineers and the sundry contrôleurs, conducteurs (who directed the laborers), chasse-avants (overseers of work teams) and others who gathered at the actual building sites, these remained largely as prescribed by Sully in 1604. But it was the layer or layers of royal agents above them with which we are primarily concerned.\textsuperscript{173}

\textbf{The Provincial Intendants}

It must be recalled that in the period after the virtual disappearance of the surintendant des fortifications in the 1620s, the locally-based administrative and technical aspects of the fortification service within the boundaries of the kingdom was under the control of the governors and later the provincial intendants, who in turn reported to the secretary of state charged with that generality. Again, if the secretary of state for war exercised any control over those fortifications in provinces that were not his, it was through the provincial intendant and often in conjunction with a fellow secretary, and usually concerned the garrisons placed in these strongholds or with the feeding, lodging, and protection of the locals from the French armies on their way to and from theaters of war.\textsuperscript{174}

As the king's chief financial advisor, Colbert's responsibilities meshed with his direction of other departments engaged in the expensive building program inaugurated

\textsuperscript{173}For a detailed description of the routine procedures followed by engineers, see Guttin, \textit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 55-79, and, at least for Louvois's department before the mid-1670s, Vauban's \textit{Directeur général}. There is no comprehensive treatment of the trésoriers des fortifications, only bits and pieces in various works. See Guttin, \textit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 25, 81-84, for a brief overview of these fiscal officiers. For the various administrative hierarchies that existed at particular times and for particular areas under the Le Telliers and the Colberts, see Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 at the end of this chapter, beginning on p. 137 below.

\textsuperscript{174}See André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 358, 365-66, 369-74, for instance, on provincial intendants working with the war department.
during the early years of the reign. He relied on a variety of personnel to help him in his work. The *commissaire général des fortifications* Clerville provided technical advice on canals, the navigation of rivers, and mines, in addition to his usual counsel on bastions, arsenals, and seaports. The *trésoriers de France*, who had long been charged with public works such as roads, bridges, and canals, increasingly assisted Colbert in the supervision of fortifications. But it was especially to the provincial intendants that Colbert turned to gather information and to make the king's will felt throughout France, the provinces. In 1664, for instance, in his role as intendant of finance, Colbert addressed a circular to all the generalities instructing the intendants to provide him with a range of statistics that would furnish the quantitative and qualitative data base from which he would launch his reform initiatives.\(^{175}\)

The intendants looked to particular secretaries of state for official orders, sending them letters on provincial affairs which were then read and discussed by the four secretaries in the Council of Dispatches. But from 1661, as a minister of state meeting with the king and the foreign affairs and war ministers in the *Conseil d'en haut*, and as intendant of finances, second only to the king in the financial affairs of the kingdom, Colbert was independently able to correspond with all the intendants and make his influence felt in all corners of the realm.\(^{176}\)


Even while serving Mazarin, Colbert had insinuated his clients into several
intendancies. 177 With the power realignment of 1661, his prerogative in the nomination
of provincial intendants had superseded that of the chancellor, and he appears to have
nominated the intendants for all but the provinces under Le Tellier. 178 Even in these, he
tried on occasion to influence the process, as in 1668 when he unsuccessfully opposed
the appointment of Louvois's twenty-seven year old client Michel Le Peletier de Souzy
to the new intendancy of Flanders. 179 As was the practice then, many of the intendants
were connected with Colbert by blood or by marriage. But it would be wrong to ignore
the older, more established, and continuously expanding network tied to the Le Tellier
clan. Indeed, Colbert himself had graduated from that clientage, and the threads
between his network and that of his former patron are not as easy to separate as one
might think, especially in the early 1660s when that of the Colberts was still emerging. 180

177 See Colbert to du Terron, 6 October 1658, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 314,
announcing the transfer of an uncooperative administrator from the intendancy of Poitiers
and the appointment of a more favorable relative, even though this province reported to
secretary of state Le Tellier. See also Colbert to Mazarin, 26 November 1659 (ibid.,
402) and 8 December (ibid., 406). The latter was written to persuade the cardinal to
name as intendant at Moulines one who "ayt créance en moy pour faire les choses qui
regarderont le service de Vostre Eminence et l'avantage de ses sujets...."

178 See Charles Engrand, "Clients du Roi: Les Colbert et l'état (1661-1715)," Un
nouveaux Colbert, 91, on the appointment of intendants. Engrand says Colbert
controlled the nominations save those for the frontier provinces; Mousnier, Institutions
of France, 2: 155-56, says the same thing. It is unclear whether or not they mean just
those border provinces that were under the war minister or all frontier intendancies.
There also remains the question of those other, non-frontier provinces whose intendants
reported to the secretary of state for war. How much influence did the controller-general
exercise over their selection?

179 See Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 74 and n. 11, on Le Peletier de Souzy.

180 On the Le Tellier clientage, see André Corvisier, "Clientèles et fidélités dans
l'armée française aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," Les hommes, la guerre et la mort (Paris:
Economica, 1985), 191-214, and his Louvois, 130-38, which also points out that a
minister's influence on nominations was not strictly confined to those areas under his
official control. André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 90 n. 42, provides an example of how
kinship could cut across and complicate lines of clientage.
Nevertheless, it is possible to examine the intendant lists in order to trace Colbert’s fortification *imperium* as it developed in the 1660s.\footnote{A useful if not always accurate list of intendants can be found in Godard, *Intendants*, 518–40.}

The intendant of Provence generally reported to the foreign secretary, but in matters of fortifications he communicated with Colbert. This is explained in part by Colbert’s growing control over naval affairs, which caused him to concern himself with the defenses of such coastal sites as Toulon and Marseille, in the latter of which the king was keen on creating a strong citadel to announce his power both at home and abroad. In 1669, for instance, Baron d’Oppède, the provincial intendant, met with Clerville and the intendant des galères at Marseille, Nicolas Arnoul, to discuss the many building projects Colbert had underway for Toulon. Primary responsibility for fortifications in this generality, however, rested with the marine intendant, as will be discussed below.\footnote{Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois*, 1: 242; Louis XIV, *Mémoires for the Dauphin*, 45. For the 1669 conference, see Colbert’s letters to Arnoul quoted in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 3 pt. 1: 162-163 n., and to Oppède, ibid., 4: 46-47. Henri de Forbin Meynier, Baron d’Oppède, was provincial intendant at Aix from 1661 to 1671, and was frequently entrusted by Colbert with marine business. His son, Jean-Baptiste, was married to Colbert cousin (ibid., 2 pt. 1: 279 n. 3; 4: 116 n. 2). See also Colbert to Oppède, 27 February 1671, thanking him for going to Marseille to meet with Seignelay, who was returning from his "study tour" of Italy (ibid., 55). For a map of the various fortifications of this era, see Figure 10 at the end of this chapter, on p. 141 below.}

Colbert likewise assumed supervision over the fortifications of Brittany, another generality whose intendants reported to the foreign secretary. Brittany fitted into the grand naval and commercial scheme that was materializing in Colbert’s mind, and in 1663 he placed in Rennes as intendant his brother Charles Colbert de Croissy, whose career owed much to the protection of his older sibling.\footnote{For Croissy in Brittany, see Livet, *Intendance d’Alsace*, 346; Bernard Hulin and Françoise Hamon, *L’œuvre de Vauban et ses collaborateurs en Bretagne* (Quimper: Société Finistérienne d’Histoire et d’Archéologie, 1983), unnumbered first page in preface. See also the useful biographical sketch by Jean Bérenger, "Charles Colbert de Croissy,“ in Jean Kerhervé, François Roudaut, and Jean Tanguy, *La Bretagne en 1665 d’après le rapport de Colbert de Croissy* (Brest: Centre de Recherche Bretonne et}
Other provincial intendants along the coastal and mountain perimeters of the kingdom assisted Colbert with the fortifications in their generalities. For instance, in 1671 he instructed Guy Chamillart to visit the château at Cherbourg, draw up a plan for its repair, and secure estimates from reliable contractors, all so the minister could decide on what work was to be done that year and authorize its commencement before the onset of winter. Colbert additionally coordinated the fortification activities in Burgundy and Béarn with their provincial intendants. The intendant for the latter also had responsibility for the places of Blaye and Fort Médoc, in the Garonne estuary, and Château-Trompette in Bordeaux, the seat of his intendency of Guyenne, and on occasion he corresponded with Colbert on their upkeep and improvement.  

In Alsace, where French influence was growing based on the rather vague provisions of the Treaty of Westphalia, the intendant had reported to Sublet de Noyers and then to Le Tellier during the war years. In 1648 Alsace was reassigned to the foreign secretary. But the real power in Alsace belonged to Mazarin and his fidèle, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. From 1656 until 1663, the provincial intendant for Alsace was Croissy, and from 1663 until 1671, their cousin Charles Colbert de Saint-Marc. Both intendants communicated with Le Tellier on military matters for this unassimilated frontier region, but for the fortress building activity, they looked to their relative in Paris for direction and support.

Celtique, (1978), 99-28. Croissy was the younger brother of Jean-Baptiste Colbert; despite the ten years that separated them, they were close collaborators. In 1679 Croissy entered the Conseil d’en haut as minister for foreign affairs.

184For Cherbourg, see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 152v-153, and for the coast from Béarn to Bordeaux, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 7 n. 1, 11-12, 60 n. 1, 111-12, and Colbert to de Séve, 17 March and 25 August 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 57v-58 and 244v-245. For Béarn and Burgundy, see p. 72 above.

185Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 156-57, 175, 184-98, who observed, 193, that "Ces interventions du secrétaire d'État aux étrangers dans l’administration de l'Alsace...ne doivent pas faire illusion: l'administration réelle appartient à J.-B. Colbert, d’abord sous le couvert du Cardinal, puis comme intendant des finances siégeant au Conseil du Roi, enfin comme contrôleur général des finances." See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 323-24, for a letter of Colbert to Croissy, 20 January 1659, on the construction work at
The Three Bishoprics were often associated with Lorraine and Alsace as being on the road to the portes leading to and from Germany. Colbert's cousin and early patron in the war ministry, Jean Colbert de Saint-Pouange, was Le Tellier's premier commis, fellow laborer, and brother-in-law, and thus his loyal client; nonetheless, he was not completely hostile to the interests of the Colbert clan, although the increasing rivalry between Le Tellier and his former commissaire Jean-Baptiste Colbert complicated matters. Saint-Pouange held the intendency of both Lorraine and the Three Bishoprics, headquartered at Metz, from 1657 until 1661. Even though peace with the Duke of Lorraine reduced the intendant's hold over that province, the treaty arrangements were still incomplete in 1661 and the provisions of what had been agreed upon had to be carried out under French supervision. Thus, Colbert's brother Croissy, who already served in Alsace, joined his cousin in a dual intendency for Lorraine, which was being partially restored to the control of its duke. They apparently worked together in near perfect harmony, but while Saint-Pouanges reported to his patron and kinsman Le Tellier, who had troops in the area dismantling a major portion of the defenses of Nancy, Croissy dispatched letters both to Le Tellier, for whom he had worked in the past as an army intendant, and to Colbert. André inferred that Croissy had been assigned to help Saint-Pouanges on this mission in order to keep an eye on the latter, whose loyalty to the kinsman by marriage over that owed to the one by blood rendered him especially suspect. When Saint-Pouanges left Nancy in December 1661, the Duke of Lorraine was playing a more active role in the affairs of his duchy and so the French intendant's role was reduced accordingly; nevertheless, certain supervisory duties remained and Croissy took on this now attenuated intendency for Lorraine, combining it with service as intendant at Metz (May, 1661 to May, 1663). He continued to write Le Tellier, and presumably his brother, on the continuing wrangling with the duke over

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Brisach and Philipsbourg; as with all the letters of this era, he wrote in the capacity of Mazarin's agent. See ibid., 5: 1-3 and 5-8 for letters of Colbert to Croissy in the early 1660s, then passim for subsequent letters to their cousin Saint-Marc. Croissy was intendant in Alsace from 1656 to 1663. On Croissy in Alsace, see Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, Livre II, and especially 175 and 184-94 for details of his intendency.
the details of this restoration. Croissy was succeeded at Metz by his brother’s client Jean-Paul de Choisy, who held the post until 1673.  

Colbert’s control of fortifications also extended from the Channel, along the frontier with the Spanish Netherlands and through intendancies that were under two other secretaries of state. Artois, conquered from the Spanish between 1639 and 1648 and only officially ceded to the French crown in 1659, was administered jointly with Picardy from Amiens. This intendant received his commission for Picardy from secretary of state La Vrillière and for Artois from the war secretary. Nevertheless, it was Colbert who was charged with the fortifications of Picardy. The intendancy of neighboring Soissons was also under the care of Colbert. Although the intendant at Amiens from April 1663 to 1664 and at Soissons from May 1664 to 1666 was Honoré de Courtin, a Le Tellier client (who also controlled Dunkirk, a part of Maritime Flanders, from 1663 to 1665), these intendancies soon fell to Croissy: Soissons from 1666, along with Amiens and possibly "Flandre maritime" (which included such places near the coast as Bergues and Furnes) until the end of 1667 or into 1668. Paul Barrillon d’Amoncourt, a protégé of Le Tellier, regained Amiens for his patron from January 1668 until the summer of 1672, but after that date, Amiens was assigned to Colbert’s créature Pierre Rouillé, although Maritime Flanders remained a separate intendancy under Louvois until the end of the century.  

For Lorraine and the Three Bishoprics, see Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 229-35, where he notes that Croissy was commissioned for the latter on 10 May 1661 as "intendant de la justice, police et finances, vivres et fortifications..." (231). For Lorraine, see André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 88-99.

For lists of generalities and élections, see Mirot, Manuel de Géographie, 2: 249, 251-52. On intendants, consult Godard, Intendants, 521, 528, 539. On Croissy, see note 183 above, as well as Jean Bérenger, "Charles Colbert de Croissy," in Conseil du Roi, 156-60, and Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 165, 176 n., 222, who notes that Croissy’s service as an army intendant to Turenne during the war of Devolution did not transform itself into service as intendant of an occupied area at the end of the campaign. Perhaps the confusion over Croissy’s service in Flanders, as noted by Baxter, is due to Bérenger’s failure to differentiate between Flanders and Flandre maritime, or to the possibility that Croissy never actually served as intendant in Flandre maritime.
Champagne, actually a collection of important fortresses along the border, also ostensibly under the foreign secretary. Choisy was aided by the engineer Brioys, who had served Colbert in the past gathering geographical data on this region.

Even though Colbert’s communications with all the intendants in frontier provinces touched on fortifications at some time or another, certain of these intendants served as his primary link with the engineers and other fortification personnel stationed on the periphery of the realm. Alsace was one such province. Even after the departure of Croissy and Saint-Marc, Colbert tried to operate through the new intendant Poncet de la Rivière, who took charge of the province in 1671, but the minister spent most of his time mediating the often acrimonious jurisdictional disputes between the intendant, who was Louvois’s créature and Clerville, who served the controller-general. As already noted, in 1673 Alsace and Lorraine were traded away by Pomponne, who recognized Louvois’s de facto control over these provinces; the same happened in the Three Bishoprics, finally traded in 1679.

The other provinces in which Colbert continued to act primarily through the provincial intendant can be determined with the help of a list for a circular letter issued from the fortification bureaucracy of Seignelay in 1685. It indicates the administrative head of each of the areas under Seignelay’s care. Charles Faucon, Sir de Ris, provincial

188 It included such old frontier posts as Rocroi and Mézières, places won during the previous reign (e.g., Sedan from the rebellious Duke of Bouillon in 1642), additions from the Spanish holdings in Luxembourg in 1659 (e.g., Montmédy, Ivoi [or Yvoi], Thionville, Marville), and places taken in the 1630s and reluctantly but formally ceded by the Duke of Lorraine in 1661 (e.g., Dun-sur-Meuse, Jametz, Moyenvic, Stenay).

189 For Choisy’s posts, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 2 pt. 1: 12 n. 1; 2 pt. 2: 866 n.; Godard, Intendants, 527-28 and 532. Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 59, 160, 177-78, records echoes of his activities in these provinces. The intendency of the frontier of Champagne appears to date from 1653 and was amalgamated with the Champagne intendency at Châlons only in 1692-93 (Godard, Intendants, 527). See Colbert to Choisy, 14 February 1673 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 67v), on "Sirk, Moyenvic, Marsal, Metz et Verdun," and 11 April, which also lists the places in his charge (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 75-76).

190 For the 1673 and 1679 transfers, see note 147 above.
intendant at Bordeaux from 1673 to 1686, was responsible for fortifications at Blaye and Château-Trompette on the Garonne, Bayonne and Hendaye on the coast near the Spanish border, and the inland places of the Pyrenees. Nicolas-Auguste de Harlay, S' de Bonneuil, intendant for Burgundy from 1683 to 1688, supervised the work at Auxonne. But as this list reveals and earlier evidence corroborates, it was not just through these provincial intendants that Colbert and later his son administered their fortifications organization. For the rest of this bureaucratic amalgamation of rather disparate elements, they relied on two specialized types of intendants: intendants de la Marine and intendants des fortifications.¹⁹¹

The Intendants de la Marine

To understand the naval reforms of Colbert, one must return to their antecedents during the ministry of Richelieu. As we have already seen, the cardinal struggled to subordinate the various admiralties to his will and that of the king he served by abolishing these ancient charges and having himself named Grand-maître, chef et surintendant général de la navigation et du Commerce de France. As along the land frontiers and in the rebellious provinces, so along the sea frontiers he employed assorted commissaires with limited terms to carry out his orders and keep an eye on the ports, out-fitting of fleets, and independent-minded naval commanders. In this as in so many other areas, Richelieu drew on the precedents of Henri IV’s fertile reign, and made more frequent use of these intendants de la marine as the years passed, especially after 1640, but as with so much else he began, it was his successor, Mazarin, who had the luxury of consolidating these initiatives after ending war with the Empire and surviving the Frondes. It was only in 1659 that one of these intendants de la marine, Louis Testard de la Guette, came to be attached to a particular port, that at Toulon. Within two years he was given real power to control the royal arsenal at that Mediterranean post.

¹⁹¹For this list dated February 1685, see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 14v-15 and Appendix C below. All the administrators listed are referred to as “intendants,” but without further specification.
Unlike the provincial intendants, whose evolution led them to supervise existing administrative structures, the intendants de la marine, inherited from Richelieu and developed by Colbert, came to administer a new bureaucratic creation. Colbert saw them as the chief managerial link between Paris and the maritime infrastructure he was attempting to forge from existing and new elements along the coastlines of France. During the reign of Louis XIV, marine intendancies were established at Toulon (1659), Marseille (1665, known there as intendant des galères et du commerce), Brouage (1666), Rochefort (1669, replacing Brouage), Brest (1674), Le Havre (1680), and Dunkirk (1683). The marine activity at each port was centered on an arsenal, which was a collection of workshops and a magazine for the fabrication, amassing, and storage of gunpowder, anchors, sails, ropes, and other materials necessary to war at sea; it also contained a construction yard for building and outfitting ships. In addition, certain arsenals served as launching points and supply links for overseas military operations and the activities of fleets and other warships sailing in the service of the king (e.g., Toulon for Mediterranean operations, and Brest, backed up by Rochefort, for the Atlantic and the Channel). Some, such as Lorient, were intended primarily as magnets of commerce.

The intendant de la marine came to have jurisdiction over nearly all matters within the arsenal, possessed of powers much like those of the provincial intendants, and frequently came into conflict with officials of the surrounding jurisdictions as they sought to extend their powers beyond the immediate confines of the port.  

Colbert envisioned these specialized intendants as the primary agents of his program of naval aggrandizement. In 1673, in a set of maxims for his son and designated

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192 Claude Aboucaya, *Les intendants de la marine sous l’ancien régime* (Gap: Louis-Jean, 1959), 21-34 on origins, and 39-86 on his assistants, technical activities, judicial powers, and administrative functions. Also consult Mémain, *Marine de guerre*, 361-81, on marine intendants. Taillemitte, *Colbert, Secrétaire d’État*, 41 n. 2, provides dates on the intendancies. Konvitz, *Cities and the Sea*, 73-147, details the origins, creation, and growth of Brest, Lorient, Rochefort, and Sète (Cette), new port cities conceived and planned by Colbert and his associates from the mid-1660s when they found the existing ports of the kingdom to be inadequate for their ambitious naval program. See Geoffrey Symcox, "The Navy of Louis XIV," in *Reign of Louis XIV*, 127-33, on Colbert’s overall plan.
successor Seignelay, he warned "de ne vous jamais servir pour les affaires de marine des intendans des provinces sans un extrême nécessité." The reason was simple: "ils n'ont aucune dépendence de vous, en cas qu'ils agissent mal, il ne vous sera possible d'y rémedier." Although Colbert himself had a great deal of influence over the appointment of most of the provincial intendants, it was due to his role of controller-general, and not the venal office of secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and navy, which his son held in survivance. Colbert reminded his son that naval affairs had long been entrusted to "commissaires de marine qui faisoient les fonctions des intendans, excepté qu'ils n'avoient aucun pouvoir concernant la justice," but now, thanks to an innovation of the past "trente ou quarante ans," the marine secretary could enforce his will through intendants de la marine who were equipped with powers of "la justice, police et finances." Thus, he urged Seignelay to rely on and foster these newer creations, seeing that they were filled only with "gens lettrés et qui soyent de bonne famille." It was especially critical that these fully empowered marine administrators remain in the "quatre ports et arsenaux principaux": Toulon and Marseille in the Mediterranean, and Rochefort and Brest on the Atlantic coast.  

These intendants de la marine quickly gained control of the fortifications of their arsenal and the port proper, but the control of the landward defenses of the city and the outlying districts was sometimes less clear, and in fact might rest with another authority. Clément noted this division and implied from his example of Dunkirk that all such control of coastal installations was partitioned between the secretaries of state for war and for the marine. Mémain stated that prior to 1676, coastal fortifications were not under the control of the naval secretary, and contended further that Colbert and Seignelay  

furent peu portés à créer des places fortes qui auraient amené, en vertu du régime existant alors, [the Le Telliers] à se mêler des affaires de la Marine. Cela dura  

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jusqu'en 1676, époque à laquelle toutes les places maritimes passèrent au secrétaire d'État de la Marine.  

But Mémain's source of information on this alleged 1676 alteration and his reasoning as to why a partition was the case prior to that year is unclear. In addition, his own discussion of the work on fortifications, along with Colbert's letters to du Terron in 1674, and the commission of the engineer Sainte-Colombe, seem to argue that the marine intendant at Rochefort was the primary royal official responsible for fortifications at the port and on the neighboring islands. For instance, when the marine minister wrote to his cousin early in 1674 to avert him of the coming of Vauban to examine the defensive works on the Isle de Ré, he began his letter by referring to "les places fortes de vostre département." This and subsequent missives make it clear that du Terron was intended to take the lead in these preparations, and that this was the normal administrative procedure, even though the marine intendant was to act in concert with the Count de Gadagne, governor of Aunis, on matters such as the use of the corvée to complete the defensive works and the coordination of all security efforts.

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194Quoted from Mémain, Marine de guerre, 216, who offered similar contentions about the control of fortifications, 230 and 433. See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 1, n. to n. 1, for comments he quoted and accepted from Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 242 n. 1.

195See Mémain, Marine de guerre, chap. 9, "Travaux pour la défense de l'arsenal," 215-47, wherein it is clear that du Terron and his successors were the main agents in fortifying Rochefort and the various nearby islands, including the Isle d'Oléron and the Isle de Ré.

196See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 93-107, for several letters from Colbert to du Terron.

197The 18 August 1675 commission for the engineer Sainte-Colombe made it clear that his responsibilities embraced fortifications along the coast of Saintonge, Aunis, and Poitou, including the large islands of the area, and that he did so under the supervision of Demuin, marine intendant at La Rochelle (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 441-42).

198Colbert to du Terron, 15 January 1674, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 94.

199Ibid.
Mémain makes much of du Terron's clashes with Gadagne, who was vocal in his contempt for the marine, suggesting that the governor's antipathy was a reflection of the natural disposition of all governors, whether of provinces or of fortresses, and the attitude of Louvois, their master. But governors, who commanded the troops locally garrisoned, as well as militia of various sorts raised in the province, were named by the king, who usually chose them from the ranks of the great nobility of the sword. Their charges were bought and sold, and the king usually had to reimburse the holder if he wanted to rid himself of a particularly incompetent or uncooperative governor of a province or a fortress. He also tried to win them over with the enticements of offices, lands, and other royal favors, much as Richelieu had practiced decades earlier. In addition, the governors reported to the secretary of state charged with the supervision of the province in which their charge was located. They were not, as Mémain implied, direct agents of the war minister.

Finally, the king's letter to Gadagne in 1674, instructing him to visit the Isle de Ré and work in unison with Vauban and du Terron, also stated that Louis had written to the naval intendant to "faire commencer aussyost et sans aucun retardement les ouvrages que led[ite] S' de Vauban aura resolu...," adding further instructions to the governor about the preparations to garrison the works once they were completed. It is worth

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200 See Mémain, Marine de guerre, 221, 374-75, on du Terron's clashes with Gadagne.

201 On governors, see Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 469-80. Joseph Bergin, Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 80-94, discusses the cardinal's efforts to tame governors, as well as the governorships he himself possessed in this region. Isambert, Recueil des lois, 18: 15, prints two ordonnances of December 1661 authorizing royal infantry to join with the troops who normally garrisoned of the king's fortresses. The latter were under the command of the governor of the place and of the province. This measures tended to bring the governors under greater obedience to the king and subject them to increasing interference from his war secretary. See André, Organisation de l'armée, 549-65, on Le Tellier's creeping but indirect influence over governors of fortresses.

202 Louis XIV to Gadagne, 15 January 1674, and an accompanying letter from Colbert, are found in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 5v-6v. Colbert to Gadagne, 11
noting that this letter, as well as one the same day to the governor of the Fort de la Prée, Sté de Launay,203 both came from Colbert’s department of fortifications, and not from the war minister or from the secretary of state for foreign affairs, who supervised the Aunis region.204

June 1674, reinforces the impression that the governor’s primary job was command of the troops, even though he was urged to continue work on a retrenchment and to place good troops in it (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 110-11).

203Louis XIV to de Launay, 15 January 1674, and an accompanying letter from Colbert, are found in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 6v-7v.

204See the letter from Colbert to du Terron, 6 November 1658, acknowledging his work on the fortifications at Château-Trompette and Château de Beauvoir (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 315-17). Mémain himself noted du Terron’s work on the fortifications at Brouage in the Aunis prior to 1661, when he served there as Mazarin’s agent. Mémain says that this region was placed under Lionne, “secrétaire d’État de la marine,” when the cardinal died in 1661, and that Brouage and La Rochelle “étant places de guerres et ayant garnison,” this province had heretofore reported to Le Tellier. Mémain’s error appears to be a combination of misinformation about governors and forgetfulness of the fact that Le Tellier controlled the Aunis as part of his generality of Poitou, which he supervised as a secretary of state, until it came under du Terron’s control in the 1650s. In other words, he mistook Le Tellier’s control of the area in his role as one of the four secretaries of state for an authority based on his role as war minister, which seems to be a common mistake made by historians attempting to sort out the administrative muddle of this era. See Mémain, ibid., 375-77, 383-85, 390-93 (he repeats the errors on the war secretary, 92-93). Beik, Absolutism and Society, 48-49, 183-84, provides a glimpse of the role of the governor and his interaction with the provincial intendant in another province. As to Rousset and Clément’s use of the example of Dunkirk to argue a split of control over coastal fortifications (see note 153, 194, 204 above), it should be remembered that Dunkirk, although a naval installation, was part of the intendency of Flandre maritime from 1662, and from that date reported to secretary of state Le Tellier. Most of the intendants for that province during this period were Le Tellier clients (see Godard, Intendants, 528). As noted by André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 111, since its purchase from Charles II in 1662, Dunkirk had been under the intendant at Amiens (responsible for Picardy and Artois), who at that moment was Colbert de Saint-Pouange, Le Tellier’s brother-in-law. Le Tellier himself sent an engineer and an artillery expert to see what work was to be done. Although important naval construction was undertaken at Dunkirk, it received its own marine intendant only in June 1683, even though it had long had a commissaire général to represent marine interests (Taillemite, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 41 and n. 2). Thus, Rousset and Clément chose an exceptional example that only created confusion when
Pierre Arnoul served as "intendant de la justice, police, finances, Marine, et des fortifications et places maritimes au département de Rochefort," according to the commission given him on 10 July 1684, even though he had been in Rochefort as de facto intendant for the previous year and one half. He was an experienced hand with fortifications who had earned Vauban’s respect, and he had visited and regulated posts from Bayonne to the Isle de Ré during 1681 and 1682. At Rochefort, Arnoul acted more and more like a provincial intendant. His successor Bégon also did not receive the title of provincial intendant, but this was perhaps due in part to his own extensive credit with the king and the pressing naval activities of the War of the League of Augsburg, which kept him otherwise occupied. Nonetheless, the trend was clear, and in 1694 a new generality was created centered at La Rochelle, finally vindicating Arnoul’s aggressiveness, recognizing the growing power of the marine intendant over that region, and officially and unequivocally investing him with clear title to both intendancies and the supervision of fortifications.205

In Provence, the combination of responsibilities for marine affairs and fortifications was of longstanding and pre-dated the establishment of permanent marine intendants. From 1640 to 1643, Nicolas Arnoul, father of the Pierre Arnoul discussed above, served Richelieu and Sublet de Noyers as intendant des galères et des fortifications for Provence, stationed at Toulon. Nicolas had labored with Sublet as chief commis when the latter had been occupied with the fortifications of Picardy prior to becoming secretary of state for war. Young Arnoul had become a specialist in matters of fortifications, serving as Sublet’s agent among the fortresses of Picardy, Champagne, and Lorraine on a number of occasions, and being charged with the conduct of the siege of Arras in 1640. From there, he was sent south by his two protectors to deal with matters in Provence, where he was an aggressive administrator. But in 1643, Nicolas Arnoul returned to private life when Mazarin preferred Le Tellier over him as Sublet’s

205Mémain, Marine de guerre, 375-79, 441-42, describes this evolution.
replacement as secretary of state for war. When he returned to royal service in 1665, Arnoul did so as a client of Le Tellier's rival Colbert, with the title of "intendant de justice, police et finances des fortifications de Provence et de Piémont et des galères de France," and took up headquarters at Marseille. Colbert wrote approvingly to Arnoul when the minister learned that the intendant had deputized his son Pierre to work "aux réparations des places fortes de Provence"; nevertheless, he urged haste in Pierre's departure because "il n'a pas trop de temps pour visiter tous les lieux où vous devez l'envoyer." In 1673 Pierre Arnoul succeeded his father as intendant des galères at Marseille, and in 1675 was transferred to Toulon as intendant de la Marine du Levant et des fortifications.

In arsenals without a marine intendant, a commissaire général acted under the authority of that of the closest major port. In 1631 one each was established at the ports of Brouage, Brest, and Le Havre, and Colbert added a commissaire général at Dunkirk in 1669, which was entrusted to Gravier, and another at le Havre in 1671, assigned to Hubert. These commissioners supervised fortifications as well as port facilities. They

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206See Gaston Rambert, Nicolas Arnoul, intendant des galères à Marseille (1665-1674) (Marseille: Éditions de Provincia, 1931), 7-17, 29-31. In a letter to Colbert on 28 November 1665, Nicolas mentioned having worked with the famous engineers Le Camus and Argencourt for ten years, and noted "je me souviens encore de leurs maximes et j'ai vu quelques sieges..." (ibid., 212). This useful work contains generous selections from over one hundred and fifty letters from Nicolas Arnoul to Colbert concerning with the construction at Marseille between 1665 and 1673. On both Arnouls, see Mémair, Marine de guerre, 436-39 on Nicolas and the rest of the chapter on Pierre. It should be recalled that until the 1660s, the official dispatches and other paperwork for the marine du Ponant was under the care of the secretary of state for war.

207Colbert to Nicolas Arnoul, 16 August 1669 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 1: 153).

208See Colbert to Pierre Arnoul, 12 February 1674 (ibid., 5: 96-98), which lists the following as under his care: Antibes, Fort d'Antibes, Isle Sainte-Marguerite, Saint-Honorat, Saint-Tropez, Toulon, Fort Saint-Jean de Marseille, Isles de Marseille, and Tour de Bouc. See also Colbert to Pierre Arnoul, 9 June 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 169v-170, requesting a report on the state of the places in his charge, and Louis XIV to Arnoul, 16 April 1682, ibid., vol. 11, fol. 92v, in which Arnoul, now at Rochefort, was referred to as "Intendant des fortifications de lad[ite] Isle de Ré."
were assisted by commissaires ordinaires and contrôleurs de la Marine, whose responsibilities were largely the same until Colbert assigned the latter exclusively to concluding contracts and accounting for money and materials. All the contrôleurs of the ports of the Levant were supervised by a contrôleur-général de la Marine, a post occupied by Léger from at least 1661, but, in spite of a short-lived commission to Pierre Arnoul in 1672, there does not appear to have been such an official for the Ponant.209

Another group playing a role in this system of arsenals and especially in matters of their defense were the trésoriers de la Marine. These officials disbursed the funds that were the lifeblood of all the activities Colbert and his collaborators were undertaking along the coasts. They were particularly important for any work related to fortifications, since building activity, especially in the remote regions where new ports were being created almost ex nihilo, was a greedy consumer of royal revenues. By 1605, the trésoriers de la Marine had become venal offices, victims of the crown’s constant penury. In addition, a number of offices of commissaires and contrôleurs de la Marine had been created or sold by the Grand-Maître de la Navigation when that office had slipped from royal control under Richelieu’s successors. Colbert, like Le Tellier, was a vigorous opponent of venality among royal commissioners. He labored throughout the 1660s to end the sale of offices and repurchase those alienated by his predecessors. Since he enjoyed more direct access to the financial resources of the kingdom than did his colleague at the war ministry, he was able to achieve earlier and more complete

209Mémain, Marine de guerre, 466-501, on commissaires and contrôleurs; he also gives details of the careers of several of the most important. Named contrôleur général de la marine de Ponant, réparations et fortifications des places maritimes..." in April of 1672--perhaps to match the similar office already in existence for the Levant--Pierre Arnoul was given an accounting supervisory role over all the coastline from the Pyrenees to Dunkirk, but Mémain doubted whether this ever meant much operationally since young Arnoul was posted to Marseille the following year when his father was promoted to the naval intendancy at Toulon (ibid., 493-94).
success since by the end of the decade only the trésoriers de la Marine remained as venal officers.  

A dispute settled by an arrêt du Conseil of 8 April 1680 sheds some further light on the battle over control of fortifications, and adds to the case against Mémain’s contention that there was a split supervision between the war and marine secretaries prior to 1676. The trésoriers des fortifications complained to the king that the trésoriers de la Marine had usurped their functions for marine fortifications by receiving the expenditures and receipts for these installations and dealing directly with the royal treasury. They argued that this constituted an out-and-out usurpation, accomplished since 1661 by the naval treasurers illegally acting in the role of provincial treasurers. These charges were countered by the trésoriers de la Marine, who noted, along with arguments in their defense based on past letters of commission, that they had been functioning as treasurers for maritime fortifications for a long period of time, and to deprive them now of this duty would be unjust. The marine treasurers carried the day in 1680, but they failed in their own efforts to wrench control from the trésorier des Galères for the monies destined to the fortifications of Provence. This episode suggests, however, that the fortifications of the coastline of the kingdom were not under the control of the secretary of state for war—unless in a province directly under his supervision—but rather were connected with the expanding administrative empire of Colbert.  

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210 Legohérel, Trésoriers généraux, 13-176, on the origins and functions of these officials up to 1691. See Taillemitte, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 25-46, for further details on marine administration, including venality. He and Mémain (Marine de guerre, 492-93) argue that, with the exception of the trésoriers, venality was ended in the marine administrative service early in Colbert’s tenure as secretary. This would appear to apply to any of the venal fortification offices that may have been created for Provence during the previous reign. See also Aboucaya, Intendants de la Marine, 43, on measures to end venality of offices.

211 Legohérel, Trésoriers généraux, 59-61.
The Intendants des fortifications

The intendants des fortifications whose administrative traces Augoyat uncovered for the year 1645, were not, as suggested earlier, part of the administrative machinery used by Le Tellier to govern the fortifications under his care, but they were certainly used by Colbert. On 6 September 1658, Colbert sent Mazarin a missive from La Fère, a fortress in Picardy, assuring his patron that he would be pleased were he able to see it himself, yet cautioning the cardinal that some work remained unachieved, which caused him to worry aloud. The faithful Colbert reported that these delays had resulted from a lack of funds, as reported to him by Pierre I Chastillon, the intendant des fortifications for Picardy and Champagne; he urged Mazarin to send the needed sums without delay because both funds and good weather would soon run out. A year later, Colbert wrote to Mazarin again about funds for La Fère, but his letter does not directly mention Chastillon.212

Offices, commissions, jurisdictions, responsibilities—all remained fluid in the seventeenth-century, especially before the greater bureaucratic maturation brought about by Louis XIV’s later ministers settled many but by no means all such issues. Thus, it is difficult to say just exactly how many intendants des fortifications there were in 1661. Their precise duties are easier to approximate, if we extrapolate from Le Camus’s 1645 letters of provision, but delimiting the areas under their care presents problems. Clément marked Chastillon’s jurisdiction as “Picardy et Champagne” in one note (for 1658), but in another added Artois, Flanders, Hainaut, Luxembourg, and the Three Bishoprics (for 1662), and later listed only Picardy, Champagne, and Lorraine (for 1683, when the office was sold to Thomas-Adolphe Renart de Fuchsamberg, Count de Moncy).213

212Colbert to Mazarin, 6 September 1658 and 1 October 1659 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 310-11 and 383). According to Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 60 n. 1, Pierre I Chastillon was styled on a 1653 document as “Con. et ingénieur du roi, ayant la conduite et direction des travaux et fortifications de Champagne, ensuite de la commission expresse de S.M.,” not yet holding a venal intendancy.

213For Chastillon’s jurisdiction, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 311 n. 1 (for 1658); 5: 4 n. 1 and 66 n. 1.
An earlier intendant des fortifications, Louis Chantereau-Lefebvre, president of the trésoriers de France at Soissons, had been given the responsibility of the places of Picardy by Louis XIII, perhaps in the 1620s or 1630s. In 1631, characterized by Richelieu as "homme intelligent et qui a les mains nettes," Chantereau-Lefebvre was sent to aid Marshal Toiras on the pressing work at Pignerol; there, he was to "distribuera fidellement l’argent à mesure que les fortifications s’advanceront." By the 1640s he had become intendant des finances in the Duchies of Bar and Lorraine, then occupied by French troops, where he assisted in the demolition of certain fortifications in the duchy. It is not clear if his post in Picardy was of much duration or if it was an office or a commission. Since Chantereau-Lefebvre died 2 July 1658, it was perhaps at that moment that Chastillon succeeded to his charge, if indeed this was the same office.

What can we glean from contemporary correspondence? In late October 1662 Le Tellier sent Chastillon to the recently purchased port of Dunkirk to gather technical information on its fortifications, but there is no indication that his role was other than that of a consulting engineer. At the end of the next month, Colbert also wrote Chastillon about the work at Dunkirk, urging him to apply himself "avec votre zèle ordinaire" to its fortifications and harbor, the latter of which the minister hoped to render "un des meilleurs ports de tout l’Océan." Nevertheless, this letter, in which Colbert

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215Richelieu to Toiras, 25 October 1631, and a letter of the same year dated simply November, in Richelieu, Lettres, 4: 206-07 and 211-12. He is called "Lefebvre" in these letters.

216This scholar and friend of savants developed a deep interest in the history of Lorraine, as evidenced by the publication of several tomes of historical research. See Bonney, Political Change, 407. Richelieu to Léon Bouthillier, 18 August 1634, instructs the secretary of state to write to "s’ Lefebvre" on the pulling down of various ramparts in Lorraine (Richelieu, Lettres, 4: 593).

217On Le Tellier and Chastillon, see André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 111-12.

218Colbert to Chastillon, 26 November 1662 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 4-5).
announced that he was sending along another consultant, a Dutch engineer from
Amsterdam, reinforces the impression that Chastillon had only a tenuous authority over
the fortifications in this new acquisition. Moreover, Chastillon’s proposal was ultimately
rejected as paltry. 19 Clerville was then called in to make another proposal, for the
Chevalier’s charge of commissaire général had been given him the previous year, and
according to Vauban’s later analysis, it had been created to “suppléer au défaut” of the
post of intendant général des fortifications, whose occupant at that moment was
apparently in Vauban’s mind when he issued this evaluation over a decade later. 220 But
Clerville’s recommendations were also rejected, and nothing much was done until several
years later. 221 Before it had been decided that his exertions at Dunkirk were a failure,
Colbert urged Chastillon to “aller reprendre votre travail dans les autres villes” the
moment obligations at Dunkirk permitted; the minister further ordered him to “demeurer
dans les places” during December and January, and then make a trip on the river Loire
to examine the levies so he could advise Colbert on the appropriate measures to order
for their care. 222 The following year, the minister wrote an admiralty official regarding
the work at Dunkirk, saying that Chastillon would tell him about matters “de vive voix”
when he arrived. 223 In 1664, Chastillon reported to Colbert on his visit of the coast from
Dunkirk to the mouth of the Seine in search of good harbors. 224

19 For Chastillon and Clerville’s failures at Dunkirk, see Maurice Millon, Les
Fortifications de Dunkerque à travers les âges, 987-1945 (Saint-Omer: Imp.

220 For Vauban’s remarks, see Directeur général, 23, and for Clerville’s commission,
see note 162 above.

221 Millon, Fortifications de Dunkerque, 1: 89-90.

222 Colbert to Chastillon, 26 November 1662 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 5).

223 Colbert to Nacquart, 24 April 1663 (ibid., 2 pt. 2: 418 n. 2-419).

224 Chastillon [sic] to Colbert, 26 December 1664, G. B. Depping, ed.,
Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV, Collection de documents
But after 1663, in the letters of Colbert published by Clément, there is no trace of Pierre I Chastillon, who died 10 December 1668, nor of his nephew Pierre II, who officially succeeded to this office. In fact, on 4 May 1669, when Pierre II Chastillon received the provisions for his late uncle’s office, a letter from Colbert written that very day reveals that the workings of the venal office no longer pleased him and it was his intention to by-pass it and its new occupant.223

Writing 4 May to his relative Chertemps226 to discuss his new commission for the fortifications of Picardy and Champagne, Colbert acknowledged that “Vous avez raison de dire que l’ordre qui a été observé jusqu’à présent n’est pas bon, et qu’il est nécessaire de le changer.” It seems that, in addition to allowing the construction work to languish, Chastillon had left the paperwork in a confusion; perhaps the peripatetic nature of his office had brought this condition about, for Colbert further ordered Chertemps straightaway to

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\text{establir quelqu’un à Calais pour prendre soin de l’exécution de toutes choses, afin que, dans vos visites, vous puissiez connaître si lesdits ouvrages sont bien faits, de bonne qualité, et si les devis et marchés auront été bien suivis.}\]

Either Chastillon’s death had revealed this disorder or it had finally made it possible for the minister to do something about it. It is important to recall that in March 1669 Colbert had finally purchased the long-coveted charge of secretary of state, which gave him control of the Maison du Roi and a newly-constituted naval department. This

223 Colbert to Chertemps, 4 May 1669 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 9-11). Pierre II’s letters of provision are dated by Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 61. Even before the death of Pierre I Chastillon, Vauban had asked Louvois’s permission to hire one of Chastillon’s former assistants who was proficient at geometry as well as construction (Vauban to Louvois, 9 June 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 9-10).

226 See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 477, for this branch of the Colbert clan, but Clément was unclear as to which Chertemps this is, implying that he was a certain Chertemps du Mousset, perhaps a commis in Colbert’s surintendancy of bâtiments in 1664 (ibid., 5: 453 and 458) and also a trésorier in the Bureau of Finances at Châlons by 1681, if not involved there as early as 1663 (ibid., 4: 19 and 519).

227 Colbert to Chertemps, 4 May 1669 (ibid., 5: 9).

228 Ibid.
marked a new beginning for his bureaucratic endeavors in a number of areas, including in the management of paperwork. Now he could expedite the king’s orders in his own name and did not have to rely on routing all official correspondence, including his own, through a secretary of state.\textsuperscript{298} Henceforth, fortifications matters—along with the Canal du Midi, \textit{ponts et chaussées}, and mines—were consolidated in a single registry of outgoing letters and orders.\textsuperscript{299} It is not without significance that the very first folio of this new registry, which began on 4 May 1669, is Colbert’s letter to Chertemps on the new arrangements for the fortifications of Picardy and Champagne.\textsuperscript{300}

These administrative changes must be seen against a background in which there was an increasing likelihood that, despite the efforts of Lionne and Colbert to deflect them in other directions, Louis XIV and his equally bellicose young war minister would have the war they craved to teach the upstart Dutch a lesson. This would require that the frontier be in a state of readiness as soon as possible, for the king had made his intentions clear late in 1669 when he and Louvois had forced an augmentation of the fortifications budget for the coming year, in flagrant violation of the controller-general’s more conservative budget projections.\textsuperscript{301}

In seeking a new administrative arrangement based on a more pliant \textit{commissaire} rather than an \textit{officier}, Colbert was perhaps influenced by the example of Louvois’s reliance on the provincial intendant Paul Barrillon d’Armoncourt\textsuperscript{302} to supervise his fortifications in Artois; yet, even though Picardy was also under Barrillon, Colbert was

\textsuperscript{298}Taillemite, \textit{Colbert, Secrétaire d’État}, 19-21.

\textsuperscript{299}See note 143 on p. 77 above.

\textsuperscript{300}Colbert to Chertemps, 4 May 1669 (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5:11).

\textsuperscript{301}For the war fever and infighting of this period, see Soanino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 70-93.

\textsuperscript{302}For a brief indication of the career of Barrillon (or Barillon, as Clément spells his name), who was ambassador to London in 1677, see Michel Antoine, \textit{Le gouvernement et l’administration sous Louis XV: Dictionnaire biographique} (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1978), 19.
probably reluctant to turn to him since he was a client of Louvois. Whatever the case, it was clear that poor workmanship and fraud had abounded under Chastillon, and that Chertemps was to be his kinsman's instrument to put an end to such practices. Colbert told Chertemps that while "il faut écouter tout le monde et particulièrement les principaux officiers qui doivent défendre les places...," he intended the civilian to rule the military, regarding the soldiers as each too tied to the needs of the particular stronghold at which he served. Colbert urged Chertemps to educate himself on the métier to which he was entering. Despite whatever experience he had had as a commis assisting Colbert with the supervision of the royal buildings and their augmentation, Chertemps was a fortifications novice. Nevertheless, he had the confidence of his relative in Paris, and that was what recommended him the most for this crucial position.\(^{234}\)

Subsequent letters from the capital indicate that a new structure was being crafted by the minister and his agent on the frontier. Chertemps was to establish his own "personnes fidèles et inteligentes" in each place or small cluster of nearby places in order to oversee the work, and Colbert recommended a sub-direction for the posts of Calais, Arènes, Boulogne, Mothulin, and Montreuil, to be headquartered at Calais. This formula was to be applied throughout his charge so that the whole was ultimately divided into four or five smaller "départemens."\(^{235}\) He was further instructed to find himself an able engineer to second his efforts,\(^{236}\) and to keep a watchful eye on the trésorier de

\(^{234}\)See Colbert to Chertemps, 21 May 1669, for further exhortations to master the technicalities, especially those of a maritime nature (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 13). This letter and a letter of 12 July (ibid., 5: 14-15) make it clear that he also had responsibility for Saint-Quentin and Rocroi, the latter place being just across the provincial border in Champagne.

\(^{235}\)Colbert to Chertemps, 21 May 1669 (ibid., 5: 13). In keeping with the established practice inherited from Sully and before, these sub-directors were probably still called contrôleurs des fortifications. See p. 123 below for more details on these contrôleurs des fortifications.

\(^{236}\)Colbert to Chertemps, 4 May 1669 (ibid., 10).
fortifications and his commis. But above all, Colbert warned Chertemps to see personally to the initiation and regulation of all work, surveillance of all financial accounts, and execution of the detailed instructions he would receive from the minister on a regular basis. It was also the responsibility of Chertemps to conclude all contracts with the various entrepreneurs at the places under his care. There is no indication that this important authority was delegated to any of his sub-directors. Colbert admonished him as well to apprise him of the work on the frontier by a steady stream of precise and informative letters that would be "si clair que je puisse le connostre dans mon cabinet comme si j’estois present sur les lieux avec vous, et que je puisse porter le tout au Roy avec la mesme clarte." 

Letters were not enough, however, and so Chertemps was instructed to visit all the places under his care and then come to Paris in November to report personally to the minister. After they worked together to regulate the contracts for the efforts of the coming year, Chertemps was to return to Picardy and scurry about to each work site to arrange matters with contractors and begin amassing building materials so as to be ready for the arrival of good weather. Chertemps must have been a bit overwhelmed by the enormity of the minister’s demands and his own technical inadequacy, especially given the size of his department and the variety of projects each vying for his attention. Colbert officially referred to the "places de Picardie et Champagne dont [Chertemps] a la direction," but Chertemps’s actual responsibilities stretched a bit beyond to include the port of le Havre, which was actually in the generality of Rouen, well outside Picardy.

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237 Colbert to Chertemps, 21 May 1669 (ibid., 13).

238 Quoted from Colbert to Chertemps, 12 July 1669 (ibid., 14). On the conclusion of contracts with entrepreneurs, see also Colbert to Chertemps, 4 May 1669 (ibid., 9-10), 21 May (ibid., 13), 10 August (ibid., 16), 5 December (ibid., 21), and 23 January 1671 (ibid., 48-49), all of which indicate that the sub-directors merely executed the contracts negotiated by Chertemps.

239 Colbert to Chertemps, 10 August 1669 (ibid., 16).

During the upcoming 1670 season, he was especially admonished to oversee the pressing work at Calais and Saint-Quentin, which Colbert regarded as "les deux plus importantes de toutes celles qui sont commises à vos soins," as well as construction at Hesdin and Laon in the interior and Dunkirk on the sea, and the demolition of Corbie and Rue, two places judged no longer necessary. Anchoring this zigzagging line in the east was Rocroi, just inside Champagne, whose repairs also demanded his attention. Although Colbert had directed Chertemps in late May 1669 to send him a list of the agents he established at each place as soon as possible, this had not been accomplished by September, and he had to be pressed by the minister for this vital information.

The year 1670 saw the drift toward war accelerate and Louvois's star ascend to new heights. The Le Telliers quarrelled with Colbert over the naval secretary's efforts to supply his ships with marines, claiming that this infringed upon the prerogatives of the war department, and Louvois and the controller-general clashed on a whole range of other issues as well. Tension mounted when the king announced in January 1670 a spring visit to the frontier to inspect his fortifications. Louis also hoped to awe his new subjects and worry the Spanish in Brussels with his royal presence. In early May the king, Louvois, Turenne, Condé, and other military advisors met with Vauban and local officials at Saint-Quentin, but the results of their inspection gave Colbert no comfort, for the city's defenses were found deficient. Chertemps surely felt the lash of Colbert's tongue as he read further exhortations from Paris that the work be pressed as much as possible.

241 Colbert to Chertemps, 12 July 1669 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 14-15).

242 Colbert to Chertemps, 10 August 1669, and the minister's "Instructions pour le Sieur Chertemps," 5 December 1669 (ibid., 15-16 and 20-22).

243 See Colbert's letter of 6 September 1669 (ibid., 15 n. 1) reflecting his avid interest in personnel matters, especially that those employed serve with "fidélité et capacité."

244 Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 95, 107, 109-13, 115. Colbert probably derived little long-range consolation from the rumors that the king had also reacted with disappointment to the work accomplished in his rival's department, for these were soon laid to rest, and the whole episode only served to diminish Turenne, whose negativity
At the end of 1670 and in early 1671, Colbert was still not satisfied with the work Chertemps was doing, and urged him on to greater diligence, even threatening him with the revocation of his commission if the disorders that were wasting the king’s money continued. Colbert himself was feeling the strain of seeing his own influence and that of his other colleagues steadily eclipsed by the young war minister Louvois, whose nearly constant presence with the king was muting dissenting voices as the two prepared for war with the Dutch. The controller-general knew that if Saint-Quentin was the weak link in the defensive chain of frontier fortresses, any resultant military disaster would be upon his head. Thus, Colbert’s menacing words turned into reality by the end of March 1671, for Chertemps was removed and yet another administrative arrangement was tried. This time, Colbert was forced to avail himself of the experienced Barrillon, the Le Tellier client and former army intendant who had been intendant at Amiens since January 1668.

Barrillon was dispatched immediately to Picardy to visit all the work sites in order that he might examine all that had been achieved in 1669 and 1670, sorting out what had been finished from projects still underway. Colbert, apparently suspicious of financial irregularities, instructed Barrillon to examine all the accounts for fraud, and in the future publish contract specifications for projected construction in all the neighboring towns, was contrasted with the more judicious and upbeat observations of Condé.

245 Colbert to Chertemps, 4 and 9 August 1670 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1, fols. 174v-176 and 182v-183), 27 September 1670 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 31-32), 27 December 1670 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1, fols. 324v-325), and 23 January 1671 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 48-49). It was Vauban who had discovered that the contractors were charging too much for some work (see Colbert to Vauban, 10 January 1671, ibid., 47-48).

246 On Louis XIV and Louvois as companions of about the same age, whereas Colbert and the other ministers were already into middle age or older, see the observations in Meyer, Colbert, 21. See Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 132-39, for the political context in early 1671, as Colbert moved gingerly, Lionne boldly stumbled in an attempt to protect his turf from the war minister, and Louvois grew even stronger.
hopefully attracting thereby a better-informed group of contractors. The intendant was aided in Picardy by his sub-delegate, the trésorier de France and member of the extensive Colbert clan Honoré Lucas, S’ de Deumun and de Courcelles, and yet another Colbert relative, S’ Séraucourt, son of his cousin Colbert de Saint-Marc (intendant in Alsace), who was to serve as contrôleur at Saint-Quentin. Although Barrillon was to conclude all contracts, his assistant Deumun was authorized to approve payments to entrepreneurs during his absence, to be submitted for his later ratification. When Deumun was unavailable, Séraucourt could do the same at Saint-Quentin, and Barrillon was instructed to ascertain if the sub-directors engaged by Chertemps for the other places were "capables et fidèles" so that they could be likewise empowered.

Thus, even though there was now no longer the over-all separate direction that had been supervised by Chertemps, the controller-general continued the arrangement whereby several places, joined together in smaller directions or départements, were entrusted to specialized fortifications administrators. Indeed, the trend in this region since 1661 had been towards smaller and smaller units of supervision as the minister sought to encourage

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248The sub-delegate Deumun had additional duties inspecting bridges and highways in the province (ibid., 127 n. 1, and B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 9v-10). For further details on Deumun, see Ménain, Marine de guerre, 420-21. Deumun went to Rochefort late in 1673 to become apprenticed to du Terron, who he succeeded the next year when that venerable marine intendant retired.

249For Séraucourt’s commission as contrôleur on 25 March 1671, which also indicated that the king had given Barrillon "la direction des fortifications de toutes les places de Picardie," see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 56-57. In August 1673, according to a mémoire from Colbert to Seignelay, Séraucourt was named a commissaire ordinaire de la marine for Provence, in charge of a department running from Antibes to Toulon (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: 123). Although Colbert expressed his dissatisfaction with him in a letter of 9 February 1674, Séraucourt nonetheless advanced to the rank of commissaire général de la marine at Marseille in 1684, from which post he retired in 1686 (ibid., 3 pt. 1: 508 n. 4).

250See Colbert’s "Instruction pour M. Barillon,” 25 March 1671 (ibid., 5: 53-55).
efficiency and to weed out fraud. Before that time, Le Camus had supervised the fortifications of "Picardie, Champagne, etc." according to his commission of 1645, which was conceivably the origin of this particular specialized fortifications intendant. When Pierre I Chastillon died in 1668, his venal intendancy had perhaps stretched from the Channel coast into the Three Bishoprics, including Flanders, Hainaut, and Artois, but at a minimum it embraced Picardy and Champagne.251 The area entrusted to Chertemps shortly afterwards, however, included only Picardy and Champagne, and in the latter only Rocroi, which was that province's most westerly fortress; Champagne, as we shall see, was to be administered separately. Colbert's requirement that Chertemps further sub-divide his direction followed this trend, and it was these parts that survived the demise of the whole of Chertemps's independent direction when in 1671 the provincial intendant Barrillon was ordered henceforth to superintend the entirety of the fortifications of Picardy.252

These sub-directions were units of nearby fortresses whose proximity facilitated supervision in an era when time on horseback travelling from place to place was time off task. Barrillon and Chertemps before him probably made use of the charge of contrôleur des fortifications to supervise these sub-directions. This position was an old one, as we have seen.253 In 1671, Colbert gave a commission to his cousin Seraucourt to serve in that position for the crucial work at Saint-Quentin. The engineer who had designed the new construction and who visited it from time to time was Vauban, but the actual manager of the work was Seraucourt. According to this commission, he was charged to "en faire un contrôle exact et des paymens" that would go to the

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251 On the extent of Chastillon's department, see p. 113 above.

252 For Chertemps's "direction," as it was termed, see Colbert's letters to Chertemps, 10 August and 5 December 1669, in Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 16, 21.

253 On contrôleurs des fortifications, see Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 68. Two engineers named Lombard, a father and his son Joseph, served under the orders of the provincial intendant of Guyenne as contrôleurs des fortifications at Blaye and at Bordeaux and Bayonne, respectively, in 1669; the latter still held this post in 1674. See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 2: 568, 3 pt. 1: 77, and 5: 11 n. 3, 112 and n. 2.
entrepreneurs engaged in the construction; in addition, he was to ensure that they met the conditions of their contracts with "diligence et solidité," and followed the step-by-step execution of his plan drawn up by Vauban. It was also his responsibility to take the weekly surveys of the various masonry and earthen works accomplished around the site. The contrôleur was the direct agent of the provincial intendant Barrillon, who could assign him any further duties deemed necessary for the timely and economical completion of a fortification design.\(^{354}\)

In 1672, Barrillon moved on to another post and was replaced by Pierre Rouillé du Coudray, who transferred from the intendency at Poitiers.\(^{355}\) He continued the efforts begun by his predecessor throughout the whole of Picardy, assisted in technical matters by a few engineers, including young François Ferry, who had been commissioned to work in Picardy on 25 June 1671.\(^{356}\) He also continued to be assisted by the sub-delegate Demuin, as well as various sub-directors.\(^{357}\) From late November 1673, for instance, Moyenneville, a trésorier de France at Amiens, helped Rouillé, now deprived of the

\(^{354}\) Seraucourt's commission is dated 25 March 1671, and can be found in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 56-57. See also Colbert to Seraucourt, 2 May 1671 (ibid., fols. 71v-72), 8 August (ibid., fols. 128v-129).

\(^{355}\) For a brief note on Rouillé and his family, see Antoine, Dictionnaire biographique, 222.

\(^{356}\) Colbert to Rouillé, 25 February, 19 March, and 14 May 1673 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 67-68, 72-74, 73 n. 1). These mention Ferry and the other engineers. For Ferry, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 281-82.

\(^{357}\) See Colbert to Rouillé, 2 February 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 15. Colbert to Rouillé, 11 February 1673 (ibid., vol. 3, fol. 58v), is an example of the pressures on the intendant, and 15 February (ibid., 68-69), shows that he and Demuin still had chief financial responsibility for Picardy’s bastions and divided their direction accordingly: Rouillé oversaw Saint-Quentin, Guise, La Capelle, Le Castellet, Péronne, Doullens, and Ham, while Demuin supervised Calais, Arders, Boulogne, Monthulin, and Montreuil.
services of Demuin, on various matters of fortification throughout the province.258 In April 1674, however, Moyenneville’s efforts were concentrated on the coast of Picardy when he was given a new responsibility for Ardres, Monthulin, Montreuil, Calais, and Boulogne.259

Indeed, April 1674 marked an important change in Colbert’s fortifications arrangements for the province of Picardy. For instance, Savonnières de Linières, a trésorier de France from Paris who was commissioned an "Intendant des fortifications" on 7 April 1674, was given the direction of La Fère and Ham in the southern part of Picardy. The same year, Pierre Chantereau-Lefebvre, son of the earlier venal intendant des fortifications, and who now exercised a similar post by commission, received a letter from Colbert discussing his work at La Capelle and Guise (by 1677 he had absorbed Moyenneville’s charge for La Fère and Ham). In 1681 Chantereau-Lefebvre was additionally managing the projects at Rocroi, just inside Champagne, and Philippeville, an island of territory gained in Hainaut in 1659. In 1685, Chantereau-Lefebvre was listed as in charge only of Laon, La Fère, and Guise, and he continued to serve in the fortifications bureaucracy of the Colberts until it was absorbed by Louvois in 1690.260 But what were these new sub-directions given out from 1674? If these new intendants des fortifications were in fact direct lineal descendants of Chertemp’s earlier sub-directions, they had undergone a profound metamorphosis in a matter of a few years, as we shall see.

258For Moyenneville, see Colbert to Rouillé, 22 November 1673 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 92), which indicates that he was replacing Demuin at the demolition of Le Catelet. Demuin was being recalled to Paris so he could be sent to Rochefort to understudy du Terron. Moyenneville also assisted the provincial intendant at Ardres and Doullens.

259See also Clément’s biographical note (ibid., 127 n. 1), and Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April 1674 (ibid., 103) and 13 April 1674 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 104).

260For Linières, see note 272 below. For Chantereau-Lefebvre, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 117-18 and 4: 469 n. 1, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 105 (Guise), and ibid., vol. 15, fol. 15. On Philippeville, see Mirot, Géographie historique, 2: 252. See Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 62-64, for some other directions.
In transferring the supervision of fortifications from a general director for the whole province to the provincial intendant in March 1671, Colbert had only availed himself of a means of control already employed elsewhere both by himself and by the Le Telliers. Although the provincial intendants in Picardy had emulated their colleagues elsewhere by backing the local fortification officials with their financial, police, and judicial powers, it would appear that Colbert had come to realize the impossibility of the task he had set before Barrillon and his successor Rouillé. Unlike most of the other provinces Colbert supervised, Picardy contained too many fortresses in varying stages of repair and construction for one man—even a provincial intendant—to see personally to the conclusion of contracts and the authorization of disbursements by the trésoriers des fortifications, as the less powerful and hapless Chertemps had already discovered. Indeed, a dawning sense of this impossibility was communicated to Barrillon in his original instructions, which recognized that after an initial immersion in the affairs of this new charge, the intendant and his sub-delegate would "quoique absens, estre en estat de les bien conduire de tous les lieux où ils se trouveront," and this would be accomplished through the sub-directors established by his predecessor. 261 Nevertheless, under Barrillon and Rouillé, the provincial intendant or his sub-delegate still signed the entrepreneurial contracts. Even at their furthest outpost of Rocroi, this arrangement continued until late 1672 or early 1673, at which time this fortress was given over to the care of a neighboring royal agent. And these arrangements persisted throughout Picardy. Thus, at the beginning of August 1673, Colbert reported to Louis XIV on Rouillé's efforts in Picardy. Both the king and his minister seemed pleased with the intendant's

261 "Instruction pour M. Barillon," 25 March 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 53-55. See Colbert to Barrillon, 7 September 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 153 and 154, discussing the contracts he was to conclude for the work of 1672 after visiting all the places of Picardy.
efforts, but, unfortunately for the latter, this contentment had evaporated by the time spring came the next year.\textsuperscript{262}

Consequently, the commission of Linières as \textit{intendant des fortifications} on 6 April 1674 marked a significant change. Entrusted with the \textit{direction} of La Fère and Ham, Linières was fully empowered to "faire les marchez, et les receptions, et ordonner des fonds destinez à cet effet." This delegation of financial powers, especially the crucial conclusion of contracts and the certification of work completed, was repeated in 1674 throughout Picardy as other commissioners, called \textit{intendants des fortifications}, were established to direct certain critical projects. There is no indication that Linières or any of the others acted as mere agents of execution for the provincial intendant, but instead were his equal in power with regards to matters directly related to fortifications, although, of course, not in other provincial matters. No mention is made in his commission of any role for or connection with the provincial intendant, whereas mention is made of instructions being sent both to the \textit{trésorier des fortifications} and the Duc Mazarin, governor of La Fère, enjoining them to work with Linières. The accompanying \textit{mémoire}, however, does note that Rouillé had been informed of these new arrangements and that Colbert did not doubt that the provincial intendant would give Linières "toutes les facilitez qui pourront dependre de luy pour l’exécution de sa commission." Nonetheless, there is no evidence in any of this to suggest that this was other than transitional assistance or perhaps an occasional help with organizing a corvée contingent that extended beyond the usual bounds of the area subject to the governor of

\textsuperscript{262}Colbert to Ferry, 24 January 1673, and to Rouillé, 25 February (ibid., vol. 3, fols. 40v \textendash} 40v and 70v-71), shows the intendant’s role in organizing and enforcing the corvée utilized in the construction process, especially in moving earth and transporting materials. Colbert to Ferry, 16 March 1673 (ibid., fol. 87v) indicates that Rouillé still made contracts for Saint-Quentin. For Colbert’s letter and Louis XIV’s comments of 1 August 1673, see Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 89-90, which also reinforces the idea that Rouillé was directly supervising the places in the interior of the province.
the fortress, through which the *intendant des fortifications* typically arranged such local matters.263

In his letter to Rouillé of 6 April, Colbert informed the provincial intendant that henceforth, in matters of fortifications, "vous appliquer seulement aux places de Saint-Quentin, Péronne et Doullens," and announcing that Moyenneville was being sent to deal with the work at Ardtres and Calais.264 Consequently, from this point on, these emerging *intendants des fortifications* appear to have operated in a mostly autonomous manner, looking to the minister in Paris rather than to the intendant at Amiens.265

The circumstances prompting this new administrative arrangement are not difficult to discover: The earlier successes of Louis XIV's Dutch War had turned sour. In December 1672, the siege of Charleroi by the Prince of Orange, although lifted, had forced the king to think to the defense of his own territory, which he did throughout the following year and beyond.266 The successes of 1673 were tempered as the war widened and Louis's armies and diplomats met a series of reversals in Germany; by the end of

263Linières's commission, instructions, the letter to the *trésorier général des fortifications* empowering Linières to authorize payments to *entrepreneurs*, along with a letter to Duc Mazarin concerning corvées—all dated 7 April 1674—can be found in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 72-78. The quotations are from fols. 72 and 73v). See also a later letter to him from the minister of 11 May, in Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 108-09, showing sympathy for the pressures of his new charge.


265Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 6 March 1676 (ibid., 167) is an example of the latter's responsibilities for the contracts in his *direction*. The provincial governors were required to cooperate with the provincial intendants in matters of corvées and could incur the wrath of the minister when they failed to yield to this preeminence, as witness Colbert to Duc Mazarin, 13 September and 11 November 1672 (ibid., 64-65 and 4: 78-79).

266Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 11 July (ibid., 5: 118), reveals that demolition work was being pressed due to fears of an enemy crossing of the Meuse or Sambre rivers.
October, Louis was forced to withdraw from most of his conquests in Holland. Matters worsened the following February when the coalition gained further adherents and Louis’s ally Charles II of England made a separate peace with the Dutch, who were emboldened to prepare for an invasion of France. As Colbert informed Rouillé in early April 1674, "Comme le Roy desire faire faire diligemment les travaux...et pour cet effet il est necessaire d’y donner une application continuelle." In another letter the same day, the minister expressed his frustration with the intendant’s recent trip to Calais and Ardres to regulate the work there now that Demuin had been posted to Rochefort: on the one hand he saw the trip as having been "fort nécessaire pour bien établir les travaux de ces places," but on the other he worried that it had deprived the province of the needed protection against the privations caused by the French troops passing through on their way to the front. In the meantime, the business of war continued to accelerate and add even more pressures on the royal servants. The Sun King hoped to ward off an eclipse by seizing the initiative: he would undertake the postponed invasion of the longed for Spanish possession of Franche-Comté. Thus, on 13 April Colbert again pressed Rouillé on the construction work in the rest of Picardy, explaining that

le Roy part jeudy prochain que les premières demarches de Sa Maître a la teste de ses armées ne doivent estre que grandes et considerable, et ainsi que toute les places foibles auront à craindre les efforts des Ennemis and urging him to redouble his efforts. Colbert, whose growing displeasure with the war, the ruin of his economic dreams, the emptying treasury, and the upstart Louvois had caused him express his opinions to the king, but Louis turned a deaf ear, and by the end of 1673 Colbert had suffered what one English commentator termed "a small

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358 Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April 1674 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 70v-71).

359 Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April 1674 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 103).

disgrace." In these circumstances, the controller-general was loath to fail the king or give Louvois further ammunition against him.\textsuperscript{271}

In these new arrangements, if anyone continued to function at a province-wide level, it appears to have been the proficient engineer-architect François Ferry, who accompanied Vauban on his visits to Picardy, executing his plans as the latter drew them up or even fleshing out his observations in greater detail later, thus actually creating many of the projects himself. But Vauban did not yet visit all the places of Picardy, and it was largely Ferry who gave this province its unity, which was now largely of a technical nature. The provincial intendant was just too engaged with the host of other responsibilities he bore to supervise the fortifications of his entire intendency in the manner required for their timely and cost-effective completion. Ferry likewise assisted Renart in the specialized details of the construction underway in neighboring Champagne.\textsuperscript{272}

The fortifications of Champagne appear to have been placed under separate management at the same time that Chertemps took charge of Picardy in 1669. Renart de Fuchsamberg undertook this responsibility.\textsuperscript{273} A 1685 list for Seignelay's department marked Renart as the "intendant des places de Champagne."\textsuperscript{274} He continued to hold that

\textsuperscript{271}Ekberg, \textit{Failure of Dutch War}, 176-78. The quotation is from Perwich, secretary to the English embassy in Paris, who wrote these comments to Lord Arlington in London.

\textsuperscript{272}For an example of Ferry’s role in Picardy, see Colbert to Ferry, 6 April and 16 June 1674 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 71r-v and 174v-176). Ferry was charged with making Vauban's general plan for Ham into a complete project (according to Linières's instructions of 7 April 1674, ibid., fol. 76). See Colbert to Renart, 14 April 1677 (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 186) for Ferry's work in Champagne. For Ferry, see Blanchard, \textit{Dictionnaire}, 281-82.

\textsuperscript{273}See Colbert to Renart, 27 September 1670 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205 vol. 1, fol. 231), and 28 January 1671, indicating his care for the "places frontières de Champagne" (ibid., vol. 2, fol. 21).

\textsuperscript{274}For Seignelay's 1685 list, see B.I.G. in-Fo 205 vol. 15, fol. 15 and Appendix C below.
post until the fortifications agency of the Colberts was absorbed by Louvois in 1690. Rocroi was re-attached to the rest of Champagne sometime around 1673, and not much before since the existing contracts for that work had been concluded by Barrillon and Rouillé. But outside that place before the transfer, it does not seem that the intendants of Picardy exercised any supervision over Champagne. In fact, Renart reported directly to the minister in Paris rather than through Choisy, the provincial intendant in whose generality his department was located.

In all these changes, what had happened to the venal office of intendant des fortifications? Clearly, Linières and the others like him were commissaires, yet according to Augoyat and Clément, the venal office continued to exist well beyond this period, even though it appears not to have been exercised in Picardy. Indeed, it resurfaced in Champagne in 1683, when Pierre II Chastillon, with royal approval, sold the office he had inherited from his uncle, Pierre I Chastillon, although there is no evidence that the nephew ever exercised any of its functions. The purchaser was Renart, who had already exercised this charge in Champagne as a commission for over a decade. When the provisions of this office were issued in 1685, Renart’s jurisdiction was noted as "des places de Champagne, et des frontières de Lorraine et Luxembourg," and he appears to have held authority more like that of provincial intendants rather than those of the other intendants des fortifications, whose financial powers were the same but who lacked police and judicial potency. Thus, Renart was empowered to hear disputes among entrepreneurs and other parties and "juger définitivement et à l’exclusion de tous autres juges, sauf l’appel au conseil...."

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276 Choisy appears to have had care for the fortifications only in the Three Bishoprics, even though he was concurrently provincial intendant of Frontière de Champagne (see p. 102 above for more on Choisy and his intendency).

277 Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 61; Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 66 n. 1. See ibid., 443, for a 1677 order empowering Renart to require and regulate corvées for a number of places in Champagne, a function normally assigned to provincial intendants.
It would appear, then, that the venal intendancy for fortifications lost real power for Picardy with the death of Pierre I Chastillon and his replacement by the commissaire Chertemps, and that the same happened in Champagne where, however, the venal office was later sold to the de facto intendant, Renart, whose original hold over this post came from a commission. This picture is complicated, however, by a letter from Louvois to Chauvelin, who was provincial intendant at Amiens from 1683 to 1694. Writing in November 1690, just days after the death of Seignelay, the war minister announced to the intendant that henceforth, since he as secretary of state for war was charged with the control of all fortifications formerly directed by the naval secretary, Chauvelin's role in this realignment of responsibilities was to "en preniez soin comme vous faites de l'Artois...." Chauvelin already served Louvois in Artois, where he was also provincial intendant and thus supervised the fortification work in that portion of his dual intendancy; now he was to fulfill the same duty in all of Picardy, for the king had decided that "il n'y aurait plus d'intendants particuliers des fortifications...." 278 Blanchard and others assumed that the earlier venal fortifications intendancies survived until 1690, and Blanchard in particular implied that the heads of the "trois grandes secteurs" into which Seignelay's department had been divided by that year were in fact the holders of venal intendancies of fortifications. 279

Does the evidence warrant this conclusion? Louvois's letter to Chauvelin was concerned only with the province of Picardy yet spoke of "intendants" as opposed to an intendant, suggesting that he was not referring to the old venal office for Picardy, but rather to all the commissions of intendant des fortifications, or to use his phrase,"
"Intendants particuliers des fortifications." As noted above, Colbert had referred to these successors to Chertemps's sub-directors as "intendants" in their commissions and in his correspondance from 1674 on. It was these, therefore—more likely than the older venal charge—that were swept away in Louvois's changes of 1690.

This conclusion is reinforced by two passages from Vauban's training manual for fortifications personnel, written in 1674 or after—probably around 1676, but certainly before Clerville's death in late 1677 and Renart's purchase of Pierre II Chastillon's office in 1683. First, Vauban noted that "Presentement ces deux charges [of commissaire général des fortifications and intendant des fortifications] sont en repos & ne sont point exercées." This suggests that the office of intendant des fortifications for Picardy and Champagne still existed but was not playing a role in current affairs, just as Clerville's office—as well as its holder—continued to exist, even though it, too, could be considered "en repos."  

Vauban's second observation may actually help us in dating his Le Directeur General des Fortifications itself, for that work was surely written in conjunction with these new administrative arrangements, either just before they were decided upon, or much more likely, after they had been put in place. In a chapter entitled "L'intendant des fortifications," Vauban stipulated that "Il est tres à propos que les Intendants de Fortifications le soient aussi de Police, de Justice, & de Finances." The verb tense he uses here is significant: "soyent," being in the present subjunctive, expresses a preference, need, or suggestion. Given that the venal intendancy of fortifications had been a failure and in abeyance for several years, it seems hardly creditable to argue that Vauban sought its revival; it is more probable that he was verbalizing a recommendation for the recently-created commissions of intendants des fortifications in Picardy. Although they were certainly to be preferred to the largely ineffective sub-directors that Barrillon and Rouillé had inherited from Chertemps, they were not invested with the full

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280 Louvois to Chauvelin, 17 November 1690, in A.I.G., Article 2, section 1, carton 1, piece 2.

281 Vauban's remarks are from Directeur général, 23.
measure of power that Vauban was accustomed to in Louvois’s department, where intendants des fortifications and provincial intendants were one and the same.²²³

A final piece of evidence suggests that, given Colbert’s early drive to rid his naval service of venality and the precipitous decline of any role for Chastillon’s nephew, it is likely that at some point Colbert either redeemed or suppressed the office for Picardy. In 1683 the controller-general allowed one of his own men to purchase an office whose function he already filled by the authority of the king’s commission. Additionally, it was very probably a truncated office, confined as it was to Champagne, which was only a part of its former jurisdiction. Thus, there is little evidence seriously suggesting that the venal offices played much if any role by 1690, and more intimating its earlier demise if not total disappearance.²²⁴

It is also useful to compare the role of the engineers in the two departments to see how they were affected by these arrangements of power at the top of the fortifications hierarchy in the provinces. Under Colbert—leaving aside the notable exception of Picardy—the administrative structure governing engineers along the coasts and in the frontier generalities was the same: even if we factor in any inadequacies of power that might remain in the authority granted the marine intendants or the fortifications intendant for the places of Champagne, we still see a fully or almost fully empowered intendant reporting directly to Paris. As we shall see in the next chapter, there was a similar arrangement in Louvois’s department. Thus, throughout the kingdom, the local engineers served directly under the provincial intendants, marine intendants, and venal fortifications intendants. But in Picardy there were two administrative layers between Paris and the engineers of places: the provincial intendant at Amiens (after the demise of Chertemps’s province-wide direction in 1671) and the new (from 1674) intendants des

²²²Ibid., 37-38.

²²³On Colbert and venality, see Tallelme, Colbert, Secrétaire d’État, 40 n. 1, and Mémain, Marine de guerre, 492-93. This title of intendant des fortifications was held by Pierre Arnaul for “Picardy et pays reconquis” on 31 October 1689, but apparently only for a short while (ibid., 443); it is not likely that it was the venal office but rather a commission.
fortifications charged with the care of one or more places, and who were commissaires
with jurisdictions subject to ministerial revision. These latter were not typically
engineers, but rather trésoriers de France, financial officers who were rapidly—if not
always with good grace—becoming professional administrators assisting the increasingly
powerful provincial intendants. This only served to distance the ordinary engineers from
the top of the administrative hierarchy and placed most of the power in the hands of
civilian managers; even the role of chief engineer and liaison with Vauban, played by
the engineer Ferry for the whole of Picardy and beyond, added to this chasm between
the technicians and the top of Colbert’s administrative structure.284

Colbert did create an occasional ingénieur général, a commissioner given temporary
control over a larger region, such as François Ferry, who was entrusted with the
fortifications in the coastal areas from the Spanish border to the mouth of the Loire.
Antoine Niquet was given a similar responsibility for Provence, Dauphiné, and
Languedoc in 1680, to which was joined supervision of the projects and engineers at the
port of Sète and the Canal du Midi.285

As all the foregoing change demonstrates, Colbert’s fortifications control apparatus
was multi-faceted and evolving over time as he tried to shape it into a more responsive
instrument. It consisted of four kinds of intendants: intendants de la Marine, directing
the defensive works on the coasts, although their jurisdiction could go fairly far inland,
as was the case with those at Marseille and Toulon who covered all of Provence;
intendants des fortifications, venal officers found on the northeastern frontier comprising
Picardy and Champagne; intendants des fortifications, commissioners who came to
supplant at least one of the preceding venal charges of the same name; and provincial
intendants, adding the care of fortifications to their host of other responsibilities, and

284 For the administrative structure in Louvois’s department, see Vauban, Directeur
général, especially 37-40. For the evolution of the trésoriers de France, see Bordes,
Administration provinciale et municipale, 55-62.

285 Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 67-68, and Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 282. 561; Augoyat,
Aperçu historique, 1: 58-64.
found in all the other border provinces, including some coastal provinces not yet given
over to an intendant de la Marine. While the power of the marine intendants waxed
stronger as the reign wore on and their number increased, that of the venal fortification
intendants waned quickly and was replaced by a non-venal variety; these latter, confined
to Picardy, came to share some of the characteristics of the provincial intendants. But
Vauban never felt that the transformation of these new intendants des fortifications had
gone far enough, remaining much weaker than their marine counterparts. Thus, the
commission of intendant des fortifications was abolished in favor of the provincial
intendants in 1690-91, when the departments of Seignelay and Louvois were joined
together. This development finally brought Picardy into line with the practice of the rest
of Colbert’s department at the moment that administrative entity ceased to exist, and was
another clear example of the triumph of the provincial intendants as the chief royal
agents to the provinces.
DEPARTMENT OF THE LE TELLIERS (from 1668):

The King

Secretary of state for war

Intendants * - - - - Directeur général des fortifications

Trésoriers de l'extraordinaire de guerre **

Tresoriers provinciaux de l'extraordinaire de guerre

Engineers of Provinces

Engineers of Fortresses

* Either an army intendant, intendant of a conquerd province, or provincial intendant (intendant de justice, police et finances).

** The specialized fortification treasurers appear to have been superseded by the war treasurers in the department of the war secretary.

Figure 6. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy in the Department of the Le Telliers (from 1668).
DEPARTMENT OF THE COLBERTS:

Marine Intendants

The King

Controller-General
(Secretary of state for the
*Maison du Roi* and Marine from 1669)

*Intendants de la Marine*

*Trésoriers généraux
de la Marine*

Engineers

Provincial Intendants

The King

Controller-General
(Secretary of state for the
*Maison du Roi* and Marine from 1669)

Provincial Intendants

*Trésoriers généraux
des fortifications*

*Trésors provinciaux
des fortifications*

Engineers

Figure 7. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy in the Department of the Colberts: Marine Intendants and Provincial Intendants.
DEPARTMENT OF THE COLBERTS: Picardy

The King

Controller-General (Secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and Marine from 1669)

to 1668...

Intendant des fortifications (with Champagne) (vénal officier) [Pierre I Chastillon]

Trésorier provinciaux des fortifications

Contrôleurs des fortifications

Engineers

1669 to 1671 (Picardy)...

Directeur des fortifications (commissaire) [Cherlemps]

Trésorier provinciaux des fortifications

"Sub-directors"

Contrôleurs des fortifications

Engineers

1671 to 1674 (Picardy)...

Provincial intendant at Amiens (commissaire) [Barrilon, then Rouillé]

Trésorier provinciaux des fortifications

"Sub-directors"

Contrôleurs des fortifications

Engineers

March-October 1674 (Picardy)...

Provincial intendant
[Rouillé]

Intendants des fortifications (commissaire)

Engineers

October 1674 to 1690 (Picardy)...

Provincial intendant [Breteuil, then Chauvelin]

Intendants des fortifications (commissaire)

Engineers

Figure 8. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy in the Department of the Colberts: Picardy.
DEPARTMENT OF THE COLBERTS: Champagne

The King

Controller-General (Secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and Marine from 1669)

to 1668...

Intendant des fortifications (with Picardy) (venal officier) [Pierre I Chastillon]

Tresorier provinciaux des fortifications

Contrôleurs des fortifications

Engineers

1669 to 1690 (Champagne)...

Directeur des fortifications (commissaire) [Renart de Fuchsamberg] *

Tresorier provinciaux des fortifications

"Sub-directors"?

Contrôleurs des fortifications?

Engineers

* Renart purchased the office of intendant des fortifications from Chastillon’s nephew in 1683.

Figure 9. Fortifications Administrative Hierarchy in the Department of the Colberts: Champagne.
Fortifications Constructed and Altered by Vauban

Figure 10. Fortifications Constructed and Altered by Vauban.
CHAPTER V

Mais on fera point faire de dépence sur son projet, n’y commencer aucun ouvrage, qu’il n’ait reçu réponse du Ministre, si l’approbation ou reforme de ce qu’il aura proposé.

Vauban, Le Directeur général des fortifications

It is important to reiterate that prior to the rise of the provincial intendants, fortifications had been controlled from Paris in only a loose fashion, for it was through and upon the governors that the four secretaries of state attempted to enforce the royal will. The surintendant des fortifications had been created as a sort of super commis to coordinate the defensive efforts throughout the kingdom, but the inherent weakness of that charge arising from its venal nature came to the fore when the office passed from the powerful Sully to his decadent son and then to an apparent nonentity, Léon de Durfort. The governors thus remained in charge of provincial defensive works, as Sully’s own 1604 codification of fortification procedures had specified, but their dominion was decisively challenged during the crisis of war and rebellion that racked the body politic of France throughout the reign of Louis XIII and into the minority of his heir. As part of the center’s reassertion of control, a multitude of intendants issued forth from Paris, and one group of these commissaires ensconced themselves in the provinces, nudging aside the governors as the primary fortification administrators of the realm, although as we have seen, they had rivals among the other varieties of intendants. It is these provincial intendants, however, who eventually came to control local fortifications as they dominated almost all other aspects of local government during the last century and one half of the ancien régime.
The Control Mechanism of the Le Telliers

The fortifications control mechanism of the Le Telliers both suffered and benefitted from the fact that it had grown up largely as a by-product of the secretary of state's war activities during a period of war-time emergency measures. In 1626 and even afterwards, the war secretary had to share a portion of his military authority within the kingdom with his colleagues, for internal unrest made it impossible to separate garrisons and fortifications from the administration of a province, including those deep inside the heart of the kingdom. The divided responsibility for correspondence with the governors, the military leaders of their provinces, is a case in point. But as Louis XIII's 1626 regulation also made clear, although the war secretary's power was shared "pour le dedans du royaume," he was master of war "tou...entière pour le dehors, le taillon et l'artillerie, sans qu'aucun autre des secrétaires d'État y ait part..." The provinces the war secretary controlled as part of his internal administrative duties were not, as we have seen, important frontier posts, and so the regime of the governors as the crown's chief supervisors of provincial fortifications remained intact within the confines of France until altered by the rise of the provincial intendants. But when the war secretary controlled conquered areas, their very status as territories outside the kingdom gave him fuller rein in them than either he or his colleagues enjoyed within the realm, hedged in as they were by special interests that included sovereign courts, a variety of officiers, and governors. In these nether regions, he could appoint army intendants and intendants of conquered

286 For example, see Richelieu's "Projet de dépêche que MM. les secrétaires d'estat feront en toutes les villes frontières de leurs départements selon les formes ordinaires," 9 August 1634, which contained orders for the demolition of a number of chateau in Lorraine and Champagne, and his "Projet d'ordre à donner pour toute la France, sur lequel il plaira au roy rédouter ce qu'il estimera plus à propos," circa 15 March 1635, in which he indicates that the secretaries of state will write the various governors with the king's instructions (Richelieu, Lettres, 4: 587-88, 678).

287 Louis XIII's administrative regulation for 1626 is quoted in Luçay, Secrétaires d'État, 587-88.
areas whose very dependence upon him for their commission from the king made them pliable instruments of his and the sovereign's will.  

Thus, while the extent of Le Tellier's responsibilities for fortifications in 1661 was shrunken from what it had been a few years earlier due to the receding tides of war, the mechanism by which he exercised what control he did possess remained quite supple and responsive to his will, thanks in part to its largely temporary and improvised nature. Whereas Colbert had to operate through a venal office of intendant des fortifications and gradually supplant it or join it to a trusted commissaire, Louvois was able to rely on agents who were his créatures from the outset and who filled positions that were by their very nature responsive to his will: in war, the army intendants and intendants of conquered provinces, the latter of which supplied the transition to provincial intendants, who governed the new provinces in time of peace; in fact, it was not unusual for the same person to occupy all three posts in succession while a province underwent this metamorphosis. And while Colbert juggled a variety of fortification responsibilities that included the very different requirements of building on land with the tricky engineering and construction problems attendant upon any project along France's often stormy coasts, Louvois was able to focus on a narrower range of construction headaches. Finally, Colbert attempted to oversee simultaneous undertakings on at least five points of the famous French hexagon, along with several projects in between, whereas Louvois's labors, especially from 1667, were much more concentrated, even though Roussillon was about as far from Flanders and Artois as any part of the kingdom.

Recently, both Douglas Clark Baxter and Richard Bonney have amply demonstrated that army intendancies and intendancies of conquered provinces gave way rather naturally to provincial intendancies at the conclusion of peace treaties, and this often left the war

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289 Bonney, Political Change, 401-18, describes the integration of the new provinces into the kingdom. See Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 104-113, on the intendants of conquered provinces, and 164-200, an example of how this worked itself out during and after the War of Devolution. George Livet, "Louis XIV et les provinces conquises," XVII, 16 (1952): 481-507, forty years later is still a useful source of ideas and
secretary as the dominant influence in the king’s new province. Artois, whose capital Arras had fallen to French troops in 1640, was assigned to the intendant of Picardy, residing at Aniens, from at least 1645, and although the latter province was under secretary La Vrillière, the intendant reported for Artois to Le Tellier and then Louvois. From 1662 until 1663 the intendant was Colbert de Saint-Pouange, Le Tellier’s faithful brother-in-law, and he was followed by other Le Tellier clients such as Honoré Courtin (1663-64), Louis de Machault (1665), and Paul Barrillon d’Amoncourt (1668-72), although there were interludes when Colbert’s clients held the post (viz., Croissy in 1666 and Pierre Rouillé du Coudray from 1672 to 1674). Roussillon, however, was firmly under the control of Louvois’s intendants,290 as was Flanders when that intendency was created in June 1668 and entrusted to Michel Le Peletier de Souzy, over the objections of Colbert, as we have already noted. Dauphiné was administered with the Lyonnais, and their intendant, if he was perhaps not a Le Tellier client, still linked with the center through the secretary of state for war.291

As Vauban saw it, Louvois’s department had the advantage in that there was no doubt about the powers of the local agents who directed his fortifications once the armies ceased their operations, whereas Colbert’s sub-directors, intendants des fortifications, and even some of his intendants de la Marine were not so well-supplied with authority

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290 On the fortifications of Roussillon, see Georges Hachon, *Vauban et le Roussillon* (Saint-Léger-Vauban: Association des amis de la Maison Vauban, 1991), which indicates some of the activities of the provincial intendant.

291 See the intendant list in Godard, *Intendants*, 521, 528-29, 538. See also Corvisier, *Louvois*, 424-34, on the administration of conquered provinces.
as the great engineer thought necessary. Unlike these others, Vauban noted, provincial intendants were armed with full police, justice, and financial powers, and therefore possessed

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l'\text{authorité, le crédit, & les moyens de pourvoir à quantité de besoins pressants, qui surviennent souvent dans les ouvrages dont le retardement pourrait être prejudiciable, s'il n'y étoit pourvu sur le champ & que l'on fût reduit à attendre les ordres de la Cour.}\]

Louvois himself had become convinced of this, and as we shall see further on, both he and his chief engineer looked askance at the running of Colbert’s department. Part of their disdain surely flowed from this judgment, for when opportunity presented itself in 1690, the war minister, eagerly seconded by Vauban, abolished the intendants des fortifications and assigned their responsibilities to the provincial intendants.

Vauban conceived of the provincial intendant’s role being largely that of a potent facilitator whose cooperation was essential since he was the chief representative of the king in the province, and one furnished with an ample array of powers. His fiscal authority allowed him to undertake the potentially contentious business of establishing the values of any private property expropriated and upon which the king’s bastions were built. The provincial intendant was additionally the royal agent who signed contracts in the king’s name, received surveys of finished work, and authorized payments to suppliers and contractors. Like his colleagues the army intendants, he used his quarter-master skills to assemble building materials of all sorts, facilitating their transport from whatever distance necessary, often mustering local wagons to form huge convoys that churned up all the roads leading to the work site. If the local peasants were required to provide corvée service, which was usually limited to the unskilled task of moving great quantities of earth, he was the royal agent who arranged and over-saw such matters if they extended beyond the territory under the jurisdiction of the governor of the fortress in question. As the chief local police agent of the king, the intendant had the authority

\[292\text{See Mémain, Marine de guerre, 364-79, on the powers and territorial limits of the marine intendancy at Rochefort.}\]

\[293\text{Vauban, Directeur général, 37-38.}\]
to protect the entrepreneurs from any who would harass them, and in turn to menace the entrepreneurs themselves with administrative discipline and even judicial proceedings should there be any hint of financial corruption or shoddy work. This power to discipline extended to all those involved in the work on a place, and it was not unheard of for an intendant to receive orders from the king’s court to imprison a contractor or even an engineer who had aroused the minister’s suspicions or ire. 294

The Role of the Directeur général des fortifications

Another difference between the two departments has to do with the roles of the commissaire général des fortifications, an office held by Clerville from 1662, and the directeur général des fortifications, which was a commission given to Vauban sometime before 1670. 295 Clerville does not seem to have exercised much of a coordinating authority over Colbert’s extensive and diverse fortifications department. Typically he was assigned to certain large-scale projects, such as the port-creation undertakings along the coasts, and making frequent inspection tours to wherever the minister sent him. He was also sent out as a trouble-shooter, acting as Colbert’s agent in untangling the

294 Vauban, Directeur général, 38-40. The extent of the arrangements required for such undertakings is suggested by Mousnier’s description of the building of Ath (Institutions of France, 1: 723-29). For a representative intendant employed by Louvois, there is none better than Le Peletier de Souzy, who directed the multitudinous projects undertaken in Flanders. See Albert Croquez, Histoire politique et administrative d’une province française: La Flandre, vol. 1, La Flandre wallonne et les pays de l’intendance de Lille sous Louis XIV (Paris: Librairie ancienne H. Champion, 1912), 327-29, 3*-. 100* (these latter are separately numbered pages at the end of the work) (cited hereafter as Flandre wallonne), which contains a list of Le Peletier de Souzy’s ordinances as intendant and seventy-three letters to and from him relating to his service in Flanders. In ibid., vol. 2, Louis XIV en Flandres: Les institutions, les hommes et les méthodes dans une province nouvellement annexée, 1667-1708 (Paris: Librairie ancienne H. Champion, 1920), 3-31 (cited hereafter as Louis XIV en Flandres), there is an account of Le Peletier de Souzy’s role in the creation of the new citadel at Lille.

295 Vauban was styled “directeur general [sic] des fortifications de France” in a notarial document dated 28 November 1670 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 67); it should be recalled that “de France” does not necessarily imply jurisdiction for the entire kingdom, as the title trésorier de France suggests.
difficulties left by others, as for instance in Alsace where he tried to salvage what Saint-Marc had nearly wrecked through fraud and negligence. Clerville acted as Colbert’s eyes and ears, but only where dispatched by the minister, who routinely relied on the various kinds of intendants in his service to execute his orders and coordinate the efforts of the engineers in each province. If there was an over-all coordinator in his administration of fortifications, it was Colbert himself, which is not surprising given his penchant for details and the long hours he spent in his bureau pouring over paperwork.296

In Louvois’s department, at least from the 1670, arrangements were quite otherwise. The minister was, of course, intimately involved in the affairs of his fortifications administration, and from 1659 one of the bureaus in the war ministry received and prepared, among other matters, correspondence related to fortifications, and was headed by the trusted commis Darbon de Bellou.297 But unlike Colbert, his desire to know all and decide all did not prevent Louvois from delegating responsibility to subordinates upon whom he felt he could rely for their skill, candor, and loyalty. From the late 1660s, in an evolution we shall explore at length further on, Vauban became the minister’s chief agent and collaborator in both the administrative and technical aspects of fortifications.

According to the introduction to Vauban’s Le Directeur General des Fortifications, pirated by a Dutch editor who published it in the safety of The Hague in 1685, this manual was "fait pour l’instruction des gens nouvellement employés dans les

296Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 76 n. 26, agrees with a restricted notion of Clerville’s role. For examples of the level of Colbert’s involvement at the local level, see Colbert to Seraucourt, 2 May 1671, asking him to keep in direct contact with him (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 71v-72), to Barrillon, 7 September, asking the intendant to "donner ordre aux Employez à la conduite des travaux des places de Picardie de m’escrire toutes les semaines l’estat auquel ils sont" (ibid., fols. 154v-155), and to the engineer Ferry, 24 January 1673, asking him to write him every week (ibid., vol. 3, fol. 41). See also Colbert’s instructions to Seignelay, 24 October 1676, on the measures his son was urged to take for the careful management of his paperwork (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: 172-73).

297Corvisier, Louvois, 85-86.
Fortifications....

298 It provided the enemies of France a glimpse into what was then considered one of the best fortification systems in Europe and into the mind of its methodical chief animator. This pocket-sized book was probably a physical reflection of the handy version French administrators and engineers surely kept close by as they went about their fortification activities. It offers the historian as well an insight into the manner in which Vauban shaped and codified the practices of Louvois’s evolving department of fortifications. As already noted, this process of evolution was facilitated in part by the absence of venal officers who were not a part of the military apparatus, for such personnel were more apt to desire and be better able to resist the kind of standardization of administrative practice reflected in Vauban’s small handbook. Above all else, he believed that the success of a prince’s fortification endeavors was the product of capable personnel coupled with uniform procedures.299

The directeur général worked with and reported directly to the king and his ministers, for there was no doubt in Vauban’s mind that in fortifications, as in all other matters of state, the final decision belonged to this more exalted echelon. When those individuals working in concert had resolved upon a major project, the directeur set to work with his staff, drawing up the detailed and summary plans and making an estimate of costs. After revisions were made and a final plan decided upon, a detailed explanation and a step-by-step description of procedures (devis) was written for the enlightenment of the entrepreneurs and workers. The directeur had the prerogative of suggesting engineers, master workers, and others who might be employed on a particular construction project. This was due, of course, to the great knowledge of such individuals he possessed through his wide travels along the frontiers and his years of observing a multitude of such technicians at work. In addition, he could assist in the

298 Vauban, Directeur général, 14.

299 Ibid., 19-21.
actual conclusion of the contracts for a site if he wished, but even if not initially involved, he reserved the right to make corrections at a later date.  

Even in our age, the physical presence of individuals often enhances their power well beyond what it would be if they were exercising it from a distance, and this was especially the case in the seventeenth century. Vauban knew that a large measure of the authority and the effectiveness of the directeur général came from his annual inspection tours along the frontiers. This peripatetic inspector progressed along the perimeters of the kingdom, stopping at each existing place to examine the upkeep of its defensive works and the progress of any repairs or new additions, and perhaps pausing longer at those entirely new fortifications being raised up that more likely than not were of his own design. At each official halt in his journey he was greeted by engineers and trésoriers des fortifications who assisted him in his tour of the works and examination of the various account books recording measures of construction accomplished and payments for materials, and to laborers and entrepreneurs. Thus informed, he was able to suggest changes in plans, modifications in modes of execution, renegotiations of contracts, investigations into fraud, changes in personnel, and rewards and punishments for those who met his expectations for useful service to his masters in Paris.

Winter may have been the cause for a cessation of most actual building activity, but it was still a busy period for the directeur général and his engineers in the field. At the beginning of that season the engineers in charge of a whole province or a single fortress would converge upon Paris to present their annual accounts and reports for scrutiny by Vauban and others in the central administration. After ascertaining the state of the projects undertaken the past work season, they would plan for the construction activity of the coming spring. These plans were then reported by the directeur général to the minister, who either alone or with the directeur presented them to the king. The monarch listened to this report, and perhaps invited the advice of various military commanders

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300Ibid., 25-33.

301Ibid., 33-35. He insisted upon a major role in regulating salaries of fortifications personnel (ibid., 31).
or other interested and knowledgeable councilors. Decisions frequently came quickly, but sometimes only after much debate and further tête-à-têtes. Once these matters were resolved, however, the minister could make his financial arrangements, and the engineers, if they had lingered in the capital, could hurry back to their posts to begin the multitudinous preparations required to re-commence the actual work of construction the moment good weather returned. 302

Guttin aptly observed that Vauban "a vraiment tenu le rôle d’un grand commis qui assure l’unité et la permanence d’un service." But he wrongly assumed that Vauban’s coordinating exertions for Louvois were matched in Colbert’s department by Clerville. Although Vauban’s annual inspection tour might concentrate upon particularly pressing construction sites, it was, at least in theory and usually in practice, unlike Clerville’s less regular perambulations and interventions, for it was intended to be inclusive of the whole frontier, and especially the northeastern border. Besides conferring with and checking up on the engineers and trésoriers des fortifications for his own purposes, Vauban served as the minister’s chief representative on the spot who met with the provincial intendant and the engineers in order to facilitate their making common cause to achieve the royal wishes for that year. Thus, he was the minister’s most important link with his department’s administrators and technicians in the provinces, although both the engineers and especially the provincial intendants corresponded directly with Paris; but even then, the minister was not supposed to countermand the orders of his directeur général unless the latter was too far away to be contacted or too ill to exercise his duties. 303

Blanchard implies that during the 1680s, after the death of Clerville, the business of the fortification department of Seignelay finally came to be coordinated at the top in a manner similar to that in Louvois’s jurisdiction. She notes the “trois grandes sections” into which it was divided in 1690, and contends that each was headed by a venal intendant des fortifications, who exercised the same function as the provincial intendants

302 Ibid., 35. See Mousnier, The Institutions of France, 1: 723-29, on Vauban and the building of Ath at the end of the 1660s.

303 Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 30-31. Vauban, Directeur général, 40, 42.
did under Louvois. Insofar as Vauvrié was charged with Provence, her list is correct, but her contention that Chantereau-Lefebvre oversaw "places maritimes" and Renart cared for the "places de terre" is mistaken. The correspondence for 1690 still shows Chantereau-Lefebvre occupied with Guise and other places in Picardy. Renart, likewise, still labored over the fortifications of Champagne. And provincial intendants still played active roles in the supervision of the works in their provinces, not having been supplanted by any of the alleged directors of Seignelay's "trois grandes sections." In fact, in the correspondence for the entire portion of 1690 before the death of Seignelay, there is not one shred of evidence for any such tripartite division of responsibilities. Both Renart and Chantereau-Lefebvre were clearly carrying on in the same positions they had occupied for years, and if anything both perhaps had experienced some discomfort as they carried out orders from the minister that actually

306Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 67.

307On Chantereau-Lefebvre's activities, see Seignelay to Garand, 5 January 1690, B.I.G. in- Fo 205, vol. 18, fol. 1v (which also notes the involvement of provincial intendant Chauvelin); to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 5 January, ibid., fol. 2v (on La Fère, Ham, and Guise), 10 February, ibid., fol. 26v, 15 February, ibid., fol. 29r-v. 14 March, ibid., fol. 45v-46, 14 April, ibid., fol. 73.

307On Renart, see Seignelay to Renart, 5 January 1690, ibid., fol. 2v-3, 21 January, ibid., fol. 8, 15 February, ibid., fol. 30v, 23 March, ibid., fol. 63, 11 April, ibid., fol. 73r-v, 8 May, ibid., fol. 91, 17 July, ibid., fol. 149v.

307See Seignelay to Bouchu (provincial intendant for Dauphiné), 31 January 1690, ibid., fol. 23r-v, and to Bezons (provincial intendant at Bordeaux), 31 January, ibid., fols. 23v-24, 26 March, ibid., fol. 69r-v. See also the commission for an intendant des fortifications for the coastal region of Picardy, 29 May 1690, ibid., fol. 108. A letter to Chauvelin, 6 June, ibid., fol. 115r-v, shows that in 1690 he too was still playing the traditional role in fortification matters of a provincial intendant.

308Although I have been unable to examine the source from which Blanchard drew the list (Ingénieurs, 69-70) of places organized into three groupings, she gave no indication that her information about its organizational significance came from this same source, which actually appears to have been a register of funds; consequently, it is more likely than not that this threefold partition reflects an accounting arrangement rather than an administrative one.
diminished their charges as they demolished several fortifications rendered superfluous by the continued progress of the king’s armies. Moreover, even in theory the notion that Chantereau-Lefebvre supervised the fortified posts on the Poant flies in the face of what we know about the marine intendants, who were entrusted with coastal fortresses. Finally, it should be noted that the scheme she proposed ignores Colbert’s earlier attacks on venality, and it is difficult to imagine that the earlier venal creations of the 1640s survived intact fifty years later and as the primary agents by which Seignelay administered fortifications. Indeed, as will be demonstrated in a later chapter, Vauban’s activities as Louvois’s directeur général des fortifications, and from 1678 as commissaire général des fortifications for the entire kingdom had come to encompass the department of the Colberts long before 1690, and it was his ministrations among the various royal strongholds throughout the kingdom that gave the two divisions of fortifications some semblance of unity prior to their official unification under Louvois and then Le Peletier de Souzy.

Contrary to Blanchard’s claim that "Chez Colbert, l’organisation interne est déjà plus avancée," it would seem that the opposite was the case, and that it was Louvois, assisted by Vauban, who had the administrative edge. This is born out by an examination of the amalgamated department both upon Seignelay’s death in November 1690 and Louvois’s demise the following July. Even if we leave aside the issue of which system was "more advanced"—for this is a somewhat slippery judgment—it is without doubt that Louvois’s system emerged the overall winner even though he himself followed his rival Seignelay to the grave after less than a year of savoring his victory.

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309See ibid., 67, for Blanchard’s her favorable evaluation of Colbert’s efforts. Her account of this transitional period is skewed by her faulty assumption that the war minister’s control over fortifications was partitioned in 1661. Thus, she refers to the marine engineers as “rattaché” to the war secretary in 1690, observing that "on en revient ainsi au système des débuts du règne.” Her view of administrative progress revolves around the notion of a fortifications service outside the control of the war ministry, which she clearly favors, and thus leads her to view the alleged partition of 1661, unlike most other commentators, as a positive first step toward that end (ibid., 62-63).
According to Blanchard, Michel Le Peletier de Souzy abolished the non-venal intendants des fortifications in 1692. As argued earlier, however, these appear to have been abolished, or at least slated for abolition, by Louvois immediately after the death of Seignelay. Louvois apparently sent some of his own engineers to examine places in his newly acquired charge, for at their annual winter meeting in Paris he and Vauban discussed the plans drawn up for the fortress at Mezières by Choisy, an engineer long in the war department; this stronghold had been under the care of the venal intendant des fortifications Renart. Although Louvois took on Seignelay's well-connected and capable premier commis Pierre de Girval to serve him in the same capacity, this expressed a confidence in Girval's capabilities rather than a desire to maintain a continuity with past procedures in the former department of the Colberts, for Girval had only assumed his position with Seignelay barely one month before the latter's demise, upon the death of Pierre Tauzié, its former occupant. In fact, when Louvois announced his new responsibilities to Vauban, who was still recuperating from a serious illness, the minister urged the engineer to come to his aid as quickly as possible, health permitting, because "j'ai grand besoin de votre assistance pour essayer de mettre un ordre à ce que vous savez qui n'en avait pas trop....." Nevertheless, it is not clear how much of this administrative reform Louvois and Vauban were able to accomplish,

30Ibid., 61.

31For the winter meeting and Choisy's plans, see Vauban to Louvois, 15 May 1691, A.G. A1 1115, p. 83.

32For Girval, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 329-30, which recounts his father's positions in princely and the royal households, and Vauban to Cladech, 19 February 1691, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 323, where Vauban referred to Girval as "ci-devant premier commis de M. de Seignelay (et à présent de M. de Louvois) pour les fortifications," even though Blanchard says Girval became "commiss des fortifications de la Marine" in October 1690, and only in 1691, after the death of Louvois, became "premier commiss des fortifications de France."

33For Louvois to Vauban, 6 November 1690, announcing the new arrangements, see ibid., 2: 321.
especially given that the early spring was occupied with preparations for the siege of Mons and, after its capture 8 April, with re-establishing its defensive readiness.\(^{314}\)

Le Peletier de Souzy had collaborated with both Louvois and Vauban in the vast building projects undertaken in Flanders in the decade and a half after its conquest, and so was accustomed to and comfortable with most of their procedures. Whatever the amount of his scheme for change in Seignelay's former department the war minister was actually able to put in place before his own death, Le Peletier de Souzy had definitely opted to follow this path laid out by his former patron. Colbert and Louvois each had had a system that consisted of specialized administrative and technical personnel caring for fortifications at the local level and being supported at a higher echelon by administrators armed with general police, financial, and judicial powers. Colbert and Seignelay had experimented in Picardy until they settled on a system that split administrative and engineering responsibilities at individual or collections of fortresses, subordinating their engineers to an intermediate layer of fortification administrators called *contrôleurs des fortifications*, who had no financial, police, or judicial authority, or later to *intendants des fortifications*, who at least had full financial powers, but still looked to the provincial intendant for police and judicial support. In Champagne, the Colberts used a venal charge of *intendant des fortifications* to specially arm its holder with general police, financial, and judicial powers, and to work directly with the engineers as the minister's agent of supervision. Along the coasts, the engineers were backed and guided by fully empowered marine intendants; and in all the other provinces in their care, the Colberts relied upon the provincial intendants directly to support and supervise their engineers. This complicated system did not, however, long survive the passing of the Colberts.\(^{315}\)

\(^{314}\)Both the minister and his engineer were under a great deal of pressure in the spring of 1691, as attested to by their letters (see p. 424 below).

\(^{315}\)See Blanchard, *Ingénieurs*, 71-77 and 116-17, on Le Peletier de Souzy and the actual arrangements after the death of Louvois. Le Peletier de Souzy and Vauban did push the efforts the latter had sought for years to assure a greater attention to technical proficiency and a lesser one to patronage than had ever been the case in either of the
Louvois's administrative arrangements had been a good deal less complicated. Although there had evolved a hierarchy among the engineers such that some had the direction of a whole province, comprising supervision of the several places within it, there was no intermediate layer of administrators between the engineers and the provincial intendants. In fact, Blanchard found them grouped according to generalities and their departments referred to by the names of the various provincial intendants. These engineers then communicated with and were supervised from Paris through the provincial intendants and the directeur général des fortifications, himself an engineer, and only rarely by direct contact with the war minister or the king. Thus, in 1692, when Le Peletier de Souzy divided fortifications into twenty-three directions, which were supervised from Paris through the provincial intendants and the new "Département des fortifications des places de terre et de mer," he was essentially maintaining the system forged by Vauban and Louvois twenty years earlier.316

Le Peletier de Souzy's new directions were headed by directeurs des fortifications who were engineers combining administrative and technical preeminence at the local level. These then supervised further sub-divisions called chefferies, comprised of one or more fortresses, which were headed by an ingénieur en chef, assisted by any number of ingénieurs ordinaire. Boundaries remained flexible, being adaptable to the vagaries of war, demolitions, new construction, and the skills and personalities of the engineers entrusted with their care. All was managed from offices newly established in the Rue Barbette, for Le Peletier de Souzy, whose title as of 21 July 1691 was directeur des fortifications, held this post as an independent administrator whose importance was most

pre-1691 departments. He and Vauban strove to create an esprit de corps that would knit the two disparate departments together, and they succeeded in widening the recruitment base both socially and geographically. The two also shared the view that religion and engineering were separate realms, and so the directeur promoted former Huguenots and apparently never harassed any of his personnel in the matter of their spiritual conscience (ibid., 117-38).

316For these arrangements in the 1670s, see Vauban, Directeur général, 41-56. See also Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 67 n. 157, 115-16.
visibly attested to by the fact that he had his own established work session with the king, which was Mondays after dinner (after 1708, Sunday evenings). His role in the fortifications bureaucracy was the same that Louvois before him had played when that responsibility had been joined with the other affairs of war, and Vauban served Le Peletier de Souzy as chief consultant and roving inspector, as he had done for Louvois for more than twenty years.317

Le Peletier de Souzy retained the useful Girval as his premier commis. The other three engineers who were frequently kept in Paris or accompanied the new directeur on his inspection tours had risen in the ranks of Louvois’s department: Louis de Lappara, an officer who began his engineering career at an early age and had attended Vauban at numerous sieges; Samuel de Crozat de Grande Combe, originally a cavalry officer, he saw much service abroad and had served Louvois as an ingénieur en chef; and Nicolas de la Cour, another tested siege officer and administrator who had worked with Vauban on the Aqueduct of Maintenon.318

Vauban was nearing sixty years old and suffered from chronic bad health, sometimes to the point of incapacitation, when these new arrangements were made in 1691. How long would he last? As it turned out, he survived his younger patron and friend Louvois by over a decade and one half. Fortunately, he and his new chief got on together quite well, although there remained a bit of the disdain of the technician for the bureaucrat, and they labored and toured together in general harmony until advancing age and infirmity forced the engineer, then in his late sixties, to give up his wide-ranging perambulations. Vauban’s last extensive visit along the coasts and frontiers had ended in Provence in the winter of 1700. Thereafter, he still toured frontiers and assisted at some sieges, and indeed demonstrated a remarkable vigor of body and mind, but he did not venture beyond the northeastern and Alsatian frontiers. Significantly, when Vauban

317Ibid., 72-77, 80, 113-17. Antoine, Dictionnaire biographique, 166-67, summarizes his career and provides the date of his new appointment.

318Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 78-80. For further details on these four figures, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 190-92, 329-30, 403-04, 423-24.
died in 1707, his office was left unfilled, but its functions were easily amalgamated into the responsibilities of Le Peletier de Souzy, as perhaps intended when his position was created in 1691. The directeur, without the rest of the military to worry about— even engineers serving at sieges did so under the supervision of the war minister and his military commanders— was better placed than Louvois had been to shoulder these responsibilities without a roving chief assistant. Le Peletier de Souzy merely increased and extended his visits to the frontiers, and the administrative structure shaped by Vauban paid its greatest tribute to its chief architect by continuing after his death.319

The Engineers of the Two Departments

Until 1690, the two departments were almost entirely separate, each equipped with its own organizational structure, commis, budget, and administrative procedures. The same was true of the engineers themselves, whose lives and careers have been the object of a detailed and comprehensive study by Anne Blanchard.

At the king’s behest, Vauban set out in 1691 to reacquaint himself with the personnel of a department with which he had lost touch due both to its recent augmentation and to his the long bouts of illness. In answer to his detailed inquiries, senior engineers supplied him with data on the 276 royal engineers of various grades then employed. Even though these replies have not survived, Blanchard has assembled a wealth of comparable information. Her study reveals that the 112 engineers of Seignelay’s former department and the 164 engineers inherited from Louvois were recruited from rather different sources, and had backgrounds and training that reflected the other administrative concerns of their masters.320

Louvois’s engineers originated in mostly rural settings across nearly the whole kingdom, especially in poorer provinces such as the borderlands of Champagne and the Nivernais. Since the latter was the home of Vauban, it is not surprising that its most famous son drew after him a host of relatives and clients. Only a few of these engineers

319Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 76-77.

320Ibid., 81-82.
came from the coastal regions or from urban settings. And although nobles outnumbered bourgeoisie two to one, a large portion of the former were of recent nobility, and most were poor country hoberaux. The middle class engineers were the offspring of fathers engaged in a wide variety of professions. Whatever their origins, this group was assembled from military officers with an aptitude for fortifications, especially assaulting them. Like his father, Louvois drew engineers from the ranks as needs arose to serve at sieges and in the repair and construction work that followed. As individuals proved their technical worth, they were issued a brevet as a royal engineer. Since this new employment interfered with normal military duties, Louvois used the expedient of putting these officers on half-pay.321 Although relieved of his usual duties, the officer nonetheless maintained his rank and the ability to advance further, and his reduction in pay was offset by the salary he received for his services as an engineer.322

Blanchard notes that we possess fuller information on the Colberts' engineers. The majority were from urban areas, with more than one third originating from Paris. Other cities heavily represented were Calais and the urban centers of Provence. These areas, as well as those few rural areas producing engineers who ended up in this department, were almost entirely in provinces whose fortifications were managed by the Colberts. They were predominantly bourgeois in origin, although the few nobles, like those serving Louvois, were of recent origin.

There was a preponderance of engineers from families engaged in professions such as engineering, architecture, and commerce, all of which relied heavily on mathematical training. Many had fathers who served the king as commis that served throughout the growing bureaucracy of the state. Although a few of Louvois's engineers, such as those issuing from the remarkable Robelin family of building contractors, did not begin as soldiers and even remained civilians, most were part of the army officer corps. Of the engineers serving the Colberts, however, none were military officers. They began and

321 This system of "réforme" prior to Louvois had been used primarily to demobilize regiments at the end of a war.

322 Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 83-93, 104-08.
continued their careers as architects, hydraulic engineers, civil engineers, and cartographers employed by Colbert in his various roles as surintendant des bâtiments, naval secretary, head of the Ponts et chaussées service, and director of the newly established Royal Academy of Sciences. In addition, as civilians they were free to hold other posts and offices. François Ferry, for example, inherited from his father the charge of trésorier des fortifications de Champagne in 1671. Louvois used the talents of such men for fortifications only after he became surintendant des bâtiments in 1683 at the death of Colbert; even then, however, these civilians rarely served at sieges and remained stuck at the bottom of the ranks. 323

The architects—formally trained men of the cities and frequently members of the Royal Academy of Science—labored mostly on constructing fortifications. They must have looked down their noses at the cruder, often destructive enterprises of the more empirically trained soldiers who pretended to their métier. Nonetheless, the military engineers had an advantage over their civilian counterparts: while the latter languished in relative obscurity within the walls they had helped create, the former were able to venture forth and assist the king in reducing enemy fortresses to submission to his conquering armies. These actions provided opportunities for the most proficient among these soldier-engineers to catch the royal eye and advance in the king’s service. In a society where noble blood, especially when risked in battle, was still more respected than bourgeois intelligence, even a fortification genius of Vauban’s obvious gifts was anxious to prove his nobility and thus worthiness for advancement in the military hierarchy. Not surprisingly then, all this social, occupational, and rural-urban tension engendered a great deal of jealousy between the two departments, even when Louvois took over Seignelay’s in 1690. A common esprit de corps emerged only after 1691 when fortifications became a department separate from the war ministry. 324

323Ibid., 93-114.

324Ibid., 60-62, 111, 113-14; Lazard, Vauban, 38-42; Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 68.
The rivalry between Colbert and Louvois is a commonplace of the Sun King’s reign. Each regarded the other as an upstart. Colbert had once been the commis of Le Tellier père, whose power he came to rival with a collection of offices and a clientage network of his own. Louvois, twenty-two years Colbert’s junior, was rightly judged by the latter to be an ambitious young man intent upon expanding his power and that of his family. The controller-general further regarded Louvois as a warmonger anxious to squander the treasury carefully amassed during years of peace in order to satisfy his master’s craving for martial glory. Their clashes were the talk of the court and have provided much grist for historians’ mills since.

It would be misleading to imply that the two royal ministers were perpetually hostile to one another and could never work together, for such was not the case. When it was a matter of advancing the fortunes of their families and clients or augmenting their own standing by increasing the gloire of their royal master, they cooperated. Indeed, it was the ministers themselves—enough above the fray to see matters from a broader perspective and aware of the limits the king might set on such infighting—who on occasion had to restrain the enmity of their subordinates against the members of the rival department.335

And there was ample opportunity for the ministers to exert their authority to stop the bickering. Neither department accommodated itself with ease or pleasure to the necessities of cooperation with their rivals. Perhaps a united department of fortifications

335See Clément, Histoire de Colbert et de son administration, 2 vols. (Paris: Perrin, 1892), 2: 433-46, for a traditional view highly unfavorable to Louvois, and André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 283-91, for the opposite perspective. Corvisier, Louvois, 267, 278-87 eschews the traditional Manichaean caricatures of the two men and puts the friction between the two clans in perspective. Also, see his chapter on "Colbert et la guerre" in Un nouveau Colbert, 287-308, but especially 289-90. Meyer, Colbert, 12, also discusses the historiographical prejudice against Louvois and for Colbert. Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, adds a narrative of the interactions of the king and his closest advisors in the period after the War of Devolution that charts the ups and downs of this rivalry (see, for example, 5-7, 12, 20, 29-31, 52-53, 57-58, 65, 70, 73, 83, 85, 91, 95-96, and 116-118), although Sonnino sometimes appears to be contemptuous of all the parties involved.
has exercised a more positive hold on the minds of historians than it did on the longings of contemporaries. Even Vauban remained largely content with this bifurcated system, or at least had no desire to undertake its rectification.

The bureaucracy of the Colberts took a longer time to resolve itself into a workable hierarchy and routine than did that of the war minister. As soon as the armies withdrew from a province, Louvois used the provincial intendants and Vauban to supervise the repair and construction of fortifications. Colbert, however, was plagued by a number of difficulties. The technical requirements of construction along the coasts were quite different from those for places not subject to the battering of the sea. Until 1669, he worked with three different sets of officials, one of which were venal officiers. His actions were also hampered the need to expedite official paperwork to the provinces through one of the secretaries of state until 1669, when he joined their ranks. From that important year, Colbert experimented with a number of arrangements and a variety of personnel, as venal officiers gave way to commissaires, sometimes provincial intendants, other times specialized fortification intendants. Only in the early 1670s did this period of large-scale administrative innovation end.

Even this apparent resolution of the bureaucratic drift that had plagued Colbert’s fortification service for so many years fell apart under the strain of the Dutch War. This constant upheaval of both personnel and procedures cannot have been good either for morale or for administrative efficiency, and by the middle of the 1670s it had taken its toll. Thus, it took the administrative ideas and skills of an outsider, Louvois’s directeur général des fortifications, to bring some resolution to Colbert’s administrative difficulties. Vauban accomplished this through inspection tours, letters, and his clear articulation of practical administrative procedures.

Vauban’s exertions also served to bring the two diverse and rival departments closer together before their official joining in the early 1690s. Colbert’s department accepted this with some resistance, rightfully fearing being swallowed by the voracious war minister, but the king, himself fearing invasions during the Dutch War, left Colbert little choice. These threats to the realm’s frontiers dictated a massive program of building, repair, and demolition, and it drove before it—or, perhaps more aptly, dragged after it—
this process of administrative change. Vauban, for his part, was a figure whose talents were so manifest that most opposition gave way to his wishes, if not immediately, at least in the long run, especially since the king and his ministers added their weight to his personal credit and the authority of whatever commission or office he held. Thus, it was increasingly upon Vauban that Louis XIV, Louvois, and Colbert relied to meet the fortification challenges of the Dutch War.

When first Seignelay and then Louvois passed from the scene in the early 1690s, it was Vauban’s procedures that remained. These had been developed in conjunction with Louvois, who chose as his chief fortifications administrators on the spot the provincial intendants. Louvois hastened to demolish the Colberts’ less effective personnel arrangements in 1690, and this work was continued by Vauban and Le Peletier de Souzy in 1691. Nearly two decades earlier, Vauban had provided a blueprint for this reorganization in his Directeur General des Fortifications, born of his practical experiences directing the work in Flanders. Vauban relied mostly upon his keen observational skills and his aptitude for organization to develop this system. Clerville, who never played the role of chief assistant coordinator under Colbert, had perhaps provided only examples of what to avoid.

Although Vauban’s designs for new fortresses and his brilliant sieges of those of the enemies of France have echoed more loudly throughout history, his administrative accomplishments were no less significant. Since the reign of Henri IV, fortifications had often been a rather haphazard affair not always under the direct control of the state. Like Colbert and Louvois, Vauban was also about the business of organizing, articulating, extending, and routinizing the administrative legacy of the past into an efficient tool of the royal will. If the Sun King was the seventeenth century’s quintessential roi-bureaucrate, the worthy heir of Richelieu’s "bureaucratic impuise," then in Vauban Louis had found his perfect ingénieur-bureaucrate—a technical genius with an observant eye, an almost limitless energy, a keen sense of pragmatism, and a

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loyal yet frank nature. Vauban was on all counts equipped to be an able collaborator in Louis XIV's pursuit of security and order on the frontiers of his realm.
CHAPTER VI

"DIACRE DE M. DE CLERVILLE": VAUBAN'S DEBUT AND EARLY CAREER (1651-67)

[Il a servi] sans aucune interruption et sans avoir été, une seule année, soit en paix ou en guerre, qu'il n'ait été employé utilement hiver et été.

"Abregé des services."

Vauban, 1703

Vauban began his long military career in an era of great disorder and confused loyalties. The emergence of the modern nation-state had by no means cleared away all remnants of the feudal past. Indeed, as a number of authors have painstakingly demonstrated, the new was grafted on to the old in a way that frequently confounds the modern observer. The institutional lines of loyalty in the absolutist state were either paralleled or contradicted by ties of personal loyalty rooted in more traditional institutions, such as family, social class, and locale.277

Urbain Le Prestre, father of the famous Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, and his ancestors were a part of these complicated crosscurrents that ran at the local and national levels. This family was one of the more humble members of the local gentry in the heavily forested and rugged Burgundian region known as the Morvan. The Le Prestres first appear in the records of this area in 1459, having come north originally from the province of Auvergne where they can be traced back to the century of Saint Louis. They were able to style themselves "de Vauban" from 1555, when Emery Le Prestre, a notary of the châtellenie of Bazoches and great-grandfather of the man who made that name famous, purchased a small, nearby fief and château from another noble short on


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cash and without an heir. This was a definite ascent of the social ladder for a man engaged in selling the local wood to the royal arsenal at La Rochelle for the building of ships, a minor nobleman whose brother was a wholesale merchant and whose wife was the daughter of a tradesman.\textsuperscript{328}

Family influences on the formation of an individual's outlook are indisputable but often difficult to sort out. Hence, we may only wonder at the connection between Vauban's later ideas on religious toleration and the fact that his grandfather, Jacques Le Prestre, although apparently remaining a Catholic, had served in the army and household of Admiral Coligny, the great Huguenot leader of the Wars of Religion. What is more, Jacques's first wife, whom he married at La Rochelle in 1571, was the daughter of the Protestant captain of the company in which he served. Jacques eventually returned to the Morvan to more conventional pursuits, marrying the daughter of the seigneur of Bazoches, moving into this chateau not then occupied by its owner, and becoming a notary. Yet, even Jacques's father Emery had served a youthful stint as a soldier, and Jacques himself could not resist the call in 1595 of the Prince de Conti to rally with the other nobles of the province to the banner of the former Protestant, Henri IV. By that date, Jacques Le Prestre bore the title of écuyer, a modest rank of nobility just below that of chevalier. This venerable gentleman lived for ninety-seven years, lasting into the middle of the seventeenth century and probably regaling the young Vauban with his tales from by-gone eras.\textsuperscript{329}

Vauban's father Urbain (1602-52) was the oldest son of Jacques's second marriage. Urbain's older half-brother Paul (d. 1635) received the chateau and fief of Vauban when he married in 1633, whereas Urbain, married three years earlier to Aimée de Cormignolles, herself the offspring of the minor nobility, received the manor of

\textsuperscript{328} Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 1: 2; Pujo, \textit{Vauban}, 15-16. Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 668-72, though flawed is still useful. Hebert and Rothrock, \textit{Soldier of France}, 11-16, 243, attempt to clear up some of the mythology about Vauban's origins and youth repeated by Rousset and a long line of other biographers.

\textsuperscript{329} Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 1: 2-3; Pujo, \textit{Vauban}, 16-17.
Champignolles and an interest with Paul in some farmland and woods. Urbain and his young bride established housekeeping near her parents in her native village, Saint-Léger-de-Fourcheret, lodging in the Chateau of Ruères, which belonged to a Huguenot family. Their only son, Sébastien, was born and baptized in this small village in May 1633, and a daughter, Charlette, in November 1638. By the time this daughter was born, Urbain had purchased enough of a portion of his father’s fief of Vauban from his nephew Paul II Le Prestre (d. 1703), heir of his late half-brother Paul I, to style himself "sieur de Vauban" in Charlette’s 1638 act of baptism.

In a treatise on sieges penned at the beginning of the eighteenth century for and dedicated to the Duke of Burgundy, Vauban noted apologetically that "Vous n’en trouverez pas le style fleuri ni éloquent, mais très-simple, et d’un homme qui, n’ayant point d’étude, cherche à se faire entendre du mieux qu’il peut." But there is a measure here of the conventional excuse-making common to most authors at the outset of their work, due either to real fear of error or to a desire to appear modest. Vauban was certainly not unschooled, especially in that era when formal education as we know it

330 Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 13, 15, 17; Pujo, Vauban, 16-17. Saint-Léger-de-Fourcheret changed its name to Saint-Léger-Vauban in 1867. The exact date of Vauban’s birth appears to be in dispute: Rochas gives both 4 and 15 May, whereas Pujo says that it was 13 May. Vauban’s sister never married; she moved into the chateau of Bazoches when her brother purchased it in 1675 and died there at some unknown date, last mentioned in local registries in 1682 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 29). Neither were orphans, as legend has had it, for Urbain lived until 1652, and his wife at least until 1651. His grandfather Jacques may even have outlasted his son by a bit or only died shortly before.

331 Ibid., 13. Rochas implies elsewhere (ibid., 4 n. 2) that it was Sébastien himself who made this purchase from his cousin, allowing him to take this title of Vauban, but it is clear that he had a right to this title from his youth. The earliest mention of Vauban in the documents of the era refer to him as "Vauban." See, for example, Mazarin to Turenne, 12 August 1658 (Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 577).

332 Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, Traité des sièges et de l’attaque des places, ed. Augoyat (Paris: Anselin, 1828), 4. The Traité de l’attaque des places, which comprises the first part of Augoyat’s composite volume, was written at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession, and was presented to the Duke of Burgundy, Louis XIV’s grandson and heir apparent, in 1704.
today was uncommon. Abbé Orillard, the vicar who had baptized the infant Sébastien, instructed the adolescent in the basics, including reading, writing, mathematics, and catechism. He was assisted in this by a Le Prestre clansman, the Abbé Morot, his vicar. When the youth had learned what he could from these two country parsons, he was sent to another relative, the Abbé de Fontaine, in the nearby modest-sized city of Montréal, where he had his first contact with urban life, which even on that small scale was quite different from what he was accustomed to in the woodlands of his home. This kinsman was soon transferred to the larger city of Semur, where he served in the priory at its famous Carmelite college. But Vauban appears not to have studied here on a formal basis, probably confined in his academic pursuits to what he could gather from the Abbé de Fontaine. Nevertheless, it was likely from that learned clergyman that the young Sébastien learned about fortifications. Just as music had been connected in the Middle Ages with the study of mathematics—a linkage rather foreign to the modern mind—so fortifications were often employed as a practical application of geometric principles. In short order, Sébastien was to have an opportunity to experience an even more realistic practicum of these skills than he had enjoyed at Semur.333

In 1651, when Vauban first took up arms, he entered a world of often confused and tangled loyalties, as was apparent in the Princely Frondes against Cardinal Mazarin. The great prince de Conde, hero of Rocroi and the dominant nobleman in Burgundy, was in the Morvan seeking the support of the local aristocracy. Urbain Le Prestre had a brother-in-law in Conde’s regiment; this connection of kinship—more than a desire to join a "patriotic" struggle against the foreign cardinal, as some have alleged—resulted in Urbain’s son, the seventeen year old Sébastien Le Prestre, rallying to the colors of that illustrious prince.334 The appeal of the military life to a youth of Vauban’s rank is not


334 Ibid., 23-24. For a highly nationalistic interpretation of Vauban’s initial adherence to Conde’s party, see Marthe Fels, Quatre Messieurs de France, chapt. "Vauban" orig. Terre de France: Vauban (Paris: Gallimard, 1932; Flammarion, 1976), 15, written during a period when many of the French were fearful of the influence of foreigners.
difficult to imagine. Added to this were the opportunities for social advancement it afforded this son of a country nobleman of modest means. Vauban’s father, himself the second son of a member of the minor provincial nobility of mediocre fortune, had no comfortable or commodious patrimony to offer his only male heir. It is not surprising that he either encouraged or seconded his son’s desire to add to it. Besides, young Sébastien was not the first Le Prestre to succumb to the enticements of military adventure.\footnote{Curiously, Hebbert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 14, argue that “there was little record of military service in the Le Prestre family,” although they cite Vauban’s three ancestors who took up arms, and claim that “Despite this lack of family tradition,” he entered Condé’s service “with enthusiasm.”}

Young Le Prestre served the rebel Condé as a cadet in the regiment that bore that prince’s illustrious name. Half a century later, when preparing the paper work attendant upon his naming as a Marshal of France, Vauban wrote an account of his career, and this document, corrected by his own hand, offers a brief glimpse into this early period. Perhaps Condé, whose own expertise at fortifications was widely recognized, himself heard of the young man’s skills and saw to it that they were usefully directed; whatever the case, Vauban did admit that at that time he had “une assez bonne teinture des mathématiq. et des fortifications et dailleurs ne dessinant pas mal,” a tribute to the efforts of his teachers and the capacity of their bright young student.\footnote{Vauban’s “Abregé des services du Maréchal de Vauban” was composed in 1703 after he received his marshal’s baton in January of that year. A draft of this document, with corrections in Vauban’s often hurried and illegible hand, is found in A.N. M (Ordres militaires) 658, no. 1 (unpaginated). This work precedes largely in a chronological fashion for many folios, then ends with a few folios entitled “Abregé plus Succinct que le Precedent”; therefore, if references are not to specific dates within the main body of the text, they are to this “Abregé plus Succinct.” For this quotation, see the entry for 1651. The whole document was printed by M. Augoyat as Abrégé des services du maréchal de Vauban, fait par lui en 1703 (Paris: Anselin and G.-Laguionie, 1839). Augoyat may have used the A.N. M 658, no. 1 manuscript, although he did not indicate his source, but his text varies—for instance, on the entry for 1664, 1665, and 1666—and he made no attempt to note Vauban’s corrections. In addition, both Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, and Lazard, Vauban, quoted from and summarized a good portion of this work throughout their works, often at the opening of chapters, but appear to have...}
During the 1652 campaign he worked on the fortifications of Clermont in Lorraine and took part in the rebel assault upon the royal garrison of Sainte-Menehould. His bravery in the latter earned him the plaudits of his superiors and an offer to be made an ensign, but he was forced to decline because of lack of funds to support such an advancement. The rest of that year and into the next he served in Condé’s cavalry, again seeing action and even receiving a wound.337

In 1653, Condé’s brave cadet once more demonstrated his boldness and his craving for honor: when cornered by royal troops, he capitulated only when he received terms that maintained his dignity. Nevertheless, this dramatic event forced him to re-think his loyalties, abandon his first master, and throw in his lot with Mazarin and the young king. It would seem, then, that the question of which master to serve was resolved for Vauban early in his career, yet the matter was more complicated than that.338

Access to the center of power meant access to the king, but most of his subjects did not enjoy a direct, individual approach to the monarch himself. More commonly, influence was to be found dispersed around the royal person among the great military and ecclesiastical nobility, certain members of the royal family, and the great officials of state, all of whom were in turn linked by a complex system of clientage and patronage to the ranks of lesser officials, nobles, clergy, and corporations, both at court and throughout the realm.339

If we conceptualize the servants of the Sun King as ranged around him in a series of concentric circles representing orbits, then certainly in 1653 we would have found Vauban—a young man the son of a modest country gentleman—a mere speck on the outer


338 Ibid., entry for 1653.

reaches of that solar system. During the rest of his career he would move closer and closer to the center, approaching it at varying pace and by diverse means. And if we extend the cosmic analogy further, we would see him attaching himself in orbit around various greater, more luminous planets over time, waxing stronger and stronger until he himself emerges as a planet in his own right.

Client of the Cardinal and the Chevalier

It was Mazarin who first took notice of the qualities of the young captive from Condé’s army in 1653, and it was to the care of one of the cardinal’s important creatures that Vauban was entrusted for his initiation into royal service. According to Vauban’s own account, "Feu Monsieur le Cardinal Mazarin informé qu’il aurait quelqu’intelligence dans les fortifications, se le fit amener et après l’avoir converti," sent him to serve an apprenticeship under the Chevalier de Clerville. As we have seen, Clerville had distinguished himself as a military commander, siege engineer, and loyal adherent of the cardinal during the final years of the Thirty Years’ War and during France’s lingering struggle with Spain, serving in Italy and rising to the rank of maréchal-de-camp in 1652. In October and November 1653, Vauban acted as second to Clerville, who commanded the engineers at the second siege of Sainte-Menehould under Marshal Du Plessis-Praslin. The siege was nearly lifted on a number of occasions due to bad weather, sparking rumors in Paris and holding out hope for Frondeurs anxious to profit of any reversal of royal fortunes, but a breach was made and the garrison surrendered on 27 November. This action at a place Vauban had helped take for Condé and the Spaniards the previous year allowed Clerville to take the political and technical measure of his new charge, and he was sufficiently impressed to entrust Vauban with the repair of the stronghold after its capture. This siege had also been conducted under the watchful and anxious eyes of the cardinal and the young king, who according to Rouset were now satisfied that the young cadet’s "conversion" was both genuine and
advantageous to them; hence, Vauban was given a monetary gratification and a lieutenancy in a royal regiment. ³⁴⁰

Further opportunities to serve his new masters presented themselves that same year as the royal armies reconquered fortresses taken earlier by the Frondeurs and their Spanish allies. The king's highly-symbolic June coronation at Rheims was followed by practical measures such as his and Mazarin's attendance at the important siege of Stenay, a small but strongly defended city that had long harbored Condé and other rebels. It finally capitulated on 5 August 1654, thirty-three days after the trenches were opened. Vauban noted that this was a long and difficult undertaking, which personally cost him two wounds. Clerville, this time directing the attack under Abraham Fabert, governor of the fortress of Sedan and another Mazarin loyalist, spoke well of Vauban in a letter to the cardinal, indicating that since the young man was "qu'à Votre Éminence, elle

³⁴⁰ Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1653. On this siege and its importance, see Chérual, Ministère de Mazarin, 2: 118-22. Rousset, "La jeunesse de Vauban," 672, recounts the notice taken of Vauban by the cardinal and king at Sainte-Menehould, but cites no source; Vauban makes no mention of this incident in his "Abregé des services." Clerville put together a list of his young protégé's services in November 1666 at Vauban's request, detailing his service from 1653 through 1656; this "Certificat du Chevalier du Clerville au sieur de Vauban, ingénieur ordinaire du roi" is dated 16 November 1666, and is reprinted in its entirety in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55-56. This document was first published by one of the marshal's descendants from the original in the archives of the Chateau of Aunay in the Department of the Nièvre. See Le comte Le Peletier d'Aunay, "Documents historiques curieux ou inédits," L'Investigateur, Journal de l'Institut historique 2d series 2 (1842): 111-12. Clerville's testimonial indicates that Vauban conducted the lines, trenches, and saps that Clerville outlined for Sainte-Menehould, and that the young engineer stayed behind to repair the place "ayant eu ordre de Sa Majesté" (ibid., 55). John B. Wolf, Louis XIV (New York: Norton, 1968), 205, mistakenly says that "Louvois had 'found' [Vauban] in Condé's entourage..." and later (231) that "Vauban first attracted royal attention at the siege of Lille in 1668" (the siege actually took place the previous year). Bluche, Louis XIV, 241, similarly errs when he asserts that it was in 1667 during the War of Devolution that the king "discovered the abilities of Vauban." For brief biographical sketches of Clerville, see Augoyat, Aperçus historiques, 1: 53-55; Lazard, Vauban, 50-57. Clerville often served Mazarin as his emissary to generals in campaign, as seen, for example, in Mazarin to Turenne and de la Ferté, 10 September 1653, when he bore instructions from the cardinal about the actions to attempt during the rest of the campaign season. This letter is printed in Mazarin, Lettres, 6: 18-19.
pourra s’en servir quand et où bon lui semblera." In his later recollection, Clerville underlined the fact that despite being wounded, his young assistant was "des premiers à l’entrée des lignes" when royal troops rushed from their success at Stenay to lift the siege of Arras undertaken by the Spanish. Vauban shared in the glory of this successful encounter between Turenne and the rebel Condé, which sent the Frondeur and Spanish troops scurrying back into the Spanish Netherlands.\(^\text{341}\)

Mazarin’s convert again proved his worth in the ensuing thrusts against the king’s enemies. The siege of Clermont (5-22 November 1654) presented Vauban with a clear opportunity to demonstrate his adeptness at engineering and his skill at command under the attentive king and his chief minister, for Clerville had fallen ill and left his young protégé to direct the trenches under Marshal de la Ferté. Having once more pleased his patrons, Vauban served under Clerville’s orders directing the demolition of the place. At Landrecies, in June and July 1655, he served directly under de la Ferté and Turenne—in his own words, "presque seul"—and did so with such competence that, according to Clerville’s later recollection, "...Sa Majesté, pour mieux reconnoistre son mérite, le retint pour l’un de ses ingénieurs ordinaires par un brevet qui lui fut envoyé au d[udit] siège dont il s’aquita aussi très bien." Under Mazarin’s careful tutelage, the king was attending sieges whenever the danger was not too great; the young sovereign visited the trenches, involved himself with the preparations, and came to know the worth of the cardinal’s servants who also served him. By this time Louis XIV had come to know that

\(^{341}\text{Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1654. Chérue, Ministère de Mazarin, 2: 148-62, gives the background and details on Stenay; see ibid., 162 for Clerville’s letter to Mazarin. See also "Certificat du Clerville au Vauban," 16 November 1666, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55, for Clerville’s equally positive account of Vauban’s bravery at both Stenay and Arras. Chérue, Ministère de Mazarin, 2: 168-81, explains the importance of the defeat before Arras that Turenne handed both Condé and the Spanish. Vauban later recalled the action at the lines of Arras in his Trait é des sièges, 28.}
Vauban was a capable technician, a brave and devoted officer, and an altogether valuable individual. 342

Cardinal Mazarin also took a lively interest in the king’s new engineer, sending him with various field commanders to besiege a number of Spanish strongholds on the frontier and then to repair them so that they could be held against any counterattack. At Condé (15-18 August 1655) and at Saint-Guillain (capitulated 25 August), Vauban again served "presques seul" under de la Ferté and Turenne, then wintered in Condé to re-establish its defenses following Clerville’s plans. 343 Due to internal problems both in the Spanish Netherlands and in France, both sides were slow to begin the next year’s campaign, but when it opened in June, Turenne attempted to take the important Spanish city of Valenciennes. The French opened their trenches on 26 June, but when de la Ferté unwisely altered Turenne’s defensive plans for the besiegers, Condé profited from his mistake by launching an attack on 16 July that forced the lifting of the siege. Vauban, who had labored at Condé until called to aid de la Ferté at Valenciennes, was himself seriously wounded on the leg in this action. This did not prevent him, however, from rushing back to the fortress of Condé with a corps of soldiers to see to its defense, for the Spanish had abandoned talk of peace due to their recent success, and hoped to regain the strategically and symbolically important place that shared its name with their

342 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1654 and 1655. Chéreau, Ministère de Mazarin, 2: 183-84 and 283-86, gives the details on Clermont and Landrecies. See "Certificat du Clerville au Vauban," 16 November 1666, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55, for Clerville’s remarks about Vauban’s brevet from the king. According to the "Extrait des titres produits par haut et puissant seigneur messire Sebastien Le Prestre, seigneur de Vauban...pour les preuves de noblesse" (after 20 January 1705), and presented to Marshals Choisel and Huxelles, deputized by the king to receive them, Vauban was given his brevet as engineer 3 May 1655 (published in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 65-70; this reference is on 67).

343 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1655. "Certificat du Clerville au Vauban," 16 November 1666, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55. In a letter to Clerville, 25 September 1655, Mazarin thanked him and approved his plans for the fortifications to be constructed at these two new conquests (Mazarin, Lettres, 7: 574 [summary]).
rebel ally. Lack of food for the garrison caused Mazarin to order the surrender of this place to the Spanish, which they did on 18 August, but not without obtaining the free exit of its defenders and their baggage. Once again, the valuable Vauban was dispatched to secure a threatened stronghold, this time that of Saint-Guillain, which the Spanish and Condé menaced in hopes of forcing Turenne to lift his siege of La Capelle. The cardinal’s engineer stood his ground and the king’s foes suffered a double loss when they surrendered La Capelle on 26 September and gave up their effort to take Saint-Guillain. 344

This succession of sieges and defenses afforded Vauban the opportunity to prove himself in the two types of action an engineer would encounter during a campaign; during the same period, he had also demonstrated his skills as a supervisor of the complicated business of repairing a stronghold, especially in the midst of war, when enemy troops remained on the prowl nearby. Marshal de la Ferté, under whom he had served as an engineer at the sieges of Clermont, Landrecies, and Valenciennes, was impressed with his courage and skills, rewarding Vauban with the command of a company in his regiment of La Ferté. This was a significant advancement for a poor nobleman who could not afford the purchase of such a position on his own, which was a prerequisite to attaining the rank of a general officer, and it also signaled a modification in his position within the patronage system of the army: although he remained a client of the cardinal, his loyalties surely shifted from Clerville, who gave him employment but under his tutelage, and to the marshal, who had considerably augmented his social standing and financial resources.345


345 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1656. For a brief introduction to venality, ranks, and their social implications, see Martin, "The Army of Louis XIV," 117.
The next action he saw was at the difficult and bloody siege of Montmédy in 1657 (11 June-6 August). It had been expected that this fairly small post would not long delay the attackers led by marshal de la Ferté, so only a few engineers were sent, but the rocky foundation upon which Montmédy sat caused all kinds of delays. While the king, Mazarin, and the court watched, numerous young nobleman threw themselves at the Spanish bastions with an abandon that cost many of them their lives. Although Clerville is mentioned as present by various authors, his role at this siege is unclear; perhaps he had been assigned to other duties with the main army under Turenne and only came to Montmédy when the place failed to yield in a timely fashion, and may have served only as an advisor or as the cardinal's emissary and eyes. Nevertheless, Vauban's own "Abregé des services" indicates that, all the other engineers having been killed at the beginning of the siege, "il conduisit seul les attaques." Clerville's own recollection

346D’Amat, "Clerville," 1526, claims that Clerville served at Montmédy, but gives no details and cites no source; Jules Bourellly, Cromwell et Mazarin: Deux campagnes de Turenne en Flandres: La bataille des Dunes (Paris: Librairie académique Didier; Perrin et C°, 1886), 50 n. 2, does the same, but notes elsewhere (19-27) that Mazarin hoped for a siege aimed at taking Rocroi, whereas Turenne hoped for a dash into Flanders to surprise the Spanish, take Dunkirk and Gravelines, and thereby comply with an earlier treaty obligation to Cromwell and the English. Perhaps Clerville's still highly regarded skills were being husbanded for these more important actions rather than being squandered on a minor undertaking such as that at Montmédy had been expected to be. Bourellly, (ibid., 87), refers to a letter from Clerville to Mazarin from the camp at Montmédy dated 29 June; Bourellly says that Vauban was the sole survivor of the four engineers serving under the orders of the chevalier, but the late date of the letter might suggest that Clerville arrived toward the end of the siege, when Vauban already had matters in hand. On 6 June 1657, Mazarin sent a letter to de la Ferté explaining that Talon carried orders for him to undertake the siege of Montmédy and telling the marshal that Clerville would rejoin him (Mazarin, Lettres, 7: 726). Mazarin to Turenne, 10 June 1657, indicates that Clerville was serving as his messenger to de la Ferté (ibid., 499). Mazarin to Clerville, 25 June and 4 July 1657, thanks the chevalier for the map and news he sent (ibid., 738 [summary] and 591) See the recollections of Henri de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, Mémôires du maréchal de Turenne, ed. Paul Marichal (Paris: Renouard, 1909-14), 2: 76-81, who does not, however, name the engineers in this action. See also Chéreau, Ministère de Mazarin, 3: 65-66, on Montmédy (or Montmédi), although his account makes no mention of either Clerville or Vauban.

347Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1657.
of Vauban's services, although written nearly a decade later, does not include this action as one in which the young engineer "a bien et fidèlement servi Sa Majesté sous notre direction..."348 Whether by the design of his new patron or by the press of events, which had left him alone after the slaughter of all his fellow engineers at the outset of the siege, this appears to have been Vauban's debut out from under the tutelage of Clerville.

Once more, Vauban's capacity and bravery—he had suffered at least four wounds—delighted all those around him, including Marshal de la Ferté, who immediately rewarded him with another company, this time in his regiment of Nancy, again waiving the usual costs of such venal positions. This tied the engineer even more firmly to that brave officer and gave him even more independent status vis-à-vis Clerville, under whose supervision he had escaped due to the countervailing direction of de la Ferté. Louis XIV and the cardinal had also observed Vauban at Montmédy and were impressed enough to send him afterwards on his own to assist Turenne and France's new English allies in an attempt to take Mardick on the coast. After only a few days, that place fell (3 September 1657), and Vauban received orders from Mazarin to spend the winter re-fortifying the place, where he worked in concert with Cromwell's troops who were garrisoned there and charged with its defense.349

It is worth pausing at this point to note that most accounts of Vauban's career have failed to mark properly and correctly this important move out from under Clerville's guidance. This is due in part to a mistake of long-standing about the chronology of this event. Clerville's certificate of 1666 briefly describes all the sieges, defenses, and repairs Vauban undertook during a four-year period, starting from his debut in royal service in 1653 through his assistance in the defense of Saint Guillain against Spanish attack in 1656. Clerville notes at the beginning and the end of his narrative that "dans toutes les occasions le sieur Vauban a toujours agy selon nos ordres, et soubs nostre


349Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1656 and 1657. See Chéreau, Ministère de Mazarin, 3: 69-74, on Mardick.
direction...." 350 in his "Abregé des services," as will be recalled, Vauban referred to being the sole engineer to conduct the attacks at Montmédy due to the death of the other engineers, but since Clerville was not, of course, a casualty of that siege, and since the Chevalier did not count Montmédy and succeeding actions as having been under his orders, Montmédy would indeed seem to have been the first action where Vauban officially commanded the trenches as first engineer, serving immediately under the royal commander of the army. The facts that Montmédy was Vauban's first engagement after becoming one of de la Ferté's captains and that it was the latter who commanded at that siege adds weight to this conclusion. But this conflicts with the chart of sieges found in Vauban's 1703 "Abregé des services," which has been given wider currency since by the various historians who have reproduced it. 351 This chart appears almost at the end of the document and marks Valenciennes in 1656 as Vauban's first siege out from under Clerville's authority. What explains this contradiction? As will be discussed later and as Vauban admitted himself, his summary of his services was imprecise in places. But it is perhaps unfair to blame Vauban for this particular confusion and instead more likely that it was the fault of one of his hard-pressed secretaries. It is noteworthy that while there are numerous corrections, deletions, and additions in Vauban's distinctive hand on nearly each of the thirty-one pages of the main body of this summary, there are none at all on eight pages of the "Abregé plus succinte que le precedent" which followed and contained the summary chart in question. This digest of his narrative may have been compiled by his secretary at a later date; in any case, it shows no sign of ever having been revised by Vauban himself. Perhaps in drawing up the chart Vauban's secretary confused his master's defense of Saint-Guillain in 1656, his last action under Clerville, with his earlier assistance in the attack on that same place the previous year. Thus, instead of placing his note ("jusques icy en second, les suivants en premier") after the


1656 entry, which would seem to agree with Clerville's certificate and Vauban's own narrative in the "Abregé des services," the hapless secretary mistakenly placed his note after the entry for 1655. It is worth insisting upon this correction to the accepted chronology because it helps make sense of subsequent developments.\textsuperscript{352}

While Clerville continued to serve as Mazarin's go-between with de la Ferté's army, which was considering the cardinal's longed for siege of Rocroi,\textsuperscript{353} Turenne moved his army toward the Flanders coast after the fall of Montmédy in 1657, he did so with the intent of fulfilling the treaty Mazarin had concluded earlier that year (23 March) with the Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, committing French troops and money to join with English troops to wrest Mardick, Gravelines, and Dunkirk from their Spanish defenders. The first of these eagerly-sought prizes was invested on 29 September, and after an enemy sortie was repulsed, the trenches were opened on the first day of October. The small garrison capitulated on 3 October. Vauban says merely that "il servit" at this siege, but the summary chart at the end of his "Abregé des services" indicates that he directed the attacks.\textsuperscript{354}

As Turenne observed in his later reminiscences, "Après la prise de Mardic, la conservation estoit bien plus difficile que n'en avoit esté la conqueste," because of a combination of diplomatic and logistical problems. He had to preserve this conquest, which was handed over to the English yet garrisoned in part by French soldiers, while at the same time preparing to take the other two fortresses on Mazarin and Cromwell's

\textsuperscript{352}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no.1.

\textsuperscript{353}See Mazarin to Clerville, 30 September 1657 (Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 636 [summary]), to de la Ferté, 3 November (ibid., 646 [summary]), to Clerville, 14 November (ibid., 647 [summary]), to Clerville, 18 November (ibid., 649 [summary]), although the latter suggests friction between the chevalier and the marshal.

\textsuperscript{354}See the description of this campaign in Turenne, Mémores, 2: 90-96. Bourelly, Cromwell et Mazarin, 34-39, describes the siege, but surely due to a typographical error says the place surrendered only on 30 October. For Vauban's role, see his "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no.1, entry for 1657. Both D'Amat, "Clerville," 1526, and Bourelly, Cromwell et Mazarin, 50-51, only place Clerville at Mardick from December 1657.
list, which the English were pressing him to do that very year. Meanwhile, the Spanish attempted to rob the allies of their first acquisition by attacking in November but were turned back. Turenne gave special attention to the fortifications of Mardick and neighboring strongholds.\textsuperscript{355}

Vauban seconded Turenne's effort to assure the defense of Mardick in the weeks succeeding its capture, but Mazarin was anxious to place his chief fortifications expert at Turenne's side, writing the marshal on 7 December:

J'envoye le chevalier de Clerville voir la place en pour me rapporter l'estat où il l'aura trouvée. Je croy mesme qu'ayant autant d'intelligence qu'il en a des fortifications, il n'y sera pas tout-à-faict inutile, et je vous prie de lay donner toute l'assistance dont il aura besoin pour s'y rendre en seует.\textsuperscript{356}

The cardinal impatiently awaited his chief engineer's arrival at Mardick, but was relieved when at the end of the month Clerville had drawn up a project and plan for its execution. Mazarin promised to send an engineer to supervise its implementation, and the highly regarded Vauban --either still on the Flanders coast or drawn from the regiment he had returned to in Lorraine--was selected by Mazarin and Clerville to be the conducteur of the work.\textsuperscript{357} With these efforts seemingly underway, Mazarin was well-satisfied, for he had remarked to one officer in recommending that he consult with Clerville on the placing of some batteries, "n'y ayant personne qui s'entende mieux en tout cela que luy...."\textsuperscript{358} And now his expert was ably assisted by a young man who had lived up to the promise shown when he was taken on four years earlier. Also reassured, Turenne returned to Paris for the winter, arriving in the capital on 3 January 1658. But not before a conflict had broken out between Clerville and Vauban. Either because so ordered by Marshal de la Ferté or from personal inclination to see to the duties of and


\textsuperscript{356}Mazarin to Turenne, 7 December 1657, in Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 232. He wrote the same to Talon, the army intendant, the same day (ibid., 654 [summary]).


\textsuperscript{358}Mazarin to Marshal d'Aumont, 25 December 1657, in Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 243.
his interests in his new companies or from a desire to distance himself from Clerville, the engineer announced his plan to return to his regiment, still stationed in Lorraine.\textsuperscript{359} Clerville wrote to the cardinal in exasperation on 21 December:

\begin{quote}
Cela est en vérité bien fâcheux que ces gens-là [the engineers] soient obligés d'aller chercher auprès des grands seigneurs le pain que le roi ne leur donne pas, et puis que le roi ne s'en puisse pas servir dans le besoin.\textsuperscript{360}
\end{quote}

This letter suggests that Clerville had a certain sympathy for the lowly engineer who had to rely on obtaining a position in some regiment in order to support himself, or perhaps that Clerville was jealous of a man of wealth and power like de la Ferté and of the independence from himself afforded Vauban by this former apprentice’s new dependence upon the marshal. At the very least, he had put his finger on one of the greatest weaknesses facing a secretary of state for war--not to mention a cardinal or a king--who wanted direct control of the military engineers on the battlefield: whoever provides their pay will tend to command their loyalty and control their actions. As we have seen already, Louvois tried to come to grips with this reality by increasing resort to putting officers with engineering skills on half pay and supplementing their income with gratifications.

It had taken the intervention of Mazarin with de la Ferté to obtain permission for an extension of Vauban’s stay on the coast. And Mazarin drew on his personal credit with the engineer as a powerful patron and protector when he instructed Clerville to "dire, de ma part, au sieur de Vauban de demeurer tout le mois de fevrier dans Mardick," and asked the intendant d’Ormesson for "cinq cents livres pour lesluy donner."\textsuperscript{361} Clerville was so pleased with Vauban’s work at Mardick that when the young officer continued to express a longing to return to Lorraine, the chevalier urged Mazarin on 9 January that

\textsuperscript{359}Turenne’s return to Paris is noted in Bourelly, \textit{Cromwell et Mazarin}, 58 n. 1.

\textsuperscript{360}Clerville to Mazarin, 21 December 1657, ibid., 87 n. 2.

\textsuperscript{361}Bourelly, ibid., 86-87. Mazarin to d’Ormesson, 8 January 1658, in Mazarin, \textit{Lettres}, 8: 665, which repeated what he had written to Clerville.
"il ne doit pas, à mon avis, être renvoyé sans quelque petite satisfaction qui l’oblige à revenir une autre fois...\textsuperscript{362}\textsuperscript{a}

Clerville fell ill and left the work site about this time, but returned mid-January despite lingering poor health, surely aggravated by the unhealthy marshes of the region. Mazarin urged him to press the work and not absent himself from it until completed, and then only to go to England to report progress to an impatient Cromwell.\textsuperscript{363}\textsuperscript{b} Difficulties erupted again, however, and appear to have taken a nasty turn. On 6 February, Clerville angrily wrote to the cardinal that Vauban persisted in his desire to join his company, "nonobstant tout ce que j’ai pu lui dire de la part de V[otre] E[minence] sur ce sujet." Clerville proposed not to pay Vauban the 500 livres gratification the cardinal had bestowed upon him earlier unless the young engineer remained the rest of the month on the work site at Mardick. Clerville complained further to the cardinal that the "tyranic de ces sortes d’hommes-là," and suggested something that his more famous pupil would later unsuccessfully press on the war secretary and the king again and again: "il vaut mieux tard ou jamais songer à en élever un nombre raisonnable dans les armées et le royaume...." Clerville saw himself and his royal master being victimized in their time of need by an arrogant "apprentis" who did not know but would be clearly shown his place.\textsuperscript{364}\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{362}\textsuperscript{a}Clerville to Mazarin, 9 January 1658, in Bourelly, Cromwell et Mazarin, 91 n.

\textsuperscript{363}\textsuperscript{b}Mazarin to d’Ormesson and to de Baas, 3 January 1658 (Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 662 [summary]), to Clerville, 18 January (ibid., 668 [summary]), and 30 January (ibid., 674 [summary]). The last letter mentions this projected trip to England, but it is not certain that Clerville ever undertook this journey (see Mazarin to Clerville, 13 January and 1 February, and to Talon, 6 February, ibid., 666, 656, and 657 [summaries]). On 30 January, Mazarin wrote Cromwell of Clerville’s anticipated visit and spoke in glowing terms of Clerville’s skills (ibid., 283).

\textsuperscript{364}\textsuperscript{c}Clerville to Mazarin, 6 February 1658, in Bourelly, Cromwell et Mazarin, 87-89. Clerville wanted to end the influence of foreigners, noting that "pour les étrangers, je ne les trouve si hardis ni si étendus que nos apprentis, pour les acheter par des capitulations si excessives que celles qu’ils prétendent faire avec nous."
For Vauban’s viewpoint, we can only speculate since there are no known letters from him for this early period, but we may reasonably conjecture that he was not necessarily wedded to the profession of military engineer—as much as we might unwittingly project back to that era some premonition of the later triumphs of his career—and tending to the business of his new companies and his new patron held out greater hopes for the future than some short-term assignment carrying out the plans of Clerville, whether or not he had by this time formed a low opinion of that gentleman’s skills as a builder and taker of places.

Before Clerville could post his letter, however, the situation had changed. He added a post-script announcing that he and d’Ormesson “avons fait retourner ledit sieur Vauban à mardick jusqu’à la fin de février,” but reiterated his complaints about the paucity of qualified conducteurs “qui soient devenus capables de servir utilement en ce temps-là.”

But Clerville’s claim of responsibility for Vauban’s return is the opposite of the truth, for it turns out that the chevalier was indeed the major cause for the engineer’s resolution to leave Mardick, and that his otherwise understandable desire to rejoin his company in Lorraine played only a secondary role. On 6 February, the same day that Clerville’s early outburst was followed later in the day by an apparent partial resolution of his frustrations, the army intendant Talon informed Mazarin that:

> Je ne vois personne qui puisse y servir [at Mardick] plus utilement et plus attachement aux travaux que lui [Vauban]; son retour n’a pas été sans difficultés par les différends qu’il a eus avec le sieur de Clerville, jusque-là qu’il l’aurait traité de coups de bâton, sans que je l’en aie empêché, l’en ayant plusieurs fois menacé en ma présence.

As Bourelly correctly observed, the grammatical sense of this quotation is open to question as to who threatened to strike whom, but the context strongly suggests that Clerville was the bully in this matter. Additionally, a letter from Talon nearly two weeks later confirms this, for he apprised the cardinal of how a frustrated Clerville’s bad treatment of an English engineer had led to a protest from the Lord Protector. In his

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365Clerville to Mazarin, 6 February 1658, ibid., 89.

366Talon to Mazarin, 6 February 1658, ibid., 89-90. It is not clear who of this family of army intendants this is.
frustration, the chevalier was treating his subordinates like lackeys. At age twenty-five, Vauban had already shown both an ambition to rise in the social and military hierarchy and an audacious, youthful courage, but when the two came into conflict, it was consistent with the way he lived his later life that he would forego advancement rather than suffer dishonor to his noble station, no matter how humble and meager his fortune. Talon added in this second missive to the cardinal that "Vauban désèrtera si le dit Clerville retourne à Mardick." 367

It is unclear what happened next, but it appears that Vauban remained at Mardick shoring up its defenses, apparently keeping his distance from Clerville and the chevalier doing likewise. This was a dark period for the latter, of whom much was expected in the delicate and domestically unpopular alliance with the Protestant regicide Cromwell. The recent rise of his former apprentice, coupled with that young man’s independent nature and, thanks to Marshal de la Ferté, increasingly emancipated status—all this appears to have weighed heavily on Clerville, as his letters and actions suggest. In his letters to Mazarin he despaired of taking Dunkirk or augmenting its fortifications if, by some chance, it was captured. 368 Nevertheless, in June 1658 Clerville had an opportunity to erase whatever doubts his gloom and quarrelsome behavior might have raised in Mazarin, for he covered himself in glory when he aided Turenne in the siege and capture of Dunkirk, coupled as it was with the latter’s brilliant victory over the Spanish at the nearby Battle of the Dunes (14 June). This was the engagement that forced the Spanish to sue for peace, even though Dunkirk itself was ceded to France’s English ally Cromwell—which subjected the cardinal to loud complaints at home—and came to France only in 1662 when Louis XIV purchased it from Charles II. 369 But even his part in this

367 Talon to Mazarin, 12 February 1658, ibid., 90.

368 Ibid., 91-97.

369 Ibid., 166-241. Clerville’s "Discours fait par le chevalier de Clerville des causes di siège de Dunkerque et de ce qui s’est passé et est notable en iceluy, 1658," can be found in ibid., 269-323. See Chéruel, Ministère de Mazarin, 3: 148-68, on the siege and battle. On Clerville’s role, see Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 55; Zeller, Organisation défensive, 48. There is no mention of Vauban at this action in his or the
triumph left Clerville in a foul mood, as attested to by Mazarin's apology to Turenne on 21 June, promising merely that "Je feray tout mon possible pour vous envoyer le chevalier de Clerville; mais on ne gouverne pas toujours son esprit comme on voudrait bien." 370

Three sieges took place the same year in the aftermath of Turenne's rout of the Spanish, but the French momentum was broken for a time by the prospect of a succession crisis. When the French resumed their advance after the king's life-threatening and lingering mid-summer illness finally abated, it was Vauban who conducted the attacks "en chef" under de la Ferté at Gravellines (29 July-27 August), a difficult business resolved only after exploding mines under its cleverly wrought defenses. Mazarin, although himself ailing, followed all from his bed in the camp, sending details to the convalescing king in Paris. Turenne pushed on into Spanish territory, and Vauban conducted the attacks for him that led to the capture of Oudenarde on 9 September and Ypres on 25 September. 371 These operations earned Vauban the cardinal's thanks and, as the engineer later remarked, even though Mazarin was "naturellement peu libéral," a monetary gratification, along with hopes for advancement into the Gardes français, one of the elite regiments of the kingdom. 372

This brilliant and rapid advance stunned the now-reeling Spanish, but autumn rains forced Turenne to satisfy himself with the work of consolidation as he paused to re-

370 Mazarin to Turenne, 21 June 1658, in Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 451.

371 Chéruel, Ministère de Mazarin, 3: 185-91, 194-99. Mazarin's correspondence suggests that Clerville served as his messenger and observer at the siege of Gravellines, offering his advice from time to time. See Mazarin to Clerville, 4, 13, and 16 August 1658 (Mazarin, Lettres, 8: 765, 772; 9: 699 [summaries]), to Turenne, 12 August (ibid., 577), to Louis XIV, 23 August (ibid., 9: 28). The same appears to have been true for the siege of Ypres and Oudenarde. See Mazarin to Turenne, 15 and 24 September 1658 (ibid., 59, 66). Letters of the cardinal to Clerville show him active, however, in the consolidation of these new gains. See Mazarin to Clerville, 9 and 12 October and 15 November (ibid., 731, 732, 746 [summaries]).

372 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1658.
fortify his new gains. Vauban assisted him, but was captured on his way to verify the progress of these efforts at Oudenarde, and remained a prisoner of the Spanish until "quelque temps après relâché sur sa parole et ensuite eschangé." This was to be Vauban's last act in the war with Spain, however, for an armistice was declared the next year by the war-weary combatants, and the rest of the year was spent applying the finishing touches to the Peace of the Pyrenees, which was signed in November 1659. An end to hostilities had come at last, but not before Vauban had established himself as a loyal, brave, and valuable member of the king's emerging military machine.373

What was Vauban's later attitude toward his mentor Clerville? Vauban's later writings and those of his patron Louvois reverberate with an outspoken contempt for the Chevalier and his skills, and we have just seen how they nearly came quite literally to blows, at least on the part of the older man. But there appears to have been no irreparable breach between the two, for they labored together on occasion in the final months of the war. Although they likely saw little of one another after the arrival of peace the following year, they did encounter one another again at Nancy in 1661 and 1662, and apparently worked together without undue friction, or at least none that caused a major explosion like that at Mardick. If Vauban had broken openly with Clerville prior to their 1667 rivalry over the construction of the new citadel at Lille, perhaps it would have influenced the certificate of service the younger engineer asked his old mentor to draw up for him in 1666, but this document contains nothing but fulsome praise for the former pupil, lauding both his skill and his bravery, and no hint of any criticism whatsoever; Clerville was an accomplished enough courtier that he perhaps could have damned the younger man with faint praise had he been so inclined, but this appears not to have been his goal. Perhaps the old chevalier had come to regret his violent irascibility during the crisis of the Flanders coast; but even if he had and had attempted to re-establish good relations with Vauban, it is not likely that that fiercely

373ChérUEL, Ministère de Mazarin, 3: 216-22, 246-64, on the peace. For his capture, see Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1658.
proud young man forgot or forgave Clerville's threats, both to his person and to his career.  

While historians have generally accepted the criticism and even contempt that Vauban, many of his contemporaries, and subsequent commentators have heaped upon Clerville, especially in light of the later, more remarkable accomplishments of his famous subordinate, the chevalier has not been without his defenders, at the very least for his non-engineering skills. The actual influence he had on Vauban's technical training is hard to gauge. In some instances his own methods may have served more as counter-examples or practices to be avoided rather than as guidelines. Clerville's virtue was that he recognized his apprentice's talents and permitted them to be developed in the heat of battle. He was generous enough to praise Vauban's efforts when he thought them deserving, even after the two had quarreled. As Colonel Augoyat observed:

Clerville ne fit faire aucun progrès à l'art. Il avait le talent précieux de savoir observer et recueillir les faits, de discerner les avis et de se pûer à la supériorité des hommes avec lesquels il avait des rapports.  

Indeed, Clerville seemed secure enough in the esteem of the cardinal, and when that prelate died on 9 March 1661, his chief engineer moved comfortably into the service of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, intendant of Mazarin's household, and the cardinal's principal

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374 "Certificat du Clerville au Vauban," 16 November 1666, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 55-56. This document is so positive in its tone, which goes beyond formulaic praise, that one is permitted to postulate some sort of reconciliation, even if it was at bottom superficial on the part of one or both participants. It is possible to draw parallels between this incident and the incident in Alsace to be examined below. The bitter tone in Vauban's letters concerning both Clerville and Colbert are certainly similar, as are perhaps the circumstances that gave rise to them.

personal agent and political heir. On the eve of his patron's death, Colbert had been named royal intendant des finances. In September, Colbert entered the Conseil d'en haut, the inner sanctum of royal advisors, as part of his victory over Nicolas Fouquet. As we have already seen, Colbert was able to add de facto control over naval affairs and most fortifications to his growing administrative imperium. Emerging victorious from the bureaucratic struggle for power of 1661, Colbert continued to protect and advance Clererville, who served as his chief advisor in matters of fortifications. 376

Client of the Colberts

While Clererville's star ascended and brightened, Vauban's appeared to fade in the dullness of garrison duty near Toul. All that his "Abregé des services" says for 1659 and 1660 is that "il a servit à sa Compagnie dans le Régiment de la Ferté." This colorless description of his activities appears to betray a lingering feeling, even after more than four decades, that these were not terribly productive years. But, despite this inactivity, in many ways Vauban seems to have "arrived" (Rousset says he had become "un personage") by the close of war with the Habsburgs. Although only twenty-seven years old, he was known to the military hierarchy for his valor and talent, and had made himself useful to the all-powerful Cardinal Mazarin. Moreover, when other young officers were losing their livelihoods, he was in a regiment that had survived disbanding at the outbreak of peace. 377 Taking another step that marked his progress in the world,

376 Augoyat, Aperçu historiques, 1: 55. For this administrative history, see Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 24-33.

377 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1659 and 1660. Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 678, says the regiment de la Ferté was at Toul, while Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 20, says it was "en garnison à Nancy," basing this on Vauban's marriage contract, signed 25 March 1660, which styles him "captaine-lieutenant du régiment d'infanterie de campagne de M. le maréchal de la Ferté-Sénectère et capitaine d'une compagnie entretenue en la garnison de Nancy...." (reproduced in ibid., 53). Rousset cites Vauban's 1698 "Mémoire concernant la jonction de la Meuse à la Moselle" (which he wrongly dates as 8 June 1679; the signed original, with corrections in Vauban's hand, is dated 7 September 1698 and is in BIG in-Fo 33; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 577-80, contains a highly inaccurate version of this same
he returned to his native Morvan to marry Jeanne d’Osnay, daughter of the Baron d’Epiy, of a family that was ancient but of modest fortune.378

Vauban’s prospects brightened in 1661 when the king employed him "par choix" to carry out one of the provisions of the Peace of the Pyrenees: the demolition of the formidable fortifications of Nancy, capital of the troublesome Duchy of Lorraine, which had sided once too often with the Holy Roman Empire in its struggles with France. Almost thirty years before, Richelieu had observed prior to his entry into the city: "Cette place se peut dire en vérité la première du monde pour sa fortification."379 Vauban, as a captain in the Regiment de la Ferté, accompanied Marshal de la Ferté, Colbert de Saint-Pouanges, and lieutenant-general François Pradel, under whose orders Vauban served, when they entered Nancy with their troops in early April to enforce the treaty signed by the duke in February. This regiment and another were to supply some of the labor for the French share of the demolition activities. In May, secretary of state for war Le Tellier sent Clerville and the architect Valpergue to evaluate the work to be

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work drawn from a more removed manuscript source), in which he recalls having been quartered in the prévôté of Foug during the winter of 1659-60; according to the modern Michelin Road Atlas of France, 3rd ed. (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1990), Foug is just to the west of Toul. A curious portion of the secret codicil to Vauban’s will, drafted 23 March 1702, instructs his secretary and executor Friand to travel to "le prevosté de Fong [sic] en Lorraine, près de Toul" to repay money whose possession troubled him: in 1659 Marshal de la Ferté had given a verbal order for a gratification for Vauban, but the lack of a written document and the fact that the local receiveur of "Fong" had to "user d’industrie" to pay it, caused the honest engineer to harbor "un scrupul" which he wanted set to rights, with interest on the original sum (Vauban’s testament is printed in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 59-63, and this reference is to 61). The confusion over Vauban’s location in 1659 and 1660 may perhaps be resolved as follows: while the company of Nancy, of which Vauban was a captain, was quartered in that nearby city—where Vauban surely visited them from time to time—it seems that his own quarters were in the area of Toul, with the other company he commanded, which was in the Regiment de la Ferté.

378For what little is known of Madame de Vauban, see ibid., 26-29. The marriage contract, dated 25 March 1660, is printed in ibid., 53-54.

379Richelieu’s observations on Nancy are quoted in Zeller, Organisation défensive, 37 n. 1.
done at Nancy. Clerville, who had been equipped with the office of commissaire général des fortifications the previous month, was placed in charge of the whole demolition operation by Le Tellier on the 6th. As apparently instructed by the king, Clerville made use of the services of his former pupil Vauban, to whom he and Saint-Pouanges entrusted the surveying of the site for the determination of the one-third share the French were to undertake and the two-thirds to be done by the Lorrainers. Prior to his departure from Paris on 8 May, Clerville wrote to the foreign minister Lionne alluding to the work Vauban was already doing in Lorraine, and there is every reason to believe that Clerville was pleased with the progress he found upon his arrival.\footnote{Boislisle, \textit{Conseil de 1661}, 211-12 (for Clerville's letter to Lionne) and 244-45 (for Saint-Pouanges to Le Tellier, 10 May 1661, on Vauban's survey activities). See Clerville to Mazarin, 9 January 1658, for an earlier expression of Vauban's technical proficiency in this specialized work involving mines (Bourelly, \textit{Cromwell et Mazarin}, 91 n.).} Along with the lieutenant-colonel of his regiment, S de Mornas, Vauban served as entrepreneur for both the French third and the two-thirds of the Duke of Lorraine. The work was done with such diligence and skill that Croissy wrote glowingly to Lionne of the efforts of Mornas and Vauban, expressing to Paris the expectation that they would complete part of it before the king's deadline. Charles IV, Duke of Lorraine, and his agents obstructed the French efforts at every opportunity, but Louis XIV applied pressure, and the work continued from April into the next year.\footnote{See André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 88-99, on the players and for a basic narrative of this episode. Colbert de Saint-Pouanges was the cousin of Jean-Baptiste Colbert and the brother-in-law of Michel Le Tellier. In 1661 he was intendant of Lorraine and the Three Bishoprics, and was Le Tellier's man while serving as royal emissary to Lorraine's duke. The intendant of Alsace Croissy, according to Louis André, was there in part as Colbert's man to keep an eye on Saint-Pouanges. See Boislisle, \textit{Conseil de 1661}, 1: 157-59, 239, 317-18, 323, 2: 71-75 (4 for Croissy's letter to Lionne, 17 June 1661), for other details and traces of Vauban's involvement at Nancy.}

It is not clear what Vauban did during the rest of the year 1662. His "Abregé des services" offers little help, noting broadly that "En 1661 et 1662, le roi l'employa par choix à la démolition des fortifications de Nanci." There is no reason to believe that he
spent the whole year engaged in that work of destruction, even though he appears to have remained stationed in Lorraine until the end of 1663.\textsuperscript{382} Rochas contended that Vauban made a memoir in 1662 on the inundations of Calais and Dunkirk.\textsuperscript{383} Another author wrote that Vauban was at Dunkirk for the first time in 1663 when, as a simple engineer charged with planning the defensive inundations of that place and Calais, he proposed to raise a line of low fortifications which could easily be flooded. According to this account, for which the author provided no documentation, Vauban’s theory was supported before the royal council in the presence of all the marshals of France; it prevailed over all opposition, and he was charged with the execution of his proposal.\textsuperscript{384} Portions of this anecdote sound rather like a legend, and it seems to be an embellished account of an incident that did occur in 1668, when Vauban and Clerville offered rival plans for the fortification of Dunkirk.\textsuperscript{385} Even though there may be some basis to believe that Vauban operated on the Flanders coast in 1662, we are left with few details of the activities of the young engineer in that year.\textsuperscript{386}

Vauban’s work at Nancy so pleased the king that early in 1663 the engineer was sent to reconnoitre the defenses of Marsal, a place to the north-east of the ducal capital, and draw up a plan for a possible attack should Duke Charles persist in his tenacious resistance to the peace terms. Bellicose preparations escalated, and the king himself, accompanied by all his ministers save Colbert, who kept an eye on business in the

\textsuperscript{382} Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1661, 1662, and 1663.

\textsuperscript{383} Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 45 n. 1, citing a \textit{mémoire} on this but giving no source. France purchased Dunkirk from England in late 1662, and the Le Telliers were involved in re-integrating the city into the French crown’s holdings. Louvois himself was there in November and December 1662 (André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 111-12).

\textsuperscript{384} Millon, \textit{Fortifications de Dunkerque}, 1: 90.

\textsuperscript{385} See p. 241 below.

\textsuperscript{386} Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, in the entry for 1664, 1665, and 1666, does mention, along with work at Brisach, several trips by royal order, one of which was to "les Pays-Bas."
capital, left Paris to meet his troops on the frontier of Lorraine to coerce the duke. Although Charles had backed down under the mounting pressure and war was averted, Vauban's plan of attack had so impressed the monarch that Louis gave him a money gratification and a transfer from the Regiment de la Ferté to the more prestigious Regiment of Picardy; Louis XIV enhanced these marks of favor by giving Vauban his new company **gratis**, for normally the cost of a captain's commission in the **vieux corps** of the kingdom was quite dear. This change of regiments also had the result Clerville had deemed necessary five years before when he had bemoaned the need for engineers to go hat-in-hand to the great nobles who were proprietary colonels of regiments: henceforth, Vauban was more firmly and directly tied to the king, for Louis XIV was himself the proprietor of the Regiment of Picardy, and had drawn his skilled engineer from dependence on Marshal de la Ferté and more directly into his own clientage.\(^{387}\)

Vauban's time in Lorraine was to prove valuable in another way, but one that in the long run resulted in a brush with disgrace and an eventual change of allegiance in the clientage system that swirled around the royal ministers; at the time, however, prospects looked bright. Charles Colbert de Croissy, intendant of Alsace, was then serving as one of Le Tellier's emissaries to the Duke of Lorraine. On 11 March 1663, Croissy mentioned to his brother, the minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, having encountered Vauban at Nancy undertaking the demolition of that place during the past two years.\(^{388}\) Nearly a month later, on 9 April, Croissy wrote to his brother of delays on the important work at Brisach and Philipsbourg, important outposts on the right bank of the Rhine gained from the Holy Roman Empire by the Treaty of Münster (1648); both Colberts had an interest in these places since they were in the intendancy of the one and in a province unofficially controlled by the other. Thus, Croissy noted with alarm that there were no engineers on the site and lamented:


\(^{388}\)Quoted in Livet, *Intendance d'Alsace*, 357.
Il n'y a pas d'apparence de continuer de sy grandes entreprises qu'il n'y ayt quelque habil homme pour directeur et cela m'oblige encore à vous dire que le s de Vauban, dont je vous ay écrit, passe pour habile ingénieur et, au jugement de M. de Pradel [commander at Nancy] et de toutes ceux quy le connoissent, peut fort bien conduire ces travaux. Il passe aussi pour fort brave homme et toute son ambition, après qu’il aura bien servy, serg qu'il plaise au Roy de le gratifier d'une compagnie dans un vieux corps....

Shortly thereafter, Colbert replied to his brother that if the engineer charged with the work at Brisach--the Italian Valpergue who had drawn up the plan for Brisach in 1661--decided not to return to it, then "je ne manqueray pas de parler au Roy de la capacité et l'activité du sieur de Vauban et de luy rendre en ce cas tout l'office qui pourra dépendre de Moy," but until he knew for certain Valpergue's intentions, the work could proceed without a new director. As for Philipsbourg, Colbert saw no need to add an engineer there, the one already in place being sufficient.390 During the summer and the

389Quoted in ibid., 357, who wrongly attributes this letter to Charles Colbert de Saint-Marc, cousin of Jean-Baptiste and Charles Colbert de Croissy (the latter is usually called "Colbert de Croissy" or merely "Croissy," and this convention will be observed hereafter). Charles Colbert de Saint-Marc will be referred to as "Saint-Marc" in this paper, despite the usage adopted by Livet (who called him "Charles Colbert"); this seems preferable because of the usage of other authors and for the sake of clarity. That the two cousins shared the same first and family names has been a source of endless confusion, as Livet notes 359 n. 2 (see Godard, Intendants, 353, for another example of this), but Livet himself falls victim of this when he misattributes this particular letter to Saint-Marc. The reply to this letter is briefly cited by Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 357, who draws it from Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 5-6, but reads Clément's label of "à Charles Colbert" as meaning Saint-Marc, whereas Clément's convention is to use "Charles Colbert" for Croissy and to call Saint-Marc simply "M. de Colbert" (see, for instance, ibid., iii, 1, 8, 18). The letter is clearly to Croissy, and even refers to their "cousin." Hence, the letter of 9 April is actually from Croissy, not Saint-Marc.

390Colbert to Croissy, 20 April 1663, ibid., 5-6. Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 357, again says that this was written to Saint-Marc, but the letter itself and Clément contradict this notion. Also, according to Livet, ibid., 212 and 946, Croissy was intendant until April and Saint-Marc began his intendancy in May; a letter in ibid., 351-52, shows Croissy writing to his brother from Metz on 5 May. André, Organisation de l'armée, 530 n. 3, reported that Valpergue was a Piedmontese who was named ingénieur ordinaire of the king in 1642 on the recommendation of Le Camus and the employed by Le Tellier during the latter's intendancy in Italy. Valpergue had worked with Colbert on expansions to Mazarin's palace in 1659 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 1: 351). Mazarin himself had tried to extract his engineer/architect from a Spanish prison in
autumn, Colbert urged his cousin Saint-Marc, the new intendant in Alsace, to expedite
the work at Brisach,\(^{391}\) but to no avail, for Colbert later complained to his brother
Croissy that their relative had squandered the fair weather.\(^{392}\) Sometime after August,
however, Valpergue quit the work in disgust over the financial improprieties he observed
and which compromised the construction, and so a new director was needed.\(^{393}\) Colbert,
either recalling his brother’s earlier recommendation or responding to new endorsements,
decided upon the thirty year old Vauban. The necessary arrangements were made with
the secretary of state for war, who on 23 December 1663 sent Vauban a dispatch from
the king instructing him to leave his garrison duty (probably at Nancy) and go to Brisach
as soon as possible, there to receive orders as to what he was to do.\(^{394}\)

**Dangerous Entanglements at Brisach**

Alsace in 1664 was firmly under the sway of Colbert and his clan. His cousin, as
recently-appointed intendant, supervised the construction projects at both Brisach and
Philipsbourg, where he had been involved in regulating contracts and other matters as
the sub-delegate of the previous intendant, Croissy, as early as April 1663. The town
of Brisach, the seat of the intendancy and a hub of administrative and diplomatic activity

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1655, writing to the Bishop of Orange on this and referring to Valpergue as "celuy-cy
que chacun sçait qui est à moy, à mon pain et à mes gages, estant mon architecte...."

\(^{391}\)Colbert to Saint-Marc, 7 June 1663, Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 8.

\(^{392}\)Colbert to Croissy, 24 August 1663, ibid., 8 n. 1 and 8 September 1663, ibid.,
6 n. 2.

\(^{393}\)Colbert to Saint-Marc, 23 November 1669, in ibid., 5: 19, suggests that Valpergue
(or Walpergue) left Brisach because of conflicts with Saint-Marc. Duc Mazarin detailed
Valpergue’s unhappiness with the skullldugery afoot at Brisach, noting that the engineer
"m’en parlé les armes aux yeux." See his letter to Colbert 6 May 1664, printed in
Georges Livet, *Le duc Mazarin, gouverneur d’Alsace (1661-1713)* (Strasbourg: Le

\(^{394}\)BN Clairambault 1174 contains a reference to the king’s letter to Vauban, and
young Louvois’s letter relaying it on behalf of the senior Le Tellier is printed in Rochas,
*Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: x.
on the eastern bank of the Rhine, was under the constant and watchful eye of that royal proxy and his agents. In addition, the governor of Alsace was Charles-Armand de la Porte, Duc Mazarin, nephew-in-law and heir of the great cardinal and thereby an associate of the Colberts; Duc Mazarin was also governor of the militarily strategic fortresses at Brisach and Philipsbourg. Thus, in 1664 Vauban entered into the work at Brisach as a client among other clients of the powerful minister Colbert. But, as one might expect, common allegiance did not prevent quarreling among the various officials in the overlapping provincial jurisdictions, and Duc Mazarin was ambitious and powerful enough in his own right to chart an independent role for himself on more than one occasion.395

It is not clear exactly when Vauban arrived in Alsace, but on 29 February 1664 the king wrote to Duc Mazarin urging him to take Vauban with him on a visit to Colmar. That city was one of the ten towns of the Decapole, a group of Alsatian communes then wrangling with Paris over their exact relationship to the French crown as spelled out in the Treaty of Münster. Louis XIV noted that since Vauban was "à présent sur les lieux, lequel pourra reconnoistre mieux que personne les environs de la dite ville et les avantages qu'on y pourra prendre pour la réduire à ce qui est juste s'il en est besoin..."396

395Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 212. Livet, Duc Mazarin, 13-24, 87-102, on his powers as governor, which gave him certain responsibilities for fortifications. Colbert tried to get along with this powerful family for reasons of personal and royal political expediency and because the late cardinal "a déposé son nom et sa fortune" on this family (see Colbert to Charles Colbert [de Croissy], 24 August 1663, in Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 22). See Colbert to Poncet, 19 February 1672 (ibid., 70), for an instance when the minister supported the duke against the intendant. But his letters to Mazarin of 13 September and 11 November (ibid., 5: 64-65 and 4: 78-79) contained forceful assertions of the jurisdictional priority of the intendants, the qualifications of these agents of the king, and the consequences of resistance to the royal will.

396Louis XIV to Duc Mazarin, 29 February 1664, quoted in Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 357. Saint-Marc to Colbert, 5 March 1664 (ibid.) says that "M. de Vauban est ici [Brisach] depuis 8 jours." Livet estimated his arrival at Brisach as 27 February. For a survey of the politics of this region more succinct than Livet's massive tome, see Franklin Ford, Strasbourg in Transition, 1648-1789 (New York: Norton, 1966; orig. 1958), 1-54.
The duke was apparently impressed enough with the newly-arrived engineer's assistance at Colmar to write Colbert that, should the king choose to move against that city and he himself was tapped to head the operation, then "Je n’aurais pas icy de mauvais seconds comme...[among others] Vauban...qui sont tous gens de service."\(^{397}\)

As new chief engineer, Vauban was charged with the execution of the plan Valpergue had drawn up for Brisach in 1661 and which had been approved by the king. Vauban’s role was even more complicated, however, since the engineer was also to serve as the new entrepreneur at Brisach. This required him not only to supervise and assist the work, but actually to see to the amassing of building materials, arranging to transport them to the site, organizing labor, paying suppliers and workers, and dealing directly with all the sub-contractors. This was more than a technical task, it was a business venture. Such arrangements whereby the engineer also acted as entrepreneur, either alone or with partners, were common during this period, although they have scandalized later military engineers who have written about them. Vauban himself had successfully combined the two roles at Nancy, so much so that his skills were signaled to the foreign minister, as we have already seen.\(^{398}\)

The project at Brisach was one beset by all kinds of problems. Besides those that arose from the very distance of this post from the capital and its location on the German side of the Rhine, with many miles of semi-hostile territory between it and the nearest solidly-French province, there were serious contentions among the royal officials concerned with its fortifications. Vauban soon found himself caught up in this incessant power struggle between intendant and provincial governor that was often found

\(^{397}\) Duc Mazarin to Colbert, from Colmar, 26 March 1664, Livet, Duc Mazarin, 149. Louis XIV’s proposed action against Colmar in May was called off the day it was ordered (ibid., 156 and n. 1).

\(^{398}\) Duc Mazarin to Colbert, 6 May 1664, ibid., 153, indicates that Vauban was slated to become the new entrepreneur, but had not yet done so by that date. See Lazard, Vauban, 117-18, where the author, a twentieth-century military engineer, expressed strong disapproval for this expedient. For a detailed discussion of contractual matters with entrepreneurs, see Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 61-71.
elsewhere in the kingdom, but which raged here with particular fury due to the strong personalities of the two men involved. Duc Mazarin’s rivalry with the intendant, with whom Vauban was closely tied by the nature of his new employment, caused the governor to express some concerns to the minister in Paris about the man whom he had earlier praised. In a letter to Colbert on 12 April, the duke alleged that "Le s’ de Vauban qui est icy est celuy qui paroist pour agir dans ces travaux et pour les entreprendre, mais ces véritables associés sont les s” Faille et Cézar qui ne paroissent pas et auraient fait augmenter le prix de l’adjudication pour toucher leur ristourne."400

By 6 May 1664, matters had deteriorated further as the duke recalled his shock at the little progress made at Brisach, and related to the minister that his investigations with the entrepreneur and the architect Valpergue had revealed that the former had been ordered to stop work, no longer being supplied with funds. Indeed, Mazarin continued, Saint-Marc had indicated that he would no longer work with the current entrepreneur, but seemed closed to the duke’s suggestions of ways to obtain better contracts and more timely construction; he repeated the rumors that Faille and Cézar, the intendant’s two cronies, were behind this tangled web of suspicious financial dealings. The duke reminded Colbert that he and Croissy—“un des plus honestes et des plus capables hommes du monde”—had gotten on well during the latter’s tenure as intendant of Alsace, whereas the minister’s cousin “a toujours paru de sa part un grand esloignement pour tout ce qui m’a peu regarder,” persecuting the governor’s clients and protecting his enemies. Finally, Mazarin reported that when he had questioned the intendant on the cessation of work

399 Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 44-46. Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 476-77, reminds us, however, that this conflict was far from inevitable or universal. Nevertheless, Duc Mazarin quarreled with all the intendants of Alsace, no matter whose clients they were.

400 Duc Mazarin to Colbert, 12 April 1664, from Brisach, Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 358. See also ibid., 92-93, for a quotation from the same letter alleging that the prices being paid at both Brisach and Philippsbourg were too high. Cézar was one of Saint-Marc’s close cohorts. Both he and Faille served as the intendant’s commis (ibid., 200, 362, 370).
il me dist qu’il avoit des ressorts et des moyens sousterrains pour pour faire tresver au roy son advantage et son compte, qui paroistroit en temps et lieu et que ce qui n’avoit peu se faire en une anneee se feroit en l’autre, et toujours me parlant en ces termes generaux.  

At first, Saint-Marc laughed at the governor’s probing questions, but gradually he became angry and their exchange became more and more heated, at which point the duke broke off the conversation before matters turned ugly. Mazarin ended by appealing to the minister’s judgement, assuring Colbert of his loyalty and his desire “jamais estre en mesintelligence avec ceux qui porteront un nom comme le vostre, vous honorant et aimant comme je fais au dernier point.”

Not content to wait upon action from Colbert, however, Mazarin tried to conclude a contract for Brisach with two architects from Paris, Voulau and Frémin. For his part, Saint-Marc jumped to the defense of Vauban, his subordinate, and made countercharges against the governor’s would-be entrepreneurs, accusing them in turn of masking the involvement of a certain de la Forest, who would be the real entrepreneur. Vauban emerged victorious from this struggle and was awarded the contract; he began his work at Brisach with seventy workers on the morning of 4 June 1664. Saint-Marc wrote Colbert letters supportive of Vauban throughout the summer, for instance, assuring his cousin that “s’ Vauban travaille tout de son mieux et avec la derniere application....”

However, hints of difficulties may be gleaned from a letter to the minister penned 20 August 1664. The intendant noted that while Vauban was away on business for the king in Nuremburg, “je fais tenir sa caisse ceans, que toutes ses despenses sont faittes

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401 Duc Mazarin to Colbert, 6 May 1664, Livet, Duc Mazarin, 153-156.
402 Duc Mazarin to Colbert, 6 May 1664, ibid., 155.
403 Saint-Marc to Colbert, 14 May and 4 June 1664, in Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 358. Livet (ibid., 359) suggests that Mazarin may have been inspired in his critique of Vauban by displaced and unhappy entrepreneurs. See also Mazarin to Colbert, 6 May 1664, Livet, Duc Mazarin, 153-56, which suggests that Valpergue was close to the governor, whereas he regarded Vauban as one of the willing or unwilling associates of the intendant, although it is not clear which Mazarin thought was the case.
404 Saint-Marc to Colbert, 11 June 1664, Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 358.
par un homme qui est à moy et que ses registres sont en mois logis pour mieux pénétrer ses affaires..." This remark perhaps refers to early problems over accounts, which may explain why the intendant had Vauban's registers and was going through them, although the intendant was indeed required to monitor such financial transactions rather closely. It may also account for Saint-Marc's assertion in the same letter that he was doing his best "pour le [Vauban] faire venir au point que vous le désirez et vous donneray avis de sa dernière résolution..." At the very least, these comments indicate the engineer's vulnerability when someone supposedly his assistant actually was an agent of the intendant and when his account books, whose accuracy was prescribed by law, were in the hands of another during the trips that frequently absented him from the work site at Brisach.405

The reference to Vauban's trips to Nuremburg hints at one of the more curious services he performed for the king during this era. According to his "Abregé," he undertook three trips by royal order to the Germanies during 1664-66 to "faire f[air]e une petite machine militaire dont il aivoit donné le dessin pour servir au divertissement de Monseigneur le Dauphin âgé pour lors de 3 ou 4 ans."406 Colbert, Croissy, and Saint-Marc were also involved in the procurement of military toys for the royal heir, and Colbert spoke of using craftsmen in Augsburg and Nuremburg.407 At the very beginning of the 1670s, Vauban recalled the fire pumps he had observed in Nuremburg and which

405 Saint-Marc to Colbert, ibid., 358. Livet, who looked through this correspondence, refers only to "Les précautions ordinaires" in this instant and says a bit earlier: "En 1664, Charles Colbert [de Saint-Marc] soutient toujours son ingénieur..." (ibid.). In addition, when the accounts for this era were later in dispute before the auditors, those for 1664 do not appear to have been in question (see Louvois to Vauban, 19 February 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 42, and chapters seven and eight below for a discussion of these subsequent investigations). See Gutin, Corps des ingénieurs, 29, 42-43, 81-82, for the financial surveillance required of intendants.

406 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1664, 1665, and 1666.

407 See Lazard, Vauban, 117 n. 1, and Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 21 n. 1, on the involvement of Colbert, Croissy, and Saint-Marc.
he had used as the model for "the miniature artillery equipment that I had made seven years ago for M. le Dauphin by order of M. Colbert...." The minister must have had a great deal of confidence in Vauban's technical skills to entrust him with this project. In an age where service in the government still meant service to the person and household of the monarch, this seemingly trivial matter of toys takes on greater importance, for it gave Colbert a further opportunity for Colbert to ingratiate himself with the king and for Vauban to do the same with the minister.

Vauban continued to work on the rejuvenation of Brisach into 1665, but by late in the year Saint-Marc was apparently trying to nudge Vauban out as contractor. On 25 November, Saint-Marc reported to Paris that, contrary to his expectation, Vauban had accepted the reduction in price imposed on his masonry work (to 35 livres per cubic unit), and "que Vauban l'avoit prié de vouloir bien assurer Colbert que, n'ayant rien plus à coeur que de pouvoir mériter l'honneur de sa bienveillance, il alloit employer tous ses soins à s'en rendre digne par la solidité de ses ouvrages." By July 1666, however, it appears that the intendant had completely lost confidence in Vauban: "Il ne me reste plus maintenant qu'à vous faire scavoir sy il seroit plus avantageux de maintenir le s' de Vauban dans son traité que de lui substituer d'autres entrepreneurs pour y mettre la dernière main," Saint-Marc wrote his cousin in Paris. He further criticized his subordinate by observing that, while one

aurait peine à en trouver un autre qui pût s'en acquitter mieux que luy et d'ailleurs il y a tousjours bien du risque à passer à de pareilles extrémités... Il n'entend que mediocrement la maçonnerie et n'a autre application que l'économie, pour s'asseurer la partie qu'il a mis à couvert dès l'année passée; il sembleroit que le plus expédient seroit de remercyer le dit s' de Vauban plustost que de luy laisser achever le travail qu'il a commencé....

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409 See Meyer, Colbert, 21, for a brief but thought-provoking discussion of this.

410 Saint-Marc to Colbert, 25 November 1665, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 441 n. 1.

411 Saint-Marc to Colbert, in Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 358-59 n. 8. Livet, usually so clear and precise, is rather muddy at this point. Although he notes in "1666, volte-face de Charles Colbert [de Saint-Marc]" with regard to Vauban in the body of his
Consequently, Saint-Marc proposed that Vauban be indirectly elbowed out as entrepreneur by requiring him to lower the price of his contract a second time; when the engineer renounces his contract rather than take the loss, Saint-Marc predicted, he would be in no position to complain about being replaced by those who were willing to do so. In this same letter, the intendant took the opportunity to suggest replacements to his cousin: "Saint-André, entrepreneur du revêtement de Philibœourg avec le s’ Guezereolle qui travaille ici depuis 18 mois avec toute la capacité et l’expérience qu’on peut désirer en une personne de sa profession." 412

It appears that either out of naiveté as to what was going on at his expense or a desire to hang on to his patron whatever the present financial cost, Vauban was striving

narrative, his footnote references for the sources he employs are all dated "1665." However, a look at Charles de La Roncière and Paul-M. Bondois, eds., Bibliothèque Nationale, Catalogue des manuscrits de la collection des Mélanges de Colbert, (Paris: Leroux, 1920), vol. 1, to match manuscript volume numbers with dates, reveals that Livet cited letters of support for Vauban from Saint-Marc in October of 1664, 1 July 1665, 12 August 1665, and 2 September 1665. The letter "en juillet" he quoted from showing that Saint-Marc had turned on Vauban was from B.N. Mélanges Colbert, vol. 138, fol. 959, which according to the catalog is a volume covering June-July 1666. Clément, 5: iii, appears to have paraphrased and quoted from either this same letter or one similar to it, for his contains almost the exact information and most of the same words as the letter quoted by Livet. Clément dates his letter 28 July 1666, as opposed to Livet’s more vague "en juillet" [1666], and gives B.N. Mélanges Colbert, vol 138bis, fol. 420, as its source (also a volume for 1666), whereas Livet cites vol. 138, fol. 959. Two letters reiterating Saint-Marc’s fervent desire to rid himself of the economy-minded and "ignorant" engineer would seem to be a reasonable hypothesis. Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 611-12 quotes from Clément but wrongly dates the letter 26 July, and Lazard, Vauban, 118, repeats this mistake.

412Saint-Marc to Colbert, in Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 359; Livet’s note, 360 n. 1, indicates that Saint-André was a former soldier of the company of Magalotti stationed at Nancy. The intendant had earlier informed the minister that Saint-André would go to Philibœourg to serve as contractor on those fortifications, recommending his new creation by noting "qu’ayant déjà travaillé à Brisach sous Vauban, Saint-André avait donné lieu d’estre satisfait de ses ouvrages et qu’il espéroit qu’il feroit encore mieux" (Saint-Marc to Colbert, 4 November 1665, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 440 n. 1). See Vauban’s Directeur général, 61-62, for his later critique of such reductions in price, which were surely based on personal experience.
to retain his position and stay in the good graces of both the Colberts; operating as he was in a world where ties of patronage were pivotal, his reaction should not surprise us. In 1666, he sought and received a certificate (dated 16 November) from his old master, Clererville, attesting to his loyal, courageous, and capable service between 1653 and 1656. The purpose this testimonial was meant to serve was not stated by Clererville, but Lazard reasonably speculates that it may have been part of an effort by Vauban to re-ingratiate himself with Colbert, which seems quite plausible. It may also have been intended for the eyes of the war ministers, Le Tellier and Louvois, who were assembling men and material for siege warfare in the Spanish Netherlands for the coming year.\footnote{"Certificat du Clerville au Vauban," 16 November 1666, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses \textsc{écrits}}, 1: 55-56. See Lazard, \textit{Vauban}, 119, for his speculation on the purpose of Clererville’s certificate. Since this document was first published by one of the marshal’s descendants from the original in the archives of the Château of Aunay in the Department of the Nièvre, we may suggest that it was delivered to Vauban himself to do with as he saw fit. See Le Peletier d’Aunay, "Documents historiques curieux ou inédits," 111-12.}

For whatever reason, according to his "Abregé des services," Vauban continued to work at Brisach in 1665 and 1666, but he also made several journeys for the king that earned him a further monetary gratification and hopes for advancement. His missions between 1664 and 1666 included three to the Germanies and one to the Low Countries; what he did on each of these voyages is unclear, although the trips to the former, if Vauban is being completely honest in his account written in 1703, merely involved the procurement of military toys for the Dauphin.\footnote{Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1664, 1665, and 1666. At least one journey into the Holy Roman Empire took Vauban to Nuremburg (see Saint-Marc to Colbert, 20 August 1664, as quoted in Livet, \textit{Intendance d’Alsace}, 358). On his activities there, see note 405 above.} Any speculation that the marshal was less forthcoming than possible in this narrative, even though it was written decades after the fact, is a result of a further entry for the years of 1664, 1665, and 1666: "Et un autre [voyage] dans les pays bas pour lequel Sa Majesté luy donna une honneste gratification a son retour et ["beaucoup" crossed out and replaced in Vauban’s hand] des
grands esperence." What was this mission that gave rise to so many hopes? And hopes for what? Vauban was likely given reason to believe that further advancement and opportunities to earn it awaited him in the near future, which suggests that at least this trip, if not those to the Germanies, were related to the preparations for the projected attack on the Spanish holdings in the Low Countries. Indeed, such pre-war excursions to sniff around the enemy's bastions were not uncommon, but had to be undertaken undercover and with the greatest of care so that a valuable engineer would not be lost or one's own plans inadvertently telegraphed to the future foe. Leaving aside these speculations, however plausible they might be, it must be observed that at the very least Vauban's four trips caused him to be away from the work at Brisach for fairly long periods of time, and these eventually proved to have been absences dangerous to his future service to the king.415

In 1666, Vauban was already thirty-three years old. In that era of low average life expectancy he was no longer the "young" engineer he had been during his rapid rise in the service of Cardinal Mazarin in the 1650s. Prior to the end of war with Spain, Vauban had distinguished himself both at the assault and the repair of fortifications, and had become a valued servant of Mazarin and the young king. Even after he moved out from under the tutelage of Clerville, with whom he had several bitter confrontations, Vauban had retained the professional respect of the older engineer. But the peace treaty signed in 1659 had temporarily halted his brisk ascent of the military hierarchy and left him with little opportunity to practice the craft he had taken up with such skill the past decade.

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415 Vauban to Louvois, 2 July 1669 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 28), describes one such surreptitious peak at the defenses of Nieupoort. In 1671, for instance, Condé requested that Descombes, Louvois's engineer at Dunkirk, be sent along the Rhine to scout out the various strongholds his advancing troops would encounter the following year. Descombes pretended to be on private business, but this trip and other preparations aroused suspicions along that entire frontier. He was sent on a second such inspection tour early in the following year. See Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 162, 169, 188.
When Louis XIV decided that he did not want history to mark him a *roi-fainéant*, he signaled a new era of youthful energy and activism. Although the first few years of the personal reign were peaceful ones, there were small conflicts with various foreign princes to allow Louis to test his mettle against his fellow monarchs. One of these, the wrangling over the demolition of the fortifications of Nancy from 1661 to 1663, gave Vauban an opportunity to remind the king of his value, even though it was his old mentor who was given the lofty-sounding office of *commissionnaire général des fortifications* in 1662.

A further chance to serve the king arose at the end of 1663. It was natural that Mazarin's convert and Clerville's former "diacre" should remain in the clientele that survived the death of the cardinal and passed on to the protection of Colbert. From 1664 until at least 1666, Vauban served in Alsace, first recommended by Colbert's brother Croissy, and working closely with the intendant Saint-Marc, cousin of the Colberts.

Although Vauban pleased the minister with his exertions on the Alsatian construction sites and on several trips to the Germanies, he was one of the many victims of the financial machinations of the corrupt Saint-Marc. Thus, when war broke out again in 1667, Vauban must have eagerly accepted the opportunities it presented. He could hope to dazzle the king once again with his skillful attacks on enemy strongholds and in the process escape his worsening predicament in Alsace.
CHAPTER VII

NEW DIRECTIONS: THE CITADEL OF LILLE AND LOUVOIS
(1667)

My orders [for the siege of Lille] were executed with so much zeal that the city was reduced to desperate straits before the Spanish could even learn that it was in danger.

Louis XIV, Mémoires for the Instruction of the Dauphin, entry for 1667

Colbert may have been the ascendant power in the administration of fortifications during the first six years of the king's personal reign, but the Le Telliers, and especially Louvois, had no intention of allowing his dominion to extend into their department. Douglas Clark Baxter justly entitles his chapter on the war ministry and its army intendants during this period as "Years of Preparation, 1660-66," and Louis André before him traced the exertions of father and son aimed at increasing and refining the military might of France.\(^{416}\) When they eventually put this instrument to the test in the War of Devolution, the Le Telliers won victories for the king and new territories for themselves to administer. These new responsibilities included the repair of captured fortifications and the construction of new strongholds. During this same, they also gained the services of an unhappy client of the Colberts, the engineer Vauban, who proved an able partner of Louvois and the king in the creation of a new defense system for the frontiers of the kingdom.

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\(^{416}\) Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 139-63; André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 77-164.
The War of Devolution

The death of Philip IV of Spain in 1665, barely survived it seemed by a sickly infant, Carlos II, increased the likelihood of a war intended both to press the French king’s claims on the Spanish succession and to impress upon Europe the might of a monarch too long in the shadow of ecclesiastical first ministers. Louis XIV saw the time ripe for consolidating and extending the gains made by the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659), which had been in reality more a truce in an on-going conflict than a definitive pacification. Louis still smarted over past Spanish humiliations and threats to his realm, especially those during his minority. He coveted at least a large slice of the Spanish Netherlands in order to distance the Habsburgs from the Bourbon capital and to put his own troops closer to the Spanish provincial capital of Brussels. The king’s lawyers put forth a claim to a sizeable collection of lands in the Spanish Netherlands. They based their legal arguments on a local law of inheritance, the Brabant Law of Devolution, and Madrid’s failure to pay the dowry of Maria Theresa, Philip IV’s daughter and Louis XIV’s wife, which she had been given as compensation for her renunciation of all rights to the Spanish inheritance.417

Although many then and many since have questioned the legal underpinnings of the claims of the French monarch, there was no doubt that his means of pursuing his pretensions were persuasive. Arrangements for a movement in force into the territories of the Spanish crown had been advancing under the careful guidance of Michel Le Tellier, enthusiastically assisted by his son Louvois. The energetic and forceful Louvois was the perfect instrument for a policy meant to frighten the Spanish and any would-be allies into giving France yet another piece of the Spanish Netherlands. In 1666, these bellicose preparations reached their high point. That year became famous as a time when the king, orbited by fawning courtiers, doting mistresses, and an indulgent wife, journeyed with great display to the frontier of Picardy to observe the military parades

Louvois had prepared in his honor. These reviews of troops allowed Louis to observe the strength and readiness of his battalions, and surely flattered his hopes for military fame. As war approached, Louvois’s political capital with the king and at court soared, while the controller-general Colbert grumbled at the cost of these martial displays and the growing influence of the brash young war secretary.418

Vauban was able to escape from the increasing vexations of his work in Alsace because of this drift toward war. This process appears to have begun in 1666. As we have already seen, the engineer may have made a reconnaissance trip to the Spanish Netherlands on behalf of the king during that year.419 It is also conceivable that he participated in the displays of French military might arranged by Louvois for that summer, which has come to be called the "année des revues." Perhaps it was to gain a position with the invading army and a portion of the gloire that would surely accrue to those who participated in the coming campaign that Vauban solicited a certificate from his old mentor Clerville attesting to his loyalty and talents.420 In 1667 it had been nearly a decade since Vauban had conducted a siege. While he was and remains justly famous for his desire to spare the lives of the common soldier and to prevent unnecessary suffering among the civilian occupants of a place under siege, Vauban was no pacifist.421 He believed in his profession and in his own ability to exercise it to a degree of perfection that gave him great confidence in his own proficiency. Undoubtedly, long years of garrison duty, the merely negative efforts involved in the demolition of fortifications, and the construction of works designed by others had grown wearisome.

419These reviews are described by André, Louis XIV et l’Europe, 102-04, and Bluche, Louis XIV, 240.


421Vauban, Manuel of Siegecraft, 62, 93, 105, 165-66, 169-70. See also Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 674-75. The king himself shared these sentiments (Wolf, Louis XIV, 205).
At the age of thirty-four he might have seen himself condemned to relative obscurity under the shadow of Clerville, officially *commissaire général des fortifications* for all France, and Colbert’s chief advisor in his extensive department. Although the direction of the construction at Brisach was an important assignment, Vauban’s standing with the intendant had deteriorated to the point that Saint-Marc had tried in various underhanded ways the previous year to dislodge him from his entrepreneurial activities. Thus, it is likely that Vauban welcomed the return of war and the opportunities it offered.

The campaign opened at the end of May 1667. One army, under Marshal d’Aumont, operated along the northern coast of the province, besieging several fortresses as he gradually moved toward an eventual rendezvous with the main army aimed at the capture of Lille.\(^{422}\) The campaign in the southern part of the Spanish Netherlands unfolded in the presence of the king and much of the court. According to Christopher Duffy, "Out of all the operations of war, a grand siege was in fact Louis’s favorite." The Sun King liked its predictability and its "magnificent spectacle in the baroque style, at once vigorous and theatrical."\(^{423}\) The Spanish, however, did not at first choose to give the king the martial satisfaction he sought, fleeing as the French advanced. Louis, with the 40,000 troops commanded by Turenne, received the capitulation of Charleroi on 5 June without encountering any resistance. Ath fell into French hands in the same inglorious manner. It seemed that Vauban, who had been called from Alsace to assist the king in his march into the Spanish Netherlands to besiege its many strongholds, might end up with nothing to do. But soon the Spanish resolve stiffened. Vauban commanded under the sovereign at the siege of Tournai, which was invested on 20 June. The trenches were opened the next day, and the city itself capitulated on 24 June. Four days later the royal army moved on to Douai, which was invested 2 July. It was at this action that Vauban received the musket wound to the face whose trace he

\(^{422}\)Croquez, *Flandre wallonne*, 16-17.

\(^{423}\)Duffy, *Fortress in the Age of Vauban*, 6.
was to bear the rest of his life, as can be seen in his portraits. Douai fell on 6 July, and the royal progress continued as other Spanish garrisons gave up without a fight.\textsuperscript{424}

Louis XIV was able to observe at first hand that the engineer who had served so well during the final campaigns of the earlier war with Spain had lost none of his flair for the trenches during the past several years of peace. Thus, the king named Vauban to direct the subjugation of the important city of Lille, one of Spain's most heavily fortified posts in the area. Lille was invested on 11 August and the trenches were opened during the night of 18-19 August. The action was pursued with vigor and courage on both sides, but the progress of the French attack forced the city to surrender during the night of 27-28 August, only nine days after the French attack had begun.\textsuperscript{425} The king was "si contente" that he rewarded Vauban with a lieutenancy in the \textit{Gardes françaises}, an honor Vauban had hoped for since Mazarin first promised it nine years earlier. The engineer also received a pension and permission to sell his company in the distinguished Picardy Regiment. Even greater rewards in the future were hinted at when Louis instructed Le Tellier to tell Vauban that he would have had a company in the \textit{Gardes} (with the rank of captain) had one been vacant at the time.\textsuperscript{426}

The rest of that campaign season was anti-climactic. Other places yielded to the swell of French power in the wake of the decisive victory won at Lille. After making the necessary symbolic entries and receiving oaths of loyalty from various of the magistrates of the cities now under his control, Louis departed the war zone and returned to court. On 18 October his troops also made their way to their various winter quarters, and various military and civilian agents of the French crown settled into their new administrative duties in the newly conquered province. The Comte de Duras,

\textsuperscript{424} Croquez, \textit{Flandre wallonne}, 16-17.

\textsuperscript{425} Ibid., 17-19.

\textsuperscript{426} Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1667. See also Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 680-81, and Bluche, \textit{Louis XIV}, 241-42. Vauban himself was critical of some of the measures taken by himself and especially others at this siege. See his \textit{Manuel of Siegecraft}, 170-75.
headquartered at Tournai, was appointed as over-all commander. All the recently captured fortresses were assigned a governor, including Lille, which was entrusted to a lieutenant-general, Bernardin Gigault, Marquis de Bellefonds. That city also became the seat of the army intendant Jacques Charuel who was now undergoing a transformation into an intendant of a newly conquered province.\footnote{Croquez, \textit{Flandre wallonne}, 20. On Charuel's activities in the conquered territories and the fluctuating boundaries of his intendancy, see Baxter, \textit{Servants of the Sword}, 173-78.}

Louis XIV's military triumph was eventually halted not because of Spanish strength, but because of Spanish weakness. It would be unfair to the French and Spanish military to minimize the force of Spanish arms, even though it was tardy in asserting itself. But the real obstacle to the French advance came from abroad. England, the Dutch, and Sweden grew so alarmed at Louis's easy progress that they formed the Triple Alliance in January 1668 to force the French king to curb his appetite for Spanish territory. Louis pressed on, invading and quickly subduing Franche-Comté in February 1668, but this only further galvanized the opposition to him. When a peace treaty was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle in May 1668, Louis's control of Franche-Comté proved fleeting, although this short period of occupation furthered the process of its eventual incorporation into the realm several years later. But with this treaty, France did acquire twelve fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, which created a ragged frontier that was certain to unravel in the near future.\footnote{Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 61-62, and André, \textit{Louis XIV et l'Europe}, 108-17.}

\section*{The Competition for Lille}

It is difficult to say at exactly what point in their careers Vauban and Louvois first encountered one another.\footnote{André, \textit{Organisation de l'armée}, 194, says that Louvois made three tours of Flanders (21 August to 7 September 1668, 18 May to 8 June and 23 October to 7 November 1669), during which he met with, among others, Vauban "avec lequel commence alors sa liaison..." but this would appear to date the commencement of this} It is likely that they met before the opening of the campaign
of 1667, at the very least in order to make plans for that projected series of sieges. But an earlier meeting is also possible. Louvois had been associated with his father, Michel Le Tellier, for some time: in 1655, at age fifteen, he had obtained the right of *survivance* to the secretaryship of state for war; in 1662 he was granted permission to exercise that office during the absence or illness of his father; and in 1664 he was accorded full discharge of the office even in his father’s presence. Clear traces of Louvois’s involvement in the correspondence of Le Tellier’s department only surface in September 1660; nevertheless, he quickly mastered the administrative procedures, took on greater responsibilities, and received approving marks of royal favor.430 In August 1663, Louvois travelled with his father in the company of the king to Lorraine, where they pressured Duke Charles into adhering to the provisions of an earlier treaty.431 This trip probably afforded Louvois an opportunity to encounter or at least hear reports of Vauban’s efforts, both in dismantling the fortifications of Nancy and preparing for the king a plan of attack on Marsal should the duke fail to come to terms.432 Thereafter, Louvois was occupied with important conflicts with the pope in the Comtat Venaissin and in Italy,433 and the likelihood of an encounter with Vauban diminished. Moreover, it must be recalled that Vauban was fairly far down the military hierarchy and was still a client of the Colbert’s working in a province under the control of that clan. Nevertheless, Vauban had impressed someone in the war department, possibly a

"liaison" several months or even years after it actually began.

430 For the rise of Louvois, see André, *Le Tellier et Louvois*, 55, 143-48, and Corvisier, *Louvois*, 17-18, 71-76. Louvois continued to share the office with the older Le Tellier—both officially and in reality—until the latter became chancellor in 1677 and the secretaryship fell completely to the son. Louvois joined his father in the *Conseil d’en haut* only in 1672, when Lionne was dropped and Pomponne added. See the list of court officials in Bluche, *Louis XIV*, 655-61.


432 For Vauban’s activities in Lorraine during this period, see the account beginning on p. 189 above.

433 Corvisier, *Louvois*, 71-76.
commissaire de guerre, for in a listing of personnel for 1665, his name and rank was followed by this brief note: "bon ingénieur et bon officier."\footnote{434}

Whether or not Vauban had gained the attention of the young secretary of state for war at an earlier date, he certainly managed to do so during the summer campaign in Flanders in 1667. In the aftermath, when the places captured were put to rights so that they could be held in case of a Spanish counter-attack, Vauban sought to advance the work and show his worth to Louvois by writing him on 17 September of measures that could save time and money at Courtrai, where he had been assigned to devise a plan for its repair and supervise the work.\footnote{435} Such suggestions always warmed the heart of a royal advisor, who had to strive mightily to stretch royal funds as far as possible. This letter also reveals Vauban’s continued status in the shadow of Clervile. The engineer felt it profitable to add that his recommendations had been endorsed by the chevalier and the Marquis de Bellefonds, the governor of Lille who was to garner a marshal’s baton the next year. If Vauban had intended this letter to win over the war minister as a new patron, his attempt was ill-conceived. Louvois did not care for either Clerville or Bellefonds.\footnote{436} It should be recalled that Vauban was still a client of the Colberts—albeit in a tenuous and unhappy position given his bad relations with Saint-Marc—and was perhaps not actively attempting to hitch his star to that of the ascendant Louvois. But whether intentionally or not, this letter at least reminded Louvois of Vauban’s continued presence in Flanders and of his virtues as a builder of fortifications. This would be

\footnote{434}{Quoted by Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 679-80.}

\footnote{435}{Vauban to Louvois, 17 September 1667, Rochas, *Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: 2. This appears to be the earliest letter between the two. Vauban’s papers on microfilm at the Archives Nationale remain closed to all but a few researchers. The inventory for this rich source indicates no correspondence between Louvois and Vauban prior to 1667. See Gourmelon, "Fonds Vauban: Correspondance, 1975 (?)," TMs [photocopy], Archives Nationale de France, 1, 2, i4. Vauban’s proposal for Courtrai was approved by Louvois in mid-October, as the minister announced to Charuel. See Baxter, *Servants of the Sword*, 195.}

\footnote{436}{Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 685-86.}
important because it was Louvois who was charged with the fortifications of the newly conquered territories.\footnote{See Zeller, \textit{Organisation défensive}, 50, on Louvois’s responsibilities here after the war.}

During the years Vauban was mired in the muddy politics and business intrigues of Saint-Marc’s Alsace, Clerville labored on a larger and more rewarding scale in the service of Colbert. His travels along the shores of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, for instance, made him a key participant in the flurry of activity resulting from Colbert’s scheme to turn France into a naval and commercial power to rival the Dutch. Clerville suggested sites and designs for several new port cities, and Colbert valued his services greatly.\footnote{Konvitz, \textit{Cities and the Sea}, 73-95.} During the mid-1660s he also labored on what many believed to be one of the greatest engineering undertakings since the fall of Rome, the Canal du Midi linking the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.\footnote{See Clément, \textit{Histoire de Colbert}, 2: 101-02, for Clerville’s role in the planning for the canal, which was also known as the Canal de Languedoc or the Canal des Deux Mers.}

Yet, even though the chevalier was widely respected and had ostensible authority over the fortifications of the whole kingdom, he was neither esteemed nor much employed by either Louvois or his father. They may even have tried to undermine his reputation with the king. In 1664, while assisting as chief engineer on an ill-fated joint army and navy attempt to establish a French base on the Barbary coast, Clerville apparently wrote the king that he feared the machinations of some enemy at court. It seems that someone was sending back unflattering reports from among the bitterly divided military and civilian officials directing this operation. These anxieties prompted Louis to reply reassuringly that Clerville had nothing to fear from the letters the king received or from what was said at court since “je saurai bien démêler le vrai d’avec le
faux, et disntinguier dans la suite ceux qui m’auront dit la verité..." It is quite possible that the Le Telliers were the source of Clerville’s uncertainty. As had been the case shortly before in Lorraine, the war secretary and the finance minister each had their own agent on the scene: Le Tellier was kept informed by Jacques Charuel, the army intendant who accompanied the five thousand troops who served on this expedition, and Clerville fed information to Colbert.441

Thus, it is not surprising that in the summer of 1667, Clerville had had to suffer the indignity of serving merely as a bystander in the king’s triumphant campaign in the Spanish Netherlands.442 Louvois had made no place for the chevalier on his team of commanders and engineers, which led Clerville to complain to the king. When Clerville made noises to the victorious monarch that he had been deprived of his rightful share of the spoils of war, the king responded with a brief commission for the chevalier “d’aller visiter les places conquises de Flandre, pour me rendre compte de l’état où il les trouvera.” Perhaps feeling that he had won the point, Clerville named the culprit, which caused someone—possibly one of the personal secretaries of the king—to record on the


441 Charles de La Roncière, Histoire de la Marine française (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1899-1932), 5: 257-61, describes this operation and Clerville’s role in it. See Louis XIV to Comte de Gadagne, 12 September 1664, for Clerville and Charuel as agents of Colbert and Le Tellier (Œuvres de Louis XIV, 5: 240). Louis XIV to Clerville, 12 September 1664 (ibid., 241), notes that “comme le sieur Colbert m’a rendu compte de toutes les choses que vous lui avez mandées, il vous informera aussi plus particulièrement de mes intentions.”

442 Colbert to Riquet, 14 March 1667, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 311, mentioned that when Clerville returned to Languedoc, Riquet should confer with the chevalier on some matters relating to the Canal du Languedoc. His letter to Riquet of 15 July (ibid., 313) implies that Colbert had just received Clerville’s report. This may account for his absence from the campaign until a later date, but it should be recalled that had Louvois wanted his help, he could have recalled him from the south. That he did not speaks of his disdain for the chevalier’s skills.
commission itself that "Clerville dit doucement à S. M., que M. de Louvois qui aurait dû lui donner un ordre contresigné, ne lui étoit pas favorables."  

What did the king have in mind when he so openly went against the wishes of the secretary of war whose exertions had just helped win him a generous portion of the Spanish Netherlands? Louis XIV, who typically reciprocated the loyalty of his servants, appreciated Clerville’s years of service.  

In 1661, for instance, prior to the eventual French expedition to those shores, the king had heartily thanked Clerville for his offer to go personally to North Africa to reconnoitre the coastal positions of the troublesome Barbary pirates. The king also had a strong sense of hierarchy. As we saw earlier, rather than follow Colbert’s desire to abolish altogether the position of a great noble officier to head the marine, Louis had chosen to replace Richelieu’s creation with a revived admiralty whose powers were, however, a front for his own. Thus, it is worth observing that while the king gave Clerville a mark of his continued favor, the chevalier’s commission was of limited scope: he was merely to visit these fortresses and report back to the king on what he found. Clerville’s exact role in Flanders remained ambiguous.

But not all matters related to the fortifications of Flanders remained ill-defined. Mindful of a bourgeoisie whose hearts still belonged to the Spanish, Louis XIV had

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443 For this commission of 2 September 1667 and the note on it, see Oeuvres de Louis XIV, 5: 416. See also Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 685.

444 In a November 1667 note to Colbert, Clerville asked for payments owed to him for his position in the Maison du Roi of "maistre pour enseigner les mathématiques" to the king (G. B. Depping, ed., Correspondance administrative sous la règne de Louis XIV, Collection de documents inédit sur l’histoire de France [Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1850], 3: 173-74). It is not clear whether this was a real assignment or merely an honorific title bestowed as a reward by Mazarin. Clerville dated this assignment from 1656.

445 Louis XIV to Clerville, 19 August 1661, Oeuvres de Louis XIV, 5: 39-40. See also the king’s letter the same day to the Marquis de Beringhen, governor of the citadel of Marseille, in which he approved Clerville’s offer "de tout mon coeur" (ibid., 38-39).

446 See p. 68 above.
resolved on a powerful new citadel to protect his recent acquisition of Lille, intending to secure it from internal as well as external threats. The war minister’s antipathy notwithstanding, in early September 1667 Clerville hoped to win the honor of creating this important project as part of his general consultation on the newly acquired fortifications of Flanders.447 When seeking a plan for repairs and new construction, Bellefonds naturally turned to the king’s commissaire général des fortifications, who had stayed behind at Lille when the army moved on. On 7 September 1667, the governor wrote to Louvois of Clerville’s hard work and final plan, assuring the war secretary that "je crois que l’on ne peut rien trouver de mieux."448 Ten days later, Clerville himself sent Louvois his completed plan, which called for a new citadel composed of four bastions.449 But as Louvois indicated in a letter 23 September to his kinsman and client, the army intendant Jacques Charuel, this plan had pleased no one at court.450

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447Clerville was deprived of his natural role in Flanders only at a later date. Two pieces of evidence suggest that he was originally intended to play his normal role of king’s chief consultant in this province. First, his presence with the king’s army of conquest, even though he did not take part in the sieges, indicates that the king envisioned a role for the chevalier in the aftermath of war. It was not a foregone conclusion, given the experiences of the past few decades, that the fortifications of the new conquests would be assigned to the secretary of state for war once peace was established. Second, as indicated by Louvois to Vauban, 13 November 1667 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 4), when the king finally selected Vauban’s plan for Lille over that of the chevalier, it was after it had been examined in the king’s presence "ainsi que tous les plans que le chevalier de Clerville a rapportés des villes conquises en Flandre sur lesquelles Sa Majesté a pris ses résolutions."

448Bellefonds to Louvois, 7 September 1667, Maurice Sautai, L’œuvre de Vauban à Lille (Paris: Librarie Militaire R. Chapelot, 1911), 4-5. Sautai says that Bellefonds asked Clerville to draw up this proposal.

449Ibid., 5.

450Louvois to Charuel, 23 September 1667, Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 686. If Charuel had indeed been the source of some of the bad reports about Clerville filtering back to the king from North Africa in 1664, it is likely that the chevalier did not look forward to working with him in Flanders in 1667.
Louvois may have sought from the outset of these discussions over the plan for Lille to check Clerville's ambitions by advancing the chevalier's former pupil as a rival, as many have assumed, but this seems unlikely. Although we can only speculate as to Louvois's precise motives in turning to Vauban, his selection as a make-weight to Clerville makes perfect sense in the context of Louvois's low opinion of the chevalier and the continuing rivalry between the Le Telliers and the Colberts. But the evidence shows that Clerville, not Vauban, was busy fulfilling the king's desire for plans for Lille shortly after its fall on August 28. In fact, Vauban was engaged elsewhere, seeing to the repairs of Courtrai to the northeast, and was made a party to the Lille project as a consultant only after Clerville's proposals had "déplait tout à fait à tous ceux auxquels le roi m'a commandé de le faire voir...," according to Louvois's 23 September letter to Charuel. The secretary further instructed the intendant to convene a meeting at Péronne so that Clerville could be presented with "les inconvénients que tous les connoisseurs trouvent à ce qu'il propose, il puisse en moins de temps refaire un autre projet." Besides Louvois and Clerville, this meeting was to include Charuel and Talon, the intendant at Oudenarre who was, another client of the Le Telliers. The secretary also asked Charuel to bring Vauban along because "je serois bien aise de l'entretenir sur plusieurs choses

451 Sir Reginald Blomfield, Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban, 1633-1707 (1938; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble; London: Methuen, 1971), 66, offers a confused sequence of events that suggests that Louvois pushed Vauban forward from the beginning of the Lille project; Duffy, Fortress in the Age of Vauban, 8, also implies an initial role for Vauban in the planning at Lille. Alfred Rebelliau, Vauban, (Paris: Fayard, 1962), 41, asserts the same. Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 69-70, maintains that Louvois plotted Vauban's displacement of Clerville from the moment the city was taken, as does the more specialized work of Sautai, Vauban à Lille, 4. Even Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 274, reads subsequent history back into Louvois's initial collaboration with Vauban by saying that the former was looking for an engineer to make in fortifications the "réformes intelligentes" that he had made in the army, and so chose the latter with that in mind. Hebert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 32-34, present a rather confused chronology of Vauban's work at Lille.
On the same day, Louvois wrote to Vauban himself with instructions to join in the rendezvous at Péronne, where they would converse of "tout ce que vous avez à me dire." On his way there he was to pass by Lille and confer with Bellefonds to be briefed on what the king had in mind for the citadel; in the little time he had, he was to learn as much as he could about the project so that they could discuss it with Clerville when they met.

What this evidence suggests is that, far from being included in the initial consultations over Lille, Vauban had no part in them. Hence, when Louvois decided to include Vauban in these discussions, he urged the engineer to go to Lille for an immersion in details that were only now shared with him. But this letter also indicates that it was probably Vauban himself who had initiated this consulting role for himself. Louvois had not yet closed the door on Clerville, who was to be given a chance to rectify his original proposal, yet he was willing to hear what Vauban had to say to him. The engineer had either written directly to Louvois—unfortunately, the letter does not survive—or had sent word by another channel that he had some ideas on the project planned for Lille. Vauban’s credibility as an engineer, especially in the capture of Lille itself, inclined Louvois to give him a hearing; nevertheless, he urged Vauban to acquire further knowledge of the place so that he could speak with greater precision at the meeting the secretary planned to convene with Clerville, Charuel, and Talon, intendant at Oudenarde, at Péronne at the end of September.

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452 Louvois to Charuel, 23 September 1667, Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 686. For Talon, see Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 174-75. Baxter was not able to identify which member of the Talon family this is, although he suspects that it was Claude Talon (ibid., 175 n. 27).

453 Louvois to Vauban, 23 September 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 2. This letter reinforces the point made above that Vauban was not initially envisioned by Louvois as the architect of the citadel at Lille. Zeller, Organisation défensive, 50, said that Clerville and Vauban were asked to do projects for Lille concurrently, but this does not square with Louvois’s letter to Vauban, which shows Vauban’s participation coming later. Lazard, Vauban, 131, conjectures that Colbert had recommended Vauban to the war minister for this assignment, but there is no evidence for this, nor does it seem likely.
But Louvois was not without his doubts about Vauban, noting to Charuel a few weeks later that "Vauban est assurément capable de bien servir; mais il n'est pas inutile de l'exciter à bien faire." The war secretary was especially concerned that the engineer strive to build "à bon marché et très promptement." Reservations about Vauban had reached the royal ear from Alsace, perhaps from Colbert or from Clerville. Louvois was anxious that economical and timely measures would "faire voir au Roi que les mauvais offices qu'on lui a rendus sur cella sont mal fondés."454 Vauban himself must have realized the damage Saint-Marc's comments to Colbert had done. This may explain his earlier letter to Louvois exhibiting a proper attention to prudent management of time and money, in hopes of demonstrating an ability to serve his royal master not only as a skillful taker but also as a prudent builder of places.455 Thus, while the first campaign of the War of Devolution had reconfirmed Vauban's reputation in the trenches, his capacity on the building site remained in doubt.

Meanwhile, because the invitation arrived too late, Clerville had the misfortune to miss the conference at Péronne at the end of September, where his project was apparently given a further bruising and where Vauban was allowed to offer his comments unchallenged by his former master. Just days before, Clerville had lost an ally when Bellefonds was replaced as governor of Lille by Louis de Crevant, Marquis d’Humières, another lieutenant-general, but one who was closely linked with Louvois.456 To add further to his difficulties, the chevalier had unwisely followed the advice of the departing Bellefonds and submitted his project to the great Turenne, who endorsed it. Clerville appears to have unwisely ignored the fact that the young war minister was jealous for the prerogatives of his office and resented the haughty Huguenot peer who exercised

454 Louvois to Charuel, 14 October 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 3.

455 Vauban to Louvois, 17 September 1667, ibid., 2. The connection with Alsace is recognized by all commentators. See, for example, Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 2: 275.

456 Sautai, Vauban à Lille, 5 n. 4. D’Humières was named governor on 25 September 1667.
over the army a rival power and influence akin to that of the medieval constables. More particularly, Louvois still smarted from Turenne's recriminations directed at his handling of the logistics for the past summer's campaign. Soon, Clerville had so discredited himself with Louvois by his poor design and his clumsy maneuvers that the secretary wrote Charuel that since the chevalier "parle fort bien et qu'il y prend plaisir," the intendant should let him prattle on but ignore his wishes, unless ordered otherwise by the minister or d'Humières.

Vauban, who appears to have been asked at the Péronne meeting to prepare a counter-proposal for Lille, must have seen his opportunity, for he embraced this commission with enthusiasm. On 14 October 1667 he alerted Louvois to his bold design of five bastions, as compared to the standard four of Clerville, and asked him to compare it with the latter's, in which case, he asserted audaciously, the secretary would see that the chevalier's "...ne valent rien ny pour la dépense ny pour la défense." He promised to send Louvois his plans in five or six days, assuring the secretary that his was "si différent du sien [Clerville's] que j'ose me promettre que vous l'approuverez." A day later, when Humières tried to mediate between Clerville and his former apprentice, Vauban confidently expressed to Louvois his hope that Clerville would yield to his views since "j'ai des raisons fort avantageuses...," and asked to be excused from guard duty at Lille while preparing the project. His meeting with Clerville, however, failed to bridge the gap between the two engineers. It was clear to both men that they

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457 Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 686-87. For further details on this conflict between Louvois and Turenne, see also André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 167-73. See also Wolf, Louis XIV, 79, for a brief sketch of Turenne's role in Louis XIV's military machine.

458 Louvois to Charuel, 20 October 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 3.


460 Vauban to Louvois, 14 October 1667, Sautai, Vauban à Lille, 6.

461 Vauban to Louvois, 15 October 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 3.
were being pitted against one another: when not serving on guard duty, from which he
had yet to be relieved, Vauban toiled long and alone, trying to keep his work secret from
the bitterly jealous chevalier, who himself labored furiously to hold on to the prize he
thought was his by right of office and his many years of service to the king.\footnote{See also Rousset, \textit{"La Jeunesse de Vauban,"} 687. See ibid., 689 n. 2, for Vauban to Louvois, 28 October 1667, on how he worked alone. Sautai, \textit{Vauban à Lille}, 7, says that Vauban still served on guard duty while completing his designs.} Shortly
afterwards (20 September), Clerville wrote to Louvois submissively yet confidently of
his desire to meet with him to explain the merits of his plan; Clerville also alluded to
widespread support for his plan and indicated a desire to lobby the king directly.\footnote{See also Rousset, \textit{"La Jeunesse de Vauban,"} 687. See ibid., 689 n. 2, for Vauban to Louvois, 28 October 1667, on how he worked alone. Sautai, \textit{Vauban à Lille}, 7, says that Vauban still served on guard duty while completing his designs.} But,
clearly, the upper hand belonged to the younger engineer, who on 28 October sent his
finished designs to Louvois and contumaciously recounted how, in his presence,
Clerville had ineffectually traced his own design on the proposed site by planting stakes
"à l’aventure, seulement pour dire qu’il avait tracé la citadelle...."\footnote{Clerville to Louvois, 19 and 20 October 1667, Rousset, \textit{"La Jeunesse de Vauban,"} 688-89. Sautai, \textit{Vauban à Lille}, 7, quotes from the letter of 19 October.} It is useful at this point to recall that just a month and one half earlier, Vauban still
thought the approbation of Clerville for his work was worth mentioning to Louvois. By
late October, however, he felt confident enough of the war secretary’s endorsement of
his plan for Lille to risk the wrath of the Colberts by openly competing to deprive their
client Clerville of the most desirable construction prize to be gained from the year’s
campaigns. Without a doubt, tongues at court wagged as rival clientele variously
grumbled at or delighted in the audacity of Vauban’s challenge. And Vauban was not the
only engineer to regard Clerville as a man whose era had passed. Deshoulières, who
was charged with the repair of Tournai, informed Louvois that "Clerville, à qui je n’ai

\footnote{Vauban to Louvois, 29 October 1667, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 3-4, where he speaks optimistically and impatiently of beginning the work at Lille, even though the king had not yet rendered his decision; his attitude probably reflected both his own and Louvois’s confidence in the outcome. See Clerville to Louvois, 23 October 1667, Rousset, \textit{"La Jeunesse de Vauban,"} 689, in which Clerville puts a different "spin" on the episode of the planting of the stakes.}
pas dit un seul mot de la conduite que je voulais tenir, non plus que du temps et de la dépense," had offered his opinion of these efforts, but the engineer dismissed them as poorly reasoned. For his part, Vauban had seen his chance finally to overtake his former master, and he gambled on the strength of Louvois's desire to see Clerville eclipsed, and on his own skills and imagination.

Clerville personally pleaded his proposal before the king, and so suffered a grave rebuff when his efforts failed to win the day. Louvois informed Vauban on 13 November that his plan had vanquished all contenders, even though the king had modified his design somewhat. This victory marked a major turning point in his career. In a follow up letter the same day, Vauban was notified that he was to have expense money, two assistants, forage for his horses in the places he had to visit, and a pension. Significantly, all these came due to the patronage of Louvois, and it was the army intendant Charuel and the secretary himself who would see to these arrangements on a monthly basis. This grant of support from the secretary should not be construed as a signal that Vauban now supervised all the fortifications under Louvois's care, as some have incorrectly supposed. Indeed, in his later recollection of the year 1667,

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462 Deshoulières to Louvois, n.d., ibid., 685. The citadel at Tournai was built on Deshoulières's design, according to Lazard, **Vauban**, 140.

466 Turenne weighed in with his own candidate for the job, an architect who was working at Tournai (Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 689). This probably further inflamed Turenne's bad relations with Louvois, especially when his architect refused to accept Vauban's eventual victory with good grace (ibid., 690).

467 Louvois to Vauban, 13 November 1667, Rochas, **Vauban, ses écrits**, 2: 4. See Louvois to Vauban, 20 November (ibid., 4-5), for the king's modifications.

468 Louvois to Vauban, 13 November 1667, ibid., 4.

469 For instance, Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 689, quotes this letter of 13 November to argue that Vauban was from this point given "la direction des travaux dans toutes les places conquises" which were in Louvois's department. It seems, however, that the purpose of the assistance given Vauban, along with the additional help of the engineer Montguirault (Louvois to Vauban, 20 November, Rochas, **Vauban, ses écrits**, 2: 4-5), appears to have been in the context of the work at Lille.
Vauban mentioned only his work on the plans for Lille and Courtrai, the latter being the place where he was first assigned to direct the repairs.  

Another signal that Vauban had entered into the patronage of the Le Telliers was his successful intercession with the young secretary on behalf of a doctor in Douai; his credit with Louvois was perceived by himself and others as great enough that he confidently solicited favors on their behalf.  

Clerviile and Turenne’s engineer from Tournaic continued to snipe at their rival’s design for Lille and to agitate for a reconsideration of the whole matter, but this only served to exasperate the minister and oblige the king to confirm his choice of and faith in Vauban’s proposals.  

Louvois’s frank letter to Charuel in response to these attacks indicates that it was clear to the secretary himself that the battle over the citadel at Lille marked an ascent for his new protégé and a descent for Colbert’s old client:

Sa majesté désire que le plan du sieur de Vauban s’exécute de point en point; mettez-lui bien dans l’esprit qu’il faut que cet ouvrage soit son chef-d’oeuvre, et que, comme l’on se confie à lui de cet ouvrage, que l’on ôte pour cet effet aux gens qui étoient en possession de les faire faire partout, je veux dire au chevalier de Clerviile, le moindre manquement qui y arrivera ne manqueroit pas d’être bien relevé ici, et de confirmer les gens, qui ne veulent pas que Vauban travaille, à croire ou à persuader aux autres qu’il n’entend que les sièges.

Vauban was no less certain that his career had taken a new direction. On 25 November, Charuel wrote to Louvois:

J’ai fait voir à Vauban tout ce que vous m’avez fait l’honneur de me mander sur le sujet de tous les travaux qu’il faut faire à la citadelle et des appointimentos et gratifications que vous lui avez procurés auprès de Sa Majesté. Il m’a témoigné en avoir la dernière reconnaissance et m’a prie de vous assurer que vous seriez content de lui et qu’il n’y a efforts ni soins qu’il ne prenne pour répondre à

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470 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1667.

471 Louvois to Vauban, 9 December 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 5. In the same letter, Louvois reassures him that his own commis has arranged with Bontemps, first valet of the king’s chamber, for payment of the pension due Vauban.

472 For his rivals’ continuing intrigues, see Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 690-91, and Sautait, Vauban à Lille, 9-10. See Louvois to Vauban, 20 November 1667, announcing that the king was standing by his earlier resolution.

473 Louvois to Charuel, 20 November 1667, Rousset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 690.
l'opinion que vous en avez et qu'il tiendra si bien la main à tout, que le Roi ne sera point trompé.\textsuperscript{474}

In order to devote himself to this project—the first complete fortress he had himself designed—Vauban was relieved of his responsibilities at Courtrai and transferred to Lille on 27 November, where he threw himself into his new job with great vigor. D'Humières noted this to Louvois before two weeks had passed, observing that Vauban "travaille avec la dernière application."\textsuperscript{475}

Just three days before the new year, Vauban announced the culmination of their joint effort to Louvois: "Enfin, Monseigneur, la citadelle de Lille est tracée et le marché fait...."\textsuperscript{476} The work was pressed even during that winter as gangs of laborers toiled at the preliminary removal of earth for the foundations and ditches.\textsuperscript{477} But as Vauban went about the many tasks that demanded his attention, perhaps he reflected upon how his fortune had changed in just a few short months. No longer was he to be merely the "diacre de M. de Clerville."\textsuperscript{478} But leaving one clientage network and entering another, while offering great possibilities for the future, was not without its dangers. The next few years would bear out both propositions.

\textsuperscript{474}Charuel to Louvois, 25 November 1667, Sautai, \textit{Vauban à Lille}, 10.

\textsuperscript{475}D'Humières to Louvois, 6 December 1667, ibid., 10-11. In fact, in Vauban to Louvois, 16 June 1668, the engineer asked that some work at Courtrai be stopped because it was certain to cause a shortage of materials needed at Lille, which Vauban now regarded as more pressing (Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 10 [summary]).

\textsuperscript{476}Vauban to Louvois, 28 December 1667, ibid., 7 (date supplied by Rousset).

\textsuperscript{477}Sautai, \textit{Vauban à Lille}, 12.

\textsuperscript{478}Vauban styled himself the chevalier's deacon ("diacre") in a letter to Louvois, 13 August 1668, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 13.
CHAPTER VIII
NEW DIRECTIONS: COLLABORATOR AND CLIENT OF LOUVOIS (1668-69)

Change is not without inconvenience, even from worse to better.
Richard Hooker

Vauban prevailed over Clerville at Lille, but the spoils of victory were not as immediately apparent as some commentators would have it. One of the benefits of his new standing, however, is undeniable. Drawing on the great favor he enjoyed with both minister and king, Vauban enlisted Louvois's aid in obtaining the royal nod for his extraordinary request to alter the terms of the monarch's recent largesse: he asked to keep his company in the Picardy Regiment and sell instead the more lucrative lieutenancy in the Gardes granted him in the aftermath of the conquest of Lille. More open to question, however, is the common assertion that from this point, or shortly thereafter, Vauban exercised de facto power as commissaire général des fortifications in the department of Louvois until his official succession to that office in 1678, after the death of Clerville. Some historians have gone further and said that Vauban also

\[477\] Louvois to Vauban, 30 December 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 7, where he notes that this obliges Vauban to "plus en plus à vous appliquer à ce que Sa Majesté soit bien servie en toutes manières en ce qu'elle commet à vos soins." See also the letter of 26 January 1668, A.G. A' 212, fol. 368, where Louvois concurred with Vauban that this arrangement was "plus avantageux."

\[480\] Parent and Verroust, Vauban, 64, date this unofficial assignment as commencing with Vauban's victory at Lille; Lazard, Vauban, 55, 134, 138, also dates this from 1668, and although vague, implies that this can be dated from the beginning of the year; Augoyet, Aperçu historique, 1: 72 and 75, and Gütin, Corps des ingénieurs, 28, say only vaguely "depuis 1668." Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 62, more carefully observes that

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exercised that charge in the department of Colbert during the 1660s, but this is clearly incorrect, as will be demonstrated below.\footnote{For this error, see Lazard, Vauban, 120-21, 138, 149; Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 135; Parent and Verroust, Vauban., 65. Borneque, La France de Vauban, 9, repeats the same line. Hebbert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 34, say that Clerville "accepted the rebuff" at Lille (cf. the evidence to the contrary in Rousselet, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 690-91) and kept his office "more or less as a figurehead" until his death. In an extreme flight of fancy, Toudouze, Monsieur de Vauban, 33, says of his hero that from 1668-88, "la sécurité du royaume de France repose tout entière entre les mains de cet homme-ci."}

Vauban's Evolving Role

It is worth taking some time to explore Vauban's relationship with Louvois. Three major questions will serve as a guide: What role did Vauban play in Louvois's department? What was the origin of that role and how did it change between 1667 and 1691? What were the interpersonal dynamics between the minister and his engineer? While there is much that has been written on these three questions, especially on the first and last, the middle question, concerning the origin of Vauban's position in the war department, has remained obscured or relatively neglected. We will treat this question first and return to the other two later.

The layers of hagiography that often encircle the figure of Vauban, a hero to generations of Frenchmen, have prevented historians from seeing more clearly into his early years. Of course, Vauban's ring of fortresses endeared him to patriots of all stripes, but remarks by Voltaire in his Le siécle de Louis XIV guaranteed that the children of the Enlightenment would be interested in this man who proved that "il pouvait y avoir des citoyens dans un gouvernement absolu."\footnote{Voltaire, Le siécle de Louis XIV, preface by Antoine Adam (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), 2: 287-88.} In the wake of the French Revolution, Vauban was a natural and popular object of study for writers in search of

Vauban replaced Clerville as "conseiller" to Louvois in 1668, and says that Vauban exercised the functions of commissaire général des fortifications in Louvois's department "depuis près d'une décennie" before Clerville's death.
the antecedents of their political, social, economic, and nationalistic viewpoints. Thus, Vauban’s rise to power in the department of Louvois is typically traced from the vantage point of hindsight. It is often told as the story of those around him merely recognizing his dazzling technical proficiency and then acting upon their discovery. Hence, the war secretary, recognizing the engineer’s superior skills, had the good sense to incorporate Vauban into his organization and put him at its head.

A variation on this theme, discussed earlier, is the notion that Vauban had been tapped initially by Louvois to displace Clerville. One author has gone so far as to say that

Tous les contemporains de Vauban affirment qu’il ne sollicita jamais aucune faveur, et qu’il éprouva la plus vive répugnance à accepter le dernier de ces titres [i.e., commissaire général des fortifications], à raison des rapports directes qu’il fallait entretenir avec le ministre, c’est-à-dire d’une circonstance à laquelle tout autre aurait attaché le plus grand prix.

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483 See Jules Michelet, Histoire de France, new ed. (Paris: Lacroix, 1877), 16: 117-18, 252-55, who did, however, dismiss Vauban’s dime in kind as too timid and impractical. Toudouze, Monsieur de Vauban, 289-302, whose last chapter, entitled “Rien ne manque à sa gloire…,” is a twentieth century panegyric typical of much that came before it, and even much that has followed. For other twentieth-century examples, see Congrès Vauban, passim. General Maxime Weygand, recalling his own days as Foch’s chief-of-staff, paid tribute to the contribution of Vauban’s legacy to barring the way of the Germans through Flanders in 1914 (Institut de France, Séance publique annuelle des cinq académies du mercredi 25 octobre 1933, [Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1933], 83). The large one-volume biography by Georges Michel, Histoire de Vauban (1879), was in the tradition of and drew deeply from similar but even more massive studies of Louvois by Rousset (Histoire de Louvois) and of Colbert by Clément (Histoire de Colbert).

484 For examples of this approach, see Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 69-70; Rousset, “La Jeunesse de Vauban,” 681, 691; Lazard, Vauban, 131-32, 134.

485 See p. 217 above.

486 Eugène Daire, ed., Collections des principaux économistes: Économistes financiers du XVIIIe siècle, 2d ed., (Paris: Guillaumin, 1851), 14. Georges Michel and André Liesse, Vauban Economiste, (Paris: Plon, 1891), 5, said that Vauban never abused the credit he had with the minister for his personal interests, but only to help subordinates and the forgotten. This is a dubious proposition, even in the case of a man of Vauban’s many virtues.
In reality, as we have already seen with Vauban's initial participation in the project for Lille, his rise occurred less abruptly and with more of his own connivance than is usually known or admitted.

As Louvois had made clear to the intendant Charuel on 20 October 1667, "Vous pouvez laisser discours M. le chevalier de Clerville sur tout ce qu'il aime à faire dans les places," but since the secretary had little regard for what he had to say, Charuel was not to allow Clerville the usual initiative due him as _commissaire général des fortifications_; the intendant was to execute Clerville's plans only upon express order from Paris or if the lieutenant-general in charge of a place "le désire absolument." Yet, it is not reasonable to assume that the eclipse of Clerville was caused by Vauban or that he immediately replaced the chevalier as Louvois's chief advisor, as is often assumed. If Vauban had completely displaced Clerville in Louvois's department after vanquishing the chevalier's plans for Lille, it seems likely that Louvois would have either intrigued with Vauban to make a pretense of listening to the old gentleman's suggestions, as he had with Charuel, or he would have spurned Clerville's advice outright. But this did not happen. Instead, in December Louvois strongly upbraided Vauban for completely dismissing the chevalier's continued suggestions for the work at Lille.

Much has also been made of the provisions for helpers and forage granted to Vauban 13 November 1667, but there is nothing in the wording of the letters in question to

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47Louvois to Charuel, 20 October 1667, Rochas, _Vauban, ses écrits_, 2: 3. In a note, Rochas assumes that phrase "que le lieutenant général le désire absolument" refers to a particular lieutenant-general, d'Humières, who was governor at Lille. But the letter is discussing "les places," which surely means the places of Flanders, Charuel's intendancy. Many of the other governors of the newly conquered fortresses undergoing repair and augmentation were also lieutenant-generals. For a list of them, see Croquez, _Flandre wallonne_, 20.

48Rousset, _Histoire de Louvois_, 1: 280, quotes Louvois's 20 October 1667 letter to Charuel to make his claim for Vauban's control over all the works in Flanders.

indicate that this provision was the result of a charge over all the work going on in Flanders, let alone the whole fortification department of Louvois.\textsuperscript{490} It does not appear to have been an extraordinary provision for an engineer working on two such important projects as Courtrai and Lille. Vauban's "Abregé des services" for 1667 also suggests the limited nature of his initial assignments from the war minister: "Il fut ensuite employé à régler les projets des fortifications de la citadelle de Lille et de Courtrai."\textsuperscript{491} Indeed, a wider role for Vauban at that moment seems unlikely given his role in and the press of the work at these two places.

Lille, which Louvois had rightly marked to Charuel would be Vauban's "chef-oeuvre,"\textsuperscript{492} kept the engineer so busy that he had to divest himself of his demanding but less glorious responsibilities at Courtrai, which he did at the end of November. A project of the magnitude of that envisioned for Lille required Vauban's full attention and energy: besides designing the new citadel and preparing all the detailed instructions for the execution of his plans, he was charged with negotiating the contracts with the various entrepreneurs and then supervising the monumental task of construction. Although Vauban worked swiftly and with good results under the constant pressure exerted from Paris, he reminded the war secretary that he could have secured better prices for the construction "si l'on ne m'avait pas tant pressé...."\textsuperscript{493}

\textsuperscript{490} Louvois to Vauban, 13 November 1667, ibid., 4. Rouset, "La jeunesse de Vauban," 689-90, used this letter to argue that Louvois gave Vauban "la direction des travaux dans toutes les places conquises qui étaient de son département," which it clearly does not. Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 74, mistakenly reads this letter as applying outside Flanders and cites it to prove that he was given a role in "toutes les places comprises dans l'étendue de son [Louvois's] gouvernement...." That this was written only to the intendant of Flanders attests to its limited scope.

\textsuperscript{491} Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1667.

\textsuperscript{492} Louvois to Charuel, 20 November 1667, Rouset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 690.

\textsuperscript{493} Vauban to Louvois, 13 and 28 December 1667, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 6-7. The date of the second letter is provided by Rouset, "La Jeunesse de Vauban," 691.
The limited geographical and administrative scope of Vauban’s initial responsibilities for Louvois is further indicated by the manner Louvois chose to announce the engineer’s role in the construction of new fortifications in Franche-Comté. In a daring winter campaign that was launched at the beginning of February 1668, Condé helped the king conquer the Spanish province of Franche-Comté in less than a month and with minimal losses. Vauban apparently played no role in either the planning or the execution of this brilliant operation, which was under the capable direction of the experienced Condé, who as part of his preparations employed “petits ingénieurs ou entrepreneurs qui s’entendit un peu en fortifications” to make a careful and surreptitious reconnoiter of the Spanish fortifications as part of his preparations.\(^{494}\) In a letter otherwise about Lille, Louvois informed Vauban in early March of the king’s plans for his new conquest, noting that:

> Comme le Roi est résolu de faire use citadelle à Besançon et quelques fortifications dans les autres places de la Franche-Comté, lesquelles, par l’estime que Sa Majesté a pour vous, Elle est bien aise que vous les traciez vous-mêmes à ceux qui les entreprendront.\(^{495}\)

Thus, rather than having an initial direction over the whole fortification department of Louvois or even the portion of it concerned with the new conquests in Flanders, it appears that Vauban’s role grew by bits and pieces. As he continued to impress the secretary with his diligence and skills, Vauban was steadily given more and more individual places to design personally, and on occasion was asked to look at the blueprints proposed by the engineers at other fortresses.

For instance, in January 1668 he wrote Louvois about the work at Tournai, mentioning that the king had rejected the idea of a second *chemin couvert* for its

\(^{494}\)The quotation is from Condé to Louvois, 20 December 1667, Maurice Gresset, Pierre Gresser, and Jean-Marc Debard, *Histoire de l’annexion de la Franche-Comté et du pays de Montbéliard* (Le Couteau: Horvath, 1988), 186. This campaign is described in ibid., 183-92.

citadel. In March, Vauban informed the secretary of his visit to and advice on Lille and on Courtrai, which had once been under his direction, and did the same concerning the Fort de l'Escarpe, near Douai. By April, he had completed projects for Franche-Comté, including a new citadel for Besançon. Perhaps rendered more susceptible to illness by fatigue, the engineer succumbed to a fever after completing his tour of Franche-Comté. Vauban had to delay his visit to Saint-Germain to confer with Louvois. Although anxious to "m'entendre avec vous de plusieurs causes concernant le service du Roi," Louvois hastened to add that "je vous prie surtout de ne point précipiter votre départ, de crainte que vous ne retombez malade." At the end of May, the secretary corrected Vauban's designs for Ath and a few days later changed their earlier resolution to send one of Vauban's assistants to oversee the work at Ath, deciding that this engineer should remain at Lille and that another should go to Ath in his stead. Less than a week later, the king approved Vauban's designs for Ath, and he was ordered to trace the design and negotiate the contracts for this important work. At about the


497 Vauban to Louvois, 7 and 14 March 1668, A.G. A 225, p. 40, 87; Vauban to Le Bret (Governor of Douai), 4 March 1668, ibid., p. 41.

498 Vauban to Louvois, 22 April 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 9 (summary). This included plans for the forts at Saint-André, Bellin, and Bracon, and the chateaus of Joux and Sainte-Anne, and the demolition of the chateau at Arguel. See also Gresset, Annexion de la Franche-Comté, 204-05.

499 Louvois to Vauban, 6 May 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 9. Vauban referred to his illness in his letter of 22 April (ibid.).


501 Louvois to Vauban, 2 June 1668, A.G. A 215, fol. 32.

502 Louvois to Vauban, 8 June 1668, A.G. A 215, fol. 142.
same time, Louvois solicited his advice on another engineer’s proposals for Arras,503 and a month later requested his thoughts on Philippeville, which Vauban had just visited.504

By June 1668, his growing responsibilities made Vauban feel that he and his assistants were being stretched to the limits. He begged the secretary to allow him to retain a key engineer at Lille rather than sending him elsewhere, for "c’est là qu’est le plus grand ouvrage dont vous m’ayez chargé...."505 Vauban’s distress further suggests that rather than having been entrusted with all or even the Flanders section of Louvois’s fortification department from the outset of their association, the engineer’s charge was an evolving accumulation of responsibilities. The king's conquests of the past year had greatly expanded the fortification activities of the secretary of state for war, and he had no desire to avail himself of the established personnel such as Clererville of Pierre I Chastillon. But the exigencies of war, especially the ever-present fear of a Spanish counter-attack, forced Louvois to work quickly to secure the king’s new strongholds. Vauban was proving to be the perfect collaborator in these efforts.506

The wrangling concerning Arras are instructive as to Vauban’s exact status in Louvois’s fortification department at this time. As noted above, Vauban was asked his opinion of plans for that place at the end of May 1668. In early June, he visited Arras itself, and by 9 June had sent Louvois a plan for the citadel.507 It was also at this juncture that the secretary assured him that the 400 livres "dont vous entreteniés des ingénieurs seront toujours à votre disposition," indicating the further consolidation of


504Louvois to Vauban, 5 July 1668, A.G. A1 216, fol. 84.

505Vauban to Louvois, 9 June 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 10. In this same letter, Vauban asked permission to add to his staff by hiring a former assistant to Pierre I Chastillon, intendant des fortifications in Colbert’s neighboring province of Picardy.

506On Louvois’s new administrative and building opportunities in Flanders, see Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 30.

507Vauban to Louvois, 9 June 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 9.
what was not originally intended to be a permanent position. When Vauban’s plans were received, Louis XIV instructed Louvois to them to "Mgr le Prince [de Condé]," who had just returned from his easy conquest of Franche-Comté. Even though Condé disagreed with these plans, Louvois assured Vauban that the prince’s alternative was too costly, and so he asked the engineer to send further advice. In another letter that day, the secretary informed his protégé that he had just received Clerville’s recommendation—adding "si ce qu’il m’a écrit peut s’appeller un avis"—which claimed that Vauban’s proposals were too expensive. Again, Louvois wanted a rebuttal so that he could press the advantages of Vauban’s blueprint with the king. By the end of the month, Louvois wrote Vauban that Condé had come over to his viewpoint, and that the king would render a decision that very morning, even though Vauban still thought the prince supported Clerville’s proposals, and hence was not sanguine about the success of his own. In a matter of days, Louvois was able to inform his pessimistic assistant that it was indeed his own design that had gained the royal nod. Despite his high standing with Louvois, Vauban had not stepped into a position as the war secretary’s official or unofficial second-in-command in the area of fortifications. Moreover, he had by no means vanquished all rivals to influence in these matters, since Condé’s opinion was greatly respected by the king, and even Clerville’s voice received a polite hearing in the king’s entourage, surely seconded by his patron Colbert, who sat in the monarch’s inner

508 Louvois to Vauban, 11 June 1668, A.G. A¹ 215, fol 180 (two letters).

509 Louvois to Vauban, 15 June 1668, A.G. A¹ 215, fol 270.


511 Louvois to Vauban, 26 June 1668, A.G. A¹ 215, fol. 407.

512 Vauban to Louvois, 27 June 1668. Rochas, Vauban ses écrits, 2: 11. Vauban said he was surprised that a great man like Clerville "emploie tant de belles paroles pour dire si peu des choses." See also his letter to the secretary of 18 June, complaining about the alleged agreement between Condé and Clerville (ibid., 10 [summary]).

council. As a result, Vauban struggled, often to the point of despair, to defend his ideas against powerful critics.\textsuperscript{514}

Louvois still made use of Clerville's services, whether by inclination or because the chevalier was still trusted by the king and especially by Colbert. In August 1668 he sent the Clerville to Lille to draw up a project to augment the city.\textsuperscript{515} Yet, as Louvois increasingly took Vauban into his confidences, the secretary expressed his growing displeasure with Clerville in ever more impatient terms, and Vauban, for his part, now openly ridiculed the work of his former mentor with little fear of reprimand.\textsuperscript{516} Even so, they both had to tread warily: in July the secretary sent Vauban materials relating to Arras: a plan by Clerville and a plan and letters from the vicomte d'Aspremont, a respected veteran of ancient lineage and a captain in the Garde, whereas Vauban was of a lesser rank. Louvois advised Vauban to cloak his examination of these papers in secrecy, report back to him discreetly, and then give his orders to Aspremont "sincèrement et avec la prudence qu'il convient, pour ne lui donner ni chagrin, ni jalousie...."\textsuperscript{517} At about the same time, Vauban reported to Louvois that Clerville had

\textsuperscript{514}See, for example, Vauban to Louvois, 27 June 1668, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 11, reveals his bitterness and gloom over efforts he assumed would fail, despite Louvois's assurances to the contrary. In a letter of 18 October, Louvois, with some impatience, had to calm Vauban's almost neurotic fears that the secretary and king had abandoned him in the controversy over the defenses of Dunkirk and sided with Clerville (ibid., 17-18).

\textsuperscript{515}Croquez, \textit{Louis XIV en Flandres}, 63. Clerville's plans were eventually rejected. See also Louvois to Vauban, 10 September 1668, A.G. A' 218, fol. 16, in which the secretary urged Vauban to examine Clerville's plan on Bergues, an inland post just south of Dunkirk.

\textsuperscript{516}Louvois to Vauban, 30 June 1668, A.G. A' 215, fol. 463, where he assured him that he was "un peu mauvaise gré d'être du parti du Chev. de Clerville"; 17 July, A.G. A' 216, fol. 367, where, in speaking of one of Clerville's plans, Louvois said he hoped "Dieu veuille qu'il ne vous entre point dans l'esprit de faire jamais rien de semblable." Vauban to Louvois, 11 July, A.G. A' 227, p. 245, and [July or August], A.G. A' 228, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{517}Louvois to Vauban, 12 July 1668, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 12.
passed through Courtrai, Ath, and Lille, and had prepared proposals for each place. Vauban’s attendant comments reveal how things stood between him and the chevalier, but they also betray his awareness that his own position in Louvois’s service had not yet been regularized:

[Clerville] est fort chagrin contre moi quelque mine qu’il fasse; c’est pourquoi il ne me pardonnera rien de ce qui lui aura semblé faute, mais je loue Dieu de ce que lui et moi avons affaire à un ministre éclairé qui, en matière de fortification, ne prend point le change et qui veut des raisons solides pour se laisser persuader, et non pas des historiettes.518

Vauban’s discomfort is also apparent in an exchange he had with Louvois over Arras: the secretary quipped that Vauban and Aspremont had apparently fallen into agreement on some work to be done "contre l’ordinaire des gens de votre profession"519—a clear allusion to Vauban’s continuing conflicts with Clerville and other engineers.520 Vauban replied tartly that men of his profession are always in accord in matters of fortification when they understand their métier and look to the good of the service.521

That summer was an especially busy one since Vauban had also been assigned the creation of a new fortress at Ath, although other engineers had been sent in April and May to draw up some plans. The original design was supposed to incorporate the old medieval walls, but these proved to be so unsuitably built that they were demolished and Vauban’s earlier plans were revised. In fact, it was only his fifth draft of these plans that finally received royal approval on 21 July. The massive undertakings at this site included the digging of a canal around the circumference of the town to allow easier

518Vauban to Louvois, [July or August] 1668, ibid., 13.


520For instance, someone sent Louvois some advice on Ath, which the minister forwarded to the engineer, remarking that he found some good things in it. Louvois to Vauban, 16 July 1668, A.G. A1 216, fol. 352.

delivery of building materials. Louvois had come to rely so much on Vauban’s advice and energetic execution of his orders that he expected the engineer to be everywhere at once. On 4 July, the secretary ordered him to hurry to Lille where the work had bogged down so that he could keep to the schedule he had promised the king. Less than a week later, however, Louvois prodded Vauban into tracing the new fortress at Ath even though the building materials had yet to be amassed, which was against Vauban’s professional judgment. The secretary recognized his assistant’s technical scruples, but ordered him to overcome them since the new fortress at Ath was so important. As secretary of war, Louvois had to pay more attention to pleasing the king, even if only with appearances, than did a technician like Vauban.

During the rest of that hectic building season, Vauban continued to assist the war secretary in the supervision of the many projects underway in Flanders. This supervisory role over a number of construction sites is clear by the summer. On 11 July, for instance, Vauban wrote from Lille to inform Louvois of the progress at that city as well as at Ath, Tournai, Courtrai, and Arras. These same places figured in

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523Louvois to Vauban, 4 July 1668, A.G. A' 216, fol. 67.

524Louvois to Vauban, 10 July 1668, A.G. A' 216, fol. 213. In his Directeur général, 138-44, written several years later, Vauban included a section entitled "Sur les ouvrages precipites," which was surely based in part on his experience at Ath.

525Vauban to Louvois, 11 July 1668, A.G. A' 227, p. 245. These cities were under the intendant Charuel, who also supervised the intendant Talon, who had charge of Oudenaarde. See the lists of cities compiled by Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 174-80, who describes how these arrangements and boundaries changed with the appointment of a provincial intendant for Flanders in May 1668 and the assignment of Dunkirk, Gravelines, and Bourbourg to Barrillon, the provincial intendant at Amiens.
other reports throughout that summer. In September, Vauban's net was spread to take in new cities, which appear for the first time in this correspondence with Paris. Except for an earlier look at Philippeville, which he had passed through on other business, Vauban had little or nothing to do with the fortresses of Hainaut in and around the valley of the Sambre that had fallen to France and the war secretary in 1659. In fact, the only place outside the 1667 conquests in Flanders that Vauban had worked on to any extent was Arras. On 6 September, however, Vauban reported to Louvois of his visit to Avesnes, Landrecies, Le Quesnoy, and, on the river Scarpe further to the northwest, Douai, which Vauban had successfully besieged the previous summer. His examination of the places in this area this time was more than mere happenstance, as is suggested by the number of fortresses he visited. In addition, it was surely undertaken at the secretary's behest, because the minister was pester ing him for news of Le Quesnoy even before receiving the engineer's first report. Vauban's inspection tour took him even further northwest to the fortifications at Bethune, and to the coast as well, since Louvois's letters also included discussions of Bergues and Dunkirk. In fact, Vauban spent several weeks at Dunkirk working on plans for its fortifications, which were the subject of a great debate at court, as we have seen.

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527 Vauban to Louvois, 6 September 1668, A.G. A1 228, p. 84. This part of the letter was not included in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 14.


529 Vauban to Louvois, 9 September 1668, A.G. A1 228, p. 95; Louvois to Vauban, 10 and 19 September, A.G. A1 218, fols. 16 and 152.

These many months of building activity during 1668 allowed Louvois to observe his new protégé closely and carefully. Louvois was himself in Flanders between 11 April and 5 May and again between 21 August and 7 September. And when he was with the court, the secretary badgered Vauban and the intendant for letters detailing the progress of the vast undertakings in that province. By these means, Louvois was able to see how Vauban sited and designed fortifications, adjudicated the entrepreneurial contracts, and supervised the actual construction process. Louvois was additionally anxious to know how the engineer took the measure of the skills of those who served under him, and how he interacted with those above and below him in the military and administrative hierarchy. Most importantly, Vauban’s new master tried to ascertain whether or not he was being served by his new client with both loyalty and honesty.

Louvois was very pleased with Vauban’s work, especially at the vital post of Lille, which also had taken on a symbolic status as the chief advertisement of the French king’s presence in this formerly Spanish territory. Knowing that the monarch was satisfied with Vauban’s exertions as well, Louvois helped the engineer obtain an unprecedented appointment from the king in June: governorship of the citadel he was building at Lille. In addition, the secretary replied favorably to his engineer's request for favors to various individuals, demonstrating Vauban’s continued grafting into the Le Tellier

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531 For the war secretary’s itinerary, see Corvisier, Louvois, 508.

532 See, for instance, Louvois to Vauban, 8 June 1668, A.G. A1 215, fol. 142; Vauban to Louvois, 5 July, A.G. A1 227, p. 220; Louvois to Vauban, 1 August, A.G. A1 217, fol. 8. In the last letter, Louvois asked Vauban to prepare a report on all the "gens" around or sent to him so that the secretary would know who to retain and who to cashier for future fortification work.

533 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1668, says that this was "le premier de cette nature en France." See Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 11, for Louvois’s 20 June 1668 letter of congratulation.
clientage network. Clearly, Louvois had found himself an able collaborator and one whose career he intended to advance, to the advantage of them both.

It is important, however, to inquire into the role Vauban played in his own ascent in the fortification hierarchy of the war ministry. Besides doing a good job, did he in any way actively promote his own career? As we saw earlier, it is frequently assumed that such self-promotion was beyond a "citoyen" of such noble spirit. At least one letter, however, contradicts this view. In August, Louvois sent Vauban Clerville's mémoire on Dunkirk, appending his own opinion of it and asking the engineer to do the same. Louvois noted in passing that he did this "Pour me conforner à ce que vous me recommandés si souvent, de vous envoyer toujours tout ce que l'on m'adresse sur chaque place...." Shortly afterwards, Vauban impetuously urged the seizure of the fortress of Condé from the Spanish, even though a treaty of peace had been signed at Aix-la-Chapelle in May. And he offered to reconnoitre the place personally if Louvois was in agreement. Clearly, Vauban was continuing to take the initiative in his dealings with Louvois, seeking with some persistence to enlarge the scope of his responsibilities beyond those places entrusted to him willy-nilly by the secretary during the past months.

Louvois's Directeur général des fortifications

Exactly when Vauban's administrative position was regularized is not clear, but it seems that this may have occurred in the late summer or early autumn of 1668. Toward the end of September, Vauban went on at length complaining to the secretary of problems with his subordinates, explaining that

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534 For example, Louvois to Vauban, 30 June 1668, A.G. A 1, fol. 463. Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 14, quotes Vauban's recommendation of the engineer La Touche to be entrepreneur at Ath, but notes Louvois's October complaint to another engineer about La Touche's honesty; nonetheless, Vauban's standing with the secretary was so great, Rochas concludes, that his recommendation prevailed.


536 Vauban to Louvois, 13 August 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 13-14. He spoke in a bellicose manner of there being no more equitable judges than cannons.
Louvois responded 26 September with vigor that he was sending no orders regarding this situation at Lille because

j’ai fait la réponse que vous pouvez désirer en mandant à tous ceux qui m’ont écrit, l’un après l’autre, que le Roi s’étant remis absolument à vous de la conduite de toutes les fortifications de mon département, je les priai de ne pas souffrir que vos subalternes raisonnaient en votre absence sur les choses que vous auriez une fois réglées. Ma réponse a été si sèche que je suis persuadé que c’est la dernière fois que l’on m’écrit de pareilles affaires. 

Although Louvois’s assurances of support for Vauban came in this particular instance as a result of resistance to the engineer’s authority at Lille, it is likely that Vauban’s recent inspection tour of the fortresses of Hainaut, under the war ministry since 1659, stirred up resentment among those established engineers as well. Thus, Louvois found it necessary to state or re-state Vauban’s role as Clerville’s replacement in the growing fortification department of the Le Telliers. He did so forcefully and for all to hear. Even though the chevalier maintained the title that seemed to give him pre-eminence over all the fortifications of the realm, there was no longer any pretense that his writ ran in the places under the sway of the secretary of state for war. If Clerville was to see his plans brought to fruition by the war ministry, he would have to plead his case before its secretary and the king like any other supplicant. Thus, Vauban’s authority was not a behind-the-scenes understanding concocted by Louvois to circumvent any royal desire to maintain appearances for Clerville’s sake. Indeed, as Louvois’s letter indicated to Vauban and as the secretary wrote to the engineer’s insubordinate subordinates, Louis XIV himself had sanctioned this new arrangement.

537 Vauban to Louvois, 23 September 1668, ibid., 14-15.

538 Louvois to Vauban, 26 September 1668, ibid., 15. While quashing insubordination against his chief engineer, Louvois still encouraged engineers to write to him directly, assuring them that no one other than himself opened letters addressed to him (for example, Louvois to Barles, engineer at Arras, 16 February 1669, quoted in André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 390, n. 45).
 Nonetheless, Vauban continued to feel insecure in the service of his new master, and he sought constant reassurance from Louvois. Certainly, this uneasy sense resulted in part from the newness of his position, but it also had its foundations in the continued attacks on his power by Clerville and his partisans, among whom were numbered several old-guard marshals of France who did not welcome the eclipse of their comrade by a younger man. Indeed, Clerville continued to advance his pretensions to pre-eminence in fortifications. After all, he still held the office that entitled him to make that claim. His plans for Dunkirk, which called for a large fort, appear to have received an honest examination by Louvois, who had charge of the land fortifications of this place.\textsuperscript{539} Even though the pupil’s plans for inundated bastions would eventually prevail over those of his master, the former’s victory was by no means a foregone conclusion. When his preliminary proposal received the king’s approval and work was ordered to begin, the matter seemed to have been resolved.\textsuperscript{540} Soon, however, it was apparent that Louvois’s objections to portions of his engineer’s design for the citadel had allowed Clerville to reopen the debate, and Vauban himself shifted his position on the very different proposals offered by himself and the chevalier.\textsuperscript{541} As Louvois informed Vauban, when presented before the king, Clerville’s plan for Dunkirk had several defenders among the assembled marshals of France, many of whom supported it out of deference either to Clerville’s experience or his skills as a courtier. Vauban fell into despair, and Louvois went on at some length to assure his collaborator that he had lost neither his nor the king’s confidence. But as the secretary also reassuringly observed, it was the king himself who politely brushed aside this advice once given and opted for Vauban’s superior design.\textsuperscript{542}

\textsuperscript{539} Louvois to Vauban, 18 August 1668, A.G. A\textsuperscript{r} 217, fol. 312, in which the secretary expressed pleasure with Clerville’s plans.

\textsuperscript{540} Louvois to Vauban, 10 September 1668, A.G. A\textsuperscript{r} 218, fol. 16.

\textsuperscript{541} Vauban to Louvois, 20 September, A.G. A\textsuperscript{r} 228, p. 140.

\textsuperscript{542} Louvois to Vauban, 10 and 18 October, Rochas. \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 16-18.
Despite the stressful challenges to his authority that took place in September and the first part of October, Vauban's responsibilities in Louvois's fortification department continued to expand, even during that difficult period but especially in the months following. For example, on 4 October, Vauban was asked by the secretary to instruct Thomas de Choisy, a cavalry officer, on the work being done at Charleroi, where he was to serve as the new chief engineer under Vauban's orders.543 The same month, Vauban and Louvois discussed the winter preparations necessary to a successful work season in the coming year.544 Louvois also corresponded with his assistant about the itinerary for Vauban's winter visit to a large number of work sites, which would include first inspection tour beyond the northeastern frontier. Beginning at Lille in Flanders, Vauban would then move on to Hainaut to re-visit the places he had viewed just a few months earlier. After a stop in Paris to confer with the secretary, the engineer would head south, going first to the fortress at Piglerol along the Alpine border with the Duchy of Savoy, and then on to Perpignan in the Pyrenees, a Mediterranean province ceded by Spain in 1659. He was further instructed to reappear at Paris by 15 January to confer with the secretary, after which he was to return to Flanders to continue preparations for the 1669 construction season.545 In sum, this represented the entire fortification department of Louvois.546

543 Louvois to Vauban, 4 October 1668, A.G. A' 219, fol. 49. For Choisy, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 166-67.

544 Louvois to Vauban, 30 October 1668, A.G. A' 219, fol. 428.


546 Franche-Comté, where Vauban had worked earlier in the year, had been returned to Spain in May by the terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which Vauban noted in his "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1668. As we saw earlier, the fortifications of Alsace, Lorraine, and the Three Bishoprics remained under the nominal authority of the foreign secretary and the actual control of Colbert. It was only in 1673 that the first two were transferred to Louvois's care, and in 1679 the Three Bishoprics fell to him as well.
But Vauban's anxieties continued to gnaw at him. On the occasions he had to withstand Louvois's wrath, he frequently fell into immediate and deep despair. The verbal lash of the secretary was much feared by those who felt it; Vauban, despite his high standing with his master, was not immune to its sting, as when Louvois upbraided him for not writing as frequently as he desired.\textsuperscript{547} Vauban thanked Louvois on one occasion that he was permitted to speak "mon sentiment avec la liberté que vous m'avez toujours permis...."\textsuperscript{548} Indeed, he often did so in a playful and even sarcastic manner.\textsuperscript{549} Yet, when in the depths of discouragement, Vauban took great pains to justify his frankness in terms of its utility to the secretary, adding assurances of loyalty and submission, and insisting that he was "un homme qui est tout à vous..." and that "j'ai l'honneur d'être votre créature, que je vous dois tout ce que je suis et que je n'espère que par vous...."\textsuperscript{550} Despite Louvois's surprise at this uneasiness, the secretary assured his subordinate that his frankness was always welcome.\textsuperscript{551} But uncertainty again gripped the engineer the following year, and he expressed his apprehension to the secretary:

\begin{quote}
Vous ne m'avez rien dit que force mercuriales, quelques-unes desquelles m'ont si fort décontenancé que je ne sais où j'en suis. Et peu s'en faut que je ne me croie assez malheureux pour avoir perdu l'honneur de vos bonnes grâces, et la seule pensée que j'en ai me tue de chagrin et de déplaisir. Rendez, Monseigneur, le calme à mon esprit, que vous lui avez ôté, en me redonnant la part que j'avais dans vos bonnes grâces, ou chassez-moi si loin qu'on ne me revoye jamais, car l'état où je suis n'est pas supportable pour moi. Je ne vois déjà que des gens qui me prennent avantage, et bientôt je deviendrai le valet des autres....\textsuperscript{552}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{547}See their exchange of letters in October 1668 printed in Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 16-19. Louvois ordered him henceforth to write more often than twice per week. In a letter of 20 December, Louvois commanded him to write every day or at least one out of every two days (A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 221, fol. 301).

\textsuperscript{548}Vauban to Louvois, 29 October 1668, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 228, p. 281.

\textsuperscript{549}See, for example, Vauban to Louvois, 8 and 14 October 1668, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 16, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{550}Vauban to Louvois, 23 November 1668, ibid., 21-22.

\textsuperscript{551}Louvois to Vauban, 27 November 1668, ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{552}Vauban to Louvois, 5 November 1669, ibid., 34.
As his last remark suggests, Vauban was well aware of the rivals who hoped for his failure and disgrace so that they could supplant him as he had dislodged Clerville earlier. Historians are guilty of extrapolating the later triumphs of the future maréchal into the past when they ignore the evolutionary nature of his debut in Louvois’s service. The real picture is not as tidy and linear as has often been supposed.

At this point, we must return to one of the three questions posed earlier: What role did Vauban play in Louvois’s department? Some sense of this can be gained from the discussion thus far, but it would be useful to summarize those functions in a more orderly manner. By at least the autumn of 1668, Vauban had emerged as the war secretary’s chief technical adviser and inspector of fortifications in all the places under the care of that secretary of state. Vauban journeyed along the fringes of the kingdom, from stronghold to stronghold, gathering reports from the local engineers, all the while deploying his extensive powers of observation to ascertain what work needed to be done to perfect each place and to enhance the defenses of the frontiers. Generous portions of his correspondence with Louvois consisted of comments on the designs of a bevy of engineers under his authority, as well as on his own proposals for work to be done.553 Each winter, after his tour of the frontiers, he would meet with the chief engineers of the various places to examine their accounts and receive a briefing on the work accomplished during the past year, and then to generate plans for the coming construction season; all this would then be presented to the secretary, who would in turn, after revisions had been made, present it to the king for his decision.554 Once the royal will was made known, preparations would begin, and it was Vauban who had oversight of these frequently massive construction enterprises. This necessitated his almost

553For example, Louvois to Vauban, 14 October 1668, asked him to examine the proposal by the engineer Jacques de Saint-Hilaire for Collioure, a chateau in Roussillon. In a letter the next day, Louvois sent Vauban the second plan prepared by Deshoulières, the engineer at Tournai (A.G. A’ 219, fols. 212 and 227). Vauban to Louvois, 24 October (A.G. A’ 228, p. 260), reported that he had worked with Deshoulières on this matter.

554See, for instance, Louvois to Vauban, 8 December 1669, A.G. A’ 236, fol. 42.
constant circulation among the work sites, regulating contracts with *entrepreneurs*, instructing the engineers in technical details, resolving professional and personal disputes among his subordinates, watching for fraud, intervening to overcome difficulties created by an overlap of administrative authority with the provincial intendants, expediting the pace of construction, and generally dislodging a multitude of other impediments that nearly always played havoc with even the most carefully crafted plans. Vauban marked the new rhythm of his life in his "Abregé des services" of 1703:

> Il est a remarquer qu’a mesure qu’il faisait un projet de place et qu’il estoit approuvé Le Roy le chargeoit de la principale Direction en ce qui regarde la conduite des ouvrages ce qui l’a engagé depuis à des voyages continuels dans tous les tems de l’année.\(^{555}\)

As Jacques Guttin correctly noted in his informative *thèse* on these administrative questions, Vauban "a vraiment tenu le rôle d’un grand commis qui assure l’unité et la permanence d’un service."\(^{556}\)

It must be remembered, however, that Vauban was not the only administrative link between the war secretary and the engineers in his employ. The Le Telliers had long made use of civilian commissioners who served with troops in the field, organized occupied provinces, and then governed them when the war ended. Whatever the role of a particular intendant at a given moment—be it as an army intendant, intendant of a conquered territory, or provincial intendant—he reported directly and often to the secretary of war. In addition to all the other tasks assigned them in their intendancy, these royal agents inspected fortifications and then supervised their repair and the construction of new fortresses. They were especially absorbed with matters concerning procurement of building materials, laborers, and contractors, resolution of disputes over property appropriated by the crown, and surveillance of the vast sums of money that poured into these frontier areas from the other provinces of the kingdom. They had

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\(^{555}\) Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1669.

\(^{556}\) Guttin, *Corps des ingénieurs*, 31. See this work for a detailed although sometimes garbled account of the operation and procedures of the fortification bureaucracy under Louis XIV. For instance, Guttin does not always make a distinction between the department of Louvois and that of Colbert.
direct control over the engineers and the projects within the boundaries of their jurisdiction, whereas Vauban’s authority was exercised through intermittent visits, annual winter planning meetings in Paris for head engineers, and an on-going exchange of letters, proposals, diagrams, and other technical matters requiring Vauban’s approval. When in the provinces, Vauban conferred with the intendant and tried to keep him abreast of all matters involving a work site. He knew that the cooperation of these powerful officials was vital to the solid and timely completion of any fortification project.597

Vauban’s initial work in Flanders had been under the army intendant Charuel. But the provincial intendant with whom Vauban worked the closest and perhaps the longest was Michel Le Peletier de Souzy, a member of the nobility of the robe and a client of the Le Telliers. On 12 February 1668, Louvois had Le Peletier de Souzy appointed provincial intendant of newly-conquered Franche-Comté, despite the pretensions of some others to this post, including Colbert’s cousin Saint-Marc, currently intendant in Alsace.598 One of the intendant’s primary responsibilities had to do with demolishing the fortifications at Dôle and Gray and building a new citadel at Besançon.599 Because of Vauban’s involvement with the fortifications of this province, he and Le Peletier de Souzy worked together on these matters, which was likely to have been the first time they encountered one another.600 Peace with Spain soon deprived both men of this field of opportunity; nevertheless, in May Louvois had obtained for Le Peletier de Souzy the intendency just created in Flanders. Albert Croquez says that Le Peletier de Souzy

597For the role of these various intendants in fortifications, see Vauban, Directeur général, 37-40, and Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 194-95.


599Croquez, Flandre wallonne, 38. From 15 March, this work of destruction was carried out by the engineer Aspremont. See Gresset, Annexion de la Franche-Comté, 203, 207-09.

600Ibid., 204-05.
arrived in Flanders in June 1668 "sans y connaître personne," 561 but this seems to ignore the presence of Vauban in that province. It is reasonable to speculate that both men were to some degree pleased to see that they would be working with the other. Le Peletier de Souzy remained as provincial intendant at Lille until 1683, and thus worked closely with Vauban during a period of incredible construction activity. Although they certainly clashed on occasion, they became fast friends, sharing a common patron in Paris and moving in the same social circles in Flanders. 562

Patron and Client

Given Vauban's function as one of the chief links between Louvois and the engineers of his department, 563 it is appropriate to address the third and final of the questions posed earlier: What were relations like between the young war secretary and his chief engineer? Even though several historians have already answered this question with insight and at some length, it is important to highlight a few elements of this relationship. 564

561 Ibid.

562 For instance, Baron Michel-Ange de Woerden, a former official under the Spanish who rallied to the French king, was a friend of both men, according to ibid., 40-41. For letters between Vauban and Woerden, see Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 194, 196, 253, 254, 290. For a biographical treatment of Le Peletier de Souzy and especially his years in Flanders, see Croquez, Flandre wallonne, 31-63. Nearly one hundred pages of letters to and from the intendant are printed in a special section at the back of Croquez's useful study (ibid., 3*-100*).

563 Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 42-43, says that Louvois still corresponded with individual engineers, whereas Colbert did so rarely, relying mainly on the intendants to dispense his orders. But Guttin makes no distinction between the provincial intendants and the intendants des fortifications that Colbert came to rely on from 1674 until they were probably abolished after the death of Seignelay in 1690.

564 Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 285-87, 454, 466; Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 54-55; André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 209, 426 (who calls their relationship "Très variée...coups de boutoir et d'affection..."); Zeller, Organisation défensive, 49-127; Corvisier, Louvois, 267.
The best introduction to the world of seventeenth-century patrons, clients, and power brokers is the masterful study by Sharon Kettering. Kettering contends that only in the later years of Louis XIV's reign did the nobility cease to be indispensable tools in the governing of the kingdom, and even then they continued to play an important role, alongside the emerging bureaucratic structures. The nobility were linked together by patron-broker-client ties, and these networks were mobilized by the king and his ministers to create among the aristocracy a stronger base of support for the crown than has often been supposed. Kettering identified a number of characteristics of patron-client relationships: they are personal, emotional, continuous, and voluntary bonds between two individuals of unequal social station; and they are reciprocal, for patrons protect their clients and dispense material advantages, while clients reciprocate with loyal service.

On a professional level, Vauban remained Louvois's subordinate. In the management parlance of our own time, Louvois would be labeled a "hands-on" administrator, one who had not abandoned the fortifications of his department to his chief engineer's care. In October 1668 Louvois assured one subordinate that "C'est moi qui réponds au roi de ce qui se trouvera de bien ou mal fait dans les fortifications de mon département." Because the secretary knew that he was the one ultimately responsible to the king for the state of the fortifications in his charge, nothing his assistant Vauban did was above question. Even though he continually assured Vauban of his esteem and friendship, Louvois nonetheless stated in the strongest terms that

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565 Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 13. For an examination of this mechanism on the provincial level, see Beik, Absolutism and Society.

566 Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 9-11.

567 André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 390. See Corvisier, Louvois, 163-76, for an analysis of his managerial style.

568 For example, in a letter of 8 October 1669, Louvois expressed surprise at the details of a marché Vauban had made at Lille, and asked his reasons for them (A.G. A1 235, fol. 78).
"depuis la plus petite chose jusqu’à la plus grande, je dois en être informé."

Vauban’s occasional failures to follow proper lines of authority provoked other such rebukes from the secretary, but Vauban usually acknowledged the limits of his own power and his dependence upon Louvois. For instance, in 1669 Vauban was approached by two engineers working at Saint-Venant, a fortress on the river Lys that had been gained from the Spanish in 1659. They wanted him to resolve some differences between them, but he referred the matter directly to the secretary because Louvois had not given him any orders regarding the work at that place.

Fundamentally, Vauban and Louvois had a collaborative relationship, even though the engineer was clearly the junior partner. Louvois was not afraid to add technical refinements to the many plans sent to his bureau, and vigorously disputed or even vetoed elements of Vauban’s designs when he thought them frivolous or of poor quality. For instance, noting that he had not yet made his decision on one of Vauban’s proposals for Ath, Louvois playfully offered his friend the opportunity to persuade him of his views when next the secretary visited there. Certainly, such decisions were indisputably his.

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569 Louvois to Vauban, 10 November 1669, A.G. A1 263, fol. 17.

570 Vauban to Louvois, 10 June 1669, A.G. A1 242, p. 37. In Louvois to Vauban, 13 June, A.G. A1 233, fol. 62, the secretary replied that he would send Vauban his resolution to this conflict.

571 Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 453-54, presents Louis XIV and Louvois as students of Vauban. For a more balanced appreciation of Vauban’s role and the abilities of the king and his secretary, see Zeller, Organisation défensive, 118-27.

572 For some examples from this early period, see Louvois to Vauban, 8 June 1668, A.G. A1 215, fol. 142; 21 July, A.G. A1 216, fol. 409; 1 August, A.G. A1 217, fol. 8; 10 September, A.G. A1 218, fols. 16 and 34 (where Louvois yielded to Vauban’s new plan for a bastion at Dunkirk since the engineer was on the site). Louvois did, however, dismiss Vauban’s ideas for inscriptions at Lille, saying that they were "ne sont bonnes qu’à divertir les yeux des ignorants..." (Louvois to Vauban, 13 June 1669, A.G. A1 233, fol. 62). In Louvois to Vauban, 10 July, A.G. A1 234, fol. 81, the secretary announced that, having consulted some architects, he had changed the engineer’s designs for gates at Ath, noting that the experts "n’ont pas trouvé votre architecture bonne."

573 Louvois to Vauban, 4 September 1669, A.G. A1 235, fol. 27.
Nevertheless, Louvois valued Vauban's advice, and was honestly open to his technical correction. On one occasion, for example, Louvois spoke of a re-submitted plan by one engineer which the secretary judged to be in part against all the good maxims of fortification. He then proceeded to offer Vauban a little "griffonement" of his own, adding that his colleague could put it "au feu si vous ne l'approuvés."574 And Louvois was not above admitting that he had made an error, as when he confessed to having been mistaken about part of an entrepreneurial contract for Ath.575

The letters that traveled the post roads of France between the secretary and his chief engineer tell only a portion of the story. An important part of their relationship was established and maintained during their frequent face-to-face meetings. Some of these took place on the secretary's numerous journeys to the frontier on tours of inspection, often with Vauban accompanying him.576 They also met frequently in Paris or one of the near-by royal palaces when Vauban passed through on one of his many visits to the south or other frontier regions. Of course, there was also the annual Paris meeting with other engineers from Louvois's fortification department. Not surprisingly, much has been lost for want of having to be committed to paper; as Louvois observed in reply to one of Vauban's letters, "Je ne vous dis rien du surplus de votre lettre, remettant le tout à la vive voix."577

Louvois was a demanding master who drove himself as hard as he drove those who served him. But the "black legend" that has been attached to his name from his own lifetime, though sometimes deserved, is often unfair. Croquez observed that in his letters to Le Peletier de Souzy, another friend and client, Louvois "prend souvent un ton


familier et même plaisant."578 In his dealings with Vauban, Louvois was capable of meting out blunt and even withering rebukes, yet he was always quick to put them in a context of continued friendship and over-all confidence in the abilities of his colleague. The correspondence between these two resonates with good humor and mutual sarcasm, and the depth of their camaraderie emerges from any extended reading of their verbal exchanges. If Louvois is justly famous for not mincing his words, then he had met his match in his equally frank deputy.

Their partnership was a mutually beneficial one. Louvois's advancement in the favor of Louis XIV was in large part a function of the successes he brought the king on the field of battle and in the trenches as they inched their way toward enemy bastions. Vauban played an especially important role in the latter endeavors. According to the count he made in 1703, Vauban served directly under the king's orders at twenty of the forty-seven sieges at which he directed the attacks. This collaboration in the field between the monarch and his chief engineer began in 1667 with the War of Devolution and ended in 1692 with the capture on Namur. Vauban also served in "130 à 140 actions de vigueur," including the defense and attack of fortifications.59 Louvois's crucial contribution to the success of all these undertakings was primarily logistical: he directed the marshaling of men and material necessary to an operation as complicated and as extensive as a siege.

As long as there have been kings, they have sought to immortalize themselves in stone. The Sun King was no exception. Any student of this period is familiar with the great busts of the monarch by Bernini and others. And the great pile of Versailles has become synonymous with the king's name, either to his glory or to his shame, depending upon one's outlook. But just as much a part of the stone, brick, and mortar legacy of Louis XIV is the protective ring of fortifications along the frontiers created by the monarch and his ministers. These defensive works owe much to the efforts of Vauban.

578 Croquez, Flandre wallonne, 45-46.

579 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1.
He calculated that during his long career "il a fait les projets de 160 places et plus, et de plusieurs Ports de Mers."\textsuperscript{580} Vauban personally designed or had a hand in the plans of most of the new fortresses constructed during the personal reign. Moreover, either directly or indirectly, he supervised the building and repair of most of the components of France’s system of frontier fortresses. Yet, it was his "visites et voyages perpetuels hiver et été toutes le fois qu’il ne s’est pas agist de siege ce qui n’a pas cessé depuis 35 années en ça"\textsuperscript{581} that kept this defensive system performing as it did. His coordinating efforts did much to assure uniformity and quality in even the farthest removed regions of the French hexagon.

Vauban personally profited from his new attachment to Louvois. The secretary became his advocate with the king for the all-important gratifications that supplemented his income as an officer on half-pay. Louvois’s patronage also opened up the military hierarchy to Vauban’s further advancement, although his progress was not as rapid as he would have wished.\textsuperscript{582} He and the war secretary had to overcome the prejudice of field commanders against the pretensions of a mere engineer, which lingered despite his brilliant accomplishments until the end of his life.\textsuperscript{583}

\textsuperscript{580}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{581}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{582}For example, see Louvois to Vauban, 11 April 1684 (Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 229) and Vauban to Louvois, 5 July (ibid., 255), concerning the engineer’s desire to be named a lieutenant-general. Even the historian Boileau, in a 26 May letter to a friend, commented on Vauban’s merit, observing that "il y a plus d’un maréchal de France qui, quand il le rencontre, rougit de se voir maréchal de France" (ibid., 255 n. 2).

\textsuperscript{583}One of the most famous instances of this attitude among other officers involved the haughty Duc de La Feuillade, whose disdain for Vauban’s advice cost the king the capture of the Savoyard capital of Turin in 1706. On this episode, see Lazard, \textit{Vauban}, 330-36. Even Michel Chamillart, secretary of state for war (1701-09) and La Feuillade’s kinsman and promoter, had to admit that Vauban had been a "prophète sur Turin" when he had warned the duke of the disasters that would result if he persisted in ignoring the experienced engineer’s advice. As a repentant Chamillart observed, "Ce qui est bien certain, c’est que, si vous aviez été chargé de cette entreprise, il y a plus de
But if Vauban was a client of Louvois, he was certainly a patron in his own right as well. His close relationship allowed him to call on the war secretary on numerous occasions to advance the careers and personal interests of the engineer’s many relatives. It is no coincidence that several of his kinsmen distinguished themselves with military service and as engineers. Vauban was a natural broker for those natives of the Morvan seeking their fortune at home by closer relations with the royal government. Additionally, he served as a natural magnet for those of his region who sought a powerful patron as they attempted to gain a position either in the military, the royal bureaucracy, or as craftsmen and entrepreneurs outside their pays.

The long years away from the Morvan had forced Vauban to establish residence in a number of other places, most notably in Flanders where he labored almost continually for the rest of his life. Indeed, as governor of the citadel, he spent a good deal of time there when not on the highways or on one of his rare leaves to visit his family and lands in the Nivernais. Thus, he developed a clientele in that region and peppered the secretary of state for war and other royal officials for favors of various kinds. His kind heart often led him to intervene for more humble sorts, such as common soldiers whose plight came to his attention and moved him to become their advocate. Those with a need for a patron with close ties to the royal government sought him out in the many places he visited on his inspection tours.584

584 Besides the letters found throughout the second volume of Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, see also A. de Boisfleury, ed., "Lettres du maréchal de Vauban communiquées par M. le commandant de Rochas d’Aiglun, et publiées par M. de Boisfleury," Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, Ministre
By the beginning of the 1670s, Louvois and Vauban had forged a strong, mutually-beneficial working relationship. The war with the Dutch that began in 1672 would provide them both with a number of opportunities to prove their worth to the king and the value of their collaboration. Louvois could be a hard master, and he would drive his engineer hard during those years, rarely letting him visit his family in the Morvan. But even before those years of nearly constant siege and building activity, Vauban was to profit tremendously from his attachment to Louvois, a difficult patron who has been judiciously described by his most recent biographer as "simple, fidèle et cynique."583

583Corvisier, Louvois, 151; see 143-63 for an evaluation of the man.
CHAPTER IX

THE FLANDERS FRONTIER AND THE "AFFAIRE DE BRISACH": VAUBAN AND THE COLBERTS (1667-1671)

I have lost my reputation. I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.

Shakespeare, Othello

By the summer of 1668, Vauban was energetically moving about Flanders to supervise the work at the numerous fortresses Louvois had entrusted to his care. The exertions required at the citadel of Lille—intended to be the crown jewel of the king’s constructions in his newly-conquered provinces—kept him especially busy, prompting him to plead with Louvois to allow him to keep the engineer La Londe at Lille as his deputy while he was away on his numerous visits to other sites. Vauban indicated La Londe’s qualities: "Il est entré dans le détail du ménage et des payments; c’est un garçon d’un soin et d’une activité extraordinaires…"586 It is not surprising that Vauban was constantly in search of other such subalterns to whom he might delegate some of the multitudinous tasks the minister was assigning him.

Vauban spent much of June 1668 at Ath, assisted by what he affectionately and proudly dubbed "la bande d’Archimède,"587 designing an enlargement that would implement the king’s desire to enhance the importance of that place. Pressed as he was, it must have been with some relief that he announced to Louvois that some additional help was on its way:

J’ai un cousin à Brisach qui a eu soin de mon équipage qui a peut-être le mieux réglé qui se soit encore vu. Je l’attends de jour en jour, et, quand il sera venu,

586 Vauban to Louvois, 9 June 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2:10.

587 Vauban to Louvois, 19 June 1668, ibid., 11.

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je lui ferai mettre en train ceux-ci avant de laisser retourner, et cela ne coûtera rien au Roi.  

As this letter indicates, the engineer's cousin Paul II Le Prestre was expected to return to his work at Brisach after a sojourn in Flanders, but his stop-over apparently stretched itself into an extended stay. In September, Louvois instructed Vauban to send Colbert an explanation as to why Paul had left Alsace for Lille without the congé of the intendant Saint-Marc, cousin of the controller-general.  

In October, in discussing an expected vacancy among Vauban's assistants, Louvois mentioned the engineer's cousin as a possible replacement. During the next month, however, Paul's visit had unquestionably transformed itself into a permanent appointment, because in early November Vauban employed his cousin to search for master masons in the Nivernois and in Limousin. In future years Paul was to serve his kinsman as envoy to the war minister and as capitaine des portes of the citadel of Lille, of which Vauban was governor.

This episode involving Paul II Le Prestre demonstrates how much Vauban had detached himself from the clientage network of the Colberts. Besides his own ceaseless labors on behalf of the secretary for war, Vauban had now drawn his cousin from their former assignment in Alsace to toil at his side in new endeavors. In other words, Vauban had taken one of his own clients and a member of his family from the orbit of one patron and into that of another. That he made such a perilous move suggests a growing confidence—albeit shaken at times by bouts of uncertainty and pessimism—in his position in the department of Louvois, which had become increasingly regularized from

588 Vauban to Louvois, 28 June 1668, ibid., 11.
590 Louvois to Vauban, 10 October 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 17.
592 See ibid., 38-40, for Paul II Le Prestre’s activities and appointments.
September 1668. But unsettled matters from Vauban’s earlier assignment at Brisach would soon embroil him in an affair that would force him to turn his thoughts back to that place. Before turning to that complicated and murky business, however, we must first examine the state of Vauban’s relations with Colbert, his former patron, once the engineer had transferred his allegiance to Louvois.

**Coal and Exchanged Fortresses**

The frontier that Vauban was helping Louvois to fortify in 1668 was not one consciously chosen by Louis XIV, but rather one forced upon him by the Triple Alliance, which had stopped his army’s sweep through Spanish territory, leaving the king’s territorial goals unachieved. Consequently, the borders that emerged from the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle were so confused and contained so many incongruous mixtures of Spanish and French enclaves, they cried out for a future revision. Both sides were aware of this, and they each expected some action by the other to rectify this disarray, especially since the Spanish saw that the French advance, while stopped in its tracks, had procured them a strategic position that allowed the French free the passage of all the important rivers. In the negotiations that followed, the French plenipotentiaries offered Madrid a choice: either suffer the French to hold on to the forward positions they had thrust through the 1659 frontier of the Spanish Netherlands or permit them to retain the entire province of Franche-Comté.\(^{593}\)

The process of negotiation revealed that the French hoped the Spanish would opt to regain Franche-Comté, but it also exposed divisions among the king’s advisors. There was a powerful and vocal party of war that urged their monarch to ignore international opinion, as crystallized in the Triple Alliance, and to continue to press his claims against

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the Spanish crown. The soldiers and administrators on the Flanders frontier likewise urged a continuation of the French advance, and their correspondence with the war secretary betrayed a zeal that seemed to surpass his own. Vauban’s was among these voices, as indicated in a letter to Louvois written after the treaty was signed but when the potential for hostilities still stirred passions:

Prenons Condé sans faire tant de cérémonies; quinze jours de temps employés en feraient l’affaire et, après cela, vous plaira, main garnie. Il n’y a point de juges plus équitables que les canons: ceux-là vont droit au but et ne sont point corruptibles. Faites que le Roi les prennes pour arbitres s’il veut avoir bonne et brève justice de ses justes prétenions. Dans l’état où il est, tous les autres juges lui doivent être suspects.

Notwithstanding such bellicose urging, the king heeded the reasoning of the peace party, and a treaty was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle on 2 May 1668. Armed hostilities soon gave way, however, to economic warfare, for Spain was intent upon playing the one trump card that remained in its weak hand: its geographic domination of the trade routes of the Low Countries. The Spanish authorities in Brussels launched a tariff war against the areas that had fallen to the French, hoping to starve them of needed goods and supplies and to ruin their commerce. This action was perfectly legal under the terms of the treaty, so all that the French could do was to respond with their own duties on goods entering or leaving the newly conquered territories and hope to force the Spanish to back down. The new provincial intendant of Flanders, Le Peletier de Souzy, urged

594 André, Louis XIV et l’Europe, 112-13. This anti-French coalition was formed 23 January 1668 between England and the Dutch; the adherence of Sweden made it three in April-May. The war party included Louvois, Condé, Turenne, and other military men. Those who urged peace were Colbert, Lionne (the foreign secretary), and Le Tellier, which put him at odds with his son. See Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 17, 24-25, on the wrangling with Spain and among the French over peace negotiations.

595 Girard d’Albissin, Genèse de la frontière, 109-14, quotes a number of them.

596 Vauban to Louvois, 13 August 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 14.

597 Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 25, says that Louis was won over by the political gains Lionne had promised by the partition of the Spanish succession agreed to by the Emperor in a secret partition treaty signed 19 January 1668. The king was also loath, according to Sonnino, to side with the former rebels Condé and Turenne against faithful servants such as Le Tellier, Lionne, and Colbert.
this policy on the controller-general Colbert orchestrated this French retaliation, but it is debated whether or not he would have himself launched such a tariff war had the Spanish not preempted him. It was certainly Colbert’s policy to use such means to detach conquered areas from their old markets and oblige them to integrate themselves into the larger French economy. In addition, to accomplish his program of economic development, Colbert needed a frontier that would funnel trade and its attendant revenues through a series of customs houses (bureaux) clearly, the boundary that snaked through the Low Countries would need to be revised and straightened out at some time or another. His was an agenda certain to arouse opposition in powerful circles, especially if it meant ceding rather than adding to territory already gained.\footnote{Girard d’Albissin, Genèse de la frontière, 114-20. See Andrew Trout, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Twayne’s World Leaders Series, 64 (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 101-02, for Colbert’s contemporaneous trade war with the Dutch, which resulted in his increased unpopularity. Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 31-32, lays the blame for the provocative economic policy of this period at the feet of Souzy and Louvois, painting Colbert as a rather reluctant participant, whereas Girard d’Albissin sees the controller-general as a more willing player. Sonnino’s argument, however, seems at odds with what he himself says of Colbert’s goals (e.g., ibid., 73).}

Louis XIV and his war secretary supported Colbert’s bureaux, not because they agreed with his economic intentions for them, but because they regarded them as a source of much-needed revenue and a useful cat’s paw against the Spanish, with whom they continued to spar over the provisions of the treaty. The king and Louvois were actually in sympathy with the merchants who, supported by their intendants, vigorously promoted the more immediate advantages of free trade. Thus, as Louvois wrote to the intendant Le Peletier de Souzy, “Il est certain qu’il vaut mieux empescher l’establissement des bureaux des Espagnols que d’y en establir de la part du Roy.”\footnote{Louvois to Le Peletier de Souzy, 24 July 1668, Girard d’Albissin, Genèse de la frontière, 121. See also Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 31-32. Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 18-89, describes how prior to the peace treaty and the return of some places to Spanish control, Louvois had instructed his intendants of contributions to draw as much wealth from the conquered provinces as possible. This was done not only to meet the French needs for money and materials but also to deny these resources to the Spanish.}
Colbert, undaunted by the softness of the support for his program, pushed on in September 1668 with a new 30% duty, but not without clashing with intendants such as Le Peletier de Souzy, who were seeking means of aligning themselves with the local merchants, by this time in a real panic. The Spanish retaliated in 1669 with new custom houses in January and an increased tariff rate in August. Paris replied with charges on three important commodities: salt, grain, and coal. Although there was an appearance that the two monarchies might come to terms in February 1669, they did not; tariffs and bureaux, under the protectionist ministrations of Colbert, became part of the kingdom’s tax-farming mechanism in December 1669, and thus a seemingly permanent and unwelcome feature of the economic landscape of French Flanders.⁶⁰⁰

Vauban took more than an abstract interest in this economic warfare and the possible revisions to the frontier it might imply. Of immediate concern to him was the coal needed at the various building sites along the Spanish border. His correspondence with Louvois was filled with their mutual concern for an abundant supply of coal and the Spanish machinations to deprive them of it.⁶⁰¹ The engineer vented his disgust to the war secretary when the French bureaux blocked the arrival of coal at a crucial juncture of some work:

Je ne sais pas qui a suggéré la pensée de ces bureaux au Roi. Je sais bien que ce n’est pas vous, puisque vous faites votre possible pour les détourner; mais il est constamment vrai qu’on ne pouvait inventer un meilleur moyen pour rendre la

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⁶⁰⁰Croquez, Louis XIV en Flandres, 128-39. See Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 34-35, on the September 1668 increase in French duties and the complaints from Flanders. Colbert ceased writing to Le Peletier de Souzy altogether for a period so great was his annoyance with the intendant’s resistance to his policies. See their exchange of letters in Croquez, Louis XIV en Flandres, 7*, 8*, 10*, 14*-15*, 23*.

domination des Français odieuse et exécrable aux étrangers qu’en établissant ces sortes de bureaux en ce pays-ci et la gabelle en Roussillon.  

Thus, Vauban also opposed these custom houses because he saw them as an impediment to the integration of the conquered territories into the French monarchy. Either Vauban was speaking tongue-in-cheek when he professed ignorance of who had devised this fiscal policy or was afraid openly to name the man responsible for these hated policies, but everyone knew that it was Colbert.

Vauban returned to the attack in May 1669 when he warned Louvois to guard against any exchanges of territory with the Spanish. He had already seen his work in Franche-Comté come to naught when that province was traded away to the Spanish the previous year. At this moment, Vauban was especially anxious for Ath and Lille, which he promised to make the best places in Europe. In a letter two months later, he apologized to Louvois for his incessant complaining, but warned that the building season was swiftly slipping away. He absolved the Spanish of any blame for the problems with coal and placed it instead on the French duty on coal. He also repeated and gave credence to a rumor circulating that this duty was part of a plot at court to prevent the completion of these works in Flanders, observing darkly that "ils veulent joindre cette considération à beaucoup d’autres que leur intérêt leur fournir pour obliger le Roi aux échanges." Louvois, as much as he disliked Colbert, came to the defense of his fellow minister when he replied to Vauban’s suspicions: 

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602 Vauban to Louvois, 24 April 1669, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 26. But as Girard d’Albissin, Genèse de la frontière, 114-20, indicates, Louvois was probably not very sympathetic to an argument based on fears of alienating newly conquered peoples. See also Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 181, 186.

603 Vauban returned to this subject 19 November 1706, in a memoir entitled "Sur la cause du peu d’affection des nouveaux sujets du Roy en Flandres." It is printed in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 523-27. Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 52, tries to blame Le Peletier de Souzy, not Colbert, for the custom houses.


605 Vauban to Louvois, 2 July 1669, ibid., 28-29. Croquez, Louis XIV en Flandres, 4, says that such rumors circulated, so Vauban’s uneasiness was not without foundation.
Roi les échanges, et les gens dont vous me parlez sont plus importée contre cette proposition que je l'ai jamais été."\textsuperscript{606} In addition, Louvois probably knew that Colbert had just allowed Souzy an exemption on the duty on coal until enough could be amassed.\textsuperscript{607}

Both Louvois's letter and Colbert's cooperation appear to have calmed Vauban's fears, at least of a pro-exchange cabal at court. His subsequent letters reflected continued anxiety for the works upon which he was lavishing so much attention--he referred to Ath as a project he "aime chèrement"--but his apprehensions appear to have been re-directed toward the Spanish, whom he increasingly suspected of plotting a surprise attack on Ath to force the king to a policy of exchanges. Probably chastened by Louvois's rebuff of his earlier analysis, he accompanied this expression of his fears with an apology for addressing to the secretary his thoughts on "chose qui surpassent ma connaissance...."\textsuperscript{608} When coal was once more in short supply at Lille soon afterward and again in October, this time he blamed the "fraponnerie des marchands" or, again, the Spanish.\textsuperscript{609} Vauban appears to have dropped his accusation against Colbert, having either been convinced that it was unjust or having decided that Louvois would not lend it a sympathetic ear.

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\textsuperscript{606}Louvois to Vauban, 5 July 1669, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 26 n. 2. Sonnino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 28, confirms that Colbert, Lionne, and Le Tellier were all opposed to exchanges.

\textsuperscript{607}Souzy to Louvois, 3 July 1669, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 28 n. 1.

\textsuperscript{608}18 August 1669, ibid., 32.

\textsuperscript{609}Vauban to Louvois, 20 August 1669, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 243, p. 85; 16 October, ibid., p. 303. Vauban echoed similar views in a letter to Louvois, 24 August 1669, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 32-33. Louvois dismissed the idea that the Spanish might try to prevent the completion of Ath during peacetime, but he suspected that they might renew hostilities in order to do so (11 October 1669, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 235, fol. 139). Vauban's interest in coal continued: twenty years later Louvois wrote him that he had tried the coal sample Vauban had sent from Flanders but found that it did not heat well and was full of sulphur and thus useless (Louvois to Vauban, 17 August 1689, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 855, fol 42).
This episode demonstrates the extent to which Vauban had moved away from the Colberts and into the service of the Le Telliers. It was dangerous to criticize a man who held as much power as Colbert did, so Vauban must have felt quite safe with Louvois, even if the war secretary was not always in agreement with the engineer’s assessment of the other ministers. Vauban’s differences with Colbert and his willingness to believe the worst of him are certainly explicable in terms of the engineer’s unhappy exit from the clientage of the Colbert clan, as suggested by Vauban’s eagerness to condemn the controller-general’s actions in Flanders but failure to indict Louvois’s harsh and hated exactions from the conquered areas in 1667 and early 1668. But there appear to have been policy issues at the root of this animosity as well. Vauban was a military man committed to the creation of expanded and safe frontiers. He was also closely linked to those in Flanders whose economic interests suffered under Colbert’s attempt to severe the province’s trade ties with the rest of the Spanish Netherlands.

The "Affaire de Brisach" and the Problem of Sources

Paul II Le Prestre was serving in the Regiment of Navarre when his well-connected cousin was able to use his influence with the powerful Colbert clan to secure for him a place as engineer at Brisach. As already remarked, Paul’s transfer in the autumn of 1668 from the service of the Colberts in Alsace to the service of his cousin and the Le Telliers in Flanders mirrored and underlined the change Vauban himself had been in the process of making since the autumn of 1667, after the fall of Lille. Vauban later said that at Brisach Paul "a eu soin de mon équipage," making it possible to infer that he was Vauban’s chief assistant. If this was indeed the post Paul held, then he would have seconded his cousin as entrepreneur and in the conduct and surveillance of the work at Brisach, probably serving in his cousin’s stead during Vauban’s many absences from that place.

610These are described by Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 180-89.

611See Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 66-67, for a description of the duties of such an assistant. Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 4, says merely that Paul was employed as an engineer at Brisach. Two additional pieces of evidence suggest that he was serving with
It is difficult to say exactly when Vauban’s connection with the work in Alsace ended, but a number of factors suggest that it was fairly soon after he gained the royal nod for building the citadel at Lille. First, there was the sheer volume and pace of work that tied him to the places of Flanders. Second, the assignment to redesign the fortresses of recently-conquered Franche-Comté put new demands on his energies. Third, we must recall that the intendant of Alsace, Saint-Marc, was anxious to see him go, having endeavored at an earlier date to remove him as entrepreneur. Although later evidence suggests that Vauban’s formal ties to Brisach persisted into 1668, it is quite likely that his cousin Paul acted as his agent during that year while these connections were being officially severed, and that Paul’s final exit marked what he and his cousin hoped was the end of an unpleasant experience.

What Louvois referred to as Vauban’s "affaire de Brisach" is a rather ambiguous business, but not so veiled as some historians have thought. Pierre Clément, the great editor and biographer of Colbert, seems to have been the first (1668) to suggest that this episode in Vauban’s ascent has been obscured by missing documents in the archives of both the military and fortification departments. He called this a "chose singulière," and

his cousin as an entrepreneur as well. First, in March 1671 Louvois announced to Vauban that he had chosen Paul to be entrepreneur for the Hôtel des Invalides the king had decided to build in Paris, remarking on Paul’s capacity in that field (9 March 1671, ibid., 2: 43). Second, among the various solutions Louvois proposed to his chief engineer for the liquidation of his "Affaire d’Alsace" (discussed below) was one to draw out all Vauban’s quittances (for the years 1665-68) sent to the Chambre des comptes in order to "...mettrait cette entreprise sous un autre nom que le vôtre ou, au pis aller, sous le nom de votre cousin seul" (19 February 1671, ibid., 42).

Colbert to Saint-Marc, 23 November 1669, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 18-19: "Vous voyez bien que les premiers entrepreneurs n’ont pu se souffrir avec vous, que le sieur de Vauban a este de mesme, qu’il fallu chasser Valpergue, et enfin il faudra encore chasser Vouleau [the current entrepreneur]."

Louvois to Vauban, 19 February 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 42, referred to the accounts for 1665-1668 being at the Chambre des comptes.

Louvois to Vauban, 15 January 1671, called it "votre affaire d’Alsace," but in his letter of 29 January, he referred to it as "votre affaire de Brisach" (ibid., 41).
wondered what had become of the missing registers and letters, hoping that Vauban’s
descendants had in their possession papers that would fill the gaps. A decade later,
Georges Michel, author of a large biography of Vauban, added his speculations. While
he suggested that it was possible that Colbert had removed the relevant documents in
order to spare his family embarrassment, Michel concluded that it was more likely that
Louvois was the person responsible and that his motivation was a misplaced zeal intent
upon removing all evidence of false charges against his faithful collaborator. Rochas,
in editing the marshal’s letters and other papers at the turn of the century, noted that few
details of this affair remained because Vauban and Colbert each had an interest in seeing
to the disappearance of correspondence that dragged both their names through the sludge
of scandal. In 1934, Colonel Lazard repeated this assertion that Vauban and Colbert
shared responsibility for the missing documents.

It is possible, however, to suggest an alternate hypothesis: there is no missing
correspondence, or at least none extracted from the records by some individual intent
upon a cover-up. Some of the hoped-for letters never existed, and any lack of such
documentation as did exist is due to the poor paperwork management measures taken in
the king’s ministries and to the ordinary ravages of time.

Of course, one can point to instances when documents were destroyed in order to
spare an individual public humiliation or reprisals from a superior or an enemy.
Vauban, for example, left a secret codicil to his 1702 will in which he assigned bequests
to his acknowledged and alleged illegitimate offspring. He instructed his faithful
secretary Friand, after executing its contents, to “aura soin de le bruller, sans en faire

615Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: iii n. 2. Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 275-79, appears to have been the first to call attention to this episode.

616Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 54-55.

617Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 20-21 n. 4.

618Lazard, Vauban, 122.
confidence à personne.  Fortunately for historians, Friand failed his old master on this count. We can also be certain that many papers from that era went the way of so many other documents of the monarchy, especially during the various revolutionary spasms that ended and succeeded ancien régime.

But there are more direct pieces of evidence that suggest the fate of these papers. During Colbert’s early years controlling the navy and fortifications, he was not a secretary of state and so could not officially expedite the letters of the king relating to those matters. Consequently, letters relating to fortifications as well as to other matters prior to 1669 are found scattered about various personal and administrative archives. This changed in 1669, when Colbert became secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and for the newly created and united department of the Marine. As we have seen already, it was only in that year that registry books were created to record all of the new secretary’s out-going letters and instructions.

Other sources suggest that even if we possessed complete documentation for the period before 1669, we would find little or no direct correspondence between Colbert and Vauban. The inventory of Vauban’s correspondence in the Rosanbo collection indicates that the series containing the originals and minutes of letters exchanged between

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620 Charles Read, "Le mémoire présenté en 1689 par le maréchal de Vauban et ses efforts réitérés en faveur des Huguenots," Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme français. Bulletin historique et littéraire, 38 (1889): 193 n. 1, provided one example of this destructive process. He recounted how in Geneva in 1869 he had purchased a manuscript volume of Vauban’s mémoires bound in the coat-of-arms of Michel Chamillart, later minister of war, only to have this treasure destroyed two years later in the "exécrables" fires of the Paris Commune.

621 See note 143 on p. 77 above for a discussion of these registry books in various archives. The years 1672, 1680, 1688, and 1689 are missing from the B.I.G. in-Fo 205 series, but there is no reason to believe that this is due to any other cause than the normal vicissitudes of time.
Vauban and Colbert begins only in 1670.\textsuperscript{622} But we know that Vauban was a client of the Colberts during much of the 1660s, so what explains this dearth of letters? Is this evidence that Vauban himself destroyed documents as part of an alleged cover-up? A simpler resolution to this apparent discrepancy is suggested when we remember Colbert's \textit{modus operandi}: generally he preferred to write directly to the intendants, not usually corresponding with the engineers, especially if they were charged merely with one place and were not the director of a whole province within the fortifications department.\textsuperscript{623} This is born out by Livet's discussion of the "Affaire d'Alsace," which is done from an examination of the letters between Colbert and the intendant; if Livet found letters to or from Vauban in the archival sources, he failed to cite or even indicate them, which makes it appear unlikely that he encountered any such correspondence.\textsuperscript{624}

The sources for Vauban's missives to and from Louvois tell a similar tale. With the exception of a few brief orders from Louvois, there is no indication of an exchange

\textsuperscript{622}Gourmelon, "Fonds Vauban: Correspondance, 1975 (?)," TM [photocopy], Archives Nationale de France, 4. A copy of this undated inventory was given to me in 1975 by M. Gourmelon, the archivist with the Archives Nationales who was working on this project at the time I did my research in Paris.

\textsuperscript{623}Guttin, \textit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 42. Guttin may have over-stated his case, relying as he did on Clément's selection of letters from Colbert's registries, but his conclusion still seems accurate for the early days of the evolution of Colbert's department.

\textsuperscript{624}Livet, \textit{Intendance d'Alsace}, 357-62. Livet's bibliography indicates that he delved deeply into the various archival collections relating to the Colberts and Alsace. An examination of the catalogue of the Mélanges Colbert collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale, which contains a generous portion of the letters Colbert received 1661-74, turns up no letters from Vauban, even though there is an abundance of correspondence from Saint-Marc and Clerville concerning the fortifications of Alsace (this was one of Livet's chief sources). The results of two searches in this catalog suggest that Colbert's out-going fortifications correspondence was kept elsewhere. First, a perusal of the index (vol. 2) in search of letters from known engineers employed at the interior places of the department yielded almost nothing. Second, an admittedly incomplete register of the minutes of some of the letters sent by Colbert from 1661 to 1680, including some to subordinates in his marine department, shows nothing written to known figures charged with the care of land fortifications. See La Roncière and Bondois, \textit{Catalogue des Mélanges Colbert}, 1: viii, 331-34; 2: 314.
of letters between the secretary and the engineer until their association on the Lille project in late 1667.\textsuperscript{625} In the Rosanbo collection, the first record of a letter to Vauban from Louvois dates to that same year, while Vauban’s minutes of epistles sent to Louvois begin only in 1669 (even though the Archives de Guerre contain originals dating from 1667).\textsuperscript{626} A brief recollection of Vauban’s early career reveals why his correspondence with Louvois did not begin earlier: until 1667, Vauban had been a client of Mazarin, Clerville, Marshal de la Ferté, and the Colberts. Even when Vauban had worked in areas under the sway of the Le Telliers or engaged in military actions, the war secretary was in direct communication with him only on a few occasions: in 1663, Le Tellier sent a brief note with the royal order instructing Vauban to quit his garrison and report to Brisach to work on its fortifications; and in 1665, Le Tellier relayed a royal gratification concerning Vauban’s position as a captain of a company in garrison at Brisach.\textsuperscript{627} Normally, such a subaltern received orders by way of his superior officers, the army intendants, or the provincial intendants.

Thus, we can reject the theory of a conspiracy to destroy incriminating letters in this matter because of a better understanding of the history of documentary evidence itself. Even without this, however, it must be noted that this conspiracy theory rings false. One has only to survey the myriad of other papers that have survived in the archives that reveal assorted failures and scandals among the ministers, their families, and their cohorts. Indeed, the most telling blow against this conspiracy theory is the fact that we do possess a number of incriminating papers from various sources relating to this tawdry affair: Colbert’s less-than-flattering letters rebuking his cousin were published by

\textsuperscript{625} The earliest letter from Vauban to Louvois appears to have been dated 17 September 1667 (A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 209, p. 204; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 2, gives a summary). From this point on, the two had an increasingly voluminous and lively correspondence.

\textsuperscript{626} Gourmelon, "Fonds Vauban: Correspondance, 1975 (?)", TMs [photocopy], Archives Nationale de France, 1-3, 14.

\textsuperscript{627} Le Tellier to Vauban, 23 December 1663 and 4 September 1665, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: x-xi.
Clément himself, and Louvois's letters to Vauban on the liquidation of this imbroglio were published by Rousset, Michel, and Rochas. In other words, the very evidence these authors published and cited mitigates against the notion of a cover-up comprising the destruction of documents. In truth, the paper trail is fairly extensive and not at all hidden; therefore, we can construct a reasonably accurate picture of what took place.

**Crisis for the Colberts**

Vauban had removed himself from the scene at Brisach since at least 1668, but his departure did not end the difficulties there. It is important that we understand the scandal that developed in Alsace because Vauban would be drawn back into it in a few short years. In addition, we can learn much about how Colbert's department actually worked and what role Clerville played in his master's administrative arrangements. Finally, this scandal is part of the later developments that lead to Vauban's re-entry into the fortification department of Colbert.

First Valpergue and then Vauban had beaten a hasty retreat from Alsace in order to escape the tangled financial web of the intendant Saint-Marc. Later entrepreneurs also quarreled with the intendant and complained to his cousin Jean-Baptiste Colbert in Paris. Colbert repeatedly rebuked Saint-Marc, expressing surprise at his behavior and threatening him with the loss of his position as intendant, as in November 1669 when the minister's frustration boiled over: "Il y a six ans entiers que je souffre de vous une conduite la plus bizarre et la plus extraordinaire dont ayt jamais entendu parler...."[^628] Despite these misgivings, throughout the remainder of 1669 Colbert continued to support his cousin against those who attacked him, although the minister privately admitted to Saint-Marc the justice of their complaints.[^629] Colbert even sought to help the intendant to re-establish himself in the good graces of the king by himself threatening poor


[^629]: For example, see Colbert to Saint-Marc, 30 November 1669, ibid., 19-20.
Vouleau for the "plaintes que vous faites contre M. Colbert [de Saint-Marc]" when that entrepreneur came to Paris to plead his case personally.\textsuperscript{630}

Yet, worn down by his kinsman's incessant pleading, in December 1669 Colbert promised to allow Saint-Marc to pick whatever entrepreneur he wanted should a reconciliation with the current one fail and if he could thereby guarantee that "le compte du roy s'y trouve et que les ouvrages soient bien faits."\textsuperscript{631} Nevertheless, as Colbert noted the following February, "Vous vous plaignez de tout le monde et tout le monde se plaint de vous," warning that "si vous persistez dans cette conduite," he could not guarantee his tenure as intendant.\textsuperscript{632} A week later, the situation had further deteriorated, and Colbert complained that he was at a loss to see how Saint-Marc's choice for entrepreneur, Saint-André—a soldier the intendant had pushed for this job since Vauban's earlier tenure at Alsace—could do the requisite job at Brisach since he was already engaged at Philipsbourg.\textsuperscript{633} But affection born of blood soon caused the minister to accede to his relative's persistent entreaties. By the end of March, Saint-Marc had what he wanted, although Colbert noted in exasperation that "il n'y a peut-être que moy en France que l'affection peut porter à vous laisser exclure tous les autres entrepreneurs."\textsuperscript{634}

\textsuperscript{630}Colbert to Vouleau, 30 November 1669, ibid., 22 n. 1. See Colbert to Saint-Marc, 11 December 1669 (ibid., 22-23), in which the minister outlined his strategy.

\textsuperscript{631}Colbert to Saint-Marc, 11 December 1669, ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{632}Colbert to Saint-Marc, 8 February 1670, ibid., 26-27.

\textsuperscript{633}Colbert to Saint-Marc, 15 February 1670, ibid., 27-28. He repeated his objection in a letter of 8 March (ibid., 28 n. 1). On Saint-Marc's earlier backing of Saint-André as an entrepreneur at Philipsbourg and for Brisach, see Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 350-51. Charles Crégy, known as Saint-André, was a former soldier in the Magalotti company. He lived in Nancy (see the note on Saint-André in Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 27 n. 3).

\textsuperscript{634}Colbert to Saint-Marc, 29 March 1670, ibid., 28 n. 1.
Probably under pressure from the king, Colbert sent Clerville to Alsace to inspect the tardy work at the building sites. Although announced in March,\(^{635}\) the chevalier's tour was delayed for a month while changes were made in the design of Brisach, apparently with the involvement of the Prince of Condé.\(^{636}\) By the middle of September, Clerville had finished his inspection and had regulated the new work to be done at Brisach and the continuation of earlier efforts at Philipsbourg. Colbert dispatched the chevalier's "grand mémoire" and plan to Saint-Marc, announcing in explicit terms that "voicy le dernier coup qui fera connoistre si vous estes capable de servir ou non."\(^{637}\) Still wary of his cousin's intentions, Colbert warned that this arrangement whereby Saint-André was the sole entrepreneur for both Philipsbourg and Brisach smacked of conspiracy. In light of the intendant's past incompatibility with all the other entrepreneurs, his desire to work only with Saint-André "paroissent fort suspectes; et assurance, si vous ne changez, cette conduite vous jettera dans quelque precipice duquel je ne pourray pas vous retirer."\(^{638}\)

Only a few weeks later, Colbert experienced disappointment once again. He informed Saint-Marc of the humiliation he had experienced because gossip about the lack of progress on the fortifications of Alsace was circulating at court while he himself had no news from the intendant to relay to the king.\(^{639}\) The next day, Colbert resolved to send Clerville once again to Alsace to examine the prices being paid, put all contracts in order, and expedite the languishing work; he was specially charged to separate the project at Brisach from that at Philipsbourg and see that they had different entrepreneurs, ending Saint-André's reign over both. But Saint-Marc was not to be excluded from the process, for Colbert ordered Clerville to work with the intendant, especially in verifying

\(^{635}\) Colbert to Saint-Marc, 22 March 1670, ibid., 28-29.

\(^{636}\) Colbert to Saint-Marc, 19 April 1670, ibid., 29.

\(^{637}\) Colbert to Saint-Marc, 27 February 1670, ibid., 30.

\(^{638}\) Ibid., 31.

\(^{639}\) Colbert to Saint-Marc, 10 October 1670, ibid., 32-33.
work reportedly done and monies paid out that year. The minister also seems to have come around to the point of wanting to do justice by the previous entrepreneur, whom he had earlier bullied in order to protect his kinsman. Confronted with an overwhelming sense that Saint-Marc’s position was quickly deteriorating, Colbert could no longer ignore Vouleau’s "preuve certaine et incontestée" that the intendant had unjustly driven away all the other entrepreneurs in order to replace them with the inexperienced Saint-André, who nonetheless was awarded these profitable contracts. In what he claimed would be his last letter on the matter, in late October Colbert sent an angry missive ordering the dismissal of Saint-André from the work at both Brisach and Philipsbourg. The intendant could choose either to send his confederate packing or to remove himself from his post in Alsace. And to assist the chevalier in his continuing inquiry into the validity of the current contracts, the minister announced to Saint-Marc that he had sent two Parisian entrepreneurs to Alsace. 

Poor Clerville, assigned the unenviable task of investigating the faults of a man whose relative, Clerville’s own powerful patron, had noted but overlooked them for so long! It is no wonder that he stepped gingerly across such dangerous ground. For his pains, he suffered complaints from both sides as he reluctantly obeyed orders from Paris that widened the scope of his mission. Saint-Marc protested Clerville’s activities in what he regarded as his bailiwick, having to submit to the indignity of having the chevalier monitor his dealings with the entrepreneur who had replaced Saint-André. The

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640 Colbert, "Instruction pour le chevalier de Clerville," 11 October 1670, ibid., 33-36.

641 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 18 October 1670, ibid., 37.

642 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 25 October 1670, ibid., 38.

643 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 15 November 1670, ibid., 40-41.
intendant also proved uncooperative in signing "mémoires de la dépense et des ouvrages faits dans les places d’Alsace...," despite Colbert’s continued prodding.644 Colbert, for his part, was growing more and more disturbed by what Clerville was uncovering in the present direction of fortifications in Alsace, where apparently "toutes les formalités ordinaires que l’on a accoustumé, en tout temps, d’observer pour rendre raison des travaux n’ont point esté observées."645 He instructed his envoy to turn his attention to past irregularities.646 By early December, Clerville had begun his examination of Saint-André’s account books.647 The minister was anxious for results and so pressed Clerville to "bien approfondir ces points et démesler ce qui peut provenir d’ignorance ou de trop de facilité, de la malice, c’est-à-dire, d’intelligence avec l’entrepreneur." Colbert found it difficult to believe a person could be capable of such baseness, but he wanted to be sure. Clerville’s findings were vital: "Je formeray mon jugement sur celuy que vous en ferez."648 Clerville openly expressed his discomfort with an inquiry that could potentially bring shame upon his patron’s house.649 Nevertheless, driven by Colbert’s impatient requests, the chevalier continued his inquiries.

Shortly after Christmas, Colbert informed Saint-Marc of just how bad appearances were, expressing pessimism at the prospects of extricating his kinsman from his

644Colbert to Saint-Marc, 3 January 1671, ibid., 46. Earlier, Colbert had to push Saint-Marc to "faire justice" to Vouleau by cooperating with the entrepreneur to see that all his accounts were properly closed, which would protect Vouleau from any future prosecution for financial irregularities. See Colbert to Saint-Marc, 25 October 1670 (ibid., 39).

645Colbert to Saint-Marc, 13 December 1670, ibid., 42. See also Colbert to Saint-Marc, 27 December, ibid., 42-43.

646Colbert to Clerville, 27 December 1670, ibid., 43-44.

647Colbert notes this fact in his 13 December 1670 letter to Saint-Marc, ibid., 42.

648Colbert to Clerville, 13 December 1670, ibid., 42 n. 1.

649Clerville to Colbert, 16 and 30 December 1670, ibid., 44 n. 1.
predicament. But in a letter to Clerville of the same day, after pressing him not to balk at the task before him, Colbert speculated that, although all indications pointed to bad conduct on the part of the intendant and his cronies, it struck him as odd that they would leave behind their account books if they were really up to something; he added, however, "j'attends vostre sentiment." The net of inquiry was cast even further in the first days of January 1671 when Colbert informed his cousin that he had ordered the commis of the trésorier des fortifications back to Brisach, presumably to assist Clerville's probe. On 10 January, convinced that Saint-André was a "fripon," Colbert ordered his arrest. In announcing this to Saint-Marc, he expressed his hope that, despite appearances to the contrary, Saint-Marc was not a swindler as well; therefore, he urged the intendant to apply himself diligently to the preparations for the recommencement of work on the fortifications of Alsace in the spring. Even so, the investigation continued apace as, the same day, Colbert notified Clerville that he would assist his informal audit by sending him a memoir on all the finances concerning the places of Alsace from 1664 to 1670 and another on what had been paid to Saint-André.

It is at this point, as we shall see in the next chapter, that Vauban was once more drawn into the murky business surrounding the king's building projects at Brisach and Philipsbourg. If only for its relationship to Vauban's career, this brewing scandal is worthy of our scrutiny. It was, after all, the main reason he had been willing to trade Colbert's protection for that of Louvois in 1667. And the resolution of his "Affaire de Brisach" would mark another important step in his advancement in the royal service. But the scandal in Brisach was in addition part of the difficulties Colbert was

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680 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 27 December 1670, ibid., 42-43.
681 Colbert to Clerville, 27 December 1670, ibid., 43-44.
682 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 3 January 1670, ibid., 45.
683 See this order of 10 January 1671 in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 6v-7.
684 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 10 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 46.
685 Colbert to Clerville, 10 January 1671, ibid., 47.
experiencing in his department of land fortifications. As we have already seen and will see further in a later chapter, the controller-general was experiencing problems in Picardy as well, where he was forced to experiment with various forms of administration and with new personnel. In both Alsace and Picardy, Colbert made use of a kinsman who ultimately failed him, due either to incompetence, dishonesty, or the impossibility of the task set before them. Whatever the cause, the king did not smile on these failures, especially since the preparation of the frontier was an important determinant in the timetable for the projected war with the Dutch. Indeed, the unreadiness of the kingdom's defenses ultimately influenced the king to postpone war at the end of 1670.66 These failures would ultimately cost Colbert control of Alsace and create a greater role for Vauban, Louvois's créature, throughout the controller-general's fortification department on the eastern frontier.

Rivalry between Louvois and Colbert

The year 1669 had ended badly for Colbert as Louvois continued to wax stronger. While Colbert scrambled to explain the delays and shady happenings at the building sites along the Rhenish frontier, Louvois could point with pride to what he and his new chief assistant Vauban were accomplishing in Flanders, where the final touches were being added to the new citadels at Tournai and Lille. Besides pleasing the king with his continual efforts to return the army to war-time strength, Louvois had persuaded the monarch of the need to press on in his game of trying to provoke war with the Dutch and the Spanish. Louis and his war secretary had also over-ruled the controller-general's 1670 budget for fortifications, augmenting the fund by nearly thirty percent.67 When Louvois announced this increased funding to his chief engineer who was still laboring in the Alps at Pignerol, he noted that these monies were intended primarily for the Flanders frontier. The war secretary urged Vauban to hurry back as soon as possible

66See Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 123-24, 146, on the unfinished fortifications delaying the war.

67Ibid., 70, 73, 81, 82, 86, 91.
so that he could press the work on the designated fortresses as much as the availability of materials and men would permit.\textsuperscript{68} The king’s journey to the Flanders frontier in May 1670 provided Colbert, Louvois, and Vauban each with some moments of discomfort. Turenne especially made much of the defaults of various places—Le Quesnoy, Ath, Tournai—being fortified by Louvois’s men, but the marshal overplayed his hand, which led to his eclipse as a royal advisor by Condé, who tempered his minor criticisms with more fulsome praise for what he did like. The post at Saint-Quentin, which was under Colbert’s care, came in for harsh criticism from everyone, including Vauban and the king’s other military advisors. On balance, it was Colbert whose reputation and power suffered as the preparations for war continued. Economic conditions were deteriorating to the point that the controller-general panicked. On his own initiative, Colbert temporarily halted payments for the fortification work, which cannot have pleased Louvois and Vauban, not to mention the king.\textsuperscript{69} Vauban’s standing with the king, however, continued to grow, despite the lingering rumors about the king’s disappointment with some of the fortifications he had inspected during the summer. For instance, when the engineer offered to reconnoitre the fortifications of the Spanish enclave at Valenciennes, the king forbade it for fear that Vauban might be captured and his important work suffer thereby.\textsuperscript{660} Louvois’s chief fortifications assistant had become too valuable, even to the king.

During that same summer, Louvois undertook two important missions for the king’s expanding war preparations. In early August, accompanied by Vauban, the war secretary visited Pignerol on the frontier with Savoy. Although the stated reason for this trip was to regulate the fortification work going on at that site, in reality Louvois was to attempt to win the support of Charles-Emmanuel II, Savoy’s duke, for the upcoming

\textsuperscript{68}Louvois to Vauban, 3 February 1670, A.G. A\textsuperscript{i} 246, fol. 4. This urgency was repeated in Louvois’s letter of 26 March, ibid., fol. 158.

\textsuperscript{69}Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 95, 107-17.

\textsuperscript{660}Louvois to Vauban, 15 June 1670, A.G. A\textsuperscript{i} 247, fol. 33.
enterprise against the Dutch. Part of Louis's package of incentives for the duke was a short-term loan of the war secretary's chief engineer, whose reputation was great enough for Charles-Emmanuel to ask that Vauban be permitted to inspect some of his fortifications, including those of Turin, the ducal capital. While Vauban remained six weeks in Savoy, Louvois lingered only about a week. Upon his return, Louvois hastily orchestrated the king's surprise march into Lorraine, which Louis intended to occupy to punish its duke for his many treaty violations and to secure that perennial source of trouble on his eastern frontier for the coming war. Vauban's part in this operation came after French troops had ensconced themselves in Nancy and he had returned from Piedmont. As he later noted: "ensuite de quoi le Roi l'envoya en Lorraine pour regler le projet de fortifications de Nancy...." The rest of the year was spent on the further fortification of the Flanders frontier where, Louvois anxiously reminded Vauban, "mille choses demandent votre presence."

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661 See Louvois's letters to Vauban, 20 and 27 July 1670, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 36-37. For the purpose of this visit, see ibid., 36 n. 2. André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 198, discusses this trip only as a fortifications inspection tour; Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 166, does the same.

662 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1671. Although Vauban's entry says "cette même année 1671," the trip to Savoy actually took place in 1670. Vauban and the duke seemed to get along quite well. The latter was so pleased with the fortifications Vauban designed for the places he visited that "en prenant congé de luy apres mil honnestetés Elle luy fit present elle mesme de son portrait enrichy de diamant et luy a souvent escrit depuis."

663 Ibid. See Louvois to Vauban, 15 September 1670, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 37 n. 1, for an expression of the secretary's annoyance with the duke for keeping the engineer longer than Louvois had intended.

664 For this affair, see André, Louis XIV et l'Europe, 127-28. The campaign is described by André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 189-93, and Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 119-21.

665 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1670 and 1671.

666 Louvois to Vauban, 10 September 1670, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 37.
Indeed, during the three years since Vauban had left the clientage of Colbert he had firmly established himself as the war secretary’s closest collaborator in the area of fortifications. He had assisted Louvois in organizing the massive building program the king had ordered for his new conquests, and he had done so with results that generally pleased the monarch. Vauban appears to have shared the same dissatisfaction with this frontier that drove Louis and Louvois to desire its amelioration, as when he urged the taking of Condé and expressed his fears of possible Spanish diplomatic and military moves to re-take Ath.*667 He travelled about Louvois’s fortifications department inspecting places, drawing up plans for repair and expansion, regulating contracts, and supervising engineers. Wherever he went for the war secretary, he could count on the same administrative arrangements and the general support and cooperation of the provincial intendant and local engineers. Although he had no formal commission empowering him, Vauban drew on “le simple crédit” he enjoyed as Louvois’s creature, which gave him great informal authority.*668 To be sure, the engineer craved a formal commission to supplement this preeminence, but most opposition to Vauban’s dominance in the department had been stamped out sometime earlier when Louvois had made it clear to his subordinates that the king had entrusted Vauban with the care of the fortifications in the jurisdiction of the war secretary. By 1671, Vauban had achieved a reputation that had even spread as far as Italy, where modern low-profile fortifications had begun more than a century earlier. His future seemed secure and looked bright.

By contrast, Colbert’s fortifications department appears to have been in disarray. Saint-Quentin, the most important post in Picardy, had been found wanting when the king had inspected it. Indeed, the whole direction of fortifications in that province seemed to be adrift. In Alsace, the intendant had failed miserably in his assignment to complete the work at Brisach and Philippsbourg. To make matters worse, Saint-Marc had tainted his failure with the strong suspicion of scandal. Clerville, who functioned as

*667 Vauban to Louvois, 13 August 1668, 13 August 1669, and 18 August 1669, ibid., 14, 31-32.

*668 Vauban to Louvois, 17 October 1671, ibid., 57.
Colbert's troubleshooter, trembled throughout the time he was in Alsace attempting to sort out this mess. Either through weakness of character or from fear of a patron whose clan loyalties skewed his judgment, Clerville hesitated to give Colbert the full extent of what he had found during his investigation.

Vauban's contempt for Colbert had only grown during the years after he left his clientage. The troubles over securing an adequate coal supply for his many building projects had provoked bitter complaints to Louvois against the controller-general. Vauban had also joined in the widespread paranoia over the possible exchange of fortresses with the Spanish to straighten out the ragged frontier left by peace in 1668. Again, his bogey man was Colbert. Thus, he surely exulted in each fresh mark of royal favor to his master—and especially to himself—and to each setback for the hated controller-general whose every move the engineer had come to regard with suspicion, both for personal and for policy reasons.
CHAPTER X
THE END OF THE "AFFAIRE DE BRISACH": VAUBAN AND THE COLBERTS (1671)

The purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless reputation... Mine honor is my life: both grow in one; Take honor from me, and my life is done.

Shakespeare, Richard II

Shortly after the dishonest entrepreneur Saint-André was locked away in an Alsatian jail, Louvois wrote to Vauban that he was "aise que vous ayez mis votre affaire d'Alsace en état d'être terminée." The war secretary reported that two days ago the king had ordered Saint-Marc to send to Paris the official discharges that would assure that "l'on ne vous puisse rien demander pour tout ce qui s'est fait depuis votre départ de Brisach...." This was the first reference between them to Vauban's connection with this festering imbroglio since his departure from Alsace roughly three years earlier. Louvois's remarks make it clear, however, that he and his chief engineer had been working on this matter for some time. 671

670 Ibid.
671 In a letter to Vauban on 16 September 1671 (ibid., 49), Louvois spoke of receiving a solution to this matter "après deux ans de sollicitations...." If Louvois's reckoning is at all correct, it would mean that he had been trying to tidy up Vauban's affairs at Brisach since roughly September 1669. But there is no other direct indication of this anywhere else, including in Colbert's correspondence with Saint-Marc. Nor does there appear to have been an occasion that would have prompted such an early effort on Louvois's part, unless it involved his assistance in Vauban's on-going attempt to "close the books" on his work at Brisach, which was frustrated by Saint-Marc's chronic
It seems reasonable to speculate that for years Vauban had been attempting to obtain the needed official financial discharges for his past role as entrepreneur of the work at Brisach. This became a more pressing issue during the inspection Clerville inaugurated in October and which broadened into an investigation in December 1670. It is possible that Vauban and Louvois spoke of the matter face to face during the latter's trip to Flanders in early November, perhaps explaining the lack of written reference to it until January of the following year.  

In any case, Vauban felt confident enough of royal favor in early December 1670 to suggest to Louvois some sort of change in his position. Louvois claimed that he could not see how his friend be "distinguer de ceux qui portent le nom d'ingénieurs, aussi avantageusement que vous l'êtes dans l'estime de Sa Majesté," but he promised to hear unwillingness to sign anyone's paperwork (see Colbert to Saint-Marc, 3 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 46). It is also possible that Louvois used "deux ans" loosely in 1671 to refer to events going on during two calendar years, or that he merely made a mistake in reckoning the length of this seemingly interminable business. Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 363 n. 1, demonstrates that Louvois had long been dissatisfied with Saint-Marc's work on the military affairs of Alsace. This included conflicts with the intendant's commis, Cézar Gosjean, who had accompanied Saint-Marc from an earlier post in Provence. From 1660, Cézar also held the office of commissaire de guerre (ibid., 200-03), and in this capacity he had dealings with Vauban who was serving at Brisach as engineer and captain of the garrison (Le Tellier to Vauban, 4 September 1665, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: x-xi). Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 362, offers further details. In 1668, Louvois had tried to transfer Cézar to the bleak post of Pigneral, perhaps as a slap at Saint-Marc, but the intendant used the intervention of his cousin the controller-general to force Louvois to relent. Cézar accompanied Saint-Marc when the latter left Alsace in disgrace, and Saint-Marc rewarded his loyalty by continuing to protect and promote his créature. In 1682, however, when Cézar was nominated for greffier (head of the public records office) at Brisach, Louvois, who now controlled Alsace, inquired: "Mais qui est-ce ce Cézar? Car je me souviens qu'il y en avait un dans la province sous M. Colbert [de Saint-Marc], président à Metz, qui étoit un grand fripon."

672 See Corvisier, Louvois, 508, for the secretary's itinerary, which puts him in Flanders from 5 to 15 November 1670. André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 198, details the fortresses Louvois visited, which surely brought him into direct contact with his chief engineer.
his suggestions and give him satisfaction if they were reasonable. Of course, Vauban realized that one impediment to receiving this commission was the infringement it might constitute on the venal offices of suintendant, intendant, and commissaire général des fortifications. That nothing appears to have come of Vauban’s request for a new title, despite Louvois’s initial positive response, however, suggests that the unsettling developments in Alsace may have contributed to putting such considerations on hold during the next year. This scandal cast a large enough shadow over Vauban’s future to cause a great deal of worry both for the secretary of war and his chief engineer until it was finally removed.

Vauban and the "Affaire de Brisach"

Before examining in detail Vauban’s part in this incident, it must be observed that most historians have treated it as having to do primarily with Vauban. Yet, as we saw in the last chapter, this "affaire d’Alsace" was first and foremost about the entrepreneur Saint-André, his protector Colbert de Saint-Marc, and the latter’s gradual fall from grace with his overly-indulgent kinsman, the minister Colbert. Even though Vauban’s career was ultimately put at risk by these events, they must be kept in this wider perspective in order to be properly understood. This emerges especially from a reading of the

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673 Louvois to Vauban, 9 December 1670, Rochas, Vauban ses écrits, 2: 38. Vauban was styled as "directeur general des fortifications de France" in a 28 November 1670 notarial document related to a land deal in the Nivernais, as noted in the "Extrait des titres produits par Vauban pour recevoir les ordres du Roi" (January 1705), ibid., 1: 67. But this appears to have been merely a courtesy title.

674 On 17 October 1671, Vauban reminded Louvois "de ce que vous étes la bonté de me dire à Dunkerque au sujet d’une commission pour faire compter les trésoriers et pour m’autoriser, dans la fortification, en quantité d’autres choses où j’avais besoin de l’être un peu plus que par le simple crédit que votre protection me donne...." (ibid., 2: 57). See Vauban to Louvois, 26 February 1673 (ibid., 89), showing that he was still asking for a commission for "une espèce de Direction générale des fortifications." In his Directeur général, 23, which was written perhaps a year or more after this letter, Vauban still referred to his position as "une espèce de Directeur general." Both the 1673 letter and his manual indicate that Vauban was cognizant of possible infringements upon offices whose occupants still lived even though their offices were "en repos."
evidence from most of the sources as assembled by Clément, even though Clément himself lost sight of the wider context. Vauban’s involvement, while especially significant for him, was at best a secondary issue that emerged late in the affair. Vauban was only one of several entrepreneurs employed on the Alsatian fortifications. Colbert’s frank epistles to the intendant of Alsace mentioned Vauban only once—and then only in a list of those who were driven away by Saint-Marc’s difficult nature—never even alluding to him in the matter of Saint-André and that entrepreneur’s alleged frauds. Likewise, Clerville made no allusion to Vauban in his inquest. Finally, when Colbert sent his uncle, the counselor of state Pussort, to examine the matter, that stern lawyer sent back a detailed report on the accounts at Philipsbourg; but it, too, made no mention of Vauban. If these various inquiries had been focused on Vauban or if he had figured importantly in them, it seems odd that he would not have received mention in documents that are otherwise very candid and damaging to a member of the Colbert clan. And if the Colberts were trying to taint Vauban with the blame for the alleged fraud in Alsace, then why would they have not done so in these letters and reports to one another that are so frank in their discussion of strategies to extricate Saint-André from this morass?

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675 Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: ii-xv, frequently failed to put this matter in proper perspective.

676 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 23 November 1669, ibid., 19. For allusions to the other entrepreneurs Saint-Marc drove away, see Colbert to Saint-Marc, 18 and 25 October 1670, ibid., 37-38.

677 Ibid., 441 n. 1.

678 See Pussort to Colbert, 14 June 1671, and Clément’s summary of and quotations from the accompanying report, ibid., 439-441. Pussort’s inquest was limited to Philipsbourg, where Saint-André had operated since 1663. Although most of Vauban’s troubles in Alsace involved the work at Brisach (hence the constant reference to that place whenever discussing this matter) it appears that he served as contractor for some work at Philipsbourg, for the royal order finally settling this affair mentioned the "marché et entreprises" Vauban made at both Brisach and Philipsbourg (Louis XIV to Colbert [de Saint-Marc], 20 August 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 45).
What role, then, did Vauban play in this "affaire d'Alsace"? The story as told by Camille Rousset portrays the engineer as the victim of a dishonest entrepreneur and an intendant whom he had displeased and who had consequently vowed his destruction. When the irregularities at Brisach were discovered, the intendant put the blame on the "pauvre et fier" Vauban, and viciously persuaded his cousin Colbert to pursue the alleged swindler. All would have been lost had Louvois not intervened to save "cette victime glorieuse." Colbert realized his error too late and so lost Vauban to Louvois, who was only too happy to gain from his rival's miscalculation.679

Pierre Clément's account followed Rousset's initial version by a few years. Clément added the correspondence of Colbert to the letters of Louvois already quoted by Rousset, thereby amassing almost all the archival material we now possess pertaining to this affair. Yet, Clément's interpretation of it focused primarily upon showing Colbert, with justice, in a better light than had Rousset. Like Rousset, Clément referred to "irrégularités reprochées à Vauban dans la conduite des travaux de Brisach," but when he noted that, in the absence of details contained in supposedly missing letters, "on ne peut que conjecturer qu'il s'était chargé" of conducting excessively priced works at Brisach, he implied that Vauban was embroiled in a legal battle with the Chambre des comptes. Clément recounted Saint-Marc's troubles with his cousin in the context of Vauban's difficulties--"Ces fortifications de Brisach, qui avaient été le tourment de Vauban, causèrent aussi bien des ennuis à Colbert"--rather than the other way around. Finally, Clément asserted that neither Colbert nor his cousin crossed Louvois in his liquidation of Vauban's ordeal, and even that Colbert added his "très-bonne grâce à tous ces arrangements."680

679Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 275-78. In his later "La Jeunesse de Vauban," Rousset says that to accuse the intendant and entrepreneur of collusion is to repeat without proof Vauban's accusation, made perhaps out of resentment. Obviously, Rousset had not seen Colbert's letters to Saint-Marc, published that same year by Clément. Corvisier, Louvois, 359-60, drawing on Rousset's Histoire de Louvois, repeats his account.

Most of the accounts of this episode are either repetitions or combinations of the accounts by Rousset and Clément. Georges Michel, writing in 1879, followed Rousset in claiming that Saint-Marc, motivated by rancor against Vauban, was backed by his cousin the minister, albeit with the remonstrances cataloged by Clément. Michel stated categorically that the accounts for Brisach were submitted to the "cour des comptes," and that when irregularities were uncovered by the judges, they issued an "arrêt contre Vauban." Michel's highly polemical account rejected Clément's contention that neither of the Colberts stood in the way of Vauban's exit from this quagmire, claiming instead that while the minister was cooperative, his cousin was a tenacious and obstreperous "adversaire." Only the heroic intervention of Louvois saved Vauban. Among his laudable feats was the forceful extraction of the tainted accounts from the archives of the Chambre des comptes when the accountant-judges refused to part with them. Once Vauban was cleared, according to Michel's mangled chronology, Colbert then went after the guilty party, sending Clerville to Alsace to investigate and finally ordering Saint-André's arrest.681

Colonel Lazard's 1933 account innovated by claiming that Vauban had not lost Colbert's confidence during this whole business. Lazard based this on the claim that Vauban continued to exercise the direction of all the works in that Colbert's department of fortifications, claiming that Vauban had replaced Clerville in that capacity in all but name since 1666. Indeed, Lazard continued, relations between the controller-general and Vauban remained good, despite some few "petits dissentiments" which never went beyond the criticisms permitted between friends. But much of the other elements of the standard tale lingered: Saint-Marc the villain, the Chambre des comptes in hot pursuit, Louvois the savior.682 Others of Vauban's recent French biographers, Michel Parent and Jacques Verroust, also thought that Vauban directed fortifications in Colbert's department, although they dated it from 1668. And they reaffirmed the centrality of the

681 Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 51-64.

682 Lazard, Vauban, 118-29. Blomfield, Vauban, 64-65, 75-76, who drew heavily from Lazard, offered much the same account in summary form.
engineer in the "affaire de Brisach," as well as the alleged active role played by the Chambre des comptes and the minister Colbert’s assistance to Louvois in extricating Vauban from the clutches of that judicial body. But Parent and Verroust maintained elsewhere, without connecting it to this matter, that Vauban and Colbert "ne se comprenaient et ne s’aimaient guère." 683

Finally, we come to the latest biographies of the marshal, F.J. Hebbert and G.A. Rothrock’s 1989 work in English and Bernard Pujo’s 1991 volume in French. Although skimpy on details, Hebbert and Rothrock imply that this matter was primarily a fraud directed at Vauban by the entrepreneur and the intendant, and that Vauban was spared "severe disciplinary action" only by the intercession of both Louvois and Colbert. Oblique references also suggest that there were no real strains in Colbert and Vauban's relationship because of this episode. Like those of their predecessors, their brief account suffers from faults of perspective, misreading of the documents (if these were, in fact, re-examined), and failure to establish a chronology of events. 684 Pujo’s account is no better. He draws largely from Lazard and then adds his own chronological confusion. For instance, he presents Vauban’s work at Brisach as if it took place when Louvois controlled Alsace and was attempting to rectify the past errors of Colbert’s agents on that project. 685 It is not surprising, then, that the old myths about the "affaire de Brisach" continue to circulate. 686

What is the truth about this "affaire d’Alsace," at least as can be reconstructed by historians at the distance of over three centuries? As observed earlier, it is crucial that we begin by putting this business in the context of Colbert’s increasing disgust with the intendant of Alsace. The work on Brisach and Philipsbourg languished, the king grew

683 Parent and Verroust, Vauban, 64-65, 33.


anxious, the court buzzed with rumors, complaints issued from various parties in Alsace, and the intendant’s actions and letters gave his kinsman every reason to doubt his abilities and honesty. As far as Colbert was concerned, if we rely on the extant documents, Vauban was merely a peripheral character, figuring into this matter only in so far as the engineer’s concerns were related to the troubles of the Colbert clan or were brought to his attention by Louvois. As noted in the last chapter, we must disabuse ourselves of any expectation of a cache of letters that will radically change the outline offered by what evidence we do possess. Gaps might be filled and some matters made clearer, but the basic shape of this episode is not likely to alter substantially.

One of the threads running through nearly all accounts of this episode in Vauban’s career is that of his alleged prosecution by the Chambre des comptes. There is not, however, a shred of evidence for this claim. In his first letter mentioning Vauban’s "affaire de Brisach," Louvois referred to the king having ordered Colbert to send the needed discharges so that "l'on ne vous [Vauban] puisse rien demander" for the work done in Alsace. From this, it is clear that the king and Louvois were concerned not with an investigation in progress, but rather with the likelihood of one in the future when the accounts from Alsace were finally examined by the Chambre de comptes. The war secretary’s uneasiness must have been prompted and fueled by Clerville’s continuing examination of Saint-André’s accounts, for both Louvois and Vauban’s informants kept

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687 Louvois to Vauban, 15 January 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 41 (emphasis mine). Note that the verb "pouvoir" is in the present subjunctive tense. See also Louvois to Vauban, 11 March 1671, ibid., 44: "vous vous mettez hors d’état de pouvoir jamais être recherché en cette affaire...."

688 Marion, Dictionnaire, 82, noted that the Chambre des comptes was extremely slow in its work; accounts were submitted to them after countless delays, and intervals of a decade or more between submission and final judgment were not uncommon. See also Mousnier, Institutions of France, 2: 278-79. Both Marion and Mousnier note that the Paris Chambre des comptes had jurisdiction over matters such as these. See also Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 83-84, on these financial arrangements.
them apprised of the events unfolding at Brisach.⁶⁹⁸ That the investigation was acquiring further depth and breadth is clear from Colbert’s instructions to Clerville at the end of January: among other things, the chevalier was to ascertain upon whose orders payments had been made, what discharges for these had been received by the trésoriers des fortifications, and if the proper discharges had not been provided, who had authorized this deviation from normal procedures.⁶⁹⁹ Louvois’s 15 January letter to his assistant, therefore, was an attempt to pre-empt Vauban’s inclusion in this spreading scandal. Thus, Louvois informed Vauban that the king had ordered Colbert two days earlier to expedite the necessary paperwork that had been delayed so many years by Saint-Marc’s negligence or attempted cover-up.⁷⁰¹

From Louvois’s missives to Vauban, we can gather that the crux of Vauban’s difficulties was that Saint-Marc had never sent along the paperwork needed to officially terminate and put a seal of approval on the engineer’s entrepreneurial work in Alsace.⁷⁰² It was standard procedure that when a work was completed, the intendant would receive it in the name of the king by inspecting it and then signing the necessary documents to allow the entrepreneur to receive his payments from the royal treasury.⁷⁰³ But Saint-

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⁶⁹⁸See Vauban to Louvois, 21 October 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 58, where Vauban refers to such an informant in Brisach. See Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 362, on Louvois’s informants in that province. Clerville must have felt that agents of the Le Telliers were lurking about, ready to pounce on anything that might be used against his patron’s clan. When he expressed his uneasiness to the minister, Colbert made light of such fears (Colbert to Clerville, 31 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 49-50).

⁶⁹⁹Colbert to Clerville, 31 January 1671, ibid., 49-50.

⁷⁰¹Louvois to Vauban, 15 January 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 41.

⁷⁰²For instance, Louvois to Vauban, 25 February 1671, ibid., 42-43.

⁷⁰³For the "reception" of completed works, financial discharges, methods of making payments, and other such entrepreneurial and financial procedures, see Guttin, Corps des ingénieurs, 69-71, 81-84.
Marc had never followed through on this for much of the work done in his intendancy.\textsuperscript{694} What was worse, Saint-Marc and probably Saint-André had mislead Vauban into signing some false accounts upon the latter’s return from his various absences from the work sites.\textsuperscript{695} It also appears that the intendant actually had signed some ordonnances (payment orders) in Vauban’s name.\textsuperscript{696}

Despite the king’s instructions to Colbert, Louvois’s almost daily consultations with Vauban’s homme d’affaires, and the war secretary’s optimism that Vauban’s limited role in the "affaire d’Alsace" was about to be terminated, the requisite paperwork was not forthcoming. Why not? It would seem that until shortly after the middle of January, Vauban and Louvois’s efforts (and perhaps Colbert’s) were directed at pressuring the intendant of Alsace to expedite the discharges releasing the engineer from any liability for projects long-since completed at Brisach. It is likely that Clerville’s probe uncovered further irregularities in Saint-André’s accounts that precluded issuing the normal letters of discharge.\textsuperscript{697} This would explain Vauban’s agitated search in the following weeks for a way around this difficulty. Replying to Vauban’s anxious letter of 26 January, Louvois promised when he returned to Paris to speak to Colbert of the expedient Vauban had proposed to liquidate these complications. Louvois hastened to assure his friend of a quick exit from this quagmire and pledged to work daily with the engineer’s business

\textsuperscript{694}See Colbert’s complaints about such negligence in his letter to Saint-Marc, 3 January 1671, Clément, 
Lettres de Colbert, 5: 45-46. See also Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 361, who cites the entrepreneur Vouleau’s complaints along the same lines.

\textsuperscript{695}This is hinted at in Louvois to Vauban, 9 February 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 42. Louvois refers to "ce qui a été fait en votre absence."

\textsuperscript{696}Louis XIV to Colbert [de Saint-Marc], 20 August 1671, ibid., 45 (Rochas does not make it clear that he is aware that the recipient of this letter is Saint-Marc).

\textsuperscript{697}Clerville had been examining the accounts of the trésorier des fortifications since the first week of January. See Colbert to Clerville, 3 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 45. On 10 January, Colbert promised to send him the accounts from 1664 to 1670 for the places of Alsace.
agent in the capital. Whether or not Vauban proposed other expedients in the interval is unknown, but the expedient Louvois discussed with this business agent on 8 February was rejected by both as impractical and unsafe since it would open Vauban to a charge for back taxes on money he had never earned. Instead, Louvois concluded that an "arrêt du Conseil" was required to discharge Vauban of what was done during his absence and to limit his accountability to what money he had received on the basis of the verbal contract that had been made with him.

A new approach, however, was approved by Louvois and Colbert when they spoke "à fond" of Vauban's latest suggestion on 18 February. In essence, the engineer was to re-write history. First, he was to draw up a new entrepreneurial contract (marché) and a new estimate of work to be done (devis) for all the tasks at which he had served as entrepreneur until he ceased to do so under his own name. To keep the price low, he was to exclude the costs of certain normally expensive specialty construction, such as vaults and staircases. Once this was done, Vauban was then to draw up a new quantity survey (toisé) of the work, normally done to ascertain exactly what work had been accomplished in order to authorize payments to the entrepreneurs. This was to be followed by a new acte de réception, the report of the official inspection of a construction job just prior to its formal acceptance by the crown. When he had finished, Vauban was to send all these papers to Louvois, who would turn them over to Colbert. When Colbert had obtained the signatures needed to discharge Vauban of further responsibility, he would return them to Louvois, who would in turn relay them to Vauban.

A portion of this new plan adds further weight to the contention that there was as yet no process against Vauban in the Chambre des comptes. Louvois was to contact the trésoriers des fortifications to see if they had already presented the Chambre with their

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698Louvois to Vauban, 29 January 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 41.

699Louvois to Vauban, 9 February 1671, ibid., 41-42.

700Louvois to Vauban, 19 February 1671, ibid., 42.
accounts for 1665-68. If they had not, Louvois intended to pull out all the quittances (receipts) Vauban had given in order to put the "entreprise" under another name, or at worst, under the sole name of Vauban's cousin, Paul II Le Prestre, his assistant in Alsace.  

If the Chambre had already initiated proceedings against Vauban—not to mention having issued an arrêt, as some have claimed—certainly Louvois would have known of it. This letter clearly demonstrates that he knew of no such proceedings because no action had been taken. This is further confirmed by Louvois's letter to Vauban a week later. The secretary reported that he had discovered that, although the accounts for 1665-68 had already been submitted to the Chambre, their processing was not so far along as to prevent him from withdrawing the papers potentially harmful to his friend.

Seemingly the eternal optimist in this undertaking, Louvois asserted that if all went as planned in the replacement of the questionable papers in the possession of the Chambre, Vauban would extricate himself from this matter better than by any other means imaginable. The war secretary obtained Colbert's acquiescence to this latest

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701 Louvois to Vauban, 19 February 1671, ibid., 42. Paul had probably assisted his cousin in his entrepreneurial endeavors. As his second during his many absences, it is likely that he too was duped by Saint-André and Saint-Marc. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: v n. 1, asserted that Paul retired from the service after he left Brisach; he suggested that this was probably due to the troublesome liquidation of this affair. Actually, Paul moved on to even greater levels of royal service. Although Clément inferred that Paul was probably the one who compromised his cousin, he did not explain whether he thought this was due to dishonesty or naïveté. Given the upheaval over building finances in Alsace, however, it seems unlikely that Louvois would have tapped Paul to serve as entrepreneur at the important royal project of the Invalides if Paul had been tainted by the affair or if his skills were in doubt, especially since the king was actively involved in the oversight of both matters. Louvois commented to Vauban, 9 March 1671: "j'ai besoin de gens qui veuillent l'entreprendre [the invalides in Paris]. Personne ne peut mieux faire cela que votre cousin" (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 43).

702 Louvois to Vauban, 25 February 1671, ibid., 42-43.
course of action, and pledged to set it in motion right away.\textsuperscript{703} He labored during the opening days of March to prepare the necessary papers for Saint-Marc to sign in place of those submitted earlier in Vauban’s name.\textsuperscript{704} By the 11 March they were in Colbert’s hands. In a few days, Colbert was expected to give Louvois a letter to Saint-Marc so that the war secretary could send an express courier to Alsace to have the intendant strike Vauban’s name from the fraudulent orders for payment and replace them with some under another name. Seeking to ease his friend’s anxieties, Louvois speculated that soon Vauban would be able to toss the questionable papers into the fire and end any possibility of a future investigation.\textsuperscript{705} But as the days extended into weeks, no such packet of papers arrived from the war secretary to add cheer to Vauban’s late winter fire.

At this point, correspondence between Vauban and Louvois on this matter ceased for over four months. Clément seized upon this interruption to buttress his hypothesis that there were letters mysteriously missing from the war archives.\textsuperscript{706} A simpler explanation, however, accounts for this hiatus: Louvois was in Flanders and Lorraine between 7 April and 20 July 1671, touring fortresses and making preparations for the projected war against the Dutch, and so few or no letters were exchanged between the two for several months. From his itinerary and the nature of his visit, it is nearly certain that Louvois worked long hours with Vauban and had ample opportunities to discuss the "affaire d’Alsace," even though other matters presumably pressed more heavily on them both. The king, accompanied by Colbert and Lionne, and soon joined by other important advisors, arrived at Dunkirk on 7 May. It is possible that Colbert and even the king

\textsuperscript{703}Ibid. Mousnier, \textit{Institutions of France}, 2: 194, details the role the controller-general played in this court, which suggests that he had the power to extract these accounts before they were audited.

\textsuperscript{704}Louvois to Vauban, 1 March 1671, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 43.

\textsuperscript{705}Louvois to Vauban, 11 March 1671, ibid., 44. For the part of this letter not printed by Rochas, see Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: v-vi.

\textsuperscript{706}Ibid., vi n. 1.
were drawn into this discussion, but the documentary evidence is lacking and so we can only speculate.\textsuperscript{707}

It is important to insist again upon placing this scandal in a context wider than Vauban's personal concerns. Not yet himself thirty years old, Louvois was definitely the ascendant advisor at the young king's side, as attested to by the monarch's continuing marks of favor.\textsuperscript{708} The same is proven by the several administrative turf battles with his older colleagues he fought and won. As he had vanquished the marine secretary the previous year over the question of soldiers serving on shipboard, in February 1671 Louvois defeated the efforts of the foreign secretary to deprive him of the control of the raising of foreign troops for the impending war.\textsuperscript{709} Fresh from these victories, Louvois went to Dunkirk to meet an army that eventually included 28,000 soldiers. While the king and his attendants watched, the war secretary flaunted the monarch's military might for all to see and at the same time used the massed troops to advance the work on various fortifications along the Flanders frontier. There were lavish receptions and musical interludes for the royal entourage as the common soldiers toiled to the tune of artillery salutes and drums. All was carefully orchestrated to please Louis, and it had the desired effect.\textsuperscript{710}

Meanwhile, the fortunes of Louvois's chief rival had taken a turn for the worse. Colbert hoped to impress his royal master with what his own agents had accomplished along the sea frontier to the west. To prepare for the king's promised journey to

\textsuperscript{707}See Corvisier, \textit{Louvois}, 508, for the secretary's itinerary. André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 199-201, describes Louvois's tour and offers a more detailed list of the places he visited.

\textsuperscript{708}Sonnino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 132, makes much of Louvois being named chancellor of the body that distributed and regulated the royal orders of chivalry, which was an important source of patronage. André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 207, notes the same and also highlights Louvois's appointment to control the post office in December 1668.


\textsuperscript{710}Ibid., 138-39, 143, 145-46, 149-53.
Rochefort, Colbert went there himself in April to inspect the new arsenal, but fell ill and was away from the court for a period of time. When he did return, the naval secretary clashed with Louis over the issue of creating companies of marines to serve on vessels. Colbert made two mistakes: First, he resurrected a matter the king had considered decided and closed; and second, he accused the king of unfairly favoring Louvois. The king was quite angry, making it clear that he was the master of his kingdom. And Colbert’s bright hopes for the navy were further dimmed when it had become clear by mid-July that the king’s trip to Rochefort would have to be cancelled, ostensibly due to the illness of the dauphin.\footnote{Ibid., 143-45, 155. For the king’s angry yet conciliatory letters, see Louis XIV to Colbert, 24 and 26 April 1671, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 7: 53-54.}

Shortly after Louvois’s return from Flanders on 20 July, the increasingly-powerful war secretary wrote Vauban what must have nonetheless sounded like a hollow refrain: "J’ay vostre affaire d’Alsace aussy presente que vous le pouvez souhaiter, et ne perdray point de temps, de maniere ou d’autre, à vous en sortir."\footnote{22 July 1671, ibid., 5: vi.} But Vauban’s troubles had not been resolved during the past four months, despite Louvois’s detailed, careful plans and bright hopes. And now matters seemed to have returned to the point where even the means of resolution was uncertain. What had happened? A number of hypotheses suggest themselves. The press of arranging for the looming conflict with the Dutch may have pushed this issue down the priority list of the king and his ministers. This is not very likely, though, because the Alsatian mess was directly related to the readiness of the frontiers for the coming war, and the pace of preparations did not slacken appreciably at the end of the summer, when the issue was finally resolved. Clément glosses over this delay by observing simply that "d’autres difficultés surgirent sans doute," but other historians have pointed a finger at Saint-Marc and even Colbert
himself, although most exonerate Colbert and assert instead that he actually assisted Vauban. 713

There is little doubt that Saint-Marc was uncooperative in bringing this whole business to a close, including Vauban’s part in it. Colbert’s letters to Alsace reverberate with his frustration at the advice and orders his cousin ignored. Either from indolence, malice, or apprehension, Saint-Marc allowed papers to pile up on his desk unfinished or unsigned. But what of his kinsman the controller-general? We should not be too quick to accept the standard interpretation and dismiss Colbert’s complicity in these delays. 714

If we return to a survey of the correspondence issuing from Colbert’s desk in the opening months of 1671, it becomes clear that he was still unresolved as to how he would liquidate the growing scandal that threatened his clan. 715 When he wrote to Saint-Marc in early February that he would punish his own son if he found him in a fraud, the controller-general was perhaps exaggerating for effect, but he was certainly signaling his

713 Saint-Marc is frequently blamed for being obstructive (e.g., by Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 55-58), although Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: xv, asserts that not even he stood in the way of the termination of this affair. Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 276, faulted Colbert in this matter, but does not appear to have been followed in this by most later commentators (although Corvisier, Louvois, 359-60, maintains that Colbert remained hostile to Vauban until the end of the affair and even afterwards). Colbert’s alleged positive role in “rescuing” Vauban is asserted by Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: vi-vii, xv; Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 59-60, 64; Lazard, Vauban, 119, 128; Blomfield, Vauban, 65; Parent, Vauban, 64; Hebert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 29; Pujo, Vauban, 39.

714 On the other hand, we should also not ignore the difficulties of what Donald Pilgrim has called “government by correspondence,” which gave local officials much more independence than the usual formulations of absolutism would allow. See Donald Pilgrim, “The Colbert-Seignelay Naval Reforms and the Beginnings of the War of the League of Augsburg,” French Historical Studies 9 (1975): 252. To some extent, Colbert was at the mercy of the constraints imposed on his authority by time and space, but these were factors that limited the actions of all the other ministers as well.

715 Colbert was not always so hesitant. See p. 312 below for an instance when Colbert moved quickly to avert a possible scandal involving another relative attached to the work on the fortifications of Saint-Quentin.
cousin that his Colbert blood would protect him only so far. 716 Although Colbert was anxious to be done with this affair, it should be recalled that there was no formal charge against Saint-Marc—what Clerville was conducting was merely an internal investigation in his role as chief consultant in Colbert's department of fortifications. 717 In early March, both his letter to Clerville and his reply the same day to one from Saint-Marc indicate that Colbert was still awaiting the completion of the chevalier's investigation. 718

By the end of March or early April, Clerville had left Alsace to report to his master. 719 Colbert received the chevalier's report probably before leaving Paris for his April trip to Rochefort. As for Clerville, soon afterwards he was off to Normandy for a tour of the coast, surely relieved to have finished his investigation, a task that had filled him with dread and which he had fulfilled only with great reluctance. 720 At first glance, it would seem that the chevalier had failed to supply the minister with enough information to resolve this lingering imbroglio, because sometime in April or May Colbert appointed his uncle, the influential counselor of state Henri Pussort, to continue the inquiry. 721 In fact, it is likely that Colbert had learned enough to convince him that

716 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 7 February 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 50-51.

717 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 21 February 1671, ibid., 51, attests to the minister's impatience. It also gives no suggestion that at that moment Colbert intended to remove Saint-Marc.

718 Colbert to Saint-Marc and to Clerville, 7 March 1671, ibid., 52-53.

719 Colbert to Saint-Marc, 30 March 1671, ibid., 55-56.

720 For Clerville's visit to Normandy, see Colbert's "Mémoire au chevalier de Clerville," 11 May 1671, ibid., 56-57. It was written from Havre-de-Grâce, where Colbert had stopped on his way to join the king in Flanders.

721 Ibid., 56 n. 1, mentioned only that Pussort was "envoya en Alsace," but Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 360, noted that Saint-Marc went to Paris in May and, after a week back at Brisach, returned to the capital in early June. Livet says that both of Saint-Marc's trips were intended to facilitate Pussort's inquiry, which he implies took place entirely in Paris. Did it? Perhaps Clément assumed that the trip Pussort referred to in his 14 June letter to Colbert (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 439) was to Alsace, when in fact Pussort meant only an unrelated journey that otherwise left him in Paris for the
matters were in such disarray and the need to press the work so great—war with the Dutch now seemed inevitable\textsuperscript{722}—he decided that Saint-Marc had to be removed. Yet such a blow to the prestige of the Colbert clan had to be managed in a delicate manner so as to minimize the damage, especially since the Le Telliers would be eager to exploit their rival’s misfortune. This possibility is strongly suggested by Pussort’s report, a series of three mémoires sent to Colbert from Paris in mid June.\textsuperscript{723} This wily lawyer had worked wonders. Pussort cleared not only Saint-Marc of fraud but also Saint-André, dismissing claims that any significant royal funds had been frittered away, and limiting himself simply to criticizing the intendant for “nonchalance” and failure to seek needed advice.\textsuperscript{724} Compared with what Clerville had revealed and with what Louvois’s letters to Vauban divulge, Pussort’s appraisal is clearly a cover-up, calculated to promote the interests of the Colbert clan rather than expose the truth.\textsuperscript{725} Revealing that politics was

\textsuperscript{722}Sonnino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 146-48, narrates how the king confirmed his decision in a 4 May meeting with Lionne and Arnauld de Pomponne, his ambassador to the Hague, and in the days following.

\textsuperscript{723}Pussort’s report, dated 14 June 1671, was addressed to his nephew Colbert. It is summarized and quoted in part in Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 439-41. Clément noted that it made no mention of Vauban in its nearly one hundred folios (ibid., 441 n. 1).

\textsuperscript{724}Ibid., 440.

\textsuperscript{725}Clément, ibid., xv, as much as he was an apologist for Colbert, doubted the honesty and questioned the motives of this report. Pussort had experienced a rapid ascent in the aftermath of the trial of Fouquet, during which he had proven himself to be a ferociously loyal partisan of the king. In the late 1660s and early 1670s he executed a number of judicial reform tasks for his nephew, in which he promoted the
as much a consideration in this matter as justice, Pussort speculated on the motives of Saint-Marc’s accusers: "qu’on l’a voulu perdre; mais qu’il y a fourny des matières." 726 Following the questionable line of defense suggested by Colbert in an earlier letter to Clerville, 727 Pussort made much of the fact that the alleged malefactors had turned over their registers for examination, which he took to be a sign of innocence. 728

Colbert’s letters make it clear that the controller-general had two related goals throughout this affair: to please the king by advancing the fortifications of Alsace in a timely and thrifty manner, and to resolve a predicament that threatened to diminish the reputation and power of his family. He was in no mood that spring to absolve anyone of complicity in this scandal if it meant implicating his cousin in the process. Thus, all the other parties to this financial tangle were held hostage to Colbert’s longing to extricate his family from this difficulty with as little damage as possible. Perhaps he intended to use their fate--and especially that of Vauban--as a bargaining chip with Louvois, hoping to enlist his support for a quiet resolution. There is no reason to believe that Colbert sought to pin the whole scandal on Vauban, which would have been impossible to arrange even had he been so inclined. Yet, even though Vauban had committed no fraud, the engineer was vulnerable because he had allowed himself to be duped and was technically responsible for all the payment authorizations he had signed. It is possible that Colbert used Vauban and Louvois’s desire to avoid a drawn-out and embarrassing court battle to leverage his own client and kinsman from this deadlock without suffering prosecution.

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ideas of royal authority over judicial independence. Pussort was also, with the controller-general, one of the leaders of the Colbert clan. An erudite jurist, he was judged by contemporaries to be an individual with whom it was best not to clash. For Pussort’s career and this evaluation of the man, see Pillorget, "Pussort," 262-68.

726 Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 440-41.

727 Colbert to Clerville, 27 December 1670, ibid., 42-43.

728 Ibid., 441.
Thus, André Corvisier, in resurrecting Rousset’s contention that Colbert had set himself against Vauban in this affair until it was finally resolved in the late summer of 1671, points in the right direction.\textsuperscript{729} Clément’s hasty yet influential conclusion that Colbert’s cooperation with Louvois on this matter was wholehearted does not stand up to the facts. But when Colbert felt the political winds blowing as that summer progressed, he realized that they were contrary to the course he had set himself, favoring Louvois instead. To salvage his own position with the king, the controller-general perhaps concluded that Saint-Marc had to be sacrificed. By at least the end of August, Clerville was back in Alsace to expedite the fortification work that had all but ceased due to Saint-Marc’s incompetence and the uncertainty of his tenure as intendant.\textsuperscript{730} Officially, Saint-Marc had retained his commission in the months after his exoneration by Pussort, but his and his cousin’s resistance to Louvois’s efforts on Vauban’s behalf had lost their effectiveness, and indeed their purpose.

Thus, on 20 August 1671, Louis XIV issued an order to Saint-Marc, countersigned by Colbert in his capacity of secretary of state for the Maison du Roi. The king instructed the intendant of Alsace to sign new payment ordonnances and strike out his signature on those that he had sent under the engineer’s name in the past. Louis explained his motivation as "désirant décharger le sieur de Vauban de toutes les recherches qui pourroient estre faites contre lui" because of his work at Brisach and

\textsuperscript{729}Corvisier, Louvois, 359-60.

\textsuperscript{730}Colbert to Clerville, 23 September 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 58. Colbert acknowledged the receipt of Clerville’s letters of 26 August and 1 and 9 September.
Philipsbourg. But it took nearly another month before Louvois could announce to his friend that the long-awaited end to the affair was only days away.

Why this delay? Perhaps Saint-Marc wanted to extract a last pound of flesh from the despised Vauban and his patron. But if Saint-Marc had any lingering hopes that he might hold on to his job, these were completely shattered the first day of September by the death of Lionne, the secretary of state for foreign affairs. The king immediately announced that Lionne's son, the Marquis de Berny, was being asked to step aside, even though he had the survivance of the office. Louis preferred the services of Arnauld de Pomponne, then serving as ambassador to Sweden. Until his arrival from Stockholm, however, the king had designated Louvois to serve as interim foreign secretary. Saint-Marc's position thus became untenable because, even though Colbert had long held sway in Alsace, officially that province was under the foreign secretary. Louvois certainly would not be as indulgent a colleague as Lionne had been, especially toward the unsavory and incompetent Saint-Marc, who Colbert tolerated only because of his kinship.

On 10 September, Saint-Marc ended his bungled intendancy in a way that can only have made his cousin in Paris wince with mortification. According to the informants of

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731Louis XIV to Colbert [de Saint-Marc], 20 August 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 45. Rochas labeled this letter as "Le Roi à Colbert," noting that it was countersigned by Colbert. He offered no clarification to explain this apparent oddity to the unsuspecting reader. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: vi n. 2, argued explicitly that the recipient of this letter was Jean-Baptiste Colbert, even though he noted that the minister was also the countersignatory. He said that Colbert did this to "...mettre à couvert sa responsabilité, et non pour s'en faire une arme contre Vauban," but this makes no sense in the context of this whole affair. Lazard, Vauban, 127-28, repeats Clément's interpretation. But all the other correspondence concerning this affair indicate that it was a matter of Saint-Marc signing the necessary papers, not his cousin the minister, and this letter is merely a follow-up to the plans alluded to by Louvois in February and March (see p. 291 above).

732Louvois to Vauban, 16 September 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 49.

733André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 201-05. Louvois turned over this charge to Pomponne on 15 January 1672.
Vauban and Louvois on the scene, Saint-Marc left Brisach as he had ruled, making a shameful exit that involved a new host of financial improprieties.\textsuperscript{734} Saved by his kinsman from prosecution but not from loss of his position, Saint-Marc returned to Metz, where he served in the Parlement but never again as an intendant for the rest of his long life.\textsuperscript{735}

Shortly after this unhappy denouement in Brisach, Louvois wrote with joy to Vauban in Flanders, announcing: "J'ai reçu...tout ce que je pouvais désirer pour finir votre affaire d'Alsace, de la plus avantageuse manière que les gens les plus entendus en ces faits les aient pu souhaiter."\textsuperscript{736} New payment ordonnances had been drawn up under the name of a certain Marchand as entrepreneur at Brisach, who was to sign them in a day or two, Saint-Marc having already signed them before leaving Alsace. Louvois assured his friend that he had in his possession the original payment authorizations that Vauban had given the trésoriers des fortifications. These would be sent along to Lille in short order, presumably to fuel the engineer's early autumn evening fire.\textsuperscript{737}

The settlement of Vauban's problems did not, of course, end the "affaire d'Alsace." As we have seen, it was an entanglement in which he played only a secondary role. But events were moving almost simultaneously to bring this business to a close and lessen

\textsuperscript{734}Vauban to Louvois, 21 October 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 58-59. Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 361-62, quotes the letters of Morice, commissaire des guerres, written to Louvois 8 and 16 September, before and after Saint-Marc's departure. In his letter of the 16th, Morice noted that Saint-Marc had departed "jeudy dernier," which was the 10th.

\textsuperscript{735}Ibid., 362, notes that Saint-Marc was later named président à mortier at Metz. His commis also left Alsace. Cézar followed his master while Faille went to England to serve Croissy, who was ambassador in London.

\textsuperscript{736}Louvois to Vauban, 16 September 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 49.

\textsuperscript{737}Ibid. Given the sundry semi-legal measures suggested and ultimately employed to terminate this affair, one wonders what was behind the curious letter of Colbert to the Chambre des comptes, 22 August 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 2 pt. 1: 246, announcing that "le Roy a voulu que le Chambre des comptes fussent sévères à ne point remettre au comptables les amendes qu'ils auront encourues faute de rendre leurs comptes dans le temps porté par ladite ordonnance [of August 1669]."
the agony of the Colbert clan, which further suggests the likelihood that there was an understanding with Louvois to liquidate this affair with as little public commotion as possible. About a week after Louvois had finally received all the paperwork needed to prevent any future legal claims against Vauban, Saint-André was released from prison, where he had remained since January, even though Pussort had cleared his name in June.\textsuperscript{738} Meanwhile, Colbert tried to use Clerville to salvage what authority and credit with the king he still possessed in Alsace. According to arrangements specified about a week after Saint-Marc’s retreat from Brisach, the controller-general, acting on orders from the king, had installed Clerville as the chief royal agent supervising the fortification work at Brisach and Philipsbourg. Colbert informed Clerville that "Sa Majesté veut que vous signiez et concluez les marchés" at both places "sans attendre aucun intendant pour conclure et signer tous ces marchés. Sa Majesté vous en donne le pouvoir."\textsuperscript{739}

But all of Colbert’s attempts at damage control were in vain. Saint-Marc’s ouster marked a check for the Colbert’s and an advance for the Le Telliers. The commissaire des guerres Morice, one of Louvois’s men, exercised control over military affairs and perhaps the whole province while the intendancy remained vacant. As interim foreign secretary, Louvois was able in December to install a new intendant, Poncet de La Rivière, who was one of his clients. As we shall see later, before two years had passed Louvois’s victory in Alsace was complete when he evicted his rivals from their long-time power base.\textsuperscript{740}

\textsuperscript{738}See the royal order, countersigned by Colbert, dated 25 September 1671, ibid., 5: 58 n. 1.

\textsuperscript{739}Colbert to Clerville, 23 September 1671, ibid., 58-59. Clerville was further instructed that "Sa Majesté veut que vous demuriez en Alsace pour voir et donner les ordres à l’exécution des travaux de ces deux places, jusqu’à ce qu’elle vous donne permission d’en revenir." Colbert continued to press him to advance the work, as in Colbert to Clerville, 24 October, ibid., 60-61.

\textsuperscript{740}Livet, Intendance d’Alsace, 363.
For his part, Colbert was deeply humiliated by this check to his power along the eastern frontier. In 1673, when his loss of Alsace was finalized, he wrote the king apologetically:

Et Vostre Majesté veut bien me délibérer du reproche que je me faisais tous les jours à moy-mesme de ne pouvoir pas servir Vostre Majesté aussy bien que je l’aurois désiré dans ses travaux des places d’Alsace. Je ne puis répondre, Sire, à toutes ces bontés que par un respectueux silence en la conjurant de vouloir bien pardonner les fautes que je fais dans son service.  

There is, of course, more than a bit of the courtier in this letter. Indeed, Colbert later tried to excuse his own and his cousin’s failures in Alsace by observing that “dans le temps que le revestissement de ces deux grandes places a esté entrepris, l’on n’avoir pas en France l’expérience de ces sortes d’entreprises,” to which the king, in his marginal notes, generously replied “je ne doute nullement que vous ne fassiez tout ce qui dépend de vous pour que je sois bien servy à toutes choses.” Nonetheless, Colbert’s discomfort was real even though his excuses and his explanation to the king of its source ring false.

**Strained Relations with Colbert**

Although Vauban had not played the leading role in the drama that had unfolded in Alsace, his involvement was such that it had threatened his career. From his perspective, his personal plight took center stage. Louvois, who had remained sanguine about the prospects of success throughout the long ordeal, shared his true fears with Vauban only when victory was at hand. He candidly noted that had matters turned out differently, this affaire “aurait toujours été sujette à beaucoup d’incidents qui vous auraient pu ruiner et votre famille....” Undoubtedly, Louvois’s protection had earned

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742 Colbert to Louis XIV, 12 September 1673, with the king’s marginal notes of 16 September, ibid., ccxxxviii-ccxxxix.

743 Louvois to Vauban, 16 September 1671, Rochas, *Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: 49.
him Vauban's gratitude and had cemented the relationship that had first developed four years earlier.744

But what of Vauban's relations with his former patron Colbert? As observed earlier, most historians have not followed Rousset's cynical analysis. Instead, they have been swayed by Clément's better-documented interpretation, which claimed that Colbert did nothing to impede Vauban's untangling from Saint-Marc's web. It is clear, however, that Colbert forced Vauban to endure the postponement of a resolution of matters until first Clerville and then Pussort's investigations were complete. And when the minister finally received the results of their efforts, the finding of Pussort, which Colbert heeded, was a patent whitewash that preserved appearances but fooled few, especially Vauban. While the passage of time allowed Clément and other historians to lose sight of Vauban's grievance and resultant bitterness, there are enough traces of his resentment in surviving documents to allow the reader to feel its sting.

Clément strongly implied that Vauban was commissaire général des fortifications for Colbert as well as for Louvois during the 1660s, even though Clerville retained the title until his death in 1677. In minimizing the esteem Colbert had for the old chevalier, Clément contended that the minister was "obligé de l'employer et de lui confier des missions importantes...."745 Georges Michel asserted that when Vauban was named Clerville's replacement, he had already exercised the functions "depuis longtemps" in Colbert's department as well as in Louvois's.746 Colonel Lazard stated categorically that Vauban administered Colbert's department of fortifications from 1666, and continued to do so during the resolution of the "affaire de Brisach" in 1671.747 Michel Parent and

744In a letter to Louvois, 17 October 1671, Vauban referred to "votre protection" (ibid., 57).

745Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: viii.

746Michel, Histoire de Vauban, 135.

747Lazard, Vauban, 121, 123, 128.
Jacques Verroust recently repeated much the same. But in the 1920s, no less an authority than Gaston Zeller called these assertions into question. Drawing on source material from the period, Zeller suggested that while Clerville held on to his office, Vauban was only occasionally employed by Colbert, and then only from 1670.

Before addressing the question of Vauban’s actual role in the fortification department of Colbert, it would be helpful to recall the work of others who labored on Colbert’s behalf. At one level, there was no administrative vacuum for Vauban to fill. Other engineers were already scurrying about the various provinces under Colbert’s command inspecting, designing, and regulating the work on numerous fortresses under construction or repair. But it is true that no engineer served Colbert as Vauban served Louvois, inspecting and coordinating the work and workers throughout his entire fortification department. As already observed, if Vauban was the war secretary’s grand commis, then Colbert’s was none other than himself.

Clerville’s enterprises along the coasts are fairly well-known, as are some of his other tours of inspection. And he was, after all, the titular commissaire générale des fortifications for the whole kingdom, and especially for Colbert’s administrative empire, where he enjoyed the affection and confidence of the minister. But there were other roving engineers as well. François de La Mothe-Villebert, Vicomte d’Aspremont, for instance, who we already encountered at Arras some years earlier, had switched to

748 Parent and Verroust, Vauban, 65.


750 See Konvitz, Cities and the Sea, 78-95, for examples of Clerville’s work on Colbert’s behalf in finding sites for new ports. Konvitz noted that the chevalier was probably guilty of some rather shady financial manipulation of the minister, which surfaced only later. Mémain, Marine de guerre, 89-92, focuses especially on Clerville’s contributions to Rochefort and offers a brief overview and assessment of the chevalier’s relationship with the minister. For examples of other trips by Clerville, see Colbert’s letters to him concerning Bordeaux, 16 May 1669 (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 11), Toulon, 4 October 1669 (ibid., 16), Alsace, 11 October 1670 (ibid., 33), and Havre-de-Grâce, 11 May 1671 (ibid., 56).
Colbert's department, were he visited the places of Burgundy.\textsuperscript{751} Deshoulières, another engineer who had worked for Louvois at one time, inspected Colbert's strongholds in Champagne and along the Atlantic coast.\textsuperscript{752}

Vauban's 1670 work at the important fortress of Saint-Quentin appears to have been the first time that he again worked with Colbert since leaving his service in 1667. Despite the gap in Colbert's papers noted earlier, the war archives show Vauban hard at work for Louvois from late 1667 through the end of the decade. Louvois and Vauban exchanged numerous letters during these years, but none mention Vauban involved with any projects for Colbert until December 1670.\textsuperscript{753} And only in August of that year does Vauban make an appearance in the extant letter register for Colbert's fortification department. When he does, however, it is clear that his activities were confined to Saint-Quentin, where Chertemps, Colbert's director of fortifications for Picardy and Champagne, was ordered to apply himself particularly to follow the work ordered by the king and based on Vauban's \textit{mémoires}.\textsuperscript{754}

\textsuperscript{751}Colbert to Aspremont, 29 January and 11 February 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fols. 42 and 59; 3 March 1674, ibid., vol. 4, fols. 51v-52. See also Augoyat, \textit{Aperçu historique}, 1: 79-80.

\textsuperscript{752}Louvois wrote to Vauban on 10 November 1669 that the king no longer wanted Deshoulières to "se mêle" in the fortifications of the war ministry (A.G. A' 263, fol. 17). Yet, the following spring, Louvois sent Vauban some plans by Deshoulières to examine, and these were all for places in Flanders and Artois, which were under Louvois's care (A.G. A' 247, fol. 86). A letter from Colbert to Renart, \textit{intendant des fortifications} for Champagne, spoke of the need to revise the estimates for the next year's work, basing the changes on Deshoulières's visit (15 Feb 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 69). He was in that province again the following year (Colbert to Renart, 3 March 1674, ibid., vol. 4, fol. 51v). In a letter dated 6 July 1674, Colbert instructed Deshoulières to go to Bayonne to see to its defenses (ibid., fol. 192). See also Augoyat, \textit{Aperçu historique}, 1: 89, and Zeller, \textit{Organisation défensive}, 59.


\textsuperscript{754}Colbert to Vauban, 8 August 1670, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fol. 129, informs the engineer of the orders that had been sent to Chertemps. Vauban's "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1670, said that "il fut occupé à faire la
Why was Vauban involved in the work at Saint-Quentin? First, we must note the importance of this stronghold. Although not directly on the frontier, Saint-Quentin was close enough to play a vital role in the defense of the kingdom, especially in the increasingly likely war with the Dutch. This fortified town was especially important in the defense of Paris, guarding the river Oise corridor that leads directly to the valley of the Seine and on to the capital. It was also the major post protecting the frontier between the recent acquisitions of Flanders and Hainaut. But Louis and his advisors were additionally motivated by memories of the 1557 siege of Saint-Quentin by Spanish troops as they advanced dangerously close to the capital. In fact, Zeller marked that campaign as the opening of a new invasion route into France and the beginning of an era in which the king’s opponents followed the line of the Oise to the Île-de-France rather than the more traditional but exacting route through the Ardennes.\textsuperscript{755}

Actually, the first mention of Vauban in connection with Saint-Quentin was in the engineer’s correspondence with the minister of war. In April 1670, Louvois referred several times to a meeting he and the king would have with Vauban at Saint-Quentin at the beginning of May, at which time they would review plans for various fortifications, including the engineer’s comments on Clerville’s proposals for some sites in Louvois’s department.\textsuperscript{756} Saint-Quentin was only one stop on the king’s tour of the frontier with

\textit{visite des places des Pays-Bas et de la frontière de Picardie...}," which is not necessarily at odds with the contention that Saint-Quentin was the only place he was concerned with that year in the department of Colbert.

\textsuperscript{755}Zeller, \textit{Organisation défensive}, 21. Colbert wrote Chertemps 10 August 1669—well before war with the Dutch had been decided upon—that Saint-Quentin was the most important land fortification entrusted to his care (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 14-15). With understandable pride but a bit of exaggeration, the minister referred in 1671 to the works at Saint-Quentin as "les plus importants et les plus considérables de toutes la frontière..." (Colbert to Barrillon, 7 September 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, 153-155).

\textsuperscript{756}Louvois to Vauban, 8 April 1670, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 36; 17 April, A.G. A’ 247, fol. 139; 21 April, ibid., fol. 153. Louvois was on tour in the Flanders area from 28 April until 11 June (Corvisier, \textit{Louvois}, 508). Several arguments from silence suggest that Vauban’s involvement with Saint-Quentin began only from this
the Spanish Netherlands. Louis and his war secretary led their entourage of military experts from fort to fort, examining which were in readiness for war and which were not. Saint-Quentin, under Colbert’s care, was judged inadequate.\textsuperscript{757}

But why was Vauban assigned to correct Saint-Quentin’s deficiencies? Colbert had other engineers in his service who could have been dispatched to rectify the place. It is likely, however, that when the king and his entourage discussed the defects of the place, Vauban being a part of this conference and of known ability, was assigned the job of translating these thoughts into a plan. In making his preparations for war, Louis had detected a potentially fatal flaw in his frontier. He wanted it corrected immediately and competently by some who had his full confidence, regardless of whose department the place and the engineer were in. Louvois, perhaps discerning an opportunity to embarrass his rival, promoted his own assistant Vauban for a task that by rights belonged to Colbert’s man Clererville.

By early August, Vauban had generated a plan for Saint-Quentin and it had been approved by the king. Colbert sent orders to Chertemps to apply himself to its implementation.\textsuperscript{758} Despite some resistance by Chertemps, in September Colbert made it clear to the director that he was not interested in a general discussion of the work at Saint-Quentin. If the director still had difficulties, he was to resolve them directly with meeting. It was customary for the minister, in his instructions to a new director of fortifications, to offer a list of the individuals the director ought to consult in his supervision of a site or group of fortifications. See, for example, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 56-57, for Seraucourt’s commission of 25 March 1671, in which he is instructed to seek out Vauban for advice on Saint-Quentin, and Barrillon’s commission of 25 March 1671, in Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 53-55, where Vauban is again singled out. By Contrast, Chertemps’s 4 May 1669 instructions from the minister made no mention of Vauban in connection with any of his places, including Saint-Quentin. The same absence of Vauban’s name is notable in the minister’s letters to Chertemps of 21 May 1669, 12 July, 10 August, 5 December (ibid., 9-11, 13-16, 20-22).

\textsuperscript{757}Sonnino, \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 107. See ibid., 106-13, for the tour in general.

\textsuperscript{758}Colbert to Chertemps, 4 August 1670, B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 1, fol. 114, and 9 August, ibid., fol. 182v.
Vauban. What the minister insisted he was most interested in was that Chertemps understood Vauban’s plans "parfaitement." To this end, on 22 November, in perhaps his earliest extant letter to Vauban, Colbert requested that the engineer go to Saint-Quentin to explain his intentions to Chertemps, and that he visit the site during the winter as well. In a letter the same day to Chertemps, Colbert advised him of Vauban’s imminent visit and pointedly urged him to apply himself to understanding the engineer’s thoughts. Problems appear to have lingered, however, for in mid-December, Colbert was again politely soliciting Vauban’s help for Chertemps.

These letters set the tone that persisted in all Colbert’s subsequent letters to his subordinates and to Vauban: they were firm in their insistence to the former that they follow Vauban’s orders without deviation, and were exceedingly polite and flattering to Vauban himself, seeming to solicit his assistance rather than to order it. Colbert’s manner with Vauban stood in marked contrast to the voice he used with those royal servants under his direct command: with these individuals, Colbert’s language was direct and matter-of-fact, capable of delivering withering admonishments when he thought necessary. Colbert’s verbal care when dealing with Vauban illustrates one

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760 Colbert to Vauban, 22 November 1670, B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 1, fol. 293.

761 Colbert to Chertemps, B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 1, fols. 298v-299.

762 Colbert to Chertemps, 13 December 1670, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5:32 n. 1. See also Colbert’s letter to Chertemps, 27 December, urging him to rely on Vauban for estimates of the just value of all that enters into the construction of works (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1, fol. 324). Thus, in addition to specific advice on his plan for Saint-Quentin, Chertemps was to look to Vauban as a kind of mentor in his general responsibilities for fortifications.

763 For example, see Colbert to Chertemps, 10 January 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 8-9. See Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: passim, for samples of Colbert’s letters both to Vauban and to the minister’s subordinates. A number of authors have remarked on the undeviating politeness and flattery of Colbert’s letters to Vauban (for example, Clément, 5: vii n. 2, xi, and Lazard, Vauban, 121). On Colbert’s epistolary style see Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 211-12, and Meyer, Colbert, 15-23, 98. On
point and suggests another. At first, Vauban was not officially a part of Colbert’s department of fortifications, playing only a consultive role—albeit a growing one—as Clerville continued to do for Louvois.\textsuperscript{76} And surely Colbert was sensitive to the personal barrier separating him from his former client, perhaps employing politeness and flattery to tread warily or even hoping overcome the engineer’s resentment.

This reticence in his dealings with Colbert is manifested in a letter Vauban wrote to Louvois in December 1670, about the time he became more personally involved in the "affaire d’Alsace." On or about Christmas Day, Vauban had paid a visit to Saint-Quentin and examined with Chertemps the preparations for the labors of the coming year. Vauban’s letter may be lost, but its contents are mirrored in Louvois’s reply. The war secretary addressed the question of whether or not he thought Vauban could "parler franchement à M. Colbert" about Saint-Quentin, where the engineer suspected fraud. Louvois responded that he could only give precise advice if he knew the details of the problem and Vauban’s specific suggestions for greater economy. With this in hand, Louvois promised that he would be able to reply right away to "ce que vous devez faire et la manière dont vous devrez mander la chose à M. Colbert."\textsuperscript{76} Vauban’s caution in alerting Colbert to fraud in his department—especially since it might involve Chertemps, a relative and client of the Colberts—was surely a result of his own years employed under Saint-Marc in Alsace, during which the minister had tolerated the peccadillos of his...
kinsman. Added to this was the engineer's certain knowledge of what was unfolding in Alsace, where Clerville was reluctantly uncovering the intendant's current failings. Inter-department rivalry, as well as higher-level ministerial rivalry, also must have persuaded Vauban to step warily on to potentially dangerous ground.

In early January 1671, Louvois looked over the letter Vauban contemplated sending to Colbert. This took place during the period when events in Alsace seemed to be accelerating toward disaster for Saint-Marc and his cronies. In letters written on 10 January, Colbert ordered the arrest of Saint-André, informed his cousin of just how bad matters looked, and ordered Clerville to widen his investigation to include the accounts from 1664 to 1670.766 The same day, Colbert wrote warmly to Vauban about the engineer's late-December inspection of works at Saint-Quentin, expressing pleasure that "un homme de vostre expérience et capacité suppléast aux défauts de celle que ledit Chertemps n'a point encore acquise, en sorte que je pusse estre assuré que les travaux se font avec tout le mensage et l'économie possible." After paying him a further compliment, Colbert invited Vauban to visit Saint-Quentin whenever he was nearby and to "ne pas manquer à m'en donner avis." He further reported that he had ordered Chertemps to make the changes Vauban had suggested and to apply himself to follow the engineer's thoughts "exactement."767

When Louvois informed Vauban that he had sent on to Colbert the engineer's earlier letter on irregularities at Saint-Quentin, this was as a part of the war secretary's first extant letter to Vauban discussing the "affaire d'Alsace." It appears that Louvois forwarded his friend's letter as written, thereby advising him to overcome his misgivings

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766For the order for the entrepreneur's arrest, see B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 2, fols. 6-7. See also Colbert to Saint-Marc and to Clerville, 10 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 46-47.

767Colbert to Vauban, 10 January 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 2, fol. 7, which ironically follows immediately after the order to arrest Saint-André. Colbert's letter to Chertemps follows this (ibid., fol. 9) and urged the director to write Vauban should he have any questions concerning his instructions. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5:47-48, prints the letter to Vauban.
about Colbert and offer the controller-general his frank assessment. Louvois may have wanted to add to the discomfort of his colleague, but there is no suggestion in Louvois's words that the imbroglio in Alsace would have precluded Colbert from listening to Vauban's concerns about Saint-Quentin. Colbert's next letter to Vauban contained no direct talk of possible fraud—quite probably Vauban had kept any direct reference to that part of his suspicions out of his report—but did refer to the engineer's forthcoming trip to Saint-Quentin to "examiner en detail" prices for the building materials being amassed, saying that this was in keeping with the sentiments he had expressed in his letters to Vauban of 22 November and 13 December the previous year. Since this matter of prices was of "très grande consequences," Colbert urged Vauban to go again to Saint-Quentin if necessary and take along an entrepreneur who could force the local entrepreneurs to diminish their prices to the levels the engineer thought reasonable and advantageous for the royal service. On the same day Colbert wrote a threatening letter to Chertemps about his lack of economy, basing his assessment on figures from "des personnes bien entendues en ces matières" (a clear allusion to Vauban), warning him about "un désordre de cette conséquence," which would cost him his job if it continued.

The parallel between what Vauban was doing at Saint-Quentin and the activity of Clerville, his former mentor, in Alsace is striking. Perhaps at the king's initiative but nevertheless with Colbert's full support, Vauban had joined his former mentor as one of Colbert's trouble-shooters. The poor management Vauban had uncovered at Saint-Quentin—even if the suspected fraud went unmentioned—apparently so disturbed the minister that he took strong action in less than two months. Up to his elbows in Saint-Marc's Alsatian quagmire, Colbert was less inclined toward his customary and leisurely

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768 Louvois to Vauban, 15 January 1671, Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 278-79 n. 2, publishes only the part of the letter referring to matters at Saint-Quentin, while Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 41, and Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: iv, publish only the part relating to the "affaire d'Alsace."


770 Colbert to Chertemps, 23 January 1671, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 48-49.
indulgence of kinsman who failed him, especially since he feared arousing the royal ire and further embarrassing his clan. Whatever his motivation, in March 1671 Colbert had had enough. He removed Chertemps and assigned his duties to the provincial intendant for Picardy, Paul Barrillon d’Amoncourt, instructing the latter to examine all the works in Picardy in order to ascertain what progress had been made and to detect any fraud.  

Significantly, Barrillon, whose generality at Amiens included Artois as well as Picardy, was a client of the Le Telliers. And it was Louvois who the king instructed to inform Vauban of this change of personnel and of the royal desire that he go to Saint-Quentin in a few days to offer his advice to Barrillon. This suggests that the replacement of Chertemps marked a check for the Colbets and an advance for the Le Telliers in the bureaucratic game in which they competed for power and for positions for their clients.

As we saw earlier, it was shortly after this that Colbert finally received Clerville’s report on the tangle in Alsace. And it was during this same period that Vauban’s extrication from his part in this was suspended, even though a resolution had been painstakingly negotiated between Louvois and Colbert over the past few months. As suggested earlier, this was likely in anticipation of Pussort’s detailed but not disinterested weighing of the evidence. How did this derailment of his hopes affect the professional relationship Vauban had developed with his former patron? Since the documentation is lacking, we can only speculate. Given his chronic concern over the possible legal consequences of his own past dealings with the unpleasant Saint-Marc in Alsace, it is not

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**Note:**

1. See ibid., 53-55, for Colbert’s detailed instructions to Barrillon, dated 25 March 1671. Chertemps surfaces later as a treasurer in the bureau des finances of Châlons (ibid., 9 n. 2). Colbert noted later that the provincial intendant had had to preside over “des diminutions considérables” of the prices charged for the various works in the department of Picardy (Colbert to Barrillon, 7 September 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 153-155).

2. Barrillon is mentioned as an army intendant working for the Le Telliers in 1668 in Turenne’s army of Flanders; earlier in his career, he had served as intendant of Paris, according to Baxter, Servants of the Sword, 178-79. See Louvois’s announcement to Vauban, 27 March 1671, in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 44. In a letter to Louvois on 14 January 1673, Vauban indicated that Barrillon "est de mes amis" (ibid., 87-88).
likely that Vauban was pleased to have to work with the intendant’s son at Saint-Quentin. In March, Colbert had appointed his nephew Seraucourt as contrôleur des fortifications at Saint-Quentin at the very same time he was getting rid of the troublesome Chertemps. Any misgivings Vauban felt were soon confirmed, for Seraucourt proved to be resistant to Vauban’s directives and would have to be admonished by his kinsman in Paris on a number of occasions.  

In addition, there was a four-month break in the correspondence between Colbert and Vauban during the summer, but as we observed earlier, such a hiatus was not

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73 Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 54 n. 1, details this appointment (he spelled the name as “Séraucourt”). See B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fols. 56-57, for Seraucourt’s commission of 25 March 1671, signed by the king and Colbert, ordering him, among other things, to take care that the entrepreneurs follow Vauban’s plan point by point. On 2 May 1671, Colbert ordered Seraucourt to familiarize himself with Vauban’s plans and to seek clarification from Vauban himself when he was on the site (ibid., fol. 72). On 8 August, however, Colbert was complaining to his young kinsman that his reports were not detailed enough and that he should apply himself in the future to conform to the minister’s specifications (ibid., fol. 129). In 1673 Vauban recounted to Louvois an earlier incident when Barrillon had been in over-all charge at Saint-Quentin. Seraucourt contested a new design for pile driving Vauban had developed at Ath and had instructed the engineers at Saint-Quentin to use. Seraucourt circumvented both Barrillon and Vauban and referred the matter directly to Colbert, who sent it to Barrillon to refer back to Vauban. The engineer had to insist that the work be done as he had originally instructed. Vauban was able, from the vantage point of 1673, to claim that his new procedure had stood the test of time and offer Louvois this as a cautionary tale about relying on "demi-intelligences." He asked the secretary, however, not to tell the story around so as not to stir up any problems for those still at Saint-Quentin (14 January 1673, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 87-88; Rochas spelled his name "Sérancourt"). See 7 September 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fol. 154v., for Colbert’s order to Barrillon to accommodate Vauban’s desires "puisque le S’ de Vauban persiste dans la resolution" to do this work his new way. Just a day earlier, the minister had suggested a transfer to Seraucourt: "Comme vous aurez peut-estre plus d’inclination pour la marine que pour les fortifications, je vous offre un employ de commissaire à Toulon..." (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 1: 508 n. 4). See also the sarcastic letter Colbert wrote Seraucourt, 26 November 1677 (ibid., 2nd set of pages: 72), in which the minister noted that the letters Seraucourt had written to Seignelay were "pleins de vos ouangés; mais le malheur pour vous veut que vous soyez le seul qui les publiez," adding that "si vous n'acoustumez votre esprit à servir avec la subordination que vous devez, il faudra toujours prendre sur nous vos emplois; mais, ce que je n'ay pas gagné en six ou sept ans que vous avez esté auprès de moy, je ne prétends pas le gagner par lettre."
necessarily significant, especially given the fairly infrequent rhythm of their exchange of letters up to this point, and the fact that Colbert and Vauban perhaps conferred on Saint-Quentin when they encountered one another at Dunkirk in May.\textsuperscript{774} Whatever the case, following the engineer’s report on his visit to Saint-Quentin, Colbert’s instructions to Barrillon at the end of July and his letter to Vauban in early August echoed his prior concern that Vauban’s wishes be followed exactly. They also mark the controller-general’s respect for Vauban’s skills “pour la bonne conduite...des ouvrages, que pour la diminution de la dépense.”\textsuperscript{775}

There is also evidence showing that Vauban did some additional work in the fortification department of Colbert in the summer of 1671, although it was not of the magnitude of the undertakings at Saint-Quentin and so appears only fleetingly in the correspondence. Colbert referred to a memoir the engineer had apparently very recently drawn up on the work to be done at "Le Castellet" (Le Câtelet), a fortification roughly north of Saint-Quentin. The minister remarked that he would decide on what to spend there when Barrillon sent him Vauban’s thoughts. It is not clear who initiated the writing of this memoir—whether the minister, Barrillon, or Vauban himself as he passed by the place on one of his many journeys between Picardy and Flanders—but it appears not to have generated any subsequent contact between Colbert and Louvois.\textsuperscript{776}

\textsuperscript{774}See Colbert to Barrillon, 2 May 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fol. 71, where he told him to adjudicate the contracts for Saint-Quentin after accompanying Vauban on a detailed inspection of all the works. The same day, Colbert informed Seraucourt that he could confer with him on any questions he had during the minister’s impending visit to Saint-Quentin (ibid., fol. 72).

\textsuperscript{775}Colbert to Barrillon, 31 July 1671, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 57; Colbert to Vauban, 8 August, B.I.G. in-Fo. 205, vol. 2, fol. 129. Colbert repeats these sentiments in his letters to Barrillon on 7 September, ibid., fol. 154v, and Vauban on 19 December, ibid., fol. 204, in which he expresses his desire that the engineer intimately involve himself in the planning with Barrillon for the coming year’s labors at Saint-Quentin.

\textsuperscript{776}Colbert to Barrillon, 8 August 1671, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 2, fol. 128v. In his letter to Vauban of the same day, Colbert made no mention of this \textit{mémoire} (ibid., fol. 129), nor have I encountered any other mention of this place in his other letters to the engineer. Le Câtelet was razed in 1673-74, according to Zeller, \textit{Organisation défensive},
On the surface of it, this was an amicable though limited working relationship, punctuated by continuing marks of confidence and deference on the part of Colbert. Yet, Vauban’s attitude toward the controller-general had only worsened by the autumn of 1671. This is not, of course, surprising given the difficulties Vauban was experiencing in bringing to a close his part in the "affaire d’Alsace." But it should be remembered that the engineer’s bad opinion of Colbert pre-dated these delays. Indeed, as early as 1667 and probably earlier, Vauban had had his fill of the irksome intendant of Alsace, his foul nature, his dishonesty, his failure to expedite the work at Brisach, and his seemingly unassailable position derived from his powerful kinsman in Paris. Likewise, Vauban generally had little more than contempt for the fortification ideas and skills of his old mentor Clerville. This must have undermined Vauban’s respect for Colbert, the minister who employed, trusted, and promoted the chevalier.

Besides personnel issues, Vauban found himself at odds with Colbert’s real or imagined positions on royal policy. We have already heard Vauban’s complaints to Louvois about the controller-general’s policy on coal shipments and alleged desire to trade away certain towns recently gained in Flanders. When Vauban made these observations to Louvois, he did so in such a way as to question the judgment and character of Colbert. And, although in his letters there is no direct mention of a desire for war with the Dutch, Vauban had supported the War of Devolution and saw Holland as hostile to French interests. He probably sided with his patron Louvois, who clashed with Colbert, an opponent of this policy. Thus, the engineer’s experiences with Colbert in 1671 merely confirmed and worsened his bad opinion of his former patron.

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Vauban to Louvois, 11 September 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 47-48, wrote sarcastically: "Comme les Hollandais nous aiment beaucoup et qu’un bon port à Dunkerque les accommoderait fort...." His mixture of respect and loathing for the commercially-minded Dutch persisted throughout his life (see, for instance, his 1691 "Mémoire sur le canal de Languedoc..." in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 561-62). For the role of the various ministers in the outbreak of the Dutch War, see Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War.
And while Vauban’s personal reservations about Colbert—born of his pre-1667 frustrations in Alsace—may have been the initial reason for his dislike of that minister, it appears that they were based on policy as well.\textsuperscript{77a} For these reasons, well before 1671 Vauban had lost confidence in Colbert.

Clearly, it would be erroneous to take the position of Lazard, who argued that the problems Vauban had with Saint-Marc did nothing to alter his otherwise good relations with Colbert.\textsuperscript{77b} The evidence, both before and after 1671, is quite to the contrary and overwhelming. In September 1671, for instance, prior to the definitive closing of this unhappy chapter in his career, Vauban complained about Colbert to Louvois in various letters.

\textsuperscript{77a}Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: ii-xv, said that his experience in Alsace from 1665 to 1667 rendered Vauban "injuste" toward Colbert, citing the engineer's later "concert" with Louvois against his rival. Michel, \textit{Histoire de Vauban}, 67, contended that Vauban "jamais ne put pardonner au ministre son attitude dans l'affaire de Brissach [sic]." Michel also stated that from this incident forward, Vauban "resté sur la défensive vis-à-vis de Colbert," sharing with Louvois his correspondence with Colbert. But Michel cited no evidence for his contention for the period prior to 1670 (ibid., 67 n. 1). Clément also based his claims only on evidence from 1670 and after (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: x-xi), relying on Rousset, who in turn cited only letters from 1670 on (Rousset, \textit{Histoire de Louvois}, 1: 278 n. 2). Thus, the common view that Vauban's antipathy toward Colbert was the result of his personal difficulties in Alsace ignores the other factors that caused him to question Colbert's judgment. A better approach is to see his attitude as an outgrowth of combination of both personal and policy issues. Was Vauban's attitude toward Colbert "injuste"? Although Clément is correct in asserting that "aucun document écrit [emphasis his]" proves any malevolence by Colbert toward Vauban (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: vii n. 2), his assertion that neither Colbert nor his cousin stood in the way of Louvois's efforts to liquidate the "affaire d'Alsace" (ibid., xv) is not credible. It fails to explain why the solution negotiated in March fell apart and why a resolution was delayed until the end of that summer. Whatever Colbert's motivations—whether genuine uncertainty about culpability or, more likely, about how best to control the damage to his clan—the controller-general did delay Vauban's exit from this scandal. For ample evidence of Saint-Marc's uncooperativeness, we have Colbert's letters to Saint-Marc and Clerville.

\textsuperscript{77b}Lazard, \textit{Vauban}, 121, 123, 128.
In one, he railed against the new customs house established on the river Lys at Warenton by Colbert’s agent Gellée. Vauban denounced the "300 fripons" who ran such establishments to the ruin of the king’s reputation among his new subjects in Flanders. He closed his remarks to Louvois with a barb presumably aimed at Colbert:

Oui, Monseigneur, je tiens le Roi malheureux de n’avoir point de serviteur assez jaloux de son honneur pour l’avertir du tort que de semblables vilénies lui font. Je m’arrête sur ces matières, car je crois bien que mon zèle m’emporterait à dire quelque sottise.

In a letter a month later Vauban returned to the attack, describing the pillaging going on in Flanders that was alienating the king’s new subjects. Uncertain as to the war secretary’s receptiveness to such harsh criticism of a colleague, Vauban hinted for a signal when he concluded his letter by noting

Je pourrais bien vous représenter quantité d’autres choses qu’y se passent en les mêmes pays, qui ne valent pas mieux, mais je crains la rebuffade; c’est pourquoi j’aime mieux me taire…

Louvois took the cue, replying shortly afterwards that as to the conduct of Gellée, "loin de craindre que je ne désire pas le savoir, vous ne sauriez me faire plus de plaisir que de m’en informer" and as soon as possible.

In another September letter, Vauban reported to the secretary of war on his visit to Dunkirk. He denounced Colbert’s commissaire de marine, Pierre Gravier, who Vauban said ignored his advice and, moreover, was incompetent. After outlining his more ambitious plans for Dunkirk, which had been rejected by Colbert, Vauban dream aloud

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780 In late August, the Spanish governor at Ypres drove the French from their new customs house at Warenton, probably claiming correctly that they had no rights to establish it there. Louvois used this as an opportunity to spar with the Spanish and so returned to Warenton in force to fortify the place and prepare to rebuff any future attacks. This episode is described by Sonnino, Origins of the Dutch War, 163-64. Vauban facetiously referred to this place as "le fameux fort Gellée" (Vauban to Louvois, 12 October 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 55).

781 Vauban to Louvois, 8 September 1671, ibid., 46-47.

782 Vauban to Louvois, 12 October 1671, ibid., 55. This portion of the letter was in a postscript in his own hand.

783 Louvois to Vauban, 15 October 1671, ibid., 55.
to the secretary of war that if a period of peace came and "Dieu vous eût inspiré assez de charité pour vouloir décharger M. de Colbert de ce soin, vous rendriez un grand service au Roi." Vauban protested that he meant no ill to anyone, "mais je suis Français" and thus could not help pointing to the wasted money and opportunities at Dunkirk. He then asked Louvois to "pardonner cette longue digression hors de propos et d’excuser un zèle qui ne se peut contenir lorsqu’il croit qu’il y va du service de son Roi, de sa conscience et de ce qu’il vous doit...." 784

Vauban’s disgust with Colbert and his department, then, was clearly related to considerations of policy and professional competence, but the personal element was never far away. In the same letter just cited, Vauban complained that Gravier had broken with the Robelin family, entrepreneurs of the jetty at Dunkirk, and added with obvious bitterness that Gravier "prend à peu près le chemin de les traiter avec autant de justice qu’on a fait à Brisach." 785 This letter demonstrates the difficulty of untangling the various strands forming Vauban’s opinion of Colbert, and especially of ascribing it primarily to personal rancor, as did Clément.

Finally, there is a cryptic reference in a letter to Louvois that attests to Vauban’s lingering resentment toward his adversaries in the "affaire d’Alsace." The engineer relayed to Louvois a copy of a letter he had received from his business agent. This was the same man who had worked directly with Louvois on Vauban’s behalf to hammer out

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784 Vauban to Louvois, 11 September 1671, ibid., 47-48. For Gravier, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5 pt. 1: 316, n. 3. Gravier wrote letters to Colbert critical of Vauban (see Gravier to Colbert, 22 June and 8 October 1671, in Archives Nationale, Archives de la Marine B3 10, fols. 21 and 95 [the collection in the Archives Nationale, Archives de la Marine is cited hereafter as A.N. Marine]). Louvois replied to Vauban on 28 September that "Je ne vous réponds rien sur tout ce que vous trouverez que l’on ne fait rien pour le port de Dunkerque, parce qu’il faut se contenter de bien servir le maître en ce dont il nous charge, et ne pas nous inquiéter du reste..." (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2:49-50).

785 Vauban to Louvois, 11 September 1671, ibid., 48. For this family of entrepreneurs and engineers, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 643-46. Here Vauban was surely referring to the brothers Jacques and Isaac. He had great respect for and worked often with the Robelin.
a solution to the financial complications involved. Vauban noted that by the letter Louvois would see "à quoi sont exposés les gens qui s'évertuent pour empêcher que le Roi ne soit trompé." Although his meaning is not certain, it seems that Vauban's business agent had suffered some kind of reprisals or reversals for his efforts on the engineer's behalf. If this were true, it was most likely at the hands of one of the Colbert clan. And even though the full meaning of this reference is elusive, it reinforces the impression that Vauban still smarted from the threats to his career that had issued forth from Alsace and found support in Paris.

An unrelated incident at Lille at the end of 1671 provides a last example of Vauban's heightened sensitivity arising from his near encounter with disgrace. Some officers complained that their troops were being defrauded of pay for work done on the fortifications, either by the entrepreneurs or by Vauban's assistants, and so they addressed themselves to Louvois. When the secretary asked them if Vauban knew about this situation, they replied that the chief engineer would not deny it if he were asked; this led Louvois to reproach Vauban for not himself informing him of the situation. Feeling under suspicion because of the officers' oblique accusation and the secretary's pointed rebuke, Vauban assumed full responsibility for any swindle unearthed since he had over-all charge of the project. But in doing so, he insisted that the secretary pursue an investigation to its fullest, either punishing him severely if he were found guilty or meting out the same retribution to his accusers if they were found to have falsely implicated him. So desirous was Vauban to clear his good name, he boldly waived all considerations of his friendship with Louvois, and threatened to resign his post if a full inquiry was not launched. In words that have endeared him to generations of Frenchmen and have reverberated in nearly every work on his life, Vauban indicated to his patron that he realized that while his post was dependent upon others, his character was not:

\[ \text{je ne crains ni le Roi, ni vous, ni tout le Genre humaine ensemble. La Fortune m'a fait naître le plus pauvre gentilhomme de France; mais, en récopense, elle} \]

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787 Louvois to Vauban, 4 December 1671, ibid., 64.
m’a honoré d’un cœur sincère, si exempt de toute sorte de friponneries qu’il n’en peut même souffrir l’imagination sans horreur…

The skeptic might suspect that Vauban’s dramatic outburst was a careful ploy to force the secretary to quash his critics at Lille. There may have been some element of this at play, but given the tribulations of the past year, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the engineer was expressing a heart-felt horror at yet another round of false accusations of fraud. From Vauban’s viewpoint, one malefactor had already gotten off lightly, after endeavoring to use him as a convenient scapegoat. Thus, Vauban was determined to make a preemptive strike against any further threats to his honor.

The year 1671 was an important one for Vauban and his further advancement in the king’s service. If his status—which had seemed so firmly established the previous year—had been called into question at the beginning of 1671, it was on a firmer foundation by the end of that year. The cloud of Alsace had been removed in a decisive way that demonstrated the support of both Louvois and the king. Vauban remained in charge of Louvois’s department of fortifications and continued to serve as a consultant to Colbert. Yet, Vauban’s bitterness toward Colbert was augmented at the very moment he increased his activities for that minister. As this relationship grew, the engineer’s resentment would add an obvious strain to their interactions.

Louvois gained from the events of 1671 as well. Colbert’s kinsmen had made a muddle of the fortification work in Picardy and Alsace, two important frontier provinces that had to be secured for the coming war with the Dutch. The king cannot have been pleased with the tardy construction at the places under the care of a controller-general who had set himself against the monarch’s desire for a war in the Low Countries. Colbert had clashed with Louis earlier in the year and he did so again in the November

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788 Vauban to Louvois, 15 December 1671, ibid., 64-65.

789 The officers may have been trying to deflect attention from or seeking revenge for Vauban’s earlier moves against their quarrelsome and dishonest soldiers who worked on the various fortifications. For these problems and the measures Vauban sought to take to address them, see Vauban to Louvois, 17 October 1671, Louvois to Vauban, 20 October, Vauban to Louvois, 26 and 28 October, and Louvois to Vauban, 31 October, in ibid., 56-61.
discussions over the budget for 1672. When Colbert balked at the king's funding requests for his war preparations, Louis reminded him that he could be replaced. Teetering on the brink of dishonor, Colbert surely felt the sinking sensation Vauban had experienced earlier in the year. The normally bustling minister was markedly inactive for about ten days as exaggerated reports of his imminent disgrace swirled about him and a frightened Pussort scurried about to repair the damage to the clan's fortunes. When this crisis for the Colberts was finally concluded, the controller-general bowed to the weight of Louis's and Louvois's desire for war and accepted his own somewhat diminished standing with the king.79\footnote{Sonnino. \textit{Origins of the Dutch War}, 172.} There would be new blows to his reputation for administrative competence in the coming years, and these would again occur in his fortifications department. Vauban would play a role in these developments, but this time he would have the upper hand and Colbert would be the one who experienced the most uncertainty in his standing with the king.
CHAPTER XI

RELUCTANT ADVISOR: VAUBAN’S RISE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COLBERT (1671-76)

Genius... has been defined as a supreme capacity for taking trouble.

Samuel Butler

When Vauban’s active involvement with the department of Colbert resumed in 1670 after a break of a few years, it was under immensely altered circumstances. In 1667 Vauban had been a promising but relatively low-level client of the Colbergs and a builder of fortifications whose fortunes had taken a turn at Brisach in the direction of future obscurity if not eventual scandal. Only the War of Devolution had drawn him out of Alsace to the more fruitful fields of newly-conquered Flanders. By 1670, however, Vauban had attracted the royal eye by his ability to subdue enemy strongholds, repair them, create new ones, and accomplish all this at relatively low costs of men, money, and material. He had spent the past two years in the clientele of the powerful minister of war, the young lion of the Le Tellier clan who was the Colbergs’ bitter rival for the king’s ear and employment. Vauban served Louvois as his acknowledged deputy in the area of fortifications. Even though Colbert’s faithful Clerville still held the title of commissaire général des fortifications, it was Vauban who had all the choice assignments and the direction of the daily work in Louvois’s department. Although the king allowed Colbert to continue to employ the chevalier on important projects, these were largely civil engineering undertakings such as canal and port construction. Louis relied instead on Louvois’s chief engineer see to the safety of the Flanders frontier and the other sensitive borderlands under the war secretary’s care. Thus, in 1670 Vauban entered into a renewed relationship with the controller-general and his clan from a fairly secure
power base. If anyone held hat in hand in this relationship, it was more often Colbert than Vauban.

**Consultant to Colbert**

The letter registers show that Saint-Quentin was Vauban’s first project for Colbert after his defection to the camp of the Le Telliers. But there are some entries in the engineer’s "Abregé des services" that pose problems for this chronology. One reference, whose imprecision Vauban acknowledged, could easily lead one to conclude that his re-involvement with his former master began earlier than 1670: at the end of the entry for 1669, Vauban noted that "Ce fut environ ce temps-là" that he made projects for Saint-Quentin, La Fère, Ham, Péronne, and Doullens, all then places in Colbert’s department.⁷⁹¹ But a census of mémoires and projects conserved in the Bibliothèque de l’Inspection du Génie mentions none for any of these places prior to 1673; and while this does not preclude there having been projects for these places at an earlier date, at least it lends no support to the notion that there were.⁷⁹² In addition, these places, other than Saint-Quentin, figure into Colbert’s letters to Vauban from at least 1673, but not in 1671 or before (the volume of Colbert’s outgoing letters for 1672 is, unfortunately, lost).⁷⁹³ In any case, Vauban’s statement was avowedly imprecise about the time when these projects were created, and his "Abregé des services" is known to contain errors.⁷⁹⁴ When

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⁷⁹¹Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1669.


⁷⁹³For 1670 and 1671, see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vols. 1 and 2. For mention of these other places in 1673, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 73 n. 1, Colbert to Rouillé, 14 May 1673, concerning Péronne. See Vauban’s letter to Louvois, 22 December 1673, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 98, where he argued for keeping La Fère; and Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 70v, for work ordered at La Fère. See also Vauban to Colbert, 10 March 1674, which reads as if this were his first visit to Ham (A.G. A¹ 418, p. 164; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 106, published only part of the letter, which did not include this portion).

⁷⁹⁴Ibid., 269 n. 1, discusses this issue. Several of these have been noted above and will be noted below.
he did give precise dates for 1670 and 1671, as far as concerned work possibly outside Louvois's department, he spoke only of having been occupied visiting "la frontière de Picardie" and putting things in order at Nancy in Lorraine.\textsuperscript{795} His reference to the frontier of Picardy is not inconsistent with a concentration of efforts on the construction occurring at Saint-Quentin.

Vauban's reference to Nancy reminds us that Louvois and Colbert were not the only ministers or secretaries of state officially charged with the care of fortifications. Lorraine had been under the nominal jurisdiction of Hughes de Lionne, the foreign secretary, when Vauban had first labored there from 1661 to 1663 in the service of Le Tellier, the minister of war, who took primary responsibility for the demolition work at Nancy. In 1670 Lorraine again passed more the Le Telliers' direction when French troops occupied the duchy. Vauban's efforts there were surely on behalf of the minister of war rather than the foreign secretary, under whose care Lorraine officially remained, or Colbert, who actually supervised the fortifications in the foreign minister's other provinces.\textsuperscript{796}

Another potentially misleading entry in the "Abregé des services" concerns the work at Dunkirk. For the year 1668, Vauban referred to having done a project for Dunkirk, and for 1669, he said that he was employed in executing the plan made the previous

\textsuperscript{795}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1670 and 1671.

\textsuperscript{796}For the French re-occupation of Lorraine, see p. 277 above. For fuller details of the leading role taken by the Le Telliers in Lorraine, see André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 88-89,189-93, 224 (which notes an inspection of Nancy by Louvois on 8 September 1673) and 420 (which describes how the minister put his man Charuel in Lorraine as intendant in 1670). See also V. Jacques, "Lettres inédites de Vauban et de Louvois sur les fortifications de Nancy (1672)," Annales de l'Est 6 (1892): 293-300. For the official exchange in 1673 of responsibility for Lorraine with Pomponne, the new foreign minister, see André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 302, and Livet, Intendance d'Alsace, 373-75. It should be noted that Vauban's work in Lorraine was early enough in 1672 that he may have lumped it in with his annual inspection and planning tour that took place during the winter of 1671-72, and then labeled the whole inspection tour as having taken place in 1671.
year. If we think of the great port-building work Vauban did for both Colbert and Seignelay starting in 1678, it would be easy to project their collaboration backwards and assume that all work done at Dunkirk was under these two marine secretaries. But it should be recalled that Dunkirk was under both the marine and the war secretaries, with former charged with naval facilities and seaward fortifications, and the latter entrusted with the land defenses. Where the one began and the other ended often cannot have been an easy matter to resolve, and certainly led to much bickering over jurisdiction and to jealousy between the two already-hostile departments. Thus, when the work at Dunkirk began in earnest in 1668, it was aimed at constructing both an enlarged port and an impregnable citadel, and this dual activity generated the usual friction.

Vauban was clearly Louvois's man at Dunkirk. There was not yet a single outgoing letter registry for Colbert's department of fortifications in 1668, so we cannot definitively determine whether or not that minister wrote to him about Dunkirk that year. But no mention of any assignments for Vauban from Colbert surface in the 1668 letters between Louvois and Vauban, who did share with one another a lively correspondence on the war secretary's portion of the fortifications of that port. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that at that date Clerville was still influential in the creation of the great

797 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entries for 1668 and 1669.

798 See Lazard, Vauban, 168-70, for Vauban's labors at Dunkirk in the late 1670s. Colbert's letters of 31 July 1677 to Vauban and Hubert, the commissaire général for the marine at Dunkirk, indicated that the king had approved plans and funds for Vauban's enlargement of the port; thus, preparations began that year, even though the work really got under way in earnest only the following year (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 282v-284).

799 See p. 105 above.

800 See Millon, Fortifications de Dunkerque, 1: 90, for the scope of these two construction projects.
ports Colbert envisioned along the coasts. 801 Although not charged with the entire Dunkirk project, Vauban nonetheless conceived of the work as a whole and designed a project on a grander scale than Colbert and his cohorts had in mind. 802 The engineer’s frustration at their refusal to envision the port as boldly as he did is palpable in a letter to Louvois of 11 September 1671, in which he complained that, in addition to his overall project having been rejected, his current proposals for smaller improvements at Dunkirk were being ignored by Colbert’s department. He derided the "fourmille de commis" employed by Colbert by noting that, for all their number, they were very ignorant, and not one of them was competent to direct such an important construction endeavor. Although Vauban mused on what wonders he would work at Dunkirk if the king replaced Colbert with Louvois as master of the place, the latter declined to join in such speculation because he thought it a useless exercise. 803 Vauban’s occasional labors at Dunkirk for Colbert continued, but they never amounted to much until the great explosion of building activity in 1678. 804

801 For examples of letters between Vauban and Louvois concerning Dunkirk, see Louvois to Vauban, 10 September 1668, A.G. A1 218, fol. 16, and Vauban to Louvois, 20 September, A.G. A1 228, p. 140, both showing just how seriously Clerville’s plans were still taken, even if both the war minister and his chief engineer had a tendency to ridicule or even dismiss them. André, Le Tellier et Louvois, 194-97, gave details of Louvois’s involvement with Dunkirk. See Konvitz, Cities and the Sea, 78, on Clerville’s continuing usefulness to and influence with Colbert.

802 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1678, notes that he had made a project for Dunkirk "quelque année auparavant." This may have been to what Louvois was referring in his 9 December 1670 letter to Vauban when he remarked that "Je serai bien aise de savoir ce que c’est que cette thèse que vous avez soutenue sur la marine” (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 38). Louvois asked again for his colleague’s thoughts on 11 December (ibid., 38 n. 1).

803 Louvois to Vauban, 11 September 1671, ibid., 47-48. For Louvois’s reply of 28 September, see ibid., 49-50. Two letters from Gravier reflected this tension in the remarks he made to Colbert (22 June and 8 October 1671, A.N. Marine B1 10, fols. 21 and 95).

804 See, for instance, the letter of 26 February 1673, A.N. Marine B1 15, fol. 23v, where Hubert, the commissaire général of the marine at Dunkirk, informed Colbert that
A last confusing reference in the "Abregé des services" has to do with Vauban's 1669-70 winter tour of Louvois's strongholds at Pignerol and in Roussillon. In describing his trip from Pignerol to Roussillon, Vauban recounted that "il passa à" Antibes and Toulon, where he made projects for a new darse (inner basin for the harbor) and the fortifications, which were later executed. But all indications are that in late 1669 Clererville remained Colbert's chief consultant on the plans to enlarge Toulon's arsenal and fortifications. There is no trace of Vauban's activity there—besides the reference in the "Abregé des services"—until 1678. What explains this discrepancy? The wording of the entry suggests that Vauban might indeed have made a plan for some improvements for Antibes and Toulon, but not at anyone's behest—perhaps his natural curiosity and his creative mind caused him to observe these two places on his way from one assigned visit to another and then to draw up a plan. There is no evidence that he had solicited Vauban's advice in picking a site for the rope yard the king wished to have established at the port. On 9 March 1675, Colbert informed Vauban that the king intended nothing for Dunkirk in the near future of the magnitude the engineer had hoped for, but urged him nonetheless to share his grander visions so that preparations could be made when peace would allow their realization (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 131-32). He repeated this invitation on 14 September and 8 November (ibid., 150-51, and B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 277). On 10 March 1676, Hubert informed Colbert of Vauban's work on the risbans of Dunkirk (A.N. Marine B 21, fol. 113).

Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1669.

See, for example, Colbert to Clererville, 4 October 1669, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: i6-18, in which Colbert made the famous remark that "nous ne sommes pas en un règne de petites choses." See also Colbert to Clererville, 2 August, and to the provincial intendant Oppède, 6 September (ibid., 4: 429, 435 n.). See also Clément, Histoire de Colbert, 1: 411-13. R. Lepotier, Toulon, porte du Levant (Paris: Editions France-Empire, 1972), 130-31, said that Vauban arrived at Toulon only in 1678, and prior to that time the various projects for the port were discussed and then rejected. Lepotier made no mention of an earlier project by Vauban.

Such activity on Vauban's part was not at all uncharacteristic. For example, in a letter to Colbert on 10 March 1674, Vauban observed that "Passant à Ham, la curiosité m'en a fait faire le tour, et les diverses considérations de son assiette, les remarques suivantes..." This took place while he was following orders to visit Saint-Quentin and Péronne (A.G. A 418, p. 164; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 106, did not include this
these plans were shown to Colbert or to Louvois, although if either looked them over, nothing came of it.

According to Vauban's "Abregé des services," if we leave aside Saint-Quentin and those places where his involvement was fairly fleeting, the first year during which he saw himself significantly and officially functioning in Colbert's department was 1674. It was during that winter that he noted with seeming exasperation that he had been additionally burdened ("surchargé") with the care for the fortifications in Picardy and Champagne, which he said were then "en très mauvais état." 808 But what of the previous two years? Unfortunately, Colbert's letter registry for 1672 is missing. Although we can presume that Vauban remained active at Saint-Quentin because his endeavors there continue to be mentioned in the years following 1672, we know nothing of any other work he might have done at Colbert's other frontier posts. As to Vauban's correspondence with Louvois, which is often a source of references to the engineer's activities in the domain of Louvois's rival, there is no mention of any such efforts during 1672 in the published letters. 809 But this is not surprising since 1672 was an especially busy year for Vauban. He wintered at Lille, laboring to implement the minister's order that he regulate all work at the places of Flanders so that they would be out of danger from any Spanish attack by the end of April. 810 The few spare moments he enjoyed were spent in his chambers in the citadel writing. In his letters, Vauban called himself "un esclave," playfully chiding Louvois for forcing him to respond to all his dispatches while at the same time expecting him to finish work on a manual for the conduct of sieges. 811

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808 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1674.

809 Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 67-86. See Appendix D below for a discussion of Louvois and Vauban sharing the latter's correspondence with the Colberts.

810 Louvois to Vauban, 17 February 1672, A.G. A' 266, p. 156.

811 Vauban to Louvois, 9 and 23 February 1672, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 70-71, 73. This is the work edited by Rothrock entitled Vauban, Manual of Siegecraft.
At the war secretary’s order, he joined the king in late April "pour s’en aller voyager en Hollande," assisting in the long-planned war with the Dutch.\textsuperscript{812} The engineer’s activities on Dutch territory included directing the sieges of Orsoy and Doesburg under the orders of the king and drawing up projects for the twenty-two Dutch forts occupied during the first campaign season.\textsuperscript{813} Vauban’s year ended in Flanders, where the work advanced due to the exertions of a huge work force, and which, of course, was the cause of innumerable headaches for Louvois’s chief assistant.\textsuperscript{814} He also eeked out some spare moments to conduct experiments with mortars.\textsuperscript{815} There was likely little time to spare for all but the most minor consultations in Colbert’s department, if there were any at all.

Vauban’s exertions on behalf of Colbert in 1673 are easier to detail, thanks to the survival of that minister’s register of out-going letters and to a number of references in other sources, including the war archives. They began early in January at the behest of the king, who had been given a scare the previous December when the Prince William of Orange had besieged Charleroi, attempting to cut the relatively unprotected French lines of communication from their advanced positions in Holland. Even though the Dutch siege failed, a much-shaken Louis had resolved to rid himself of a superabundance of poorly defended forts, which offered the enemy too tempting a prize and which could be properly garrisoned only at a great expense of men and money. Condé, whose eye for fortifications was respected by the king as well as by his engineers, was asked to

\textsuperscript{812}This was what Vauban was to do according to the orders issued by Louvois, 8 April 1672, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 267, p. 57.


\textsuperscript{814}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1672.

\textsuperscript{815}Vauban to Louvois, 6 September and 13 November 1672, Rochas, Vauban, ses écris, 2: 78, 85.
render an opinion on which to preserve and which to raze. 816 According to Gaston Zeller, "Vauban ne jouait pas encore le rôle de premier plan qu’il aura un peu plus tard." Zeller reminds us that "Condé était, à l’époque de la guerre de Hollande, le conseiller le plus écouté du roi en matière de fortifications." 817 Louvois, who relayed this royal request to Condé on 7 January 1673, listed among the possibilities Guise in Picardy, several places in Champagne, and most of the places of Alsace, all of which were supervised by Colbert. 818

At about the same time, Louvois ordered Vauban to go personally to Guise and offer his opinion as well. The engineer went reluctantly, complaining that the minister engaged him "insensiblement" at places other than those under his care, which "ne s’en trouveront pas mieux," and asked him to ponder that thought. 819 This suggests that up to that point his experiences in the department of Colbert, limited though they probably

816 Zeller, Organisation défensive, 53 n. 1, noted that Turenne did not favor this program of demolition.

817 Gaston Zeller, "Deux mémoires inédits du Grand Condé sur l’Alsace," Revue historique 140 (1922): 208. See also Zeller’s Organisation défensive, 51-52. In 1670, while accompanied by both Condé and Vauban on a tour of Flanders, the king had encouraged the two to disagree on what was to be done at the various sites they visited. According to Paul Pellisson, the court historian, the monarch more often than not adhered to the side of the prince, as when he agreed with his desire to keep Fort de la Scarpe, near Douai, which Vauban wanted to demolish (ibid., 52 n. 2). See page 232 above for Vauban and Condé at odds in 1668 over the work to be done at Arras. At a later date, Colbert to Buisson, 17 August 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 171v-172, recorded Condé’s suggestions for Péronne, where Vauban had been working. Buisson was to relay the prince’s recommendations and reasoning to Vauban and to the king. But Condé recognized Vauban’s abilities, and in 1684 sent the engineer—who he described to another as "un aussi habile homme"—both his compliments and his nephews, who Vauban was to instruct in his arts at the siege of Luxembourg (Condé to Écuyer de Vaulx, 30 May 1684, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 240).

818 Zeller, "Deux mémoires du Condé," 208-09, quotes from Louvois’s letter to Condé of 7 January 1673. The places in Champagne included Linchamp, Donchery, Mouzon, Damvilliers, Jametz, Marville, and Sierck. The only "châteaux" of Alsace excluded from consideration was Belfort.

were, had been mostly frustrating and disappointing. As far as Vauban was concerned, his work for Louvois kept him busy enough. Indeed, after his inspection was completed, Vauban wrote to Louvois a letter containing his famous idea for a pré carré aimed at eliminating the serpentine frontier that interspersed French and Spanish territories and fortifications. In a postscript, he advised Louvois that he had not written Colbert of his visit to Guise since Louvois had not instructed him to do so; but he added that he had attached to the memoir and diagram a letter for Colbert that would, at all events, "sing" the same tune as Louvois’s letter to the controller-general. A visit by Louvois’s chief engineer could not pass unremarked in his rival’s department, so Colbert quickly learned of Vauban’s itinerary and, in a letter chiefly concerned with the engineer’s continuing responsibilities on the urgent construction at Saint-Quentin, Colbert interjected that he awaited Vauban’s mémoires on his visit "des autres places" in order to give the necessary orders.

Whether before or after he had decided to send Vauban to Guise, Louvois received Condé’s advice in a letter dated 11 January 1673. Among other recommendations was the prince’s strong defense of the importance of Guise and his urging that it be upgraded rather than pulled down. What Vauban thought of this particular piece of advice is not clear, but by February he had himself made a proposal for work to be done at Guise, which Colbert urged his subordinates to execute with care and diligence. Despite

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820 Vauban to Louvois, 20 January 1673, ibid., 89.

821 Colbert to Vauban, 24 January 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 41. The minister had to threaten one of the résoriers des fortifications with arrest in order to pry loose funds destined for this crucial project, according to his letter of 15 March, ibid., fols. 87v-88.

822 Zeller, Organisation défensive, 53-54.

823 For instance, see Colbert to Ferry, chief engineer for Picardy, 24 January 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fols. 39-41, in which he commended Ferry for accompanying Vauban to the places he visited and further urged Ferry to understand Vauban’s thoughts and faithfully follow the mémoires he left behind. See also Colbert to Ferry, 7 February 1673, ibid., fols. 55v-56; 15 March and 12 April, ibid., fols. 87 and 97v. See Colbert to Louis XIV, 1 August, for the minister’s progress report on the various places being
Colbert’s efforts, the work did not progress as Vauban had planned or hoped, as the engineer complained to Louvois at the end of 1673. 424

If Vauban had not been keen on further involving himself with Colbert’s department by inspecting Guise, he surely recoiled at the course of events that took him back to Alsace— from his experience an ill-starred province he was seemingly unable to escape. The expanding anti-French coalition, including as it did the emperor and several German princes, raised fears for the frontier with the Empire. Condé, whose winter campaign in Holland had been frustrated by a thawing of the flooded polders, was not allowed to sit idle. Louis XIV dispatched him to scrutinize the defenses of Picardy, Champagne, Lorraine, the Three Bishoprics, and Alsace, all in Colbert’s department. Even though he knew that Vauban was not normally employed by Colbert, Condé saw the crisis as overriding all such considerations and gave Louvois’s engineer this endorsement:

Je voudrois bien que M. de Vauban pust s’y trouver dans le temps que j’y seray, parceque nous résoudrons plus avésent toutes choses ensemble. S’il se pouvoit qu’il pust venir jusques à Brizak ey Philisbourg, cela seroit bien advantageux pour le service du Roy. 425

On 14 January, the prince reported to Louvois from Metz on his visit of several of the sites being considered for demolition. He added that the minister should have Vauban stop at Metz on his way to and from Nancy, for Condé judged the former to be one of the most considerable and important posts in the kingdom, even though it was in a razed, repaired, or augmented, and the king’s annotations to his letter (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 89-90). Colbert wrote Rouillé on 15 February that he wanted an update on the work plans for the coming year that had been revised due to the mémoires of Vauban and the other engineers who had just visited the places of Picardy (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 68v). The still limited nature of Vauban’s work for Colbert is also suggested by another of the minister’s letters to Rouillé (25 February, ibid., fols. 70-71v), which only connects Vauban with the work at Saint-Quentin and Guise, even though other places are discussed.

424 Vauban to Louvois, 22 December 1673, in Zeller, Organisation défensive, 62-64 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 98, offered a smaller portion of this letter). Vauban implied that he had regarded Guise as useful originally but only if it were brought up to par, which he claimed had not yet happened.

surprising state of neglect and disorder.\footnote{Condé to Louvois, 14 January 1673, Zeller, \textit{Organisation défensive}, 54.} Later, from Philipsbourg and Brisach, Condé again requested that Vauban be sent to accompany him on his tour of Alsace.\footnote{Ibid., 55.} Surely to the already hard-pressed engineer's relief, Louvois demurred, noting that the places of Alsace "ne sont point de mon département," and therefore Vauban had no knowledge of what had been accomplished there in the past four years. In addition, Louvois added, Vauban still had more than a month's worth of business to attend to in Flanders before joining the king for the coming campaigning season.\footnote{Louvois to Condé, 19 January 1673, Zeller, "Deux mémoires du Condé," 209.}

Condé proceeded with his inspection of Alsace, returning to court on 11 February, where the king quickly approved all his recommendations.\footnote{Ibid., 210.} Colbert soon issued orders for the execution of Condé's plans. See Colbert to Renart, \textit{intendant des fortifications} for Champagne, 26 February 1673, and to Choisy, provincial intendant at Metz, 11 April, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 69-70, 75-76.

\footnote{André, \textit{Le Tellier et Louvois}, 208.} The first session he attended was 1 February. This was in part a sop to the older Le Tellier, whose ambitions to succeed the late Ségurier as chancellor of France were frustrated by intrigues at court, which included the opposition of Colbert. Rather than choose between Le Tellier and Colbert's candidate, Louis decided to keep the seals himself. Le Tellier finally realized his ambition in 1677, this time with the help of his son's political leverage (ibid., 519-21).
absolument dans l’Alsace." Condé was especially critical of the Duc Mazarin, whose quarrelsome nature put him at odds with almost everyone.

Clerville, who had remained in Alsace in the wake of Saint-Marc’s embarrassing exit, was supposed to be putting those fortifications in a state of readiness. But he was embroiled in disruptive disputes with the intendant Poncet de la Rivière and various others involved in the languishing work on Philippsbourg and Brisach. That spring and summer, Colbert was kept busy writing first to Poncet, then to Clerville, supporting the chevalier in some matters and the intendant in others. Although the minister was indulgent and even reassuring to the old chevalier, matters were clearly slipping from the grasp of the commissaire général des fortifications. Clerville was rapidly eclipsed by Condé, whose earlier plans he could not dislodge from their dominant position in the king’s blueprint for the renovation of the fortifications of Alsace. Colbert, who had inherited Cardinal Mazarin’s predominance in Alsace, had long put its titular master, the

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832 Even though he felt compelled to spare the king none of what he uncovered in Alsace, Condé did feel obligated to apologize to Colbert for pointing the finger at Mazarin, who was part of the controller-general’s network of clients. The prince made his apologies in a special post-script on the copy of this letter destined for Colbert. See Condé to Louvois and Colbert, 30 January 1673, ibid., 211-12. He reiterated his disapproval of Duc Mazarin in another mémoire on Alsace that was likely presented to the king (ibid., 213-14).

833 Colbert to Clerville, 4 February 1673, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 65; to Poncet, 26 May, ibid., 81-82; to Clerville, 26 May, ibid., 82 n. 1; to Clerville, 2 June, ibid., 83; to Poncet, 2 June, ibid., 83 n. 1; to Clerville, 10 June, ibid., 84-85; to Poncet, 17 June, ibid., 85-86; to Clerville, 17 June, ibid., 85 n. 1; 8 July, ibid., 87-88; to Poncet, 8 July, ibid., 86 n. 2.

834 Zeller, Organisation défensive, 55-59, described the difficulties in Alsace. He also noted that the king accepted all of Condé’s recommendations on 6 February. While Clerville was unable to obtain any modifications of the prince’s plans, in October 1673 Vauban was able to persuade the king to reverse himself on his earlier decision to follow Condé’s recommendation to demolish Belfort. Zeller further noted, however, that in February Condé had planted a seed of doubt with the king about Vauban’s designs for Nancy and some other places in Lorraine, and that the king had sided with Condé after personally inspecting the sites in August.
secretary for foreign affairs, in the shadows. But he was himself about to lose his authority over the province, for the storm clouds that had been gathering for sometime were about to burst. First, there was the inability of Saint-Marc to calm the king's fears for his frontier with the Empire by finishing the vital defenses of Alsace. Then, there was the scandal surrounding Saint-Marc's fraudulent machinations. Finally, the controller-general's chief envoy Clerville had failed to put matters in order and advance the construction in a smooth and timely fashion.

In November 1671, profiting from his position as interim foreign secretary, Louvois had installed Poncet de la Rivière, one of his kinsmen and créatures, as Saint-Marc's successor in the intendancy of Alsace. Even when Pomponne took official charge of his province in January 1672, which was more vigorous than that practiced by his predecessor, Poncet remained as intendant and continued a lively though private correspondence with Louvois on a number of matters, including the vital matter of fortifications. The failure of Colbert and his clients, however, delivered Louvois a stunning administrative victory, which he added to those he was accumulating in the expanding war with the Dutch. By the end of July 1673, Louvois had turned his foothold in Alsace into outright control, dislodging both Pomponne and Colbert when the king effected an exchange of provinces among his ministers: Louvois gave Pomponne the Angoumois, Saintonge, and Limousin for Alsace; Colbert, of course, was not compensated with new fortifications since these three were not frontier provinces. Although Louvois, in the flush of his success, had wanted to swallow the Three Bishoprics as well, Pomponne fought off his voracious rival. Nevertheless, since Poncet had been transferred to the Three Bishoprics as intendant, the war minister established his influence in and nibbled away at that province until it officially fell to him in 1679, in the wake of Pomponne's fall from power.\textsuperscript{833}

Vauban noted this realignment of responsibilities in his "Abregé des services," observing that in 1673 the king had given him charge of the fortifications of Alsace and

\textsuperscript{833}Livet, \textit{Intendance d'Alsace}, 363-75.
the Three Bishoprics. Louvois wrote his deputy almost as soon as the 1673 exchange was announced to apprise him of the voyage he intended to take to Alsace in order to inspect the fortifications and regulate "les contestations entre Clerville et ses valets," which have frittered away the better part of the construction season. The minister hoped that the king, accompanied by Vauban, would follow in September to observe the faults of these places and ponder remedies. Louvois then asked Vauban to recommend engineers to send to Alsace, and noted that he would have to break the bad habits there that had resulted in the king being robbed at the various building sites. The engineer's reply reflected a gloomy attitude toward this new charge, which he saw only as adding to his and the minister's headaches. In addition to these new burdens, Vauban finished the year as busy as ever, advising the war minister on the projected invasion of Franche-Comté slated for the coming spring, seeing to it that all the places of Flanders were in order, and arranging for the emergency work scheduled during the winter months in preparation for the much-anticipated war with Spain, which had been declared on 20 October.

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836 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1673.

837 Louvois to Vauban, 2 August 1673, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 96.

838 Vauban to Louvois, 10 August 1673, ibid., 96. He added a touch of humor when he suggested a way of revenging themselves on those who had brought this added burden upon them (presumably, he referred to Colbert and his underlings who had made a mess of things in the province): ask the king to spend 400,000 to 500,000 écus to make Brisach the best place in the world.

839 Louvois to Vauban, 22 September 1673, and Vauban to Louvois, 26 September, ibid., 97; Louvois to Vauban, October (day uncertain), A.G. A1 307, p. 614. For the circumstances of this declaration of war on Spain, see Ekberg, Failure of Dutch War, 110-23.
The Capture of Maastricht

In a sense, Vauban only had himself to blame for the additional burdens he was asked to shoulder in 1673. His brilliant direction of the siege of the Dutch fortress of Maastricht forced its surrender in just thirteen days (30 June). This feat was accomplished with few casualties for the attackers and gave the French control of the lower Meuse valley, the vital corridor to their earlier conquests in Holland. Louis XIV was the nominal commander of this operation, while his queen, mistresses, ministers, and others of his court watched from various nearby points of safety. Given the strength and renown of Maastricht's defenses, most observers had expected a prolonged and possibly unsuccessful siege. Thus, the news of its rapid capture by the methodical Vauban, which had surprised yet delighted the king and his entourage, stunned the rest of Europe. As these tidings reverberated throughout every capital, they stiffened the resolve of the French as well as that of their opponents.840

Christopher Duffy observed that at Maastricht "Vauban assailed the fortress with a marching fortress of his own" by his introduction of siege parallels, which Duffy contends represented "the greatest advance in the siege attack since mobile siege artillery was introduced in the 1490s."841 Although Louis allowed himself a generous portion of the official adulation for this victory, he knew to whom the real credit belonged, probably congratulating himself on recognizing and utilizing the remarkable skills of

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840 Ekberg, Failure of Dutch War, 16, 33, 43-45. In his "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1673, Vauban noted that this siege "fut terrible. Ce fut la qu'il commenca pour la premier fois a mettre en usage la reforme qu'il a depuis executée si heureusement dans les attaques des places....Ce siege fut fort sanglant a cause des incongruités qui arrivent par la faute de gens qu'il ne veut pas nommer." His reference to the unnecessary losses at Maastricht was a result of the ill-conceived and unauthorized attacks of officers whose thirst for glory made them impatient with the engineer's more deliberate approach (see Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 94-95, who quotes from Vauban's relation of this siege).

841 Duffy, Fortress in the Age of Vauban, 10.
Louvois's chief engineer. During that summer the king inspected his frontier defenses accompanied by Louvois and Vauban, both of whose capital had risen tremendously. As Zeller correctly observed, for Vauban the capture of Maastrict "l'a mis définitivement hors pair. Jusque-là il était surtout l'homme de Louvois; maintenant le roi l'adopte sans réserve." The year 1674 saw Vauban again drawn into the work of Colbert's department. Late in 1673 the king had asked Vauban's opinion of his resolve to raze a number of places, including La Fère, a small fortress in Picardy. Vauban availed himself of the opportunity to again press Louvois for his pré carré. Although typically a partisan of the position that urged the king to eliminate superfluous strongholds, Vauban argued for augmenting La Fère. He based his argument on La Fère's strategic value, both against external enemies and internal disorder, offering Louvois a brief history lesson drawn from the sad experience of the father of Roderick, last king of the Goths in Spain. Vauban's arguments for retaining a stronghold at La Fère were relayed by Louvois to the king, who reversed himself and adopted Vauban's plan. Colbert sent the necessary orders for the 1674 work season, and Vauban returned there on occasion to inspect its progress. Carl Ekberg argues that "Vauban's suggestion for a clean, defensive cordon

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82 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1673, noted that "Le Roy fut si content du succès de ce siege qu'apres l'avoir beaucoup gracieuse, il luy donna une gratification de 4000 Louis." On the working relationship at sieges that developed between the king and his engineer, see John B. Wolf, "Louis XIV, Soldier-King," Craft of Kingship, 199-200.


84 Vauban to Louvois, 22 December 1673, in ibid., 62-64 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 98, published only a portion of this letter). This history lesson cost him a rebuke from the minister, as reflected in Vauban's equally barbed rejoinder which scolded Louvois in return (see Vauban to Louvois, 27 December 1673, ibid., 98-99).

85 Colbert to Dubois, 3 March 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 50v; to Rouillé, intendant at Amiens, 6 April, ibid., fol. 70v; memoir to and commission of Linières as director of fortifications at La Fère and Ham, 7 April, ibid., 72-76v.
was brushed aside" because the king wanted to seize the Spanish Netherlands; only in 1677-78, when the end of the Dutch War had changed the situation, did a more rationalized frontier begin to emerge.\textsuperscript{846}

Curiosity, by his own admission, cost Vauban some further labor for Colbert. While passing by Ham, another fortress in Picardy, he arrested his journey long enough to inspect the place, later sharing his thoughts with the controller-general in a letter on another matter. Soon, Colbert was expediting the requisite orders and following them up with reminders to his agents in the field to follow Vauban’s orders to the detail.\textsuperscript{847} During the same period, while passing through the near-by fort at Péronne, Vauban met with the local engineers and decided on a component of that project and wrote Colbert of his resolution. Going there again in the summer, Vauban failed to mention it to Colbert; nevertheless, the minister quickly got word of Vauban’s visit, and politely requested further details of his proposition so that he could propose its adoption to the king.\textsuperscript{848}

Shortly after fulfilling the royal request for his thoughts on La Fère, but before his involvement with Ham and Péronne, Vauban received a royal order in January 1674 to hasten to another area heretofore the preserve of Colbert and his chief collaborator, Clerville: the Atlantic coast near Rochefort, one of the new ports created as part of the controller-general’s efforts to increase France’s overseas commerce. The early and

\textsuperscript{846}Ekberg, \textit{Failure of Dutch War}, 14, 116-19.

\textsuperscript{847}Vauban to Colbert, 10 March 1674, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 418, p. 164 (Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 106-07, printed only a portion of this). Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 70v; memoir to and commission of Linières as director of fortifications at La Fère and Ham, 7 April, ibid., fols. 72-76v. Ferry provided the technical assistance in implementing Vauban’s plans. See Colbert to Ferry, 6 April, ibid., fol. 71r-v.

\textsuperscript{848}Colbert to Rouillé, 13 April 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 105; Colbert to Vauban, 22 June, ibid., fols. 179v-90 (there are not actually any pages between these two folios—the numbering is an error by one of Colbert’s copyists). These plans were apparently implemented only the following year, probably due to funding problems and the lateness of the work season (see Colbert to Breteuil, intendant at Amiens, 28 February 1675, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 129-31).
stunning victories of French arms in the Dutch War had by then given way to a back-and-forth series of retreats and advances. In October 1673, the French had evacuated most of the Dutch territory they still held. The Dutch and their allies had served the French king a series of defeats that autumn, including the bold capture of Bonn on 12 November, which persuaded some of the king’s German allies to abandon him. Thus, the allies were emboldened to extend their counterattack. In addition, the English Parliament had presented Charles II with a pretext to renege on his earlier commitments to Louis XIV and seek peace with the Dutch (signed in February 1674). The end of hostilities on that front offered the Dutch fleet an opportunity for greater action in and beyond the English Channel. Louis XIV feared a Dutch descent on Rochefort and so took appropriate measures, writing to the Comte de Gadagne, governor of Aunis, that the Isle de Ré,

estant d'une tres grande conse[en]ce au bien de mon service, j'ay resolu d'envoyer le S de Vauban pour les visiter, enlever les plans, et faire les devis et memoires de tous les ouvrages qui seront necessaires de faire, tant pour mettre le fort en estat de faire une bonne et vigoureuse defense, que pour empescher les descentes que les Ennemis pourroient faire dans lad[ite] Isle.  

During the weeks Vauban was on the Isle de Ré there was a flurry of activity, and it continued after his departure. No Dutch fleet materialized that year, however, so all the time and money expended on the Isle de Ré were in vain, at least in the context of the stretched resources of the royal treasury as the war dragged on.

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80 Louis XIV to Gadagne, 15 January 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 6; Colbert wrote the same to Launay, governor of Fort de La Prée, ibid., fol. 7. See Mémâin, Marine de guerre, 226-28, on the seriousness of this threat; he also provided a brief summary of the essentials.

85 See, for example, Colbert to Vauban, 19 January 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 9 (sends engineers to execute his plans); to Colbert du Terron, 2 February, ibid., fols. 13-14; to Vauban, 2 February, ibid., fol. 14 (he is to tour the area with Courcelles, the new governor of the Isle de Ré); to Colbert du Terron, 17 March, ibid., fol. 55v (urges diligence in following Vauban’s proposals). According to a letter from Colbert to Colbert du Terron, Vauban had returned to Versailles by 26 February 1674, so he had been on the Isle de Ré approximately six weeks (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 99).
Besides involving Vauban in the coastal defenses of the realm on Colbert's behalf, this episode is important for another reason. It helps put into perspective Vauban's growing insinuation into the fortification department of Colbert, and it does so in two ways. First, Vauban's sojourn on the coast of the Atlantic offers further evidence of the eclipse of Clerville. Even though Clerville was the governor of the nearby Île d'Oléron and was currently in residence, it was to Vauban that the king turned during this crisis. Colbert either acquiesced in the royal decision, desiring to align himself with the royal will, or he heartily concurred with the monarch's choice. We shall return to the question of Colbert's attitude toward Clerville's eclipse by Vauban further on, but for the moment it is worth underlining this snub to the older engineer. At the end of a letter to Colbert du Terron, marine intendant at Rochefort, outlining the result of Vauban's report to the king upon his return from the coast, the minister asked his cousin about Clerville and the exertions he was expected to make to put his Île d'Oléron in a state of readiness. The budget figures discussed by Colbert reflect the same differential in the importance of what the two engineers were undertaking: Vauban's projects were funded at 150,000 livres, whereas the chevalier's proposals had to compete with other works for a share of a 40,000 livre fund for fortifications on the islands.\footnote{Colbert to Colbert du Terron, 5 March 1674, ibid., 100-01. See also Colbert to Clerville, 17 March, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 56v-57.}

There is a second way in which the work at the Île de Ré illuminates Vauban's relationship with Colbert. Even though Colbert surely knew of or suspected Vauban's antipathy toward him, his letters to Vauban were invariably polite and often larded with flattery. But Colbert's letters to Colbert du Terron, a kinsman and trusted confidant, were usually frank, and yet they reflected the same attitude toward Vauban found in Colbert's letters to the engineer himself. Nevertheless, they also provide us with a possible glimpse into the minister's motivations for treating Vauban with such deference. There was apparently nothing deceitful in Colbert's assessment of Vauban: "Je dois vous dire qu'il a accoustumé de les [his mémoires] dresser si nettement expliqués qu'il
n’y a aucune peine à les suivre et à les faire exécuter."⑧52 Nor was Colbert obliged by other than his honest evaluation to say:

Vous trouverez assurément le sieur Vauban plus habile et plus entendu qu’aucun ingénieur qui ayt jamais esté en France; et comme il est particulièrement considéré du Roy pour son mérite, il est nécessaire que vous agissiez avec lat sur ce fondement, et qu’au surplus vous l’entendiez et faisiez exécuter tous les expédiens qu’il vous donnera pour avancer les ouvrages, en quoy mesme je vous puis assurer qu’il est très-habile.⑧53

The implication of this statement is clear with regards to Clerville: his reputation with Colbert had been superseded by that of his former pupil. Thus, Vauban’s purely technical expertise recommended him to Colbert and thereby to the intendant at Rochefort and any of the minister’s other subordinates. But Colbert’s line of reasoning also reveals an experienced courtier and a veteran of bureaucratic infighting. He surely recognized that Louvois’s engineer was the architect of the king’s remarkable victory at Maastricht and thus was particularly regarded by the monarch for his merit. At the very least, Vauban was to be worked with on that basis; ignoring him could incur the royal wrath. Perhaps Colbert reiterated Vauban’s technical abilities after noting the engineer’s political clout so that the intendant would not assume that only political pressures required him to heed Vauban’s advice. Whatever Colbert’s personal feelings toward Vauban—they did not likely include affection since Colbert surely knew of the latter’s enduring antipathy toward him—the engineer’s demonstrable technical expertise and royal favor meant that it was in Colbert’s best interests to work with Vauban with as little friction from his part as possible.

Colbert’s reading of the political winds blowing in Vauban’s favor was not contradicted by the events of the late spring of 1674. As planned since the previous year, the armies of the French king repeated their 1668 invasion of the Spanish possession of Franche-Comté. This time, however, the Spanish were better prepared for

⑧52Colbert to Colbert du Terron, 15 January 1674, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 94.

⑧53Colbert to Colbert du Terron, 19 January 1674, ibid., 95. In his letter of 5 March, Colbert indicated that the king had approved all Vauban’s plans "avec éloge," and urged the intendant to execute them step-by-step and with care (ibid., 100-01).
their French foes, and so the campaign dragged on longer and was harder-fought than that of 1668, which had lasted hardly fifteen days. The siege of Besançon in April and May 1674, by contrast, cost the French twenty-seven days. The whole French operation in the province, which began in earnest in February, ended only in July. Vauban seconded the king at the crucial siege of Besançon, but it was Aspremont, already familiar with these posts from his past efforts to demolish them, who assisted in the other sieges that reduced the Spanish strongholds to submission. There was no thought in 1674 of abandoning this long-sought-after province which had cost much more dearly this time, and so it was not held in reserve, to be traded away at the negotiating table when the war ended, but rather was ingested whole by the French crown. Afterwards, when this area fell to Louvois, as did all the newly-conquered territories, Vauban likewise added its fortifications to his jurisdiction.\(^5\)

Before and after the campaign in Franche-Comté, Vauban continued to visit and oversee the sites he had already worked on as consultant to Colbert. At Guise, Vauban met with the intendant des fortifications for Champagne, Chantereau-Lefebvre, who Colbert admonished to execute the engineer’s plans in a punctual manner. The same instructions were sent to the engineer Ferry, who had been dispatched to supervise the technical details of the construction work.\(^5\) Similar messages were sent to Pierre Rouillé de Coudray, provincial intendant at Amiens since 1672, who was in charge of the projects at Ham, La Fère, and Saint-Quentin, and to his assistants.\(^5\) At one point, Colbert pressed Rouillé to devote the necessary attention to a particular portion of

\footnotesize{\(^5\)See Gresset, Annexion de la Franche-Comté, 187-90, for the first conquest, and 229-55, for the second. They said that the province came under Louvois’s control (ibid., 196 and 265); Blanchard, Ingénieurs, 60, also lists this province as assigned to Louvois.}

\footnotesize{\(^5\)Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 13 and 16 February 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 170, 172; to Ferry, 13 and 16 February, ibid., fols. 170v-171, 174v-175.}

\footnotesize{\(^5\)Colbert to Rouillé, 6 April 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 70v; 13 June, ibid., fol. 175v; to Ferry, 6 April, ibid., fol. 71; 13 June, ibid., fols. 174v-175v; to Dubois, 13 June, ibid., 171.}
Vauban's plan for Saint-Quentin, echoing the engineer's warning that all the other work undertaken at that place would rest "inutile" if this detail were neglected. 857

In fact, by the end of the summer, Vauban had grown weary of his dealings with Rouillé. He complained to Louvois, who supervised his fortifications in Artois through this provincial intendant, who also had in his care the fortifications of Picardy, in Colbert's department. Vauban heaped scorn upon Rouillé (referred to as "M.R." in his letter), whom he regarded as nearly useless, especially when it was a matter of the work in Artois. Vauban objected to the intendant's criticisms of both Louvois's decisions and his own efforts to implement them; he further grumbled that Rouillé shared his disapproval with others, probably including Colbert ("pour rendre compte après à qui bon lui semble..."). 858 Thus, Vauban urged Louvois to arrange a division of the intendancy of Amiens, leaving Colbert's man with Picardy and placing Artois under the care of a certain "M. le Président." 859 This official was André Scarron de Longne, who


858 Vauban to Louvois, 6 August 1674, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 12-13. See note 868 on p. 349 below for other criticism of Rouillé's management skills.

859 Ibid. Rochas (ibid., 112 n. 1) identified "M. le Président" as "Boizot, qui fut intendant des fortifications de Franche-Comté, puis, en 1680, des places frontières de Longwy à Phalsbourg" because Vauban mentioned a "M. le Président Boizot" in a letter of 6 November 1688 (ibid., 299). Gresset, Annexion de la Franche-Comté. 253-55 and 258, said that a Claude Boisot, a Besançon banker, had been intendant of fortifications for the Spanish in Franche-Comté between the two conquests. Boisot helped the French during the second conquest, and was indispensable at sieges, his assistance saving many lives. Later, Boisot advised Louis XIV on the appointment of new members of the Parlement of Dole, which included himself. Roland Fiétier (under the direction of), Histoire de la Franche-Comté (Toulouse: Privat, 1977), 239-40, described Boisot as a banker and faithful client of Louvois who provided him with the nominations for the re-established Parlement of Dole. On Boisot and his family, also see Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 116-17, 131-32. It is unclear whether this Boisot is the same as Rochas's "Boizot"—although it makes sense in some letters. It seems doubtful that Rochas's identification of "M. le Président" as Boisot is correct, given Boisot's preoccupations in Franche-Comté. For instance, in a letter of Vauban to Louvois, 6 February 1679, he spoke highly of "M. Boisot" and his "diligence and exactitude" in repairing the fortifications at Salins (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 178).
had been named president of the *Conseil souverain* of Artois 13 June 1661.\textsuperscript{860} Vauban assured Louvois that Longne already doing most of the work in Artois without any of the recompense and was, moreover, "à vous de bon coeur jusqu'à n'avoir liaison ni commerce avec aucune autre...."\textsuperscript{861} But the two provinces remained one intendency until 1754. If Vauban derived any pleasure from Rouillé's loss of the intendancy of Amiens during the autumn of 1674, it must have been tempered when he learned that his replacement was François Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, who up to that appointment had been one of Colbert's principal *commis*.\textsuperscript{862}

**Administrator of the Eastern Frontier**

In August 1674, after suffering a tactical loss to Condé at the battle of Senef, the foes of France were forced to abandon their planned invasion of France and instead content themselves with a move towards Louis's new fortress at Ath. Louvois relayed to Vauban the monarch's desire that he hurry himself to that place in order to direct its

\textsuperscript{860} Also spelled Scaron de Logne. According to Boistliste, *Conseil de 1661*, 2: 30, 45, 47, Longne was chosen because "S.M. a résolu d'établir un président au conseil d'Artois qui soit originaire du Royaume et capable d'y bien servir..." Logne was a councillor at the Parlement of Metz, and was originally from the area of Thionville. He died on Christmas Day 1684. See also Louvois to Scaron de Logne, 5 July 1675, Depping, *Correspondance*, 1: 599-600. The war minister still addressed him as the president of the "conseil provincial d'Artois," and instructed him to have the deputies of that body see to the gathering of two thousand peasants with spades and six hundred carts for the kings use. In a letter to Louvois on 15 July 1669 Rochas, *Vauban, ses écrits*, 2: 29), Vauban had informed the war secretary that "Vous ne pouvez pas mieux faire que d'interposer M. Scarron pour médiateur des différends qui surviennent entre M. d'Aspremont, de Barles et l'entrepreneur...." Barles was an engineer employed at Ath with Aspremont.

\textsuperscript{861}Vauban to Louvois, 6 August: 1674, ibid., 112-13.

\textsuperscript{862}For a sketch of the administrative history of this province, see Cabourdin and Viard, *Lexique historique*, 23. For Rouillé's term at Amiens, see Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 67 n. 1. On Breteuil, see ibid., 3 pt. 2: 63 n. 1. On 9 September 1674, Colbert congratulated Breteuil on the considerable advancement of work at Saint-Quentin since his arrival at that place (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 250).
defense. Vauban's testy reply made it clear that he feared being made to look the fool if he undertook such an assignment without the requisite authority over troops and royal funds. Hinting at his need for a promotion, he noted that at his current rank he would be no more than "comme un volontaire sans autre crédit que celui qui m'est donné par la bonne opinion que l'on peut avoir de moi...." The king agreed with the engineer's request, and instructed Louvois to inform Vauban that, wishing to allay his fears, he had decided to grant him the brevet of brigadier, which was issued on 30 August 1674.  

As we have seen before, Vauban was not averse to promoting his own career by requesting enhancements to his rank and powers. But as much as he sought to ascend the military and fortifications hierarchy, Vauban appears not to have been anxious to extend his power into Colbert and Clerville's bailiwick. Yet, it happened, almost inevitably. The old chevalier was out of favor, having failed miserably in Alsace; he had gone into semi-retirement at his governorship on the Isle d'Oléron. On the coasts, Colbert was blessed with a largely competent team of assistants in a bureaucracy mostly of his creation; the navy was, after all, the part of his employments for the king that Colbert valued the most. But Colbert's department concerned with the interior fortifications was in varying states of disarray, at least in the unsympathetic yet technically expert eyes of Vauban and Louvois. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Vauban sought to rescue the provinces in Colbert's charge, and there is much to suggest that such a task was looked upon by the weary engineer with great apprehension.

As for Louvois, he apparently acquiesced in the various "loans" of Vauban to his rival's fortification department. Louvois relished the full range of delights offered by

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863Louvois to Vauban, 16 August 1674, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 114.

864Vauban to Louvois, 18 August 1674, ibid., 114-15.

865Louvois to Vauban, 21 August, ibid., 115. Martin, "The Army of Louis XIV," 117, explains that the rank of brigadier was created in 1667-68 as the lowest grade of general officer, capable of commanding either a cavalry or infantry brigade. An officer could be promoted to this rank without first purchasing the costly rank of colonel.

866D'Amat, "Clerville."
this arrangement, including a greater knowledge of Colbert’s plans and problems, and
the upper hand this surely afforded him since everyone knew that the controller-general
had to come to the minister of war, hat-in-hand, to put his own department to rights.
But it was the king himself, anxious for the safety of all the places on his expanding yet
beleaguered frontier, who insisted that they have the best technical evaluation and
direction possible. The probing of the French frontier by William of Orange and his
army during the summer of 1674, while deflected by Condé’s countermeasures, had
increased the king’s anxiety. Not surprisingly, he turned to Vauban to put his mind at
rest. Whenever he became particularly concerned for a fort or an area, Louis XIV sent
Vauban to inspect it and draw up plans for its rectification, regardless of whose
department it was in or who had worked on it before. Thus, it was the monarch himself
who expanded Vauban’s control of fortifications beyond Louvois’s domain, eventually
to encompass those of the whole realm, despite Vauban’s reluctance to take on additional
responsibilities.

In a letter of 20 October 1674, Colbert announced to Vauban this regularization of
what had been heretofore merely an occasional role of consultant on particular projects,
usually involving at most a few places in a given subdivision of Colbert’s department.
The minister informed him that

Le Roy m’ayant dit que Sa Majesté vous avoit envoyé ses ordres pour visiter
toutes les places de la frontière de Picardie ausquelles Elle a fait travailler cette
année, à fin que sur les desseins et les memoires que vous en ferez Sa Majesté
puisse resoudre tous les travaux à faire l’année prochaine....

It should be recalled that Rouillé had had his supervision of the whole province reduced
by the creation of the intendants des fortifications, leaving the provincial intendant
charged with only a few projects. A wider supervisory role appears to have been
restored to the new intendant Breteuil, who scurried from fort to fort in Picardy to

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867 Colbert to Vauban, 20 October 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 301. He
announced the king’s desires on this to Breteuil on the same day, ibid., fols. 300v-301,
saying that Ferry was to execute Vauban’s plans step-by-step. See also Colbert to
Breteuil, 22 December 1674, ibid., fols. 345-46.
expedite the projects that had languished under his predecessor. His exertions were matched by those of the two royal agents in charge of the fortifications of the interior of the province and those along the coast. In a flurry of letters announcing the new arrangements, they were instructed to join Vauban and learn his thoughts so that they could report back to the minister.

The progress of the work in Picardy during the previous months and even after Breteuil took charge illustrate why Vauban was so frustrated with what he regarded as the incompetency of Colbert’s department. In March, Vauban had reminded Colbert that Ferry, the minister’s chief engineer in Picardy, had warned him that he and his three assistants were not sufficient to prevent "fraponneries et les malfaçons des ouvriers" at the various building sites. Breteuil, acting on Colbert’s approval of this procedure, foolishly advertised the fortification work to be done in his department the coming year in public notices that contained detailed specifications for the work to be done. Vauban noted that this method gave away too much information to enemy agents, who did not have to ferret out French secrets when they were offered so publicly. Colbert quickly withdrew his backing for this procedure. At Guise, as Vauban had predicted when he had warned Louvois that it was wasted effort to send him there since Colbert’s people

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864 Colbert to Breteuil, 13 and 20 October 1674, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 124-26. That Rouillé was having difficulties earlier in the year is suggested by a letter to him from Colbert on 6 April (ibid., 103). See Vauban’s criticism of Rouillé in note 861 on p. 346 below. These failures regarding fortifications certainly contributed to the demise of that official’s tenure at Amiens.

869 Colbert to Ferry (frontier fortifications), 20 October 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 302; to Moyenneville (fortifications along the coast), 10 November, ibid., fol. 317; to Ferry, 10 November, ibid., fol. 319; to Ferry, 17 November, ibid., fol. 322 (where he told Ferry to go meet Vauban at Nancy to learn his thoughts if Vauban did not have enough time to report directly to Colbert, which would be preferable; Ferry was then to report to Colbert).

870 Vauban to Colbert, 10 March 1674, A.G. A1 418, p. 164 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 106-07, did not print this portion of the letter).

871 Colbert to Breteuil, 22 September, 20 October, and 22 December 1674, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 125-126 n. 1.
generally ignored him, the director at that place resisted Vauban's instructions and so had to be admonished by Colbert.\(^{972}\) Such actions served only to reinforce Vauban's low opinion of Colbert's administration and the personnel of his department.

As 1674 drew to a close, the king assigned Vauban a further tour of places under Colbert's care. This indicates that Vauban's efforts had found favor with the king, as they usually did, and that what he had found in Picardy caused the king concern for the other strongholds under his controller-general. In a letter to Morangis, the intendant at Metz, Colbert urged him to expedite the work at the places under his care since the king would probably order either Vauban or St. Lô to visit them soon. A week later, he confirmed that it would be Vauban who would make the inspection so he could propose the work to be done there the following year.\(^{973}\)

Turenne's series of brilliant winter maneuvers in Alsace culminated 5 January in a victory at Turkheim over allied forces led by Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg. Yet, allied pressure continued and Louis XIV continued to fear for this frontier. The incursion of Louvois's man into Colbert's fortification department continued into 1675; but it was unwilling at best. In January, Vauban wrote resignedly to Louvois that "J'irai aussi, puisqu'il le faut, voir les places de Champagne où vous m'ordonnez d'aller." He expected them to be in the same "très méchant état" as the others he had visited. With obvious frustration, he begged to be exempted from "tant

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\(^{972}\) Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 31 August 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fol. 249v-250. A similar situation arose with regard to Vauban's plans for the Isle de Ré (see Colbert to Demuin, 25 August, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 243v-244).

\(^{973}\) 17 November 1674, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 4, fols. 324-25; 24 November, ibid., 327v-328. In letters to both Ferry and Moyenneville, 12 December, Colbert first announced that, due to Vauban's illness, Chazerat would tour their areas in his stead, but at the end of the letters he added an up-date, announcing that Vauban would be making the tour after all (ibid., fols. 341-344). According to Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 608, although Chazerat had worked for Vauban at Lille in 1669, he was employed on the fortifications of Champagne, under Colbert, from 1670 to 1675. Saint-Lô was an engineer who had been trained by Vauban and who had directed the fortification work at Nancy, according to Jacques, "Lettres de Vauban ," 297 n. 2 and 299.
de corvées," asking rhetorically "Ne suis-je pas assez fatigué des places de votre Département?" 874

Soon, the usual letters to his agents in the field issued forth from Colbert’s secretariat as Vauban began his tour. Vauban made recommendations on a variety of works, ranging from the bastions at Rocroi, the site of the Great Condé’s decisive victory over the Spanish more than thirty years earlier, to the location for a bridge proposed by the consuls of Charleville. 875 Of course, all that Vauban proposed for Champagne was approved by the king. Colbert himself had noted to Morangis, with regard to the plans Vauban was yet to generate on his projected visit to the Three Bishoprics:

Je vous recommanderai seulement de vous bien appliquer à entendre ses pensées et pour cet effet de l’accompagner lorsqu’il ira à Metz, parceque Sa Majesté approuvera sans difficulté les memoires qu’il aura dressez sur ce sujet.... 876

There were other signs that year of Vauban’s growing influence in Colbert’s department. Vauban had long complained that his bold vision for the port of Dunkirk had been ignored by the controller-general and those around him. In 1675, however, Colbert was soliciting his ideas on that project. Noting that even though the present war had prevented the king from spending the funds needed to make Dunkirk and Calais as large and fine as Vauban hoped, Colbert assured the engineer that the king would do so one day. 877 On the land frontier it was the same. The king had ordered Colbert

874 Vauban to Louvois, 11 January 1675, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 120-21. In the same letter, Vauban spoke of the need to be four people in order to satisfy the minister’s demands. His despair was probably exacerbated by his ill health, which he recounted to explain the delay in his tour of inspection.

875 Colbert to Renart, 19 January 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 11.

876 Colbert to Morangis, 9 March 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 26. See Colbert to Renart, 8 March, ibid., fol. 22, and Colbert to Vauban a day later, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 131-32, for the announcement of the royal nod to Vauban’s designs for Champagne (including some for Picardy).

877 Colbert to Vauban, 9 March 1675, ibid., 131-32. This request was repeated 14 September, ibid., 150-51, and 8 November, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 277.
to see to the adequacy of the powder magazines in the places of Picardy, Champagne, and the Three Bishoprics. The minister sought Vauban’s advice not only on their number but also on their placement and construction.\textsuperscript{878}

So great was the engineer’s credit with Colbert, the minister deferred to Vauban’s judgment in matters where he otherwise reserved the final word for himself. For instance, after telling the intendant at Metz that he had nothing to say with regards to the contracts for Verdun, Colbert instructed Morangis to show them to Vauban and follow his orders since the engineer “a une très grande connaissance de la valeur de tous ces ouvrages….\textsuperscript{879}” During that autumn, it became increasingly clear to Colbert’s agents that Vauban would play an active role in planning and executing the works in their department during the coming year. Louvois’s engineer was becoming more than just an occasional consultant—he was on his way to becoming Colbert’s chief deputy and in essence their new master.\textsuperscript{880}

**Resistance to Vauban’s Expanded Role**

The *intendants des fortifications*, engineers, and other agents served Colbert along the frontiers were accustomed to greater independence than either Vauban or Louvois allowed in the latter’s fortification department. Even though Clerville was still *commissaire général des fortifications*, his wings had been clipped some years earlier.

\textsuperscript{878}Colbert to Vauban, 16 March 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 35v-36.

\textsuperscript{879}Colbert to Morangis, 23 January 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 17v-18v.

\textsuperscript{880}The following letters of Colbert indicate Vauban’s expanding role in longer-term planning: to Ferry, 24 August 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 184 (on Dunkirk, Ardres, and Calais); to Ferry, 27 September, ibid., fols. 232v-233 (on Péronne); to Vauban, 20 September, ibid., fol.216 (on Picardy); to Marshal de Rochefort, 27 September, ibid., fols. 235v-236v (on Metz); to Buisson, 11 December, ibid., fols. 310v-311 (on Péronne); to Morangis, 20 December, ibid., fol. 320 (on Metz and Verdun).
due both to his increasing age and his various failures. In 1673, when Vauban had joined other engineers in making visits to various of Colbert's frontier fortifications, their efforts occasioned revisions of previously-made plans for those places, but Vauban's work for the controller-general was still limited, and one project, the defense of the Isle de Ré, was far enough away not to disturb too profoundly the peace of the "gens des fortifications" on the eastern frontier. By October 1674, however, Vauban's presence in the department had expanded greatly and threatened to be of a permanent nature.

As noted earlier, Vauban complained to Louvois that his advice was routinely ignored by Colbert's subordinates. For instance, Colbert had to admonish Chantereau-Lefebvre, intendant des fortifications for Guise, for an infraction of this nature in the summer of 1674. By early 1675, Colbert began issuing letters--first a few, later a steady stream--aimed at quieting the fears of his subordinates and insuring that they followed Vauban's orders exactly as written. Someone, was spreading rumors with regards to Vauban's views on the proposed demolition of Doullens in Picardy. This was always a cause of anxiety within the fortification bureaucracy since the razing of a fortress meant that someone's power or even employment was diminished at the end of

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881 See Colbert to Poncet, 17 June 1673, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 86, where he backed Clerville as an "ingénieur habile et en qui le Roy se confie," but admitted that the chevalier had "beaucoup de défauts" to excuse because he was old, ill, and had "beaucoup de sujets de chagrin..." One can speculate that his continual eclipse by his former pupil was probably one of these. For Colbert's warnings to Clerville not to meddle in the preserve of the intendant, and other indications of his diminishing confidence in the chevalier, see Colbert's letters to Clerville of 2, 10, and 17 June, and his letter to Poncet of 2 June, ibid., 83-85.

882 Colbert to Rouillé, 15 February 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fol. 68, called for a revision of the estimates for the works being done in Picardy in 1673. See page 304 above for the other engineers who served Colbert as inspectors in particular provinces.

the job. Colbert wrote to the provincial intendant Breteuil to check the spread of such tales, advising him not to believe all that he heard.88

Another reason why Colbert's men were on edge was that what Vauban had found on his inspections did not, for the most part, measure up to the standards to which he was accustomed in Louvois's department. This included not only the fortifications themselves88 but also the administrative procedures employed by those who directed them. This is probably the source of remarks in his manual entitled Le Directeur général des fortifications, which appears to have been written during this era and in response to his expanded duties. In justifying his little book, Vauban observed:

finalement on y a mis ce qui peut instruire ceux qui ne sont pas bien accoutumés à l'ordre qu'il faut tenir dans le detail des grands travaux, & le tout pour insinuer une conduite plus réglée....89

88 Colbert to Breteuil, 19 January 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 8v-9v.

89 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1674, noted that "il fut encore pendant l'hiver surchargé du soin des fortifications des places de Picardie et Champagne qui pour lors estoient en très mauvais estat." It is worth noting that "très" was added in Vauban's own hand.

88 Vauban, Directeur général, preface. As noted above, it was printed in Holland in an unauthorized version in 1685. Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 1: 220 n. 1, dated its composition in 1680, based on a letter of Vauban to Louvois, 30 December 1680 (ibid., 2: 195 and n. 1), but this letter hardly supports that contention (Lazard, Vauban, 422-23, rightly questioned the 1680 date). Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 89 n. 1, referred to a "Mémoires sur les qualités que doivent réunir les Directeurs des fortifications pour faire exécuter les ouvrages importants dont ils sont chargés," dated 1674 and found by General Haxo in an admittedly hasty visit to the Rosanbo chateau in the nineteenth century (ibid., 1: 97-98). Rochas concluded that it was this memoir that was referred to by Vauban in a letter to Louvois, 26 February 1673, saying that he had sent the minister his thoughts on "une espèce de Direction générale des fortifications...." He asked to be given this title and its attributions as described in this mémoire, but "sans préjudicier aux charges de Surintendant et de Commissaire général des fortifications...." Gutten, Corps des ingénieurs, 29, opted for a composition date of circa 1673, which seems to be the best choice. Internal evidence also suggests that its composition was connected with Vauban's new duties for Colbert, although he surely used earlier writings drawn up exclusively for Louvois's department. For instance, he discusses working with "ministres" in the plural and discusses intendants des fortifications who are not provincial intendants (Directeur général, 23, 25, 29, 37). In addition, it should be noted that his sample forms are dated "1674" (ibid., 110-11).
For example, he complained to Colbert about the quality of the *entrepreneurs* used in Picardy, noting that while many of them were insolvent they were nonetheless employed on several projects. This prompted the minister to warn the provincial intendant to be more careful of this in the future.  

Another of Colbert’s agents was advised that Vauban had found the places under his care in bad condition, and only a careful adherence to the latter’s instructions would redeem him. Yet, Vauban did not allow either his reluctance to be drawn into Colbert’s affairs or his critique of the state of that minister’s department to blind him to the competent individuals employed there. This generosity and fairness was witnessed by his words of praise for the engineer Ferry and his expressions of satisfaction with Buisson’s progress on Péronne.

During the summer work season of 1675, various expressions and actions of rebellion spread throughout Colbert’s department of fortifications. Although Vauban’s letters to Colbert are lost or unavailable, surely they were filled with oblique or direct complaints about this resistance to his orders. Either from Vauban himself or other sources, Colbert learned of the insurgency among his engineers and wrote strong letters to counter it. Ferry was reminded that the king wanted no deviation from Vauban’s *mémoires*, even under the pretext that Vauban had altered them orally while passing by a project site. If Vauban himself ordered any changes, Ferry was instructed to get them in writing and with Vauban’s signature. Demuin, marine intendant at Rochefort, transmitted a proposition for some alterations of Vauban’s original plans for the Isle de

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887 Colbert to Breteuil, 28 February 1675, Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 129-31. There were other letters reflecting Vauban’s concerns about questionable *entrepreneurs*: Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 20 April, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 57v-58v (on La Fère and Guise); to Ferry, 20 April, ibid., fols. 58v-59v (on Guise).


889 These were relayed by the minister. See Colbert to Ferry, 23 March 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 40-41; to Buisson, 16 March, ibid., fol. 34v.

Ré, but was informed by the minister that the king was not interested in anything contrary to Vauban’s advice—to propose otherwise was not useful since he was merely to see to the prompt execution of these plans.\textsuperscript{891} The same message was sent to Chantereau-Lefebvre when he proposed changes to Vauban’s plans for La Fère.\textsuperscript{892} Niquet, engineer for the Three Bishoprics, by contrast, was congratulated for having been judged by Vauban capable of conducting the work there. The minister urged him to apply himself to knowing Vauban’s thoughts so he could be relied upon to execute them. Yet, Niquet soon joined the resistance against the "outsider." Indeed, Niquet enjoys a certain notoriety because Clément published a good deal of the correspondence from Colbert chronicling the younger engineer’s recurring refusal to accept Vauban’s authority, an incorrigibility that landed him in prison in 1681.\textsuperscript{893}

Vauban’s responsibilities extended beyond planning and deciding on what works were to be done at the various sites. He took an active hand in overseeing the crucial adjudication of the entrepreneurial contracts. On one occasion, Vauban was able to see to it that an entrepreneur who had his confidence was preferred above all others, provided that his price was reasonable.\textsuperscript{894} When costs at any site exceeded Vauban’s earlier estimates, the minister was quick to point the finger at his own men. He

\textsuperscript{891} Colbert to Demuin, 16 June 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 106-107.

\textsuperscript{892} Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 6 April 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 47v-49.

\textsuperscript{893} For Niquet, see Colbert to Niquet, 20 July, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 140. Clément provided a brief summary of correspondance relating to Niquet (ibid., xviii-xix; the letters are found \textit{passim}).

\textsuperscript{894} Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 20 April 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 57v-58v, and 21 February 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 40v-41. See also Colbert to Ferry, 20 April 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fols. 58v-59v, and to Morangis, 23 January and 21 February 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 17v-18v and 41v-42. Vauban’s influence over contracts was an important privilege since the construction of fortifications was an important source of patronage to businessmen and artisans of all kinds. It offered great financial opportunities to patrons and clients, both of a legal and illegal nature. One need only recall the experience of Saint-Marc and Saint-André in Alsace.
observed to Renart, *intendant des fortifications* for Champagne, that in other places Vauban's estimates had been exact, rendering the cost overruns in Champagne a matter for concern.995 Technical matters at the building sites also had to be referred to Vauban for his approval.996 Colbert additionally charged Vauban to resolve disputes among the engineers and other officials over the execution of his mémoires, as happened at Metz.997

Niquet's resistance to Vauban was largely a matter of his personal egotism: he had a high opinion of himself and was regarded by Vauban as a skillful engineer. But the obstinacy of Moyenneville, who supervised the interior strongholds of Picardy, while equally tinged with vanity,998 also verbalized an attitude that was more typical of the wider opposition Vauban's activities encountered among Colbert's subordinates. After a summer of repeated expressions of dissatisfaction with his work from Vauban, which were echoed by Colbert when he read Vauban's letters, Moyenneville struck back, complaining to the minister that Louvois's chief engineer "ne trouve rien de bien fait que ce qui passe par un autre canal...."999 In other words, he claimed that Vauban was prejudiced against Colbert's department and found good only in Louvois's. Colbert

995 Colbert to Renart, 17 August 1675, Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 143-44. See also Colbert to Chantereau- Lefebvre, 11 September, ibid., 175-76.

996 For example, see Colbert to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 20 July 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, fol. 136r-138, where he told the *intendant des fortifications* he had done well to advise Vauban of the special foundations employed at La Fère, adding that he was sure that Vauban would take this information into consideration when making his decisions on the place. Ferry was told by Colbert that he would not speak to the king of the designs for the elevation of the waters at Péronne until Vauban had first examined the matter (22 September, ibid., 232v-233).


999 The words of the *intendant des fortifications* were quoted back to him in Colbert to Moyenneville, 14 September 1675, Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 149-50.
brushed this suggestion aside by replying sternly that it was of no "valeur auprès de moy, et je ne vous conseille pas mesme de vous en servir jamais." 900

Nearly a week later, the minister again warned Moyenneville that "ce n'est point à vous à contrôler le sieur de Vauban," adding dismissively that "la seureté d'une place ne peut pas dépendre de vos sentiments." Colbert noted ominously that he detected in Moyenneville "une certaine résistance à tout ce que veut faire le sieur de Vauban." The minister admonished him that his recalcitrance was futile since "le Roy se repose de la seureté de ses places" on Vauban, and further resistance could only "vous renderoient incapable de servir." 901

In a letter to Vauban reporting this rebuke, Colbert dismissed Moyenneville's excuses as "ne valent rien," but he fabricated a more innocuous excuse rather than sharing with Vauban what Moyenneville had actually said, since to have done otherwise would only have served to stir up further enmity between the two departments. 902 Instead, Colbert assured Vauban in a later missive that he had written both his agents in Picardy "si fortement par ordre de Sa Majes[ité]," that he was certain that in the future they would not fail to second his diligence and execute his mémoires punctually. 903

The 1675 campaign season was on balance an unhappy one for Louis XIV. Turenne died in battle on 27 June, depriving the king of the skills of one of the truly great commanders of that age, even though the Louis had never completely trusted the old marshal. French forces suffered defeats in Alsace and Lorraine and the loss of Trier on the Moselle. France itself was threatened with yet another invasion. Despite or perhaps because of these pressures upon the frontier defenses, Colbert's fortification agents continued to resist Vauban's authority. During the winter of 1675-76, Vauban

900Ibid.

901Colbert to Moyenneville, 20 September 1675, ibid., 152.

902Colbert to Vauban, 14 September 1675, ibid., 150-51. Colbert said that Moyenneville's excuse was that Ferry's visit to Calais had been delayed until May.

again inspected the fortresses of Picardy, Champagne, and the Three Bishoprics, in addition to the places of Louvois's department. Besides corresponding with Colbert, Vauban met with him and with the king at Versailles, where they decided upon the work to be done during the upcoming season.⁹⁰⁴ Again, there was resistance, met by strongly-worded messages from the minister. Upon receiving a memoir from Ferry on work ordered during a recent royal tour through Picardy, the king had Colbert remind the engineer that he had been instructed to bring such matters to the royal attention by way of Vauban.⁹⁰⁵ Not surprisingly, Moyenneville, Renart, and Niquet also continued their resistance.⁹⁰⁶ But a reading of Colbert's register of out-going letters for 1676 leads to the conclusion that there was a perceptible diminution of disobedience. For instance, even though Colbert was forced to upbraid Raulet for proposing changes in Vauban's designs at Rocroi, he did congratulate the engineer for his wisdom in making no changes without an order from Vauban.⁹⁰⁷

The summer of 1676 proved to be a fruitful season for the king's arms. French land and sea forces defeated the Spanish and Dutch on and around Sicily. Although loosing Philipsburg, Marshal Créqui held on to Lorraine. Maastricht resisted an attempted assault by William of Orange. And the king's chief engineer added to his master's victories, as Vauban later recounted:

Il proposa les sièges de Condé et Bouchain, son avis fut suivi et ces deux places prises comme il l'avait prévue. Après quoy on assiegea Aire, Le Fort Français et le Fort de Linq qui furent pris asséz promptement après quelques jours

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⁹⁰⁴ Colbert to Vauban, 8 November 1675, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 5, 277; to Morangis, 27 December, ibid., 325v-326v; to Vauban, 7 and 28 February 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 30v and 46v-47v. This latter missive noted that Vauban was not granted all the expenditures he had requested, but was given latitude as how to spend part of what was appropriated.

⁹⁰⁵ Colbert to Ferry, 17 July 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 143-44.

⁹⁰⁶ For example, Colbert to Moyenneville, 6 March 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fol. 57; to Renart, 16 September, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 176. For Niquet, see note 893 on page 356 above.

⁹⁰⁷ Colbert to Raulet, 16 May 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 105v-106.
d'attaque. Le Roy l'honora d'un brevet de Marechal de Camp a la fin du siege d'Aire.\textsuperscript{98}

Vauban's promotion was, of course, noteworthy, but another mark of his growing influence with the king was that his counsel on strategic matters had been heeded by Louis and his other advisors.\textsuperscript{99} This made resistance by Colbert's men even more dangerous to their own advancement, even though Colbert seemed to have an almost limitless supply of patience, despite his stern warnings. Even Niquet, who was not a kinsman, could retain his post and indeed rise further while proving often uncooperative and trying the minister's patience. This reminds us of the constraints imposed upon absolutism by slow communications and transportation and by the shortage of skilled men willing to molder away in the remote regions of the kingdom at tasks that might not make their fortune.

The autumn of 1676 and the early winter months of 1677 saw Vauban again trudging the roads of the eastern frontier, inspecting and planning fortifications for both Louvois and Colbert.\textsuperscript{100} He complained afresh to the minister of war of the pressures

\textsuperscript{98}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1676.

\textsuperscript{99}Vauban was only one of the king's many advisors, albeit an important one. Jules-Louis Bolé, Marquis de Chamlay, was another of the king's important military advisors. From 1675 he accompanied the king into the field, drawing up precise orders based on what was decided by Louis, Louvois, and any officers present during a campaign. He and Vauban first worked together at the siege of Condé, and did so at every other siege where the king was present save that of Cambrai in 1677. Vauban had free reign over the lines of circumvallation and the attack, while Chamlay as maréchal de logis laid out the lines of contravallation and organized the camp. For Chamlay in general and his work with Vauban in particular, see Ronald Martin, "The Marquis de Chamlay, Friend and Confidential Advisor to Louis XIV: The Early Years, 1650-91" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973), 73-75, 83, 85-87, 121-22, 267. Martin shows that Chamlay, who was almost constantly at the king's side, was probably more influential on the king's strategic planning than was Vauban (ibid., 104, 132, 136-37, 160-62, 203-04, 206-07, 216-18, 220, 243, 258-62).

\textsuperscript{100}Ibid., notes that he made an inspection of Burgundy, which was in Colbert's department. For Vauban's visits on behalf of Colbert, see Colbert to Breteuil, 16 October 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fol. 216; to Moyenville, 5 November, ibid., fol. 234; to Breteuil, 27 November, ibid., foils. 250v-251; to Renart. 3 December, ibid.,
upon his time, but to no avail. Perhaps Vauban wanted to rid himself of the extra burden of Colbert's department; if anything, however, his influence in it increased almost daily and the ties binding him to it only grew tighter. At the end of 1676 Colbert informed Vauban that Ferry had been retained as chief engineer over the places of Champagne from Rocroi to Verdun, and that Raulet and Niquet were to continue in the places of this area under Ferry's direction. If Vauban had any objections to these arrangements, Colbert wanted to know right away so that the king could be informed. If not, however, Vauban was personally to announce their continued appointment to the two engineers, although he was authorized to remove or change them if they caused him any difficulties. The minister further invited Vauban to apprize him of "toute ce que vous reconnoistrez dans toutes ces places, soit sur les prix, soit sur la conduite, ou la qualité des ouvrages." A few weeks later, in detailing the work to be done in the places of Champagne, Colbert referred to the engineers as having been established in each place by Vauban. Colbert also expressed the hope that Vauban would share with him any suspicions of financial mismanagement—whether from dishonesty or from waste—he discovered at any of the places in Colbert's department. Thus, before the 1677 work season had begun, each and every one of the intendants des fortifications and engineers in Colbert's province of Champagne had learned that they served at Vauban's pleasure, although it appears that few were actually removed or transferred. The bureaucratic and

fols. 254v-255v; to the engineers of places in Picardy, 18 December, ibid., fols. 266v-267; to Vauban, 18 December, ibid., fols. 262v-263; 31 December, ibid., fols. 267v-268v; 18 January 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 13v-14; to Morangis, 18 January, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 179; to Vauban, 27 February, ibid., 184 n. 1.

911 Vauban to Louvois, 10 October 1676, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 141-42.

912 Colbert to Vauban, 3 December 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fol. 254.

913 Colbert to Vauban, 31 December 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 267-268v. Colbert, in his letter of the same day to Ferry, informed him that Vauban had designated the engineers for each place in Picardy (ibid., fols. 268v-270).
technical insurgency by Colbert’s men had been largely vanquished by Louvois’s man, firmly backed by the king and by Colbert himself.914

It would be a mistake to see Vauban’s administrative victory in late 1676 as greater than it was. Resistance would surface from time to time, as it does in any bureaucracy, and especially one in which distance and slow communication made subtle and even outright insubordination in the field more difficult to stifle.915 In addition, Clerville’s star, while much dimmed, had not been obliterated by his loss of influence on the eastern frontier. In 1677, although in semi-retirement and virtually ignored by the king in matters of fortifications, the chevalier was still at work on the Canal du Midi and Cette, Colbert’s new port city located near where the canal connected with the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, Clerville was reminded of his dispensability when the minister informed him that the king had cancelled an inspection tour the chevalier was to have made to Provence, an area where he had once reigned supreme as Colbert’s chief engineer.916 But if Clerville’s writ no longer ran as it once had in Provence, it should be recalled that Vauban’s authority did not yet extend to that land and sea frontier nor

914 Of course, there were always a few incorrigibles such as Niquet, but they became the exception. On the minister’s hopes that Vauban’s stern talk to Niquet had settled the problems with that recalcitrant, see Colbert to Vauban, 18 January 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 13v-14.

915 See, for example, Colbert’s battles with Demuin at Rochefort, which the latter occasionally won (Mémiein, Marine de guerre, 231-34).

916 Colbert to Clerville, 23 January 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 17v-18. Clerville had joined Seignelay for a tour of Provence the previous year (Colbert to Clerville, 27 November 1676, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fols. 253v-254).
to the other places along the Mediterranean or those of the Atlantic coast.\textsuperscript{917} That augmentation to his power, however, was not far away.

Well before the Dutch War was brought to a formal close in 1678/79 by the Treaty of Nijmegen, Louis had grown weary of this conflict. In 1676, he had initiated negotiations with the Dutch, but it took a series of French victories on the battlefield and in the assault of fortresses in 1677 and 1678 to break the diplomatic stalemate.\textsuperscript{918} This war was to prove a turning point in Louis XIV’s thinking. The king and his advisors, among whom were included Louvois and Vauban, became more circumspect in launching military expeditions beyond the borders of the kingdom. Vauban’s voice also took on new importance as the king increasingly inclined to the engineer’s arguments for a pré carré. This was less a wall than it was a chainlink fence designed to provide a defense in depth based on a variety of obstacles to enemy incursions. Although he was not the only royal advisor to give expression to such thoughts, Vauban urged the king to rectify the faults of his frontier and acquire the cities and regions needed to deny the enemies of France access to the kingdom. This would include his endorsement for the infamous Reunions and the seizure of Strasbourg.\textsuperscript{919}

\textsuperscript{917}Gazin, “Essai de Bibliographie,” 373-74, showed no mémoires or projects by Vauban for these provinces before 1679. Vauban’s only other foray outside the eastern frontier and the coast of the English Channel on Colbert’s behalf appears to have been his 1674 emergency inspection of the Isle de Ré, regarded as the site of a possible Dutch descent on the coast of France (see page 341 above). Clerville, in residence on the Isle d’Oléron, was still active at near-by Rochefort in 1675 (Mémain, Marine de guerre, 230). Vauban returned to the Isle de Ré—but this time under orders from Louvois—for a short visit with Ferry in December 1677 because Clerville was near death, but from 1678 Vauban was too occupied in Flanders to concern himself with this area (ibid., 238).

\textsuperscript{918}The Dutch signed the treaty on 10 August 1678, the Spanish on 17 September, and the emperor on 6 February 1679.

But less known is Vauban's rise to bureaucratic prominence. As we have seen, there has been much confusion as when he assumed the supervision of the fortifications entrusted to Colbert. It is now clear that this was a gradual process that took place in stages. The greatest impetus for this development was Louis XIV's war with the Dutch and the various alarms along the frontier that forced the king to employ whatever means to see to their defense. This included expanding the administrative role of Louvois's skilled engineer, even if it provided the war minister with an advantage in his rivalry with the controller-general. Colbert's fortification administration had, after all, disappointed the king at a critical juncture, and Colbert appears to have been relieved that the damage to his personal position was not worse, especially given his clashes with the king.

The fortification bureaucracy itself was at the beginnings of a process whereby it would eventually be brought under a unified command. Vauban had begun the spade work for that future union of the two departments. Despite initial opposition from Colbert's agents, the engineer increasingly guided them to greater efficiency through his interminable inspections and letters. He also provided a written framework for regularity and order in the construction and maintenance of fortifications along the eastern frontier and in other regions as well. Vauban's administrative activities thus increased the value and the sense of comfort the king received for the men and money he employed on his frontière de fer.
CHAPTER XII

THE KING'S ADMINISTRATOR OF FORTIFICATIONS: SEIGNELAY AND
THE NEW COMMISSAIRE GENERAL (1677-88)

Je ne doutois pas de vostre amitié ainsi que vous pouvez compter sur la mienne m'intéressant autant que je fais en ce qui vous regarde.

Seignelay to Vauban,
2 October 1683

In that age of rampant nepotism, it was inevitable that Colbert would seek to groom one of his sons to succeed him in at least part of his administrative empire. Both Le Tellier and Lionne had introduced their heirs into the activities of their offices. In 1669, when Colbert officially became secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and the marine, he looked to the future of his clan by securing the survivance to that office for his eldest and favorite son, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay. Even though born in 1651, Seignelay was personally and carefully tutored by his father in the functions of the office he would one day inherit. The young man's preparation was divided between long hours in the minister's cabinet reading and writing memoranda and letters, and visits to ports and other facilities to observe day-to-day operations and speak at first hand with his future subordinates. Colbert, himself driven by a genuine love for hard work, winced at the streak of indolence he detected in his offspring, but undeterred in his ambitions for his son, he applied all the more pressure to mold the young man into his
own image. The father's efforts bore fruit, for in March 1672 the king granted Seignelay the right to sign official dispatches.

Part of Seignelay’s apprenticeship included tours of the fortifications in his father’s administrative domain. For instance, as part of a 1670 trip, Seignelay visited and described for his father the fortifications at Brouage and Bordeaux. He made a further journey to Provence in 1676, primarily to see to naval business, which were always his first concern, but "dans le temps que les affaires de marine luy permettront," he was to inspect all the fortification work done since 1674, examine the account books, and evaluate the military and engineering personnel who served in each fortress. But all this was to be accomplished in such a manner so as not to suggest that the minister harbored any suspicions towards his agents in Provence. Of course, Colbert did suspect his subordinates, but as he observed to his son, it would be better to remove these men than to leave them in doubt about their standing in Paris.

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920 For Seignelay’s education, see the serviceable sketch in Trout, Colbert, 139-43. Nearly half of Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2, is devoted to the minister’s letters and instructions to and about his son. Clément also wrote a still-useful introduction to the marquis’s life (ibid., i-1xxxiv). Donald George Pilgrim, "The Uses and Limitations of French Naval Power in the Reign of Louis XIV: the Administration of the Marquis de Seignelay, 1683-1690" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1969), offers the best modern account of his career and life, although it is admittedly limited in scope. Another son, Jules-Armand, Marquis d’Ormoy, was groomed to succeed his father as surintendant des bâtiments, but he was passed over in favor of Louvois upon Colbert’s death (Trout, Colbert, 205).

921 Colbert to Nicolas Colbert, Bishop of Auxerre, 25 March 1672, announced that "Le Roy m’a accordé le grâce d’admettre mon fils à la signature et aux autres fonctions de ma charge" (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 72).


923 Colbert to Seignelay, 5 October 1676, ibid., 152-53. See also Seignelay to Colbert, 19 October (ibid., 162), 22 and 23 October (ibid., 168), and 27 October (ibid., 178). In this last letter, Seignelay assured his father that he would assemble all his fortification mémoires so he could render an account to the king upon his return (ibid., 184).
Vauban also took a hand in the part of the young man's instruction in the arts of fortifications. In February 1677, Colbert alerted Vauban to Seignelay's upcoming visit to the Three Bishoprics. If possible, Vauban was to meet Seignelay at Metz and Toul in order to apprise him of the work yet to be accomplished.\textsuperscript{924} Nearly a month later, the minister wrote that while he was happy that Vauban's inability to meet Seignelay as planned was because of his exertions capturing Valenciennes and preparing to take Cambrai, he nonetheless hoped that Vauban would be able to meet with his son after the later siege.\textsuperscript{925} When the two men did in fact confer together in April, Colbert expressed his pleasure to Breteuil when the intendant assured him that Vauban had found the young marquis well-instructed in the places he had visited.\textsuperscript{926}

**The Advent of Seignelay**

In August 1677, at the end of his circuit on the eastern frontier, Colbert entrusted Seignelay with the supervision of fortifications.\textsuperscript{927} Seignelay became the recipient and writer of the department's considerable correspondence, and reported on it regularly to the king. Colbert took a direct hand in fortification affairs only during the almost annual absences of his son on frontier and coastal inspections (although in May, August, and September 1678 Seignelay was forced by poor health to "take the waters" at Bourbon and further absent himself from his duties). Clément concluded that on these occasions the father deferred as many decisions as possible until his son's return, resolving only those matters that could not be delayed.\textsuperscript{928}

\textsuperscript{924}Colbert to Vauban, 27 February 1677, Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 184 n. 1.

\textsuperscript{925}Colbert to Vauban, 25 March 1677, ibid., 184-85.

\textsuperscript{926}Colbert to Breteuil, 22 April 1677, ibid., 187.

\textsuperscript{927}Colbert to Breteuil, 22 August 1677, marked this: "Je vous prie à l'avenir de m'écrire séparément sur les matières des ponts et chaussées et autres ouvrages, et de continuer à écrire à mon fils sur les fortifications..." (ibid., 192 n. 1). He repeated the same to Breteuil 5 July 1679 (ibid., 222).

\textsuperscript{928}Ibid., 192 n. 1, lists Seignelay's major absences.
Even so, it is difficult to imagine Colbert having cut Seignelay loose from some manner of paternal supervision, especially given Colbert's lingering doubts about his son's application to his work. 929 Early in 1678, for instance, the older Colbert expressed an anxious desire to see Seignelay's orders for the fortifications of Normandy, Brittany, the western coastal region up to Bayonne, Languedoc, and Provence. 930 In addition, he requested an extrait of all Seignelay wrote concerning fortifications. 931 This was because he had found what he had seen thus far to be "fort sèches" and lacking in adequate detail. 932 Colbert then sent Seignelay a packet of instructions by express courier containing "des choses fort importantes et auxquelles il est nécessaire de donner promptement ordre." 933 In the same letter, he chided his son for the inadequate instructions he had written for the visit of the coasts by the engineer Deshoulières. 934 The next month, however, the young man must have felt some relief when his father expressed pleasure with the progress he was beginning to detect. 935 In addition, Colbert's continuing and pivotal role in naval matters and royal finances guaranteed that when he deliberated on the bastions in his son's care, he grasped the bigger picture. His occasional return to the daily operations of the fortification department kept him abreast of the details as well.

929 Trout, Colbert, 142-43, 196, noted Colbert's reservations, Seignelay's limitations, the frequent difficulty of distinguishing between the work of one from the other, and Colbert's reluctance to delegate. Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 10, says that Seignelay had become "virtual secretary of state by 1678," but this seems to underestimate his father's continuing role.

930 Colbert to Seignelay, 16 February 1678, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: 193).

931 Colbert to Seignelay, 22 February 1678, ibid., 197.

932 Colbert to Seignelay, 20 February 1678, ibid., 201.

933 Colbert to Seignelay, 27 February 1678, ibid., 202.

934 Ibid.

935 Colbert to Seignelay, 9 March 1678, ibid., 213.
Thus, when Seignelay stepped into the yoke with his father in 1677 at the relatively young age of twenty-six, there were doubts that he had the same penchant for hard work that animated the elder Colbert. In March 1678, Colbert felt compelled to remind his son that he should

Pensez bien que les fortifications de toutes les places, depuis Bayonne jusqu'à Calais, sont de vos soins, et qu’il n’y a point de jours ni de moments qu’il ne faille y penser.  

Perhaps his father’s fears were well-founded, for Seignelay may have gone to an early grave as a result of his fondness for high living, although the exaggerations of his enemies have to a great extent poisoned the historical well against him. For now, however, Vauban’s talents

Footnotes:

96 Colbert to Seignelay, 3 March 1678, ibid., 206. Seignelay, in marginal notes that reflected the procedure his father had drilled into him, affirmed that “J’écriray par tous les ordinaires sur le sujet de ces places et je taschery de profiter de tous les avis que vous me donnez” (ibid., 207).

97 For the historiography of Seignelay’s life and career, see Pilgrim, “Administration of Seignelay,” 8-28. Pilgrim shows that most authors have merely echoed the hostility of certain of Seignelay’s contemporaries. Pilgrim’s own view of Seignelay is much more sympathetic even though he freely points to the secretary’s limitations and weaknesses.


99 See p. 413 below for Seignelay’s chagrin over this communication of his problems to Louvois, expressed in his letter to Vauban of 20 (?) June 1689 (A.N. Marine B3 59, fols. 339r-v).
were lauded by the king, undeniable by even the Colberts, and necessary to the defense of the kingdom.940

From the outset, Seignelay had seen that the king relied heavily upon the advice of Vauban, although the monarch never followed it slavishly. In fact, it was Louis's adjustment to Vauban's plan for a project in the Three Bishoprics that apparently emboldened Seignelay to propose further modifications of his own device to the engineer's original blueprint.941 But this instance—perhaps a manifestation of the confidence of youth—was not followed by any overt attempt to dislodge Vauban from his predominant status as the king's technical expert. Whereas Colbert had largely remained in Paris, preferring to supervise fortifications through a multitude of agents in the field, relying on their eyes and directing them by his pen, Seignelay made extensive visits to the frontiers. This could have resulted in a threat to Vauban's pre-eminence on the work sites, but no such clash developed while Seignelay directed his father's department.942 Seignelay wrote Vauban the same kind of flattering letters the elder Colbert had written, and sent his subordinates the same admonishments urging that they follow Vauban's instructions to the letter.943 Still, it is clear that Seignelay took a more active part in the affairs of his department than had his father. Seignelay's letters to Vauban, unlike those

940 On one of Colbert's letters to the monarch, Louis XIV wrote (8 April 1677) that the controller-general was to send Vauban a gratification for his work at the sieges of Valenciennes and Cambrai, and noted that the engineer was "un homme qui me sert très-utillement et dont je suis très-satisfait; et pour tout dire, il n'y a plus personne icy qui n'approuve ce qu'il fait" (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 338).


942 Colbert to Vauban, 19 September 1677, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 201-02, announced the itinerary of one such tour, hoping that Vauban and the marquis would be able to rendezvous on the Calais to Dunkirk leg of the journey (see ibid., 192 n. 1, for a list of these inspection tours). According to Seignelay to Vauban, 26 October, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 6, fol. 371, they missed one another at Dunkirk. On Seignelay's rather peripatetic administrative style and the attendant delays it created in the flow of the paperwork of his department, see Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 44-45.

943 For example, Seignelay to Ferry, 27 June 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 213v-216v; to Vauban, 27 June, ibid., 208-209v; 7 September, ibid., fol. 341.
of the elder Colbert, are generally longer and filled with more technical matters and even debates on these issues.\textsuperscript{544} In a departure from his father's procedure, which had been largely to read Vauban's recommendations to the king, Seignelay had expressed to Vauban from an early date his hope that "nous pourrons bien tôt concerner ensemble tout ce qu'il faudra proposer au Roy non seulement pour Calais, mais aussi sur toutes les autres places de mon département...." indicating that at that time the two of them would examine the mémoires Seignelay had made while at Dunkirk.\textsuperscript{545}

Vauban, Ports, and Maritime Fortifications

Vauban's collaboration with the Colberts expanded in new directions at about the same time that it was finally regularized. Heretofore, the engineer appears to have been on loan from Louvois, with no official role in Colbert's department, acting instead as constant consultant who had the king and marine minister's confidence. That changed in December 1677 when Clerville, worn-out and long-since overshadowed by the accomplishments of his former pupil, died on the Isle d'Oléron. Shortly afterwards, on 4 January 1678, Vauban received provisions appointing him commissaire général des fortifications.\textsuperscript{546} Rejecting the example of Pepin the Short, who had desired to join the title of king to the one who exercised its functions, Vauban did not welcome the new commission. In his "Abregé des services," Vauban commented that the new office "le

\textsuperscript{544} Even though one of the secretaries employed by Seignelay had a smaller, more cramped handwriting than that of Colbert's usual secretary, the son's letters still spilled over more folios than did those of the father (see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, passim). For the debate over the work the king (and possibly Seignelay) proposed for Verdun, see Seignelay to Vauban, 8 June 1677, ibid., cols. 185-187; 3 July, ibid., cols. 221-223; to Ferry, 17 July, ibid., cols. 260-261v (where Ferry was asked to examine the matter and do some surveying of the site so that the king could render his decision). These findings agree with Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 45, who found that the secretary had a hands-on style of administration, despite his subsequent reputation for indolence. If anything, Pilgrim observes, Seignelay did not delegate authority enough.

\textsuperscript{545} Seignelay to Vauban, 30 October 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, cols. 379-80.

\textsuperscript{546} "Extrait des titres produits par Vauban pour recevoir les ordres du Roi" (20 January 1703), Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 1: 67.
surchargera du soin général de toutes les places fortes du royaume."947 But unlike his old mentor, Vauban had no credible rival to challenge his titular domination of the fortifications of the entire kingdom. There was no one else to whom the king could turn with equal confidence. As noted earlier, outside of Louvois’s department and the conduct of sieges, Vauban craved no augmentation to his responsibilities, largely because he felt weighed down by what was already on his shoulders.948 Assuming Clerville’s grand and comprehensive but long-moribund title meant more prestige, to be sure, but it also increased Vauban’s responsibilities, including care for whole provinces and fortifications he had hitherto visited only occasionally or not at all. Admirers of Vauban might look back and conclude that he had finally been given his just due, but the hard-pressed engineer himself clearly thought otherwise.949

Seignelay’s debut as head of his father’s fortification bureaucracy coincided with Vauban’s first major collaboration with the Colberts’ on their ambitious program for the development of new and existing ports. Vauban had complained long before, as we have seen, about the lack of vision in the building program at Dunkirk, while Colbert bent his efforts in other directions and toward other coasts. Seignelay, probably reflecting the opinion of his father, noted in 1673 that Dunkirk was not useful to the growing

947 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1678.

948 Vauban to Louvois, 26 February 1673, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 89, requested that he be given a new title and powers. But, significantly, he stated that he did not want to prejudice the more encompassing charges of "Surintendant et de Commisaire général des fortifications," thus eschewing all desire to supplant or surpass Clerville outside Louvois’s department.

949 For example, Parent and Verroust, Vauban, 64, said that the post was "officially conferred" "only" in 1678 after Clerville’s death. Hebbert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 56, observed that Clerville’s death "freed" the office. It is also true that such implications that officialdom had finally caught up with reality are often based on the misplaced notion that Vauban had exercised the functions of that office for many years prior to the death of Clerville, whereas we have established a very different chronology for the increase in Vauban’s administrative responsibilities.
marine activity because of its various deficiencies, unlike the more favored port of Brest. By 1675, however, their visions were beginning to converge as the Colberts finally turned their attentions to Dunkirk, and in 1677 father and son decided to heed Vauban’s advice and make it a first-rate port. The next year, Colbert assured Vauban that by making Dunkirk’s harbor capable of accepting ships with fifty cannon he had contributed as much to augmenting the king’s power by sea as he had by the land fortifications he had constructed over the years. Although writing this letter on behalf of his son, who was recuperating at the waters of Bourbon, Colbert assured Vauban that as controller-general he would see to it that funds would not be lacking for this project.

So pleased were both Colberts with Vauban’s work at Dunkirk, in 1678 they invited him to inspect any maritime city he visited and to suggest how its capacity could be increased. Soon, Vauban was drawn into planning for new havens along the coast of the English Channel for the Colberts’ growing fleet. On a number of occasions, the engineer was requested to write often about the progress of the work at Dunkirk, an

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950 Clément, Histoire de Colbert, 1: 418-19, quoted Seignelay’s observations. See Mémain, Marine de guerre, on Rochefort as a model of Colbert’s arsenal-building program. Konvitz, Cities and the Sea, 73-89, discussed Colbert’s search for new ports.

951 See Colbert to Vauban, 14 September 1675, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 150-51, soliciting this thoughts on making Dunkirk capable of holding a Channel fleet with ease, and Seignelay to Vauban, 31 July 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 282v-283v (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 201-02 n. 1, printed only a portion of this), announcing approval of plans and money for such an undertaking. In a few months, Vauban was being urged to visit the site since his presence and care was deemed essential for the success of the project (Seignelay to Vauban, 7 September 1677, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 341r-v).

952 Colbert to Vauban, 25 May 1678, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fol. 134. On 24 October, Seignelay offered the same assurances with regard to funding (ibid., fol. 267).

953 Colbert to Vauban, 30 May 1678, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 167-68.

954 Colbert to Vauban, 4 June 1678, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 144v-145v; 10 June, ibid., fols. 149v-150v; 9 August, ibid., fols. 220v-221.
entreaty reminiscent of Louvois's frequent pleas for a steady flow of information during the great building program in Flanders. ⁹⁵⁵

While the Colberts showered him with praise, Louvois—perhaps a bit jealous of Vauban's growing stature and independence—aimed a few barbs at his old friend, poking fun at some work the engineer planned at Dunkirk by branding it as useless and wasteful. ⁹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, in 1678 Louvois acquiesced to Colbert's request that Vauban be permitted to devote a month of the valuable spring work season to opening the major phase of the work at Dunkirk. ⁹⁷⁷ Seignelay and Vauban worked together frequently, meeting either on the work sites of Dunkirk or wherever the court happened to be. ⁹⁵⁸

In March 1678, Vauban helped the king push the allies toward signing a treaty to end the Dutch War by successfully investing their fortresses of Gand and Ypres. But after those actions Vauban returned to his familiar routine of annual inspections, which were now to include all the land and sea frontiers of the kingdom. Over the next several years Vauban would visit and create projects for a host of fortresses and cities that had not experienced his ministrations up to this point. As we have just seen, work began in earnest at Dunkirk the summer of 1678. ⁹⁹⁹ His annual winter voyage began in Franche-Comté in Louvois's service but in the early months of 1679 took him to Provence, where he drew up new plans for Toulon and Marseille, among other places. ⁹⁶⁰ The next year


⁹⁶⁶ Louvois to Vauban, 20 April 1678, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 165-66.

⁹⁷⁷ Colbert announced this to Vauban, 10 May 1678, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 211.

⁹⁸⁸ Seignelay to Vauban, 17 July 1678, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 191v-192; 31 October, ibid., fol. 281; to de Combes, 3 December, ibid., fols. 326v-327; to Raulet, 24 December, ibid., fol. 353; to Hubert, 30 December, ibid., fol. 357; to Vauban, 4 December 1679, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fol. 258.

⁹⁵⁹ Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1678.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid., entry for 1679.
found him on the coast of Guyenne, creating projects for Blaye, Bordeaux, and Bayonne, and then on to the entire eastern frontier. During the early months of 1681, Vauban followed the coast of Normandy, arresting his progress long enough to gather data to draft designs for Saint-Malo, Granville, Dieppe, Cherbourg, and Boulogne. In what was an incredibly busy year, he went from Normandy to Alsace, then to Hainaut and on to Paris. From the capital he made a dash to the western coast where he prepared projects for La Rochelle, Rochefort, Brouage, and the Isles of Ré and Oléron, and then traversed the kingdom once again, this time by less traveled routes and in a secretive manner, so he could join the king and Louvois for their surprise occupation of Strasbourg in September. The late winter and spring months of 1682 found him once again in Provence inspecting what he had begun on his last voyage and developing new projects for the approval of Seignelay and the king. Thus, within the space of three years of assuming the office of commissaire général des fortifications, Vauban made a complete tour of all the coastal fortifications under Colbert’s control. The primary purpose of these visits was to rectify any faults in the plans for these places and to verify their prompt and proper execution. But a critical secondary goal, crucial to the realization of the first, was Vauban’s assertion of his authority and the implementation of his administrative procedures throughout Colbert’s department. This had been largely accomplished just prior to this period along the land frontier supervised by Colbert. It was now the turn of the fortification agents in the maritime places of the naval secretary to submit to Vauban’s regime.

Vauban’s negative comments about his service in the department of the Colbergs appear to have subsided with the dawn of Seignelay’s administration in April 1677. Perhaps this was because Vauban regarded the advent of the son as a hopeful sign. Vauban and Seignelay had worked well together on the inspection tours they had shared,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{\textsuperscript{961}}Ibid., entry for 1680.
\item \textit{\textsuperscript{962}}Ibid., entry for 1681. For this elaborate ruse, see Louvois to Vauban, 25 August 1681, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 199.
\item \textit{\textsuperscript{963}}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1682.
\end{itemize}
and Vauban would henceforth be spared having to interact on a regular basis with the hated father. In addition, before the year was out Vauban knew that his managerial hand had been strengthened by the passing of Clerville, whose title he nonetheless reluctantly accepted from the king in the first days of January 1678. This helps account for the relative ease with which he asserted his hegemony over the fortifications along the coasts of the realm. Of course, both Colbert and later Seignelay had smoothed his path by their earlier and consistent refusal to brook any opposition to Vauban in their department along the eastern land frontier. But it is worth underlining that Vauban was no longer merely Louvois’s chief engineer, for now he was an important officier whose dependence was increasingly on the king rather than his war minister.

Thus further empowered, Vauban was better able to introduce into the Colberts’ administration many procedures he already employed in Louvois’s department. For example, in July 1678 Seignelay informed all the governors and commanders of fortifications in his division of complaints to the king about the poor conservation of walls, palisades, buildings, and other parts of their strongholds. Henceforth, in order to prevent such deterioration and damage, they were to utilize the regulations that had been in effect "depuis longtemps dans toutes les places de Flandres." In 1679, Colbert requested an example of Vauban’s designs for barracks as employed in Louvois’s department so he could use it for those to be constructed at Stenay; he stated that, in accordance with the royal will, his aim was consistency.

Numerous letters show that the king’s fortification planning for each year was largely contingent upon receiving and weighing Vauban’s recommendations. Seignelay and Vauban worked often together, but in technical matters and even in over-all planning, Vauban’s opinion typically counted for more with the king than that of anyone

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965 Colbert to Vauban, 11 November 1679, ibid., 226-27; to Ferry, 11 November, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fol. 252; Seignelay to Vauban, 4 December, ibid., fol. 258; to Ferry, 4 December, ibid., fol. 261.
else, whether engineers at the provincial posts or the minister in Paris. Seignelay frequently postponed technical decisions until he could confer with Vauban, either by letter, at court, or on the actual work site. The naval and fortification intendants in his department were continually instructed to wait patiently for Vauban’s arrival before deciding on a detail of work, a new contract, or numerous other matters. In addition, Vauban was given great latitude to act upon his own best judgment while on tour.

For example, see Seignelay to Vauban, 9 November 1677 (general plans for the coming year), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 7, fols. 390-391; 27 January 1678 (faulty bastion at Doullens), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 15v-16; 13 April (advice on proposal of marine officers on protection of the moat at Mardick), ibid., fols. 84v-85 (see Colbert to Vauban, 6 May, ibid., fols. 120v-121, for the king’s agreement with Vauban’s resolution); Seignelay to Vauban, 2 July (a letter filled with flattery), Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 216; 17 July (hopes for a meeting at Dunkirk), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 191v-192; Colbert to Moyenneville, 20 August (the king awaits Vauban’s visit to the places of your department before resolving work for next year), ibid., fol. 229; Colben to Pierre Arnoul, 4 December 1678 (on a matter of this importance and expense, the king will take no resolution without first sending Vauban to Toulon), Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, vol. 3 pt. 1 (2d set of pages): 138; Seignelay to Vauvré, 9 March 1679 (dismisses the naval intendant’s complaints about quality of building materials at Dunkirk since Vauban has not complained), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fols. 42v-44v; to Vauvré, 31 December (dealing with carpenters), ibid., fols. 292v-294.

Seignelay to Moyenneville, 6 July 1678 (I will write to Vauban to find out whether or not to continue work at Calais), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fol. 184; to Buisson, 23 July (go to Lille to get Vauban’s ideas on Doullens and Péronne), ibid., 206v-207; to de Combes, 3 December (change nothing until I have spoken with Vauban), ibid., fols. 326v-327.

Seignelay to Du Cairon, 24 December 1678 (expresses pleasure that he has stopped most work at Toulon and has returned there to await Vauban), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fol. 355v; to Vauban, 17 September 1679 (advises him that a number of decisions have been postponed until his arrival at Dunkirk), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fols. 200v-201v; to de Combes and to Vauban, 16 July and 5 August 1682 (king awaits Vauban’s advice on work at Dunkirk), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fol. 158 and 184; to Desclouzeaux, 3 September (the matter of a new entry at the port of Dunkirk so important, Vauban’s opinion wanted before a decision made), ibid., fol. 210.

Colbert to Vauban, 20 August 1678 (about changing an entrepreneur at Dunkirk), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 227v-228; 3 September (telling him not to hesitate to change any unsatisfactory entrepreneur), Clément, *Lettres de Colbert*, 5: 219.
So great was Vauban's power in the department of the Colberts, engineers were instructed on occasion to submit their disputes to Vauban for his decision, rather than having them decided in Paris. Any deviation from Vauban's designs earned a reprimand, or as in the case of the obdurate Niquet, eventual imprisonment. But there is no evidence that the wider insurgency of earlier days persisted. Although there were occasional difficulties, Vauban was increasingly accepted in the department of the Colberts, if not warmly, at least as a fact of the administrative command system. One of Seignelay's subordinates and a boyhood friend, Pierre Arnoul, marine intendant at Toulon, expressed what appears to have been genuine pleasure with Vauban's efforts at Toulon, praising not only his expeditious manner of working and the comprehensiveness of his design, but also the fairness of his construction prices and the over-all economy of his project. Thus the stern warnings of the naval secretary as well as Vauban's obvious preeminence in the exercise of his métier helped him win over the engineers and other functionaries of the department.

In fact, as the years passed, Seignelay's engineers had grown so accustomed to Vauban's dominion in technical and administrative matters and Seignelay's deference to him that many by-passed the minister altogether and took their concerns directly to Vauban. In a 1681 circular letter to his engineers during the height of the busy summer construction season, a frustrated Seignelay noted

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971 For instance, Seignelay to Vauban and to Hubert, 24 October 1678 (work at Dunkirk), B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 267-268; to Vauvré, 23 July 1679, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, 159v-160v; 5 August, ibid., fols. 159v-160v; to Buisson, 22 February 1682, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fols. 43v-44.

972 On Niquet, see note 356 above.

973 Arnoul to Seignelay, 10 March 1679, A.N. Marine B3 32, fol. 180. Vauban himself, in a letter to Louvois the same day, said that the project had fatigued him (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 179). Jean Meyer, "Vauban et la marine: milieu ambiant et intervention," Vauban réformateur, 355-72, argued that while Vauban's ideas on arsenals were well-informed, the information base he drew upon for his thoughts about the guerre de course was less so due to "technological uncertainty."
Je vous ay deja fait sçavoir qu'il estoit apropos que vous escrivissiez a M. de Vauban sur les esclaircissemens dont vous pourriez avoir besoin pour l'execution des ouvrages desquels je vous ay donnè la conduite; je vous repette encore qu'il faut que vous executiez ponctuellement cet ordre, observez cependant de ne luy point envoyer a droiture les plans profils et memoires sur lesquels il sera neces[ai]re qu'il donne son avis, mais de me les adresser, a fin que je les voye a l'avance, et jauray soin ensuite de les luy faire tenir et de vous renvoyer sa reponse avec l'ordre de ce que vous auriez a faire a cet esgard.974

This letter testifies to the remarkable progress Vauban had made in just a few years. Seignelay actually feared being left out of the supervision of the administrative business of his own fortification department; consequently, he sought to reassert his authority by at least overseeing the flow of papers between Vauban and the local engineers.

To say that Vauban's opinions carried great weight in matters of fortifications is not the same as asserting that all other points of view were swept aside by his arguments. In 1681 at Toulon, in a province that had fallen to Vauban's care only a few years earlier, the marine officers and engineers did not shrink from objecting to parts of his project for a new arsenal, although apparently without success.975 The king himself did not always defer to Vauban's judgment. Even when Louis approved a project, he reserved to himself the final word as to when it would be executed, basing his decision on strategic and budgetary considerations that frequently transcended the realm of fortifications.976 Nevertheless, the king listened to Vauban's advice on strategic matters and often followed it, especially on technical matters.

974Seignelay to his engineers, 25 June 1681, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fols. 118v-119. This letter went to ten engineers. Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 44-46, attests to Seignelay's desire not to be excluded from the administrative loop of his department, even by trusted subordinates.

975Seignelay to Vauvré, 10 July 1681, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fol. 139, and 22 July, ibid., fols. 157-158.

976See, for example, the plans for Marseille, which were approved in 1679, even though the work was deferred to the following year (Seignelay to Brodart, 30 April 1679, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fols. 110v-111). Later, Vauban's proposal for the augmentation of the port of Antibes was not approved because the king did not find the expense to be "a propos" (Seignelay to Vauban, 11 June 1682, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fol. 137).
Despite some familiarity with having his plans criticized, postponed, or even rejected, Vauban accepted this with better grace for some projects and from some people than others. In 1679 he complained of the "nonchalance" that had marked the government's attitude toward Port-Vendres, on the coast of Roussillon.  

In his general mémoire on Roussillon, Vauban argued strongly for the advantages to the realm of fortifying Port-Vendres, and the minister of war agreed with his proposal, but warned his friend that its expense might be "too frightening." Frightening to whom? Louvois did not specify. Although Roussillon was one of the provinces under his care, he did not control the port facilities, which fell under the authority of the minister of the marine. Seignelay promised Vauban that he would visit Port-Vendres in October to see at first hand his proposals for its augmentation, but without apparent result. So great was the engineer's ire that he had not forgotten this rebuff when over twenty years later he composed his "Abregé des services," noting with lingering bitterness that the project "n'eut pas de suite par la jalousie du ministre de ce temps-là."  

Certainly, Seignelay is a prime suspect in the killing of this project because of his initial involvement with it. Yet, the hand of his father the controller-general may be

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977 Letter of Vauban, 2 May 1679, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 184 n. 1. Rochas did not indicate the recipient of this letter, but because he found it in the Archives des Pyrénées-Orientales, it was probably written to Rousselot, the engineer assigned to that area. On Rousselot, see Ph. Torreilles, "L'oeuvre de Vauban en Roussillon," Bulletin de la Société agricole, scientifique et littéraire des Pyrénées-Orientales 42 (1901): 205.

978 Ibid., 214-16, reprints part of Vauban's 2 May 1679 mémoire on Port-Vendres and the other places of Roussillon.

979 Louvois to Vauban, 10 May, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 184.


981 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), AN M 658, no. 1, entry for 1679. Hebert and Rothrock, Soldier of France, 62, acknowledge that Vauban must have had Colbert in mind when making this comment, but they found it peculiar since "Vauban suffered no ill will from Colbert..." They concluded that it was "some echo" of the rivalry between Louvois and Colbert, apparently unaware of the tension between Vauban and the latter.
seen in this as well, for Colbert was ever in pursuit of savings for the royal treasury.\textsuperscript{982} Moreover, an enlarged and improved Port Vendres was not a part of Colbert’s grand blueprint for making France a maritime power, which included the construction of four new port cities along portions of the coast not already served by existing facilities. Devised in the 1660s, this was a calculated building program that resulted in new ports and naval arsenals at Brest and Lorient in Brittany, Rochefort in the Charente river basin, and Cette (Sète) in Lower Languedoc, sites selected by Colbert’s collaborators, Clerville and Colbert du Terron. These new establishments on the maritime frontiers of the kingdom, far from the traditional centers of French power, cost the secretary of the marine much in time and money. Colbert cannot have appreciated Vauban’s ambitious scheme for Port Vendres, having no desire to add to an already strained administration and budget.\textsuperscript{983} Finally, Vauban used the term "ministre," and Seignelay was not a minister until years after the death of his father, being called to the \textit{conseil d’en haut} only in 1689 (although an imprecise or anachronistic use of "ministre" term cannot be ruled out). Whether with the son, the father, or both, this disappointment over Port Vendres did nothing to repair Vauban’s long-since damaged view of the Colbert clan’s understanding of the defense needs of the realm.

Vauban’s reservations about Colbert’s strategic judgment were reciprocated by the controller-general. Almost invariably, Colbert’s and Seignelay’s letters to and about Vauban are filled with praise for his technical expertise. And their letters to their subordinates reflect a clear comprehension of just how much the king relied upon his chief engineer. But in 1681, Colbert let slip a complaint about Vauban. Writing to a confidant, Louis Le Blanc, the intendant at Rouen, Colbert remarked that Vauban "est accoustumé à des dépenses prodigieuses dans les fortifications des places, ce qui ne

\textsuperscript{982} Meyer, \textit{Colbert}, 121, 128-32, 267.

\textsuperscript{983} Konvitz, \textit{Cities and the Sea}, 74-89, offered an insightful discussion of this program. In his "Mémoire sur le canal de Languedoc...," 25 February 1691, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 1: 552-53, Vauban wrote disparagingly of Cette, where he said "on a voulu (en forçant la nature) faire un port dans un lieu qui n’y avait nulle disposition...." Despite the vast sums expended on it, the place remained unfinished.
convient nullement pour ce qui se passe au dedans du royaume..."984 Thus, he observed, Vauban's up-coming visit to Le Havre, even though in the company of Seignelay, was not likely to be "fort utile," nor would one be able to implement the "vastes desseins" that he would propose. The intendant needed only to examine Vauban's thoughts and reduce them as much as possible to "la dépense que nous voulons faire." Colbert himself would peruse any mémoires Vauban left with the intendant so that Le Blanc would know the minister's sentiments.985 A few weeks later, Colbert instructed Le Blanc to await orders from Seignelay, who would send along orders as to which of Vauban's many proposals he was to undertake. Colbert found it necessary to observe again that Vauban was accustomed to "grands desseins et à ne s'arrêter jamais pour quelque dépense qu'il y ayt à faire..."986

Surely, this letter represents more than an emotional, frustrated outburst over differences of opinion involving just one project. It would appear to represent years of pent-up frustration, exacerbated by the monarchy's slipping finances, and the recollection that Vauban had abandoned the clientage of the Colberts for that of their bitter rivals the Le Telliers.987 It gives us a clear insight into Colbert's opinion of Vauban's grasp of the bigger strategic and financial picture. Again, he had an honest admiration for Vauban's engineering skills. But when it was a matter of balancing the requirements of a strong frontier defense with the other needs of the kingdom, Colbert found Vauban wanting. Even in this instance, when the expenditures in question involved port facilities in his much-beloved naval department, Colbert drew the line. It is likely that he felt that Louvois--if not the king as well--had spoiled Vauban by accustoming him to vast outlays

984 Colbert to Le Blanc, 30 January 1681, Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 4: 516.

985 Ibid.

986 Colbert to Le Blanc, 13 February 1681, ibid.

987 The dangers of moving from one clientele to another are discussed in Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 28-31, 184-86.
of money during the past decades. Colbert would trust Vauban only when it was a matter of exercising his engineering craft and administrative talents, but beyond that, there is no evidence and little reason to suppose that he would have welcomed or heeded Vauban's advice on other matters.

Seignelay and Vauban after the Death of Colbert

On 6 September 1683, Jean-Baptiste Colbert breathed his last, having occupied his final, fever-ridden weeks with more thought to attending to his salvation than to the royal business that had consumed his past decades. Although the old rumor of an actual or looming disgrace seems unlikely, it is certain that Colbert had felt increasingly exasperated by the growing chorus advocating more aggressive and even violent policies than in the past. His long-time rival Louvois led the Le Tellier clan in this chant, but the fact that they were frequently joined in this bellicose chorus by his own brother Colbert de Croissy, named foreign secretary in 1679, and his heir-designate Seignelay must have been particularly discouraging. Depending upon the results of his soul-searching, Colbert—aged sixty-four and racked by chronic ill health—may have been content to leave the tumult of earthly cares behind. His rivals certainly shed no tears at

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98 But Louvois and the king did not always accede to Vauban's requests. On 16 November 1668, Louvois explained to the engineer that the king had declined to implement some of the work proposed for Tournai because it was not necessary to "pousser les choses à l'infini" (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 21). A decade later, Louvois referred to some of Vauban's plans for Dunkirk as too magnificent (Louvois to Vauban, 20 April 1678, ibid., 165).

99 Meyer, Colbert, 13, 309-10, 316-17.

99 Trout, Colbert, 112-14, 143, 207-09, 211-12. On ministerial quarrels and Croissy's support for the aggressive reunion policy, see Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 67-69. For the shared aggressiveness of Louvois and Croissy, especially with regard to the policy of reunions along the imperial frontier, see Corvisier, Louvois, 438-44, 446 (who includes Vauban and other engineers as supporters of the reunions as well).
his passing, and even his son perhaps felt some relief at no longer being under the wing of his demanding father.\textsuperscript{991}

Vauban, too, probably felt no more sorrow at Colbert's death than his usual spirit of Christian charity required. For nearly twenty years he had nursed a deep dislike and mistrust of his former patron, and he had served Colbert during the past decade with great reluctance and much grumbling. What had started as Colbert's department and then become that of both the Colberts was now the exclusive domain of Seignelay, a man with whom Vauban had interacted on a more affable level. But as argued earlier, Vauban's quarrel with Colbert had never been of a purely personal nature since the two men were also separated by a policy gulf that was only exacerbated by the rift between them as individuals. Vauban apparently never visited upon the son the alleged "sins of the father," which was epitomized in his mind by Colbert's conduct in the painfully drawn-out "Affaire de Brisach." But he could not ignore the fact that Seignelay was a Colbert, formed in part by his father's unrelenting tutorials, and heir to his patronage, a goodly portion of his administrative empire, and most of his policies.\textsuperscript{992} Thus, the death of Colbert could not and did not render Seignelay a \textit{tabula rasa}. While personal animosity diminished greatly as a wedge between Vauban and the Colbert clan, the policy conflicts remained and multiplied.

In 1683, even prior to the passing of Colbert, Seignelay showed a bit more willingness than in the past to say "no" to Vauban's requests, and even to criticize him. The engineer's extended visit to the coasts of Brittany that year generated an abundance of plans for various improvements and new undertakings. One was rejected by the king himself as unnecessary, but another was never taken to the king, Seignelay himself

\textsuperscript{991}Madame de Maintenon said at the death of Colbert that "M. de Seignelay ne se console point; l'ambition le dévore" (quoted by Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 3 pt. 2: xxxiii).

\textsuperscript{992}Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 38, argues for this essential administrative continuity from father to son.
regarding it as superfluous.\textsuperscript{993} Early in 1683 Seignelay instructed the marine intendant at Dunkirk to lower the price of a previously concluded entrepreneurial contract, despite Vauban’s recommendation that it be left as it was.\textsuperscript{994} To another marine intendant Seignelay remarked that Vauban’s plan for a new dock at Brest was excessive, offering him a design at lower cost.\textsuperscript{995} In August, Seignelay expressed surprise and impatience to Vauban at not having yet received a memoir on the trial of a battery—sentiments the engineer was accustomed to hearing from Louvois, but not from either of the Colberts.\textsuperscript{996} In November, the new secretary of state for the marine thanked Vauban for an inscription to be placed over a gate at Dunkirk, which had been devised at Vauban’s request by his client Baron Woerden. Yet, although he pronounced it "bon," Seignelay rejected it as too bombastic, sending along a new inscription he regarded as simpler and better.\textsuperscript{997}

These rough spots in their professional association notwithstanding, Seignelay continued to rely on Vauban for the direction of his department. In the same letter in which he thanked Vauban for the condolences the engineer had sent upon the death of the elder Colbert, Seignelay expressed delight that Vauban had been satisfied with what he had found on his visit to the places of Champagne. He also requested that the engineer let him know when he would be arriving at court so that they could work

\textsuperscript{993}Seignelay relayed to Vauban the king’s thoughts on his proposals for the Breton post of Port Louis, at the opening of the estuary leading to Lorient, on 1 March 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 29r-v (reiterated 27 May, ibid., fols. 65-66), and his own thoughts on Vauban’s request for fortifications at the mouth of the Loire on 31 March, ibid., fols. 44v-45.

\textsuperscript{994}Seignelay to Desclouzeaux, 22 January 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 17v.

\textsuperscript{995}Seignelay to de Seuil, 3 July 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 93.

\textsuperscript{996}Seignelay to Vauban, 5 August 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 118r-v.

\textsuperscript{997}Seignelay to Vauban, 27 November 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fols. 228v-229r.
together to regulate the next year’s projects. The 1680s experienced an increase in the pace of the Colberts’ naval build-up, especially after the death of the elder Colbert. Seignelay, now at the helm of this ambitious program, showed a greater willingness to use the fleet than had his father. Yet, Vauban’s active involvement in Seignelay’s department appears to have diminished during the spring and early summer of 1684, during which time he was occupied with the methodical and time-consuming siege of Luxembourg, a fortress reputed to be impregnable but which he took with remarkably few French casualties. Perhaps as a reminder of Vauban’s continuing position as his chief deputy, in September Seignelay sent a circular letter to all the engineers of his department urging them to redouble their efforts to work diligently on the projects entrusted to them and based on Vauban’s plans.

In the autumn of 1684 the established pattern resumed and even expanded a bit. First, Vauban toured the frontier strongholds and port facilities for inspection and planning purposes, and then drafted detailed mémoires to be sent off to Versailles, where Seignelay began discussions with the king. Meanwhile, Vauban examined various

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998 Seignelay to Vauban, 2 October 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fols. 163v-164r. On 12 November, the new secretary expressed his impatience to learn precisely when Vauban would go to Dunkirk to tie up loose ends for the present year and to regulate work for the next (ibid., fol. 212r-v). He also hoped that Vauban could visit Dieppe during the winter (16 December, ibid., fols. 239v-240r).


1000 Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1684.

1001 Seignelay, circular letter, 18 September 1684, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 14, fols. 164v-165r. Vauban’s absence from the secretary’s register lasted from 2 January until 18 June (ibid., fol. 89r-v), when Seignelay offered Vauban his tardy congratulations for the engineer’s stunning mastery of Luxembourg. In a letter to de Combes in February, the secretary mentioned having spoken with Vauban about the work at Dunkirk (20 February, ibid., fol. 43r); in March, he did the same in a letter to Desclouzeaux (12 March, ibid., fol. 50r-v); in April, he informed Clement of Vauban’s involvement with the ongoing planning for Dunkirk (15 April, ibid., fol. 72). After that, however, Vauban is not mentioned in any active role until June. For Vauban’s efforts at Luxembourg, where he remained at least until July putting its fortifications back in order, see the exchange of letters with Louvois in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 229-56.
proposals generated by the local engineers and sent to him by the secretary. Finally, Vauban met with Seignelay at Versailles to consult together on what was being proposed to the king for the 1685 work season. Some selected engineers were also invited to Versailles to consult directly with Vauban on their projects for the following year. During this same year, Seignelay drew Vauban into his responsibilities for the colonies when the secretary solicited his recommendation for an engineer to send to Canada.

Vauban’s greatest fame as an engineer rests largely on his military engineering feats, both in constructing fortresses resistant to capture and to reducing those of the enemy to obedience to his king. But Vauban’s civil engineering accomplishments also attest to his skills, and the year 1685 provided abundant evidence that the king and his ministers regarded Vauban as more than just a military technician. Indeed, he had become the chief engineer of the realm. The ill-fated folly of the aqueduct that was supposed to divert part of the river Eure to Versailles is well-known, and is often cited as an example of the hubris of both Louis XIV and Louvois. Today, there remain only a few arches of the uncompleted aqueduct, covered with vegetation and creating a romantic effect when viewed from the gardens of Madame de Maintenon’s near-by chateau. At the time, however, these spans and the related work kept thousands of soldier-workers occupied during the years of peace, and many died in the unhealthy marshes near Maintenon. Vauban himself was drawn into the project by Louvois who alternately

1002 Seignelay to Vauban, 12 August 1684, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 14, fols. 127v-128r; 30 September, ibid., fol. 166r-v; 9 October, ibid., fol. 171r-v; 23 November, ibid., 196r-v; 7 December, ibid., 202r-v; 13 December, ibid., fol. 211r-v.

1003 Seignelay to Niquet (concerning Toulon), 13 December 1684, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 14, fol. 214r; to Raulet (concerning Mezières), 20 December, ibid., fol. 216.

1004 Vauban to Seignelay, 10 March 1685; Seignelay to Vauban, 19 March; Seignelay to Vauban, 26 March; Vauban to Seignelay, 29 March; Seignelay to Vauban, 2 April. These and other letters, some of which are from the generally-closed Rosanbo collection, are printed in Louise Dechéne, ed., La correspondance de Vauban relative au Canada (N.p.: Ministère des affaires culturelles [Canada], 1968), 9-10. The letter of 29 March noted that the engineer Vauban offered was the only one that could be spared due to the work on the aqueduct at Maintenon.
sought his advice and then rejected it with his usual verbal abuse. Only the resumption of war in 1688 ended this costly and remarkable project.  

So great was Louis XIV's confidence in his chief engineer's skills, he instructed Seignelay to employ Vauban in a number of the great civil engineering projects undertaken in his department as well. Seignelay was in apparent agreement with the king's high opinion of Vauban. In 1685, when Henri Daguesseau, the intendant of Languedoc, sent Seignelay a proposal to join the Canal du Midi to Narbonne by a secondary canal, the secretary instructed him to inform the local sponsors of this project that there would be a delay of about one month in reaching a decision, the king having resolved to determine nothing until Vauban, who was visiting nearby Cette on the Mediterranean coast, had inspected the site and rendered his evaluation. Seignelay added that he would also contribute his observations on the matter when he returned from a projected inspection of Languedoc.  

In June, Seignelay apprised the intendant of the itinerary of the visit he and Vauban planned to make to the Canal du Midi: it would take place in October, start at Toulouse, and end at the port of Cette. But Vauban's duties on the marine secretary's behalf along the Atlantic coast forced Seignelay to postpone his trip. When Vauban finally made his way from the foothills of the Pyrenees to the Canal du Midi early in 1686, he accomplished his inspection without

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1005 For the aqueduct at Maintenon and the whole river-diversion project, see Blomfield, Vauban, 99-102, and Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 258-62, who printed a selection of Louvois's letters to Vauban on this topic. In his "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1685 and 1686, Vauban called this project a "grand et magnifique ouvrage."


1007 Seignelay to Daguesseau, 17 June 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13, fol. 67r.

1008 Seignelay to Pennautier, 16 September 1685, ibid., fols. 70v-71r.
Seignelay;\textsuperscript{1009} nonetheless, the secretary expressed great satisfaction with the plans Vauban sent from Languedoc.\textsuperscript{1010} In April, Seignelay and Vauban toiled together at Versailles on the proposals generated during the latter's sojourn in the south,\textsuperscript{1011} and by May, the secretary was able to announce to the interested parties in Languedoc the approval of the Narbonne link to the Canal du Midi.\textsuperscript{1012} In later instructions, Seignelay notified the new intendant, Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, that Niquet would be charged with supervising the project since Vauban had not found the locally-sponsored priest of sufficient capacity.\textsuperscript{1013} To further insure his control over this important undertaking, Vauban, backed by Seignelay, sent Niquet an assistant of the senior engineer's own choosing.\textsuperscript{1014}

\textsuperscript{1009}Vauban's "Memoire sur le canal du Midi, les augmentations qu'on pourrait y faire" is dated 5 March 1686. The original is in the A.I.G., Article 5, section 5 § 10, carton 1, no. 10 (B.I.G. in-Fo 33 is a nineteenth-century copy), and a portion of the introduction was included in Rochas, Vaubain ses écrits, 1: 548-49. Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1687, says that he "fit la visite du Canal de la Communication des mers et Port de Cette et tous les projets necessaires pour mettre ce grand et bel ouvrage dans sa perfection," but his chronology is clearly off by a year. See also L.T.C. Rolt, From Sea to Sea: The Canal du Midi ([Athens, OH]: Ohio University Press, 1973).


\textsuperscript{1011}Seignelay to Niquet, 10 April 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fol. 42.

\textsuperscript{1012}Seignelay to Cardinal Bonzy, 11 May 1686, ibid., vol. 13, fols. 82v-83r (same announcement to Basville and Niquet on the same day, ibid., fols. 83r-85v).

\textsuperscript{1013}Seignelay to Basville, 12 June 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13, fol. 86. Basville had been named to this post in August 1685. See Antoine, Dictionnaire biographique, 143-44.

\textsuperscript{1014}Seignelay to Vauban, 12 June 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fols. 70v-71v; to Niquet, 12 June, ibid., fol. 88.
Vauban's tour along the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts in 1685-86 led to further civil engineering assignments from Seignelay. In September 1685, while Vauban made his way down the coast from Brittany, Seignelay arranged for him to confer in Rochefort with Bonrepaus, one of his chief assistants in the navy department, who was on his way to Languedoc. The two were to explore the possibility of re-establishing the harbor of Brouage, a fortress located in the marshes of the Charente that had rivaled La Rochelle as recently as the reign of Louis XIII, but which had since fallen on hard times, due in part to the silting up of its harbor. The following month, the secretary added to Vauban's expanding itinerary by relaying the king's desire that he examine the silting of the Garonne, which was impeding the navigability of this link to the Canal du Midi, and suggest ways to repair the damage. In addition, Seignelay was receptive to a canal proposal originated by Vauban himself. He ordered Ferry to examine the site Vauban had suggested for this canal to connect with the river Seudre, another marshy

1015 This tour began in Brittany in July. Vauban and Seignelay conferred in Brest late August-early September (Seignelay to Vauban, 10 July 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 148v-149r; 30 July, ibid., fol. 159; 7 August, ibid., fols. 168v-169r), regulating not only the work of this direction but also a serious personnel problem at Belle-Isle (see p. 393 below). Vauban visited La Rochelle (Seignelay to Vauban, 9 September, ibid., fol. 174r), conferred with Ferry on Bayonne (Seignelay to Ferry, 9 September, ibid., fols. 173v-174r) prior to visiting that place and the surrounding area (Seignelay to Buisson, 12 October, ibid., fol. 205v), inspected the Pyrenees frontier (Seignelay to de Ris, 16 September, ibid., fols. 180v-181r), and then went on to visit Languedoc (Seignelay to Richer, 5 November, ibid., fol. 210). Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1685 and 1686, mentions his visit "des costes de Bretagne et des places de Normandie...."

1016 Seignelay to Vauban, 9 September 1685, A.N. Marine B255, fol. 385 bis v. Although Seignelay strongly approved of Vauban's proposal for Brouage, he was convinced that the king would not approve it due to its cost. But he urged the marine intendant to try to form a private company and persuade the locals of the commercial value of investing in cleaning of the canals that fed into the harbor (Seignelay to Arnaul, 25 December, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fol. 240, and to Vauban, 15 January 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16. fols. 1-3v). For Brouage, see Blomfield, Vauban, 30, 87.

1017 Seignelay to Vauban, 10 October 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fol. 197v, and 30 November, ibid., fols. 225v-227.
area north of the Gironde which Vauban regarded as having great commercial potential.¹⁰¹⁸ As Vauban progressed along the Canal du Midi toward the Mediterranean coast, Seignelay again sent him off to the mouths of the Rhône to examine possible sites for canals. This time, he was to evaluate proposals to link Beaucaire to Aigues Mortes and Arles to the port of Bouc, an ambitious plan to join the two river cities to two Mediterranean ports, thereby circumventing the "wild and turbulent...headstrong river."¹⁰¹⁹ Seignelay expressed impatience to receive Vauban’s thoughts and great satisfaction upon reading these mémoires which he regarded as important to the fostering of commerce.¹⁰²⁰

The measure of Seignelay’s continuing reliance upon Vauban’s technical expertise can be taken in the flurry of letter’s from the secretary that pursued the engineer on his voyage along the waterways of France. Besides advice on the repair of the fortifications of Belle-Isle, Seignelay sought Vauban’s wisdom on how best to rectify the defaults of its chief engineer, Jean-Anténor Hue de Luc, who was summoned to Brest where Seignelay intended to replace him, hopefully with Vauban’s connivance.¹⁰²¹ But Vauban, who visited Belle-Isle in September, did not concur with Seignelay’s diagnosis and cure, even though he acknowledged that the work there languished dangerously due to a multitude of problems, some due to the faults of de Luc, others deriving from unclear administrative arrangements that left that engineer largely without authority to expedite his projects. While Vauban saw no need to replace the hapless de Luc, he counseled Seignelay that should he decide otherwise or should de Luc himself ask to be relieved of his post, he hoped Seignelay would consider entrusting the construction at Belle-Isle


¹⁰²⁰ Seignelay to Vauban, 11 March 1686, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 269.

to the engineer’s son, Hercule Hue de Langrune, “un garçon doux et fort sage, bon géomètre, qui dessine bien, entend fort bien les toisés et que j’ai pris à tâche de bien instruire de tout ce qu’il y a ici à faire....”¹⁰²² Seignelay cautioned Vauban about entrusting such an important post to a youth of little experience and unaccustomed to working alone, but finally acceded to his request since the king was satisfied that de Langrune had been instructed by Vauban himself.¹⁰²³

Vauban’s advice was also anxiously sought on projects for places that were not on the route of his tour, but whose resolution could not be postponed until his return to Versailles. In October, Seignelay sent him Niquet’s letter on the dock being constructed at Toulon, requesting his comments.¹⁰²⁴ Later that month, the secretary relayed the ideas of a man claiming to have invented “fire-bullets” and other useful naval machines, asking Vauban whether or not he thought they merited some tests.¹⁰²⁵ In early November, Seignelay had written Richer that Vauban would be two more months touring in the south, but that that should not cause him to postpone sending to Paris his proposals for the next year’s work at Calais and the other places under his charge. Despite this attempt to manage business as best he could in Vauban’s absence, within three weeks Seignelay forwarded Richer’s proposals to his peripatetic chief deputy to

¹⁰²²Vauban to Seignelay, 17 September 1685, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 262-66. Rochas and other historians have identified the recipient of this letter as Louvois, but the sense of it points to Seignelay. This is confirmed by Seignelay’s letter of 4 October (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 189-91), in which he acknowledges a letter from Vauban of 17 September, and then proceeds to reply to the specific points of Vauban’s letter of that date published by Rochas.

¹⁰²³Seignelay to Vauban, 4 October 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 189-91; 30 November, ibid., fols. 225v-227. On this father and son, as well as the rest of this noted family of engineers known as the Hue de Calignys, see Blanchard, Dictionnaire, 367-70.


¹⁰²⁵Seignelay to Vauban, 22 October 1685, A.N. Marine B‘ 53, fol. 196.
examine in detail, noting that they were considerable and confessing that it would be easier for Vauban to do so since he knew Calais "parfaitement."  

Seignelay peppered him with requests of all sorts. While in Toulouse working on the Canal du Midi, Vauban was to deliberate with Niquet on the proposition of some naval officers to enlarge the port of Antibes since, as Seignelay reminded him, he had visited that place in the past. Seignelay also sought Vauban’s recommendation of two or three engineers for some unspecified project relating to the marine; he wanted men who were skilled at moving earth and hoped Vauban knew such individuals from his campaigns. Early in 1686, Seignelay entreated him for advice on setting work priorities at Dunkirk, especially in light of the current budget constraints.

After nearly ten months on the road in the service of the marine secretary, Vauban returned to Versailles in the spring of 1686 to confer with Seignelay directly, but by June he had taken to the highways once more, this time to visit the Channel ports. Again, the engineer saw his itinerary lengthened as he made his way along the coast. Anxiously awaiting the plans Vauban would generate, Seignelay also reminded him to scout the coast for locations for new ports. Personnel problems at Brest led the


1028 Seignelay to Vauban, 23 November 1685, A.N. Marine B3 55, fol. 558v.


1030 Seignelay to Niquet, 10 April 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fol. 42; to Richer, 12 April, ibid., fols. 67v-68r; to Vauban, 12 June, ibid., fols. 70v-71v.

1031 Seignelay to Vauban, 15 and 30 June 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fols. 75r-v and 94-95r, asking him to visit Pont-Audemer on the river Risle, near the mouth of the Seine, and Honfleur. Seignelay was interested in establishing ports principally in areas distant from Ingouville (roughly halfway between Fécamp and Dieppe) and Colleville (either the place of that name just east of Fécamp, or Colleville-sur-Mer, on the coast just north and west from inland Bayeux) (11 July, ibid., fol. 97r). See the Michelin Road Atlas of France.
secretary to enlist Vauban’s help to resolve them and expedite the work on the new dock at Brest, where Vauban had visited the previous year, even though Seignelay eventually rejected both Vauban’s evaluation of the situation and his technical recommendation for its remedy. Additionally, Vauban respectfully offered Seignelay some designs for fortifications to be constructed in Canada by the new governor, one of his old friends, who had just departed for his post. These were welcomed as "très bien pratiques" and readily approved. Seignelay ordered them to be sent along with the new intendant who was to embark for Canada in a few days.

Vauban’s presence in Seignelay’s fortification department was so pervasive the secretary was forced to remind one engineer that any proposal for changes in Vauban’s plans were to be sent to Paris first, so that he could look them over and discuss them with the king prior to communicating them to Vauban. He added further that "Il y a longtemps que j’ai donné cet ordre à tous les ingénieurs qui l’observent exactement et j’ai lieu d’être surpris que vous n’en fassiez pas de même." But this reprimand was probably not the result of any jealousy on Seignelay’s part of Vauban’s ascendancy with his engineers. Seignelay merely attempted to enforce proper bureaucratic procedures and

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1033 Seignelay to Vauban, 7 July 1686, A.N. Marine B2 58, fols. 521v-522; 22 July, ibid., fol. 558; 5 August, ibid., fols. 591v-592. Although Vauban had confidence in the abilities of de la Voye for the difficult task entrusted to him, Seignelay did not, and so insisted that Vauban send de Combes to Brest to finish the matter as soon as he could spare him from Channel inspection duties. In his letter to de Combes, Seignelay sought a cheaper and quicker remedy than that proposed by Vauban, which the secretary argued would be too costly and put the dock out of service for too long at time (5 August, ibid., fol. 592). In 1687 Seignelay wrote to Vauban that de la Voye was unfit for service in Siam, even though Vauban had recommended him, and Seignelay argued that Vauban would agree when he saw the evidence. Besides being a failure at his craft, de la Voye was accused of taking money from entrepreneurs, and so the king ordered his arrest (7 February 1687, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 17, fols. 21v-22r), but by the end of the year he was back at his post at Brest (Seignelay to Vauban, 7 December, ibid., fols. 248v-249r).

1034 Vauban to Seignelay, 21 May 1686, Dechêne, Correspondance de Vauban, 11-12, and Seignelay to Vauban, 12 June, ibid., 12.

1035 Seignelay to Garangeau, 31 July 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fol. 102v.
exercised his supervisory responsibilities since he was the one ultimately responsible to
the king for these fortifications.\footnote{Vauban had a similar desire that procedures be followed and he not be circumvented by a subordinate. See his 1691 rebuke to Cladech, an engineer in Louvois’s department, in Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 322-23.}

By this time, there could be little doubt among Seignelay’s subordinates that he
regarded Vauban as a consummate practitioner of his \textit{métier}. Seignelay freely expressed
his satisfaction and pleasure with Vauban’s work, and usually gave way to his
judgment.\footnote{Seignelay to Moyenneville, 7 September 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fol.
132r, in which the secretary said he was certain that Vauban’s plans for Calais would be
approved by the king because "ils me paraissent tres bien entendus et fort praticables...." On another occasion, the engineer at Dunkirk requested a particular assistant apparently unknown to Seignelay, but since the proposed assistant was certified by Vauban as able and intelligent, Seignelay consented (Seignelay to Clement, 12 January 1687, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 17, fol. 3v-4r).} On one occasion, he informed the obdurate Nicket that it was useless to
continue to push a particular proposal since it had already been rejected by Vauban.\footnote{Seignelay to Nivet, 15 November, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13, fol. 110v. Vauban
wrote to Seignelay on 24 November (A.I.G., Article 8, Cette, carton 1, piece 6), that
Nivet’s about-face on some previously agreed designs, while surprising, was typical of
he who always changes what he is told to do.} Seignelay also seconded the king’s desire that Renau d’Éliçagaray—a remarkable Basque
engineer, inventor, naval officer, and client of the Colberts—travel awhile with Vauban
to gain further and deeper understanding of the craft of fortification.\footnote{Seignelay to Vauban, 18 June 1687, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 17, fol. 111v-112r. For biographical
details on "Petit Renau," as he was called due to his small physical stature, see A. Jal, \textit{Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d’histoire} (Paris: Plon, 1872), 1048-49, and the eulogy delivered at the Academy of Sciences by its secretary
Fontenelle, in \textit{Eloges des Académiciens}, 2: 91-123. Vauban and Renau worked
together closely and on numerous other accessions.} Certainly, Seignelay—and the king, for that matter—questioned particular elements of the plans
Vauban devised, rejecting some as unnecessary and postponing others as beyond the
current budget. But Seignelay was generally appreciative of the engineer’s advice.
concerning both fortifications and the marine, and said so in the long letter he wrote in the wake of Vauban's successful 1686 tour of the Channel ports:

Et je finis cette lettre en vous disant que je suis ravi de vous voir aussi vif que vous estre sur tout ce qui regarde la marine et je ne puis m'empescher de vous tesmoigner la joie que j'ay de connoitre toujours de plus en plus combien le service du Roy tire d'utilité de l'applica[t]ion continuelle d'un aussi habile homme.\textsuperscript{1039}

From both the "Abregé des services" and Seignelay's letter register for 1687, there is little evidence that Vauban undertook any great tours on Seignelay's behalf in 1687. The secretary's letters to Vauban dealt mostly with the execution of the projects generated by the engineer's extensive circuit in 1685 and 1686.\textsuperscript{1040} The only large-scale new endeavor for that year was the creation of an arsenal for the construction of gun carriages at Auxonne, in Seignelay's province of Burgundy. Seignelay had sent Vauban a plan drawn up by someone else, but Vauban judged it to be badly made, so while inspecting Louvois's neighboring province of Franche-Comté he stopped in at Auxonne to inspect the site with the Master of Artillery and local skilled workers, who endorsed his new design.\textsuperscript{1041}

\textsuperscript{1039}Seignelay to Vauban, 7 September 1686, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fols. 128-131v.

\textsuperscript{1040}Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1687, mentioned visits to Roussillon and Provence, which may have actually taken place the previous year, and a tour of the eastern frontier. For instance, Seignelay to Vauban (on Dieppe), 4 March 1687, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 17, fols. 45v-46r; (on Belle-Isle), 18 June, ibid., fols. 111v-112r; (on Brest; also, asked when he would arrive at Versailles and if he would be able to visit Dunkirk, Calais, and Ambleteuse during the winter), 7 December, ibid., fols. 248v-249r.

\textsuperscript{1041}Vauban to Seignelay, 10 August 1687, A.I.G., Article 8, section 1 Auxonne, carton 1, no. 4. A letter of Vauban to Louvois dated 21 July put the engineer in Belfort, while his letter of 9 August showed him at Bazoches (B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol.6); he probably visited Auxonne on his way home. See also Seignelay to Marcilly, 24 August, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 17, fol. 173v, and 7 December, ibid., fols. 248v-249r. In his letter to Vauban of 21 November (ibid., fol. 238), Seignelay announced that the king had ordered Niquet to stop by Auxonne on his way to Provence in order to implement Vauban's plan, and he asked Vauban's opinion of Niquet's suggestions for improving it.
It is not difficult to discern why Vauban expended less time in 1687 on the marine secretary’s affairs than he had the previous two years. The curt reply Louvois delivered to one of Vauban’s letters the previous year offers a clue. On 29 July 1686, the war minister pointedly observed that half the summer had passed without Vauban having visited the places of his department. It would give him pleasure, he noted dryly, if Vauban began his inspection as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{1042} Up to this point, Louvois had shared Vauban’s services with Seignelay, as that secretary sought a further elaboration of the infrastructure necessary to his naval build-up. But on 6 July 1686, the emperor had joined with several German princes and the kings of Spain and Sweden in a decidedly anti-French alliance called the League of Augsburg. The minister of war had labored to secure the frontier from Flanders to Alsace since it had been augmented by the \textit{Chambres de Réunion} in the early 1680s. The emperor’s diplomatic triumph raised fresh fears of an imperial threat from the east and accelerated the renovation, enlargement, and creation of fortresses all along that frontier. Vauban was one of Louvois’s key collaborators in shaping this defensive strategy, and was certainly his primary agent for its technical elaboration and execution on the far-away frontiers.\textsuperscript{1043}

Given Vauban’s earlier reluctance to venture further beyond the northern and eastern frontier than Louvois’s province of Roussillon and his deep-seated animosity toward Colbert, it suggests that a significant development had taken place when Louvois had to compete with the Colberts for Vauban’s time and attention. What had happened to change this? Even though Colbert himself had been generally supportive of Vauban’s efforts, it appears to have been the advent of Seignelay at the head of his father’s fortification service and the navy that cleared the way for greater collaboration with Vauban. At about the same time, the worn-out Clerville died and allowed the Colberts to solicit Vauban’s services more freely, without prejudice either to the chevalier’s office

\textsuperscript{1042}Louvois to Vauban, 29 July 1686, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 766, p. 351.

or to the esteem they owed him due to his long years of faithful labor on their behalf. This included engineering projects that had long remained the domain of Clerville even after his own failures and the successes of Vauban had largely removed the chevalier from the fortification work on the northern and eastern frontiers. Thus, from 1678 especially, Vauban was quickly drawn into the maritime aspects of the Colbertian administrative empire, expanding ports and arsenals, connecting waterways with networks of canals, and constructing coastal bastions. Part of this work was driven by the needs of the naval build-up, but another portion was in the service of the Colbertian plan to facilitate and multiply the commerce of the realm.

Louis XIV encouraged this progressive assignment of new responsibilities to his chief engineer. Certainly by the 1680s, the king trusted Vauban more than any other engineer, and certainly more than he had trusted Clerville, despite his genuine esteem for that courtly engineer. Indeed, a measure of the monarch’s confidence in Vauban’s mastery of both the technical and administrative aspects of his métier can be found in what the engineer was permitted to do from 1678 with his new charge of commissaire général des fortifications. As we have seen with this and other posts, Louis was not averse to permitting an office to remain unfilled or merely decorative if he judged its occupant unworthy or if it fit his other purposes. But Vauban was allowed to breathe life into this office so that it finally could live up to the promise of order and uniformity of practice always inherent in its title. Clerville had never inspired such confidence in Louvois and his father, even though—or perhaps because—Colbert had utilized and promoted the chevalier. And the king had never been impressed enough with his talents to force Clerville on the reluctant Le Telliers. Vauban, however, had altered this balance. Firmly backed by Louvois, he had won over the king as well, especially with the siege of Maastricht in 1673. The Dutch War and its attendant fears of invasions had guaranteed Louvois’s engineer a growing role in Colbert’s places along the frontier with the Spanish Netherlands and the Germanies. Either out of political necessity or because they too had been overwhelmed by Vauban’s technical and administrative proficiency, Colbert and later his son increasingly employed the engineer in their cherished maritime domain.
Thus, in just a few years after becoming commissaire général des fortifications, Vauban had firmly established himself as the king’s chief coordinator of all the realm’s fortifications. He added to that onerous responsibility the role of the king’s chief civil engineer as well. Once the chief engineer of the secretary of war, Vauban was now chief engineer of the secretary of the navy as well. But most importantly, he was unchallenged as chief engineer of the Sun King himself. Even though the unification of the two fortification departments was still nearly a decade away and the personnel employed in each continued to differ from one another in background and training, from at least the beginning of the 1680s, there was an increasing movement toward uniformity, especially of administrative and technical procedure. And this was provided by Vauban, the one man who was able to bridge the gap between the two fortification bureaucracies. Vauban was clearly the consummate ingénieur-bureaucrate. During the 1670s and especially the 1680s he served Louis XIV and his ministers by animating and coordinating France’s vast building program along the coasts and frontiers. The ensuing decades of war were to crown his efforts with success as his creations withstood the onslaught of a Europe largely united against France.
CHAPTER XIII


Je vous aime et honore de tout mon coeur pour l'amour de vous et de votre illustre père, dont la mémoire ne me sortira jamais du coeur et de l'esprit.

Vauban to Barbézieux,
21 August 1691

The first two years of the 1690s were transitional years for Vauban and for France. They witnessed the death of two powerful and aggressive rivals, Seignelay and Louvois. Actually, it makes little sense to see them merely as individuals since each was the leader of and was supported by a faithful and extensive clan and clientage. The long-time hold on the major offices of state by these two power groupings had quickly emerged in the 1660s. But when the heads of these two coteries died within less than a year of one another, each faction entered a period of change. The Phélypeaux, a ministerial family not tied to either clique, waxed stronger during this decade. The influence of the Le Telliers plummeted due to the deficiencies of Louvois’s son, the Marquis de Barbézieux. That of the Colberts was now largely concentrated in foreign affairs until 1708, when clan member Nicolas Desmaretz became controller-general. With the rise of the Phélypeaux there was little prospect of a return to the dichotomy of the old days.1044

In the bureaucracy itself, the administration of fortifications was first consolidated into Louvois’s hands and joined to the war office. When he died, however, this responsibility was divorced from those of his son and successor at the war department and entrusted to Le Peletier de Souzy who, although he never attained ministerial rank,

1044 On these changes, see Rule, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 71-72. Meyer, Colbert, 329-33, also charts the ups and downs of the rival groups.
certainly functioned in matters of fortifications as if he had. His chief collaborator in this new position, of course, was Vauban, who had provided what administrative unity there was over the past years.

During the 1690s, therefore, Vauban had to adjust to new personnel and new arrangements of power. And at a personal level, it should be recalled that Louvois had been Vauban's patron and friend for nearly twenty-five years. Although there had been tempestuous moments in their relationship, Vauban missed his fellow laborer. Vauban, like Louis XIV, had managed to out-live those royal servants with whom they had served the first three decades of the personal reign. But Vauban himself only barely managed to survive the turning of the decade. In August 1690 he had written to the dying Seignelay: "Je vous souhaite Mgr un parfait retour de santé aussi ardent que je le pourrois désirer pour moy Mgr qui en ay bon besoin...." It was, in fact, only Seignelay’s death in November 1690 that brought Vauban to Versailles from his long convalescence at Bazoches to resume his duties in the construction and destruction of fortifications. He had been ill on and off since December 1689. During that period, as we shall see, Vauban appears not to have played much of a role in Seignelay's department, nor was he up to his usual levels of activity in Louvois's. Indeed, he was forced to reassert himself with at least one subordinate upon his recovery. In February 1691 he upbraided the engineer Cladech for bypassing him and going directly to Louvois with technical designs, reminding the younger engineer of the "usage" among "honnêtes gens de notre métier," and of his earlier return to health and work.

Conflicts with Seignelay

It is more difficult to trace Seignelay and Vauban's work together in 1688 and 1689 because the former's registers of outgoing correspondence for those two years is missing. What little evidence we possess shows Vauban at work in the first few months of 1688 further promoting his ideas for improving the navigation of the Rhône and evaluating for

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1045 Vauban to Seignelay, 12 August 1690, Dechène, Correspondance de Vauban, 13.
1046 Vauban to Cladech, 19 February 1691, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 322.
Seignelay the suggestions others had offered for the building of canals. But all this activity was based on data gathered during his earlier visit to that region some years before. 1047

His summer months of 1688 were spent largely along the eastern frontier, where Vauban had been summoned after the Austrian victory over the Turks at the second battle of Mohács (also called Nagyharasany or Harkány) had raised fears at Versailles. 1048 These fears of a growing Habsburg power in the east and in the Empire, along with the dispute in the strategic bishopric of Cologne over the selection of a new elector, led Louis XIV to launch an attack on the Empire in September, both to encourage the Turks and to prevent the formation of an effective anti-French coalition of princes.

As part of the main thrust of this campaign, Vauban was engaged in the Germanies under the orders of the Dauphin Louis, where they besieged in turn Philippsbourg Mannheim, and Frankenthal. His careful exertions at these opening actions of the War of the League of Augsburg (or Nine Years War) cost the French few casualties and earned Vauban the praise and gratitude of the Dauphin and the king. The rest of the

1047 See Vauban’s 18 March 1688 mémoire entitled “Opinion sur la navigation à établir depuis le Rhône jusqu’aux Etangs (Aigues-Mortes),” in A.I.G., Article 5, section 5 § 17, carton 1, no. 8. Seignelay to Vauban, 28 March, A.N. Marine B’ 65, fol. 223r-v, thanked him for and agreed with his mémoire of 18 March, but stated that the expense made it impossible to implement in the near future.

1048 Louvois to Vauban, 25 August 1687, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 280, says that "la défaite de l’armée turque lui [the king] fait juger à propos de pourvoir à donner la dernière perfection à sa frontière du côté d’Allemagne." This victory caused a panic in Constantinople, for it gave southern Hungary and Transylvania to the Habsburgs and forced the Hungarian estates to recognize that dynasty as their hereditary rulers. Vauban’s letters place him at Dunkirk (to Louvois, 14 January 1688, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7 [this volume, made up of some original letters and nineteenth-century copies, has no page numbers]) and then Paris (to Woerden, 29 January, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 290), at Lille (to Louvois, 19 August, A.G. A’ 1115, p. 4), and at Fort-Louis, which is in Alsace on the Rhine (28 September, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 291).
year Vauban spent in German territory regulating the repair of the king's new conquests and inspecting other places along that frontier.\footnote{For Vauban's brief record of these three sieges, see his "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1688. In addition, see the letters in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 292-306, and especially 298, which is Louis XIV's letter to Vauban of 3 November 1688. See also Saint-Pouange to Louvois, 1 November, Griffet, Recueil de lettres, 5: 120, which also offers a selection of letters detailing Vauban's activities in Germany and the inspections he made on his way home to Bazoches, which he still had not reached by the end of the year (he was in Strasbourg on 30 December, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 306). For a judicious account placing these sieges in a wider context and seeking to explain the reasonableness of Louis XIV's motives for this foray into Germany, although some have said that the king allowed himself to be distracted when he could have prevented William of Orange's descent on England, see Symcox, "Nine Years War," 179-212 (especially 179-83, 198-99, 202-03). For a more recent analysis, which places this crisis in an even wider chronological context by exploring its implications for the emergence of a complex balance of power, see John C. Rule, "France Caught between Two Balances: The Dilemma of 1688," in The Revolution of 1688-1689: Changing Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35-51. Rule accepts Symcox's narrative but points to problems with his tone, which sounds at times like a return to the Whig interpretation of Louis XIV.}

If Vauban finally reached the Morvan after his early winter journey through Alsace, his stay must have been brief, since by the end of January 1689 he was on the Loire, near Nantes. This flying visit to the Atlantic coast had been precipitated by the widening of the conflict in Germany at the end of the previous year. England's pro-French stance of past decades, while admittedly inconsistent and unreliable, had been decisively reversed by the Glorious Revolution of late 1688, which placed the unequivocally anti-French William of Orange on the English throne. Louis XIV thus feared an Anglo-Dutch landing on his coast and so Vauban was dispatched to arrange a defense. Beginning at Belle-Isle, Vauban made his way along first the Atlantic and then the Channel coasts, scrutinizing and organizing the defenses at all the major facilities and possible enemy landing points, from the mouth of the Loire to Dunkirk, and reporting to Louvois his findings and preparations.\footnote{Louvois to Vauban (on St-Malo and Brest), 29 January 1689, A.G. A1 840, fol. 406; Vauban to Louvois (on Belle-Isle and coastal defenses), 21 February, A.G. A1 903, p. 30; Vauban to Louvois (on Abbeville), 19 May 1689, A.G. A1 904, p. 175;
the most dangerously open "porte" of the realm, and so urged the immediate completion of its new fortifications and the preservation of the old chateau until its replacement was finished; Louvois, however, disagreed, promising to share his reasons for the immediate demolition of the old chateau when they next met.\textsuperscript{1051}

Even today, despite lengthy legal descriptions spelling out "exact" boundaries between bureaucratic units, there is much blurring around the edges. That was certainly the case in that era when the modern bureaucratic state was still in its infancy and the definitions of jurisdiction remained imprecise and overlapping. It should not surprise us, then, to see Louvois actively involved in the royal response to the English menace to France and in the projected counterstroke of a Jacobite invasion of Ireland. As secretary of war, his participation in coastal defense and the provision of troops for the Irish descent were obvious, but as powerful an impetus toward involvement in the total war effort was his influential position in the \textit{Conseil d'en haut} as one of the king's most trusted advisors. Although the outbreak of hostilities had caused the king to rely on Louvois even more, the turn of events in 1689, with the shift to a defensive strategy on land and an offensive stance at sea, had also strengthened the hand of the Colbert clan when Seignelay was called to the \textit{Conseil} as a minister on 4 October. In addition, Seignelay's cousin and Croissy's son, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy, had been granted the \textit{survivance} as secretary for foreign affairs the previous month. These

\textsuperscript{1051}Vauban to Louvois, 25 January 1689, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 902, p. 125, and Louvois to Vauban, 2 February, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 841, fol. 40. Symcox, "Nine Years War," 203, said that the unfinished fortifications at Cherbourg had to be dismantled for fear that they might be seized by invaders, who could easily do so since French troops were unavailable to garrison them. Foucault, then intendant of Normandy, said that Louvois did it to spite Seignelay. See Nicolas-Joseph Foucault, \textit{Mémoires de Nicolas-Joseph Foucault}, ed. F. Baudry, Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1862), 257-58). Pilgrim, "Administration de Seignelay," 12-13, has his doubts about Foucault's evidence for this conclusion.
developments, coupled with the replacement of controller-general Claude Le Peletier, a member of the Le Tellier clan, by Louis Phélippeaux de Pontchartrain, who was a member of neither faction, seemed to tip the balance in the favor of the Colberts. 1052

Vauban and Seignelay had also labored together on the coastal defenses in 1689, although lacunae in their correspondence prevent us from knowing exactly how closely. Nevertheless, we know that Vauban arrived at Belle-Isle on 29 January, just an hour behind the secretary, and that together they toured the defenses of the area. 1053 Later, Vauban sent Seignelay plans for Port-Louis, Brest, St-Malo, Abbeville, and other places along the threatened coast. 1054 While at Brest he witnessed a dramatic sight: the departure of James II for Ireland, appropriately on Saint Patrick’s Day. Vauban noted in a letter to Seignelay that the deposed English monarch sailed with a good wind that seemed divinely sent, and he wished "ce bon roi" well, for he judged James to be truly pious and a man of goodness. 1055 But Vauban soon resumed his progress along the coast, having been averted by Louvois in February that the king planned to put him in command of Dunkirk in the coming campaign. 1056 By the time he reached Flanders it

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1053 Vauban to Louvois, 29 January 1689, A.G. A¹ 902, p. 146.


1055 Vauban to Seignelay, 18 March 1689, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 19-26. The wind, however, bore James II and his entourage only to eventual defeat in Ireland. He returned to Brest in July of 1690, after his disastrous defeat by William III at the Battle of the Boyne. On this episode, see Claude Nordmann, "Louis XIV and the Jacobites," in Louis XIV and Europe, 83-84; for the naval angle, see Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 78-87.

1056 Louvois to Vauban, 14 February 1689, A.G. A¹ 838, fol. 242.
was late May. Louvois was confident that all these efforts to organize the coasts to repel invaders would soon discourage the allies from attempting anything on that front, but he was equally certain that William would turn next to Flanders. Since the war minister regarded Calais, Dunkirk, and Gravelines as the allies’s most likely targets, Vauban was instructed to put these places in a state of readiness. Louvois added that while Calais was not in his department—it was in Seignelay’s province of Picardy—nonetheless, he wanted to be kept informed about it, and he offered the engineer his own thoughts on what he believed that port needed to render it secure. At the same time, Vauban undertook the renovation of the defenses of Ypres, which he said he had found in "un grand désordre," and his activities there cost him much conflict with Louvois, who was trying to stretch his finite military resources to the limit.

1057 Louvois to Vauban, 3 June 1689, A.G. A1 850, fol. 98.

1058 Symcox, "Nine Years War," 204.

1059 Louvois to Vauban, 20 July 1689, A.G. A1 853, fol. 62. The minister’s solicitude for and interest in this port under his rival’s care continued (see Louvois to Vauban, 24 and 25 August, A.G. A1 855, fols. 256, 266, and 16 October, A.G. A1 859, fol. 16, in which Louvois concluded that Vauban’s plans for Calais were too costly and a bit bizarre in places. It should be remembered that at places like Dunkirk that were in a province controlled by Louvois, he controlled the defenses of the city, while the marine secretary was responsible for that of the port. But since Calais was in a province whose fortifications were assigned to Seignelay anyway, no such division was necessary. Thus, Louvois was a clear interloper in his colleague’s domain.

After his journey along the coasts, most of Vauban's efforts were devoted to readying "Basse-Flandre" for a possible attack from Holland. His preoccupation with defensive measures mirrored the over-all French strategy in 1689: while the army had moved back from its forward stance of the previous year—in fact, the withdrawal of French troops from Germany had been accompanied by much destruction, which only served to rally the princes to the emperor—the navy was now assuming an offensive posture. Thus, Vauban's work for Seignelay securing the land fortifications of the ports of Flanders and Picardy was not of primary importance to the naval secretary.

Instead, what mattered most to Seignelay during 1689 was the preparation and deployment of the fleet upon which he and his father had lavished years of effort. And this caused him no end of frustration and disappointment. As Donald Pilgrim has painstakingly demonstrated, the limited naval victories France gained during that year were achieved despite the fact that the whole Colbertian naval supply system broke down under these demands. Seignelay scrambled to cobbled together resources and fleets, oftentimes undermining the very system it had taken so long to build. The success of French naval arms that year has tended to blind historians—and may have blinded Seignelay as well—to the full meaning of that administrative collapse, but he was certainly cognizant of the pains his victories had cost him.\[1061\]

It is only in this context that we can make sense of most of Vauban's letters to Seignelay in the second half of 1689. Vauban peppered the marine secretary with complaints and ideas relating to naval strategy, and particularly to the guerre de course. He was fairly well informed about the marine due to his many trips to ports and his construction activities on behalf of the navy department. Vauban was also on friendly terms with a number of naval officers, including a chef d'escadre, Jean Gabaret, who supplied him with valuable information and observations.\[1062\] And Vauban was a natural

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1061 Pilgrim, "Colbert-Seignelay Naval Reforms."

1062 Vauban to Louvois, 25 February 1689, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 307-09, in which he called Gabaret one of the best men in the navy and a friend with whom he spoke often. On Gabaret, chef d'escadre, see Mémain, Marine de guerre, 165, 281,
magnet for those in port cities who wanted to influence policy at Versailles, for he was known to be on good terms with the king and his ministers.\textsuperscript{1063}

Vauban pressed Seignelay hard on the matter of supporting the efforts of the {	extit{corsaires}}. The marine secretary was in fact a fairly strong supporter of privateering, but only as a supplement to the activities of the battle fleet. It was in this limited sense that Seignelay supported it both with available naval resources and with his own investment.\textsuperscript{1064} Yet, this encouragement could go only so far. As detailed by Pilgrim, the whole Colbertian system for provisioning all the needs of the fleet was strained to the maximum and was collapsing about the heads of the naval secretary and his administrators. Many of the most basic material components of waging war at sea were

\textsuperscript{1067, 945-46.} Gabaret was commandant of the marine in the port of Rochefort in the 1680s, a trusted advisor to the naval secretary on technical matters, an occasional emissary to other ports (e.g., Toulon), and consequently well-versed in the affairs of the marine. Like other officers of the poor country nobility, he probably augmented his income with privateering. Gabaret was involved in the 11 May 1689 victory at Bantry Bay and that of 10 July 1690 at Beachy Head. It is possible that he and Vauban first met during the 1674 crisis when Vauban labored for several weeks to prepare the Île de Ré for a possible Dutch attack (see p. 340 above), and Gabaret worked on local defenses and was charged by the secretary with the defense of Rochefort (ibid., 226-27).

On 12 November 1669, as part of Colbert's reforms to secure his hold over the navy, Gabaret was named one of the three squadron chiefs, charged with the fleet in the Saintonge and Poitou region (Taillemite, {	extit{Colbert, Secrétaire d'État}}, 27). See also Symcox, {	extit{Crisis of French Sea Power}}, 28, 30, 82, 83, 85, on Gabaret's rise due to merit, his conversion from Protestantism, and his role in the Irish campaign of 1689.

See Fonds National de la recherche scientifique, Brussels, Commission interuniversitaire du microfilm, {	extit{Inventaire des microfilms des papiers du maréchal de Vauban conservés aux "Archives du Châteaux de Rosanbo" en Bretagne}} (Brussels: n.p., 1961), 115-19, showing an array of papers in Vauban's possession on marine officers, ship construction and costs, fleet strength, and marine administration.

\textsuperscript{1065}Vauban to Seignelay, 11 April 1689, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 29-35v; 16 June, A.N. Marine B\textsuperscript{1} 59, fols. 341-42; 22 June, ibid., fols. 344-46v; and especially 27 June, ibid., fols. 349-50, in which Vauban tried to justify his letters to Seignelay by observing that since he was at Dunkirk, everyone there was pressing him to write to the secretary.

\textsuperscript{1064}Symcox, {	extit{Crisis of French Sea Power}}, 76-77, details this support, especially from September 1688 when the fleet was still far from ready for action.
either delayed reaching the ports or in chronic short supply or unavailable altogether. Vauban's correspondence with Seignelay reflected this growing scarcity. For instance, Seignelay apologized that he was unable to ask the king to give Vauban the fifty buccaneer's fusils he had requested since he was at that very moment unsuccessfully striving to secure enough for the fleet, but he did promise to try again later. That summer, Seignelay was forced to deny Vauban's requests for some navy ships to cruise off Dunkirk to aid the corsaires. At that moment, he was in the midst of a furious effort to concentrate enough sail at Brest in order to take to the sea. He wanted to move against the unready Anglo-Dutch forces, which were daily waxing stronger and thereby lessening his hopes for a decisive naval victory. Again, Seignelay saw Vauban's point and agreed with it, but the best he could do was promise to send along the desired vessels when they were no longer engaged in the big fleet action he envisioned.

Seignelay and Vauban were accustomed to differences of opinions in their professional relationship, but their clash over the guerre de course must have seemed especially unfair to Seignelay because he felt that he was doing what he could to help the corsaires, despite his severely limited resources. Vauban's impassioned and even extreme language cannot have failed to ruffle Seignelay's feathers. In complaining about the slowness of the prize courts, Vauban poured out a full measure of invective on the harried secretary, claiming that "jamais Prince ne fut plus mal servy a cet esgard qu'est le Roy...." He added darkly that unless there was some secret he was not privy to, "on

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1065 Pilgrim, "Colbert-Seignelay Reforms," 243-46, 251. Seignelay to Vauban, 31 October 1689, A.N. Marine B 70, fol. 339. Louvois had earlier told the engineer in a less polite tone that reading his complaints about the lack of gunpowder at Ypres was a waste of time (6 June, A.G. A 850, fol. 192), and on another occasion he barked that Vauban would have to be satisfied with the affuts (gun carriages) he had at Dunkirk (17 June, A.G. A 851, fol. 48).

ne peut pas concevoir que les gens commis a l’examen de la validité des prises ne soient d’intelligence avec les ennemis pour faire ce qu’ils font.”

What made Vauban’s diatribe all the more galling to Seignelay was the fact that he had learned from the king that Vauban had shared these complaints with Louvois. This was a time when the two secretaries were jockeying to win the favor of the king for their respective segment of the royal war machine. Both men hungered to take the lead in spearheading the expanding war effort. Seignelay hoped at long last to justify to the king in a spectacular and decisive manner all the resources that had been lavished on the great naval buildup. Indeed, he longed to preside personally over a knock-out blow to the Anglo-Dutch fleet in the Channel. For his part, Louvois probably sought to mask the poor showing of the land forces in the previous year’s incursion into the Empire by preventing the navy from seizing the initiative and providing a shining counter-example to that of the army. Since at least the beginning of the year, Vauban had actively fed Louvois information and opinions critical of the direction naval affairs were taking. Vauban argued that the navy could have done more the previous winter to prevent William of Orange’s descent on England, reinforcing Louvois’s conviction that Seignelay (and the king) had been mistaken to ignore his recommendation the previous June to reinforce the Brest fleet. Louvois, privy to copies of the letters Vauban was sending Seignelay on his tour of the coasts, read with interest the engineer’s

1067 Vauban to Seignelay, 16 June 1689, A.N. Marine B3 59, fols. 341-42. Seignelay had established a prize court the previous October to regulate privateering; it was soon clogged, however, due to the stunning successes of the corsaires. The delays of which Vauban complained forced administrative changes to expedite matters, and these were made official in October (Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 76-77, 90-91).

1068 Seignelay to Vauban, 20 (?) June 1689, A.N. Marine B3 59, fol. 339. See also Appendix D below.

1069 Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 73, 77, 78, 89, 91, 102.

1070 Vauban to Louvois, 25 February 1689, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 307-09. On Louvois’s suggestion and why it was not followed, see Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 74-76.
reports to the naval secretary on the state of privateering activity along the Channel. By late May, Louvois was directly requesting additional information and his friend’s further "reflexions" on this matter:

Rien ne paraît plus important que de prendre de bonnes mesures pour incommoder nos ennemis, et traverser leur commerce par mer pendant l’hyver prochain. Mandez moi un peu comment vous croirez que cela se pourrait faire sans qu’il en coûte trop d’argent au Roi.\textsuperscript{1071}

Neither Louvois’s intrusion into naval affairs nor Vauban’s complicity in it was to Seignelay’s liking. Seignelay chided Vauban for allowing himself to be swayed by rumors and speculation, but then proceeded to offer a defense of both the prize courts and his big fleet strategy.\textsuperscript{1072} Vauban fired off another critical letter a few days later, again begging for warships, offering to invest in the project himself along with some associates, and complaining that "la caprerie qui pouvroit faire un mal infiny aux ennemis si elle estoit protogée ne va plus."\textsuperscript{1073} Despite Vauban’s sharp jabs, during this same period Seignelay procured the king’s permission for one of Vauban’s clients to conclude the marriage he desired, adding: "Je suis persuadé que cette affaire luy convient puis que vous avez bien voulu vous en mesler."\textsuperscript{1074} He also assured Vauban that even though the king could not provide the frigates requested, if the engineer’s enterprise could be deferred and if other frigates became available, then the king would give him satisfaction in the matter.\textsuperscript{1075}

Vauban’s reply to Seignelay’s letter of 20 June 1689 is instructive. He clearly saw that he had offended Seignelay. His lame excuse was that he had only written the same

\textsuperscript{1071}Louvois to Vauban, 27 May 1689, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 849, fol. 140. He requested a continuation of such news on 19 June, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 851, fol. 88. On 2 July, for example, Vauban sent Louvois news of privateering action off Dunkirk (Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 311-12). According to Symcox, \textit{Crisis of French Sea Power}, 76, Louvois, along with Seignelay and Croissy, was an investor in privateering ventures.

\textsuperscript{1072}Seignelay to Vauban, 20 (?) June 1689, A.N. Marine B\textsuperscript{1} 59, fol. 339.

\textsuperscript{1073}Vauban to Seignelay, 22 June 1689, A.N. Marine B\textsuperscript{1} 59, fols. 344-46v.

\textsuperscript{1074}Seignelay to Vauban, 27 June 1689, A.N. Marine, B\textsuperscript{2} 69, fol. 581.

\textsuperscript{1075}Seignelay to Vauban, 30 June 1689, A.N. Marine, B\textsuperscript{2} 69, fols. 600-01.
thing at the same time to Louvois as he had written to the naval secretary Vauban added rather dishonestly that he had only replied to Louvois's request, saying that it was a thing he could no more fail to do than to tell him the truth. He tried to further justify himself by shifting blame, saying that he had been pressured to write Louvois by all the complaining privateers, and then resorted to flattery, saying that he knew Seignelay was occupied by the larger affairs of the kingdom. Apologetically, Vauban intoned: "Je vous en demande cependant excuse de tous mon cœur...." Nonetheless, he could not refrain from returning to the attack, saying defiantly that "je ne suis pas si credule ny si ignorant que vous pensez et que quand je me mesle du service sur quelque chose je ne le fais que quand je suis asseure de la verité," repeating his earlier charge against the prize court, and strongly promoting the use of galleys on the Flanders coast.\textsuperscript{1076}

In July, Seignelay was off to Brest to hasten the arming of the fleet, which was now seriously behind schedule. When Admiral Tourville finally set sail, it was 15 August. Seignelay accompanied the warships on two weeks of cruising that seemed to lack purpose, and finally left the romance of the rolling decks to return to the drudgery of his bureau at Versailles. The 11 May tactical victory at Bantry Bay on the Irish coast was the only real success of that year. Yet, even that opportunity was squandered, falling prey to French caution and strategic error, and so 1689 ended without the great sea battle Seignelay craved. Nevertheless, the king had been impressed, if not with an actual victory at sea at least with the potential for such a decisive blow against the allies. Seignelay's recompense was being raised to the rank of minister. Now he was able to combine with his uncle, the foreign minister Croissy, to check the power of Louvois, whose star seemed less bright that autumn because of reversals in the land campaign.\textsuperscript{1077}

\textsuperscript{1076}Vauban to Seignelay, 1 July 1689, A.N. Marine B\textsuperscript{1} 59, fols. 349-50. There is ample evidence that as often as not it was Vauban who initiated the sharing with Louvois of information from Seignelay's administration.

Meanwhile, Vauban's vigorous exertions at Ypres had exacted their toll: besides involving him in almost constant and acrimonious conflict with Louvois, it had cost the fifty-six year old engineer his health.\textsuperscript{1078} Before his illness worsened, however, the war minister had informed him that he was to inspect the fortifications of the Meuse frontier since it appeared that that would be the main theater of war in the next campaigning season. Louvois instructed Vauban to return to Calais afterwards.\textsuperscript{1079} But by November it was clear that his fever was lingering, and so the minister gave him permission to go home to the Morvan after returning to Flanders and stopping by Versailles for consultations.\textsuperscript{1080} Even these plans had to give way when Vauban, unable to return to the Flanders coast, took to his sickbed in his quarters at Lille, where he remained for some time.\textsuperscript{1081} The king and Louvois were both so concerned that they ordered Vauban to suspend the completion of his tour of inspection and to come to Versailles to receive the ministrations of the royal physicians.\textsuperscript{1082}

The year 1690 was a year of some uncertainty in that both Seignelay and Vauban appeared to be mortally ill. Seignelay was assumed to be fatally ailing by the court gossips as early as July 1690, especially when he was too sickly to go personally to Le Havre to force Tourville back to sea to exploit the 10 July victory at Beachy Head. Louvois's troops had won an important victory at Fleurus on 1 July, and Seignelay now hoped to exceed his rival's accomplishment. But Tourville was dislodged from port only with great difficulty and when the moment for French dominance of the Channel had

on land, see Corvisier, Louvois, 465, and Meyer, Colbert, 329-32.

\textsuperscript{1078} Vauban, "Abregé des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1689, said that "estant presque toujours pressent sur les travaux [at Ypres] Ce qui luy attira une grande maladie dont il pensa mourir."

\textsuperscript{1079} Louvois to Vauban, 29 September 1689, A.G. A' 857, fol. 274.

\textsuperscript{1080} Louvois to Vauban, 17 November 1689, A.G. A' 861, fol. 66.


\textsuperscript{1082} Louvois to Vauban, 3 and 4 January 1690, ibid., 316.
already slipped away. By the autumn, all that Seignelay had worked for in the past two campaigns had come to naught. This point was driven home by the humiliating evacuation of Ireland, completed by early October. Seignelay died on 3 November, shortly after his dreams expired, his body wrecked by a spreading cancer.\textsuperscript{1083}

To contemporaries, Vauban’s survival from his bout with sickness must have appeared for a time more doubtful than Seignelay’s. The likelihood of the death of the latter was not definitely known until the summer, but Vauban’s illness during the first half of 1690 seemed at times more liable to be fatal. The old engineer was after all nearing sixty, whereas the minister was not yet forty. And while Seignelay had continued to work during the first half of the year, even though with increasing pain, Vauban was largely incapacitated, convalescing first at Lille, then in Paris, and finally at Bazoche until 1 June, when his return to court was remarked upon, perhaps in part because it had not been expected that he would survive.\textsuperscript{1084}

Vauban’s correspondence with the royal ministers during this period shows that his administrative activity experienced a definite tapering off. Unable to make his usual winter inspections, all he could do was make an occasional comment on fortification projects. Otherwise, he was left to his own thoughts, which turned to broader issues. For instance, he sent Louvois a treatise containing his thoughts on the Protestant problem


\textsuperscript{1084}Vauban appears to have returned to the citadel of Lille by at least 3 December 1689 (Vauban to Cladech, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 112-113). He remained there until at least early January (see Louvois’s letters to him 3 and 4 January, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 316-17), but by 22 March he was writing letters from Paris (Vauban to Cladech, B.I.G. in-Fo 31d). A few days later, he had returned home to the Morvan (Vauban to Louvois, 25 March, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 317-18). He took a medical treatment that involved drinking the milk of a cow and that of a she-ass. The memorialist Sourdís said that this had been suggested by a simple soldier, to the shame of the royal physicians, who had been unable to help his recovery (ibid., 319). Vauban recuperated at Bazoche, his health improving daily, until he returned to Versailles, according to Sourdís, on 1 June (ibid.).
that had erupted with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.\textsuperscript{1085} And he dispatched further complaints about Seignelay’s direction of the guerre de course.\textsuperscript{1086} Just prior to his late March departure from Paris for Bazoches, he wrote the engineer Cladech that he had received the plans he had sent him for Dinant on 3 February, but apologized for not replying earlier by explaining that “depuis cinq mois j’ay presque toujours esté malade et que je ne me suis meslé d’aucune affaire.”\textsuperscript{1087} Vauban agreed that Cladech’s proposal was better than Filley’s, but since Louvois was of an opinion contrary to his own, he begged off pursuing the matter.\textsuperscript{1088} His usual pugnacity appears to have been overridden by the ravages of illness.

Seignelay’s fortifications letter register for 1690 continued to record the minister’s administrative output until 23 September, after which he must have been too afflicted to continue his routine. But it contains no letters to Vauban. He is mentioned in Seignelay’s letters to others only in terms of the execution of plans he had developed during previous years. Thus, Vauban appears to have been largely out of the loop of decision-making in Seignelay’s department during that minister’s final year.\textsuperscript{1089} As to the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Read, “Le mémoire de Vauban en faveur des Huguenots,” 190-209, 243-56, 314-22, 375-88. Louvois to Vauban, 5 January 1690, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 317, noted that “J’ai la votre mémoire où j’ai trouvé de fort bonnes choses; mais entre nous, elles sont un peu outrées; j’essairai de les lire à Sa Majesté.” Vauban had touched on these matters before. See, for instance, Vauban to Louvois, 30 December 1688 (ibid., 306).

\item Vauban to Louvois, 25 March 1690, ibid., 317-18.

\item Vauban to Cladech, 22 March 1690, B.I.G. in-Fo 31d.

\item Ibid. On 3 December 1689, while convalescing at Lille, Vauban had written a reply to another letter from Cladech. Although critical of Louvois’s funding levels for Dinant and Charlemont, and admitting that he would have done it differently, he nonetheless remarked that Louvois “est le maistre et quand il a prononcé ce nest pas a moy d y mettre davantage mon néz” (B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 112-13).

\item B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 18, passim. Seignelay was so sickly he was unable to accompany the king to Fontainebleau on 5 October) Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: xl).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
guerre de course, Vauban still received news and requests for his intervention from Dunkirk and Saint-Malo, but he no longer regarded it as useful to write to the marine secretary. Either Seignelay had cut him off, or more likely, Vauban had concluded that his efforts in that direction were in vain. In fact, Vauban asked Louvois to go secretly to the king to plead the case of the corsaires and the merits of a strategy built around the guerre de course.1090

By May, Vauban’s improving health permitted increased communication with the ministers. Seignelay asked his help in resolving a tax-related dispute at Brouage, where Vauban had devised a project for the re-establishment of the harbor some years earlier, and hoped he could do so without having to travel there. Vauban felt well enough to comply and offer further advice on that port.1091 The same month Louvois expressed pleasure at his improving health, asking him to come to Versailles when his health permitted to learn what role the king had assigned him in the coming campaign. Four days later, having received proof of his friend’s returning strength from the memoir on

1090 Vauban to Louvois, 25 March 1690, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 317-18. Once so eager for news and ideas about privateering, Louvois now rebuffed his friend, saying rather disingenuously that since “la caperie n’est pas de mon département,” Vauban should write to Seignelay rather than “à moi qui n’en peux faire aucun usage.” Louvois’s loss of interest was surely not due to any scruples about interfering in his rival’s affairs, but more probably a result of his confidence in preparations for the coming campaign, during which French forces would push their way into the Spanish Netherlands. With the English preoccupied in Ireland, the emperor entrusting the war with France to William of Orange and the other allies while he concentrated on the Turks, and with the allied fleet dispersed protecting Anglo-Dutch commerce from French privateers, especially in the Mediterranean, Louvois had little reason to concern himself with the details and the further promotion of the guerre de course. For the French prospects for 1690, see Clark, “Nine Years War,” 238-39.

1091 Seignelay to Vauban, 8 May 1690, A.N. Marine B’ 73, fol. 492; Vauban to Seignelay, 15 May, ibid., B’ 59, fols. 337-338; Seignelay to Bégon, 31 May, ibid., B’ 73, fol. 551. Charles d’Aubigné, the brother of Madame de Maintenon, was somehow involved in this business, and in a letter to Seignelay (a more likely recipient than Pontchartrain, the controller-general, who was suggested by Langlois) on 19 April, he mentioned Vauban’s connection with this matter. See Madame de Maintenon, Lettres, ed. Marcel Langlois (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1935), 3: 458-59.
Landau Vauban had recently completed, Louvois outlined the itinerary the king contemplated for his chief engineer should his health allow his return to active duty: Vauban was to come first to Versailles to work with the ministers of war and the marine, then journey to Guise to meet with the engineers of Hainaut to regulate that frontier, travel afterwards through Flanders inspecting fortresses, then rendezvous with the engineers of the coastal fortifications, and finally visit two other posts on the way to Montreuil, a place in Picardy "qui est un bon air," there to await news of the movements of William III and his army. The king intended for Vauban to go to the defense of Dunkirk if the allies stepped foot in Flanders, but if their moves were directed elsewhere, then Vauban was to depart around 10 or 12 August for an inspection circuit. This included a visit to Sedan, a meeting with the engineers of some important forts on the river Meuse, further inspections at Luxembourg, Thionville, Sarrelouis, and Mont-Royal, all in the valley of the Moselle, then on to Landau and Huningue, at opposite ends of Alsace, and from there back to Bazoches for the winter break in hostilities.\textsuperscript{1092}

Vauban finally made his long-awaited reappearance at court on 1 June, but never embarked upon the ambitious itinerary the king and his ministers had devised for him. He remained in Paris until mid-August, too ill to serve at the siege of Namur being contemplated by the king, who was both worried about his health and anxious for his participation in the war effort.\textsuperscript{1093} Vauban wrote Seignelay on behalf of an engineer serving in Canada, and expressed signs of concern for the minister's deteriorating health, but the two men do not appear to have worked together, especially since Seignelay was preoccupied, frantically but vainly attempting to exploit the naval victory at Beachy Head and salvage the deteriorating situation in Ireland.\textsuperscript{1094}

\textsuperscript{1092} Louvois to Vauban, 18 May 1690, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 318-19.

\textsuperscript{1093} Louvois to Vauban, 3 July 1690, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 922, fol. 98; to Marshal Luxembourg, 3 July, Griffet, Recueil de lettres, 6: 265.

\textsuperscript{1094} Vauban to Seignelay, 12 August 1690, Dechène, Correspondance de Vauban, 13-14. For the naval situation, see Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 98-102.
Sometime in August, Vauban returned to the Morvan again in broken health, unable to do any serious work. To Louvois's disappointment, Vauban replied with uncharacteristic sluggishness to his persistent requests for advice on such places as Fribourg and Huningue on the threatened eastern frontier.\textsuperscript{1095} He mustered enough strength, however, to send to Versailles an occasional request for local clients who continued to beseech his intervention with the grands gens at court.\textsuperscript{1096} Vauban was on the mend by early September, but was still far from his normal level of activity by the middle of that month, reminding Louvois in a request for favors for his hard-working staff that "quand je suis en état de servir, je loisir est fort inconnu parmi eux...."\textsuperscript{1097} Shortly thereafter, the pace of his exertions quickened as he waxed stronger, although he was still too weak to leave his chateau and return to the capital. But this seemed less pressing since the campaign season was ending, and especially since it was doing so on terms that put the French in a good position for the start of the next.\textsuperscript{1098}

\textsuperscript{1095}Louvois to Vauban, 17 and 26 August, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 925, fols. 61 and 312; 4 September, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 926, fol. 102; 10 September, ibid., fol. 251.

\textsuperscript{1096}Vauban to Louvois, 28 August 1690 (from Bazoches), quoted in R. Dauvergne, \textit{Vauban et la détresse économique dans la région de Vézelay (fin XVII\textsuperscript{e}-début XVIII\textsuperscript{e} siècle)} (Clamecy: Imprimerie générale de la Nièvre, 1954), 1.

\textsuperscript{1097}Vauban to Louvois, 14 September 1690, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 321, where he also replied to the minister's queries about Mont-Royal, and did so again on 18 September, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 994, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{1098}Louvois to Vauban, 7 and 10 September 1690, A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 926, fols. 180 and 251. On 12 September, Louvois asked his advice on Landau (ibid., fol. 350). On 23 September, Vauban finally replied to a request Louvois had made when Vauban was still in Paris, advising the building of a pontoon bridge at Philipsbourg until peacetime allowed the construction of a more permanent structure (A.G. A\textsuperscript{1} 994, p. 39). The next day, Vauban sent Louvois his thoughts on Landau (ibid., p. 41). Vauban dispatched comments on plans for Mont-Royal and Fort-Louis on 18 October and 1 November (ibid., p. 69 and 87). By the end of 1690, although Ireland and command of the Channel now seemed beyond his grasp, Louis XIV had gained the initiative in Flanders and Savoy, thanks especially to the efforts of Luxembourg and Catinat. The Turks had re-captured Belgrade, and the alliance of German princes was beginning to hemorrhage. See Clark, "Nine Years War," 239-41.
Louvois’s Last Victory over the Colberts

While Vauban was slowly recovering from his illness, Seignelay was losing his battle with cancer, finally succumbing to its ravages on 3 November. A few days later Louvois sent Vauban an urgent letter informing him of the changes this had set in motion:

Le Roi m’ayant commandé de me charger des fortifications des places dont M. de Seignelay avait la direction, même celles des ports de mer, j’ai un grand besoin de votre assistance pour essayer de mettre un ordre à ce que vous savez qu’ils n’en avaient pas trop; ce qui me fait vous prier, si votre santé vous le permet, de venir ici le plus tôt que vous pourrez, sans rien précipiter. ¹⁰⁹⁹

Roused from his convalescence by this portentous news, Vauban replied the following week that he would depart for the capital in three or four days. ¹¹⁰⁰

With first Colbert gone, and now Seignelay, one branch of the Colberts had ceased to play a role in the king’s councils. Only Croissy was left to champion the clan and its clientage in the king’s inner circle. For Vauban, any lingering bitterness toward Colbert or his progeny from the “affaire de Brisach” was now at an end, for Seignelay left no heir to succeed him in office. ¹¹⁰¹ And even though Vauban had served him more willingly than he had his father, the engineer had grown increasingly disgruntled with Seignelay after the outbreak of war. But did he rejoice at his demise? This hardly seems likely. Louvois could rub his hands in delight at inheriting a portion of his rival’s administrative empire, which now gave him control of all frontier fortifications as well as those of the ports and coasts. ¹¹⁰² But Vauban had never wanted to shoulder such additional responsibilities, despite whatever criticisms he had leveled at the administrative

¹⁰⁹⁹ Louvois to Vauban, 6 November 1690, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 321.

¹¹⁰⁰ Vauban to Louvois, 13 November 1690, A.G. A¹ 994, p. 102.

¹¹⁰¹ Charles Colbert de Saint-Marc, who lived on until 1722, when he died at the age of 103, probably remained an object of Vauban’s scorn. But there is no evidence that Vauban ever blamed Croissy or his son Torcy for Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s protection of Saint-Marc.

¹¹⁰² Corvisier, Louvois, 466-67, and Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 106. Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: xvi, said that Louvois had wanted complete control of fortifications when Colbert died.
operations of the Colberts. Besides, he already played an active role in Seignelay's department as commissaire général, and had done so for over a decade. Yet, the work of unification was far from complete before this moment since it rested at base on the force of Vauban's personality and the eminence of his reputation.

Any lingering pretense of the old division of fortification supervision by province was finally dropped. Of course, Colbert's department, which emerged at the outset of the 1660s, was a mockery of that system. And there had been several piecemeal rectifications of which secretary was charged with what province, which gradually increased the control of the war secretary over frontier regions. But 1690 marked the expulsion of non-military or non-specialist ministers from the control of fortifications. This is not to say that the Colberts were rank amateurs in matters of fortifications, for clearly they were not. Yet fortifications, constituting only a portion of their rambling and diverse administrative empire, was certainly not their primary interest, as became apparent when so many of their efforts proved inadequate during the Dutch War.

In the aftermath of Seignelay's death, the minister of war finally held between his hands the components for a complete land-based military machine: now all the strongholds of France, which he had always had to garrison and defend, would be under his thumb, from planning through construction, repair, and alteration, to defense against actual attackers. But what apparently surprised even Louvois was that the new secretary of state for the marine, the controller-general Louis Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, had the supervision of the port fortifications subtracted from his other naval responsibilities and transferred to the war department. Now it was the turn of the marine engineers to be the ones awkwardly subordinated to a different arm of the royal military service.¹⁰³

¹⁰³"Mémoire du reglement a faire entre Messieurs les secretaires d'Etat du departement de la guerre et de la Marine au mois de Novembre 1690," A.I.G., Article 2, section 1, carton 1, no. 2, in which Louvois outlined the details he proposed for this new arrangement. Pontchartrain was to retain control over the marine arsenals and other facilities directly relating to the port (e.g., docks, embankments), but Louvois would have charge of all flood-gates leading into the port that might also be used to defend the place, especially by the flooding of the surrounding countryside. He also proposed that the marine secretary be allowed to finish the fortifications at Toulon and Cette, as well
A certain amount of continuity was maintained, as we have seen, in the person of Pierre de Girval, an experienced engineer who had just become _premier commis_ in Seignelay’s department the month before that minister’s death. Louvois must have had great confidence in this man who had been a long-time client of the Colberts, for he maintained Girval in his post but now with bureaucratic responsibilities for all fortifications.\textsuperscript{104} One major change Louvois did introduce was the suppression of the office of _intendant des fortifications_, discussed earlier. Henceforth, the engineers in the places formerly under the Colberts would follow their counterparts who served under Louvois and look to the provincial intendants on matters of contracts, building materials, labor, and so forth.\textsuperscript{105}

The continuing War of the League of Augsburg prevented Louvois from savoring his triumph over the Colberts or embarking upon any large-scale construction projects. Instead, he continued the hectic efforts of the past few years to obtain the necessary war material, assure the defense of the various frontier posts, and field armies to take the war into allied territory. While William III parlayed with the other allies at The Hague, where they reluctantly agreed to his call for more troops, the French king dispatched Marshal Luxembourg across the frontier to besiege Mons. This time Vauban was not prevented by illness from participating in the campaign—Louvois assured the king from the frontier that the engineer’s apparent relapse was actually due to a bad tooth, now extracted\textsuperscript{106}—and so had the pleasure of directing the trenches in the presence of the

\textsuperscript{104}For Girval, see p. 154 above.

\textsuperscript{105}A contemporary copy of Louvois’s letter of 17 November 1690 announcing this to Chauvelin is found in A.I.G., Article 2, section 1, carton 1, no. 2. Chauvelin had been the intendant of Franche-Comté, but he was transferred to the generality of Amiens, comprised of Picardy (formerly under Colbert) and Artois, in December 1683 (Godard, _Intendants_, 521, 524).

\textsuperscript{106}Louvois to Louis XIV, 15 March 1691, Griffet, _Recueil de lettres_, 6: 457.
king. 107 Louis derived great satisfaction from this victory, for it came on 8 April as William was floundering far away in an ill-advised move to aid the Spanish at Mons. But if it looked for awhile that the anti-French alliance might fall prey to the mediation efforts of certain princes, these failed, and in the long-run the capture of Mons gained the French king little. 108

For Vauban, however, this victory marked an event of great import for his career. On 9 April, after the surrender of the garrison of Mons, the king rewarded his faithful and skilled engineer with an invitation to dine. In the hierarchy of honors Louis XIV bestowed on his courtiers and servants, this summons to the king’s table was especially momentous. The monarch’s increased esteem for his chief engineer was indisputable among the courtiers who orbited the Sun King and took their cues from his every action and word. Vauban was deeply touched by this sign of royal gratitude and favor, which delighted him more than the monetary gratification that accompanied it. 109

The aftermath of the capitulation of Mons, however, was not so agreeable for the minister of war. Louvois had assured the king that William III would not attempt to disrupt the siege. Even though William’s efforts appeared pathetic after the fact, Louis was nonetheless vexed, for he liked his sieges—especially the ones where he commanded in person—to be sure things. 110 This, along with the general inconclusiveness of French efforts that spring and early summer probably account for Louvois’s foul temper as displayed in his letters to Vauban. While pressing the engineer to complete a plan for

107 Vauban, "Abrege des services" (1703), A.N. M 658, no. 1, entry for 1691.


110 See Corvisier, Louvois, 472-77, on this incident and others that have caused many to speculate that there was an impending disgrace for Louvois; he doubts that this was so. See also Baxter, William III, 294.
the necessary repairs to protect their new acquisition, Louvois harshly criticized what Vauban did send him, and rebuked him frequently for not writing him more often. At one point, Louvois even threatened to hold hostage Vauban's royal gratification until he received the projects and plans for Mons. Later, he chided the engineer for the seven weeks that had elapsed since the fall of Mons without the completion of a repair plan by observing that "si le chevalier de Clerville vivait, vous seriez bien plus diligent...." Vauban defended himself by pointing to the bad weather and the constant interruptions that called him away from his work; he also noted that the contractors were unaccustomed to being pushed so hard, which was giving rise to all kinds of problems that required his immediate attention. Finally, at the end of May, Vauban informed the minister that his tormenting had forced him to seek relief and send the project, even though it was in imperfect form. But this action only resulted in a further stream of complaints from Louvois.

Another issue that divided the two friends during this summer was the tactic of bombardment. Vauban opposed it for tactical, strategic, and humanitarian reasons, and had done so for a very long time. Louvois, however, was of another mind. Having rained bombs on the Spanish Netherlands in 1683 (while Seignelay was doing the same to Genoa) and ravaged the Rhineland in 1688-89, Louvois had become a creature of habit by 1691 when he directed Marshal Boufflers to bombard the city of Liège, which


1113Louvois to Vauban, 18 May 1691, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 326.


he had been unable to capture earlier that summer. 1117 In reply to Vauban's arguments against a future bombardment of Brussels, Louvois dismissed his reasoning and spoke impatiently of needing to teach these people a lesson "en les tourmentant le plus qu'il pourra, et il n'y a point de mal que ces peuples-là appréhendant tant que celui-là." 1118 Vauban sent back a letter reiterating his pragmatic and moral indictment of this policy of terror, but it arrived too late, for Louvois had died the previous day. 1119

At first glance, it might strike one as lamentable that the final months of Louvois and Vauban's nearly twenty-five years of collaboration and friendship should have been marred by so much contention. This ignores, however, the nature of the discourse between these two strong-willed and oftentimes brutally frank personalities. On balance, both had a realistic sense of and appreciation for the skills of the other, and each was aware of the hierarchical separation between their social and political stations. Even so, within those parameters there was a great deal of room for rhetorical maneuver. These two comrades shared a penchant for extreme language, which could show itself either in anger or jest, or even a bewildering blend of the two. It is often impossible for the historian to discern in just what portions these elements are mixed in many of their letters. Yet, there can be little doubt that, if not regretted by many at court and throughout Europe, Vauban mourned the passing of his supervisor, benefactor, collaborator, and friend.

The War of the League of Augsburg sorely tested the France of Louis XIV, militarily, financially, and in nearly every other area since those two matters touched

1117 Wolf, Louis XIV, 418, 420, 451-55, 461, censures Louvois and the king for their "policy of violence and terror." He also recounts the half-hearted compliance or noncooperation of a number of commanders, the negative repercussions of these tactics on the French army, and the galvanizing effect this policy had on France's enemies and European public opinion in general. See also Wolf's "Louis XIV, Soldier-King," 215, 220. On Seignelay and the bombardment of Genoa, see Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 243-63.

1118 Louvois to Vauban, 18 May 1691, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 327.

1119 Vauban to Louvois, 17 July 1691, ibid., 327.
almost everything else. It had also strained Vauban’s relations with the two ministers with whom he most closely collaborated on the defense of the realm. Part of this was the normal stress-related tension one expects in a period of crisis, but part was due to policy differences as well. It is a measure of Vauban’s ascent among the king’s advisors that the engineer’s quarrels with Louvois and Seignelay were over matters of strategy rather than more technical or administrative issues. His status with the king secured Vauban the right to offer his thoughts on these matters, and if Louvois dismissed them on occasion in his typical brusque manner or if Seignelay failed to heed them to Vauban’s satisfaction, it is certain that the king was open to his suggestions.\footnote{For example, Louvois to Vauban, 3 October 1689, ibid., 314.}

This time of crisis also marked the passing of two of Louis XIV’s chief advisors and a major realignment within his Conseil d’en haut. Seemingly on their last leg after the death of Seignelay, the Colbert’s reasserted their influence during the 1690s while Louvois’s son squandered the credibility with the king amassed by his father and grandfather. The Le Telliers thus gave way to the Phélypeaux as the other great ministerial family of the last twenty-five years of the reign, even though the king no longer permitted two clans to dominate his councils as he had during his first three decades. Vauban lost both his powerful patrons in this realignment. Barbézieux removed himself as a possible replacement for his father by his inept performance as secretary, while the Colberts were now largely removed from involvement with fortifications, the navy, and other engineering matters, being employed elsewhere. This merely accelerated Vauban’s closer work with the king and his greater reliance on the monarch for patronage.

The administrative realignment was significant as well. The two frequently warring fortification departments became one, and after the death of Louvois they became a separate entity from the war department, where the engineers stationed at the frontier strongholds had always felt themselves condescended to by their fellow officers. Michel Le Peletier de Souzy, a seasoned and capable administrator with extensive experience supervising fortification projects, worked in conjunction with Vauban to codify the past
administrative accomplishments, rectify inadequacies, and forge the two services into one finely-honed instrument of royal power. It attests to the managerial skills of both Le Peletier de Souzy and Vauban that they were able to fashion this new department during a time of war and after so much internal bureaucratic disruption brought on by the ensuing deaths of Seignelay and Louvois. And they did so with a minimum of disturbance and friction. Vauban’s contribution, however, must be singled out because once again it was his supervisory role that had facilitated this transition. If the two departments had been truly separate in 1690, their amalgamation would have been more difficult to achieve. And perhaps it would have cost the king some of the confidence he had come to place in the bureaucracy that oversaw the ring of fortifications that guarded his realm when seemingly all Europe was united against him.
CHAPTER XIV

PATRON, CLIENT, AND BROKER: VAUBAN AND SEIGNELAY

Dans tout ce que vous pouvez désirer de moi, vous y trouverez toujours des marques sincères de l'estime que j'ai pour vous...

Seignelay to Vauban,
15 January 1686

Vauban and Seignelay generally enjoyed good relations, even though Colbert and Vauban viewed one another with reservation. The available administrative correspondence up to the death of Colbert, although almost entirely from Seignelay to Vauban, testifies to a pervasive confidence in and customary deference to Vauban's opinions and judgments. Although there were conflicts, their friendship weathered them. Yet, Vauban nurtured a lingering suspicion of anything to which Colbert put his hand. Vauban's bitter feelings toward the father presumably cast a shadow long enough to prevent him from completely trusting the professional judgment of the son, which explains why he fed information from Seignelay's department to Louvois.

Relations with Seignelay

Certainly, Vauban's suspicions that Seignelay might be cut from the same cloth as the elder Colbert were only strengthened by certain of the collaborative efforts of father

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112 The fortification register for 1680 is missing, but 1681's letters continued the trend of the earlier ones (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10). In 1682, Vauban objected to the new entry proposed by two engineers for the port of Ambleteuse, arguing among other things that the port was too small and ought to be augmented. Seignelay reminded him a number of times that the king did not want to expand that facility (Seignelay to Vauban, 16 September 1682, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fol. 216r-v; 8 October, ibid., fols. 236v-237r; 10 November, ibid., 243v-244r). But this does not appear to have mushroomed into a test of wills.
and son, as exemplified by Vauban’s acute disappointment over the fate of his proposals for Port-Vendres. On another occasion, when in 1682 Colbert and Seignelay planned to punish the Barbary pirates for attacks on the French Levant trade, Vauban catalogued the technical deficiencies of the projected bombardment of Algiers, arguing that it was unlikely to have the desired effect. Expressing incredulity at the foolishness of the man who dared make such a proposition so dangerous to the reputation of the king, he urged Louvois to share these reservations with the king in hopes of preventing this imprudent enterprise.\textsuperscript{1122} The author of this policy of naval terror against the enemies of the king was Colbert, seconded by Seignelay. While the bitterness of Vauban’s tone indicates that the primary target of his tirade was likely Colbert, this incident could only have diminished his opinion of Seignelay.\textsuperscript{1123}

Still, the signs of a friendlier exchange between Vauban and Seignelay are undeniable. The one letter of Vauban to Colbert outside the closed Rosanbo Collection is a cold yet correct request to the controller-general that, due to his continued absence from Paris inspecting the frontiers, his expenses for last years travels should be paid to his business agent.\textsuperscript{1124} By contrast, a letter to Seignelay from the same year exudes a

\textsuperscript{1122}Vauban to Louvois, 19 May 1682, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 211-15. Hebbert and Rothrock, \textit{Soldier of France}, 107, state that Vauban’s advice on this matter was sought, but they do not say by whom; his letter, however, does not support that assertion, implying to the contrary that he had volunteered his counsel to Louvois. It is highly unlikely that his opinion had been solicited by either of the Colberts.

\textsuperscript{1123}For the first bombardment of Algiers, made during the summer of 1682, see the traditional account in La Roncière, \textit{Histoire de la marine}, 5: 714-721, and the letters in Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 3 pt. 1: 209-216, 224-35. Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay,” 243-63, offers a more sympathetic and balanced account. Vauban’s opinion did not change after the bombardment took place. He spoke of it disparagingly that autumn as an example to be avoided (Vauban to Louvois, 2 December 1682, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 218-19).

\textsuperscript{1124}Vauban to Colbert, 24 March 1682, A.N. G' 543°, plaq. 4, piece 251 (the G' series at the Archives Nationale consists of the papers of the controllers-general).
more congenial and relaxed attitude, and is even playful in places. A similar tone prevails in a letter from Vauban the next year.\footnote{Vauban to Seignelay, 9 May 1682, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 210-11, and 30 March 1683, ibid., 222. For the latter, Rochas marked Colbert as the recipient, but there is no reason to concur since Seignelay was not absent from court, and the sense of the letter, concerned as it is with the day-to-day operations of the fortifications department, points clearly to Seignelay. These are the only two letters of Vauban to Seignelay that I have located for the period prior to the death of Colbert in 1683.}

One incident is suggestive of Vauban's willingness to deal with Seignelay outside a purely professional capacity, whereas with Colbert he sought to keep contact businesslike and to a minimum. Vauban's eldest daughter Charlotte was married 15 November 1679 to Jacques Louis de Mesgrigny, Chevalier and Baron de Villebertin and d'Aunay, and like his new father-in-law, a soldier.\footnote{Ibid., 1: 43. Augoyat, \textit{Aperçu historique}, 1: 314-15.} The following year Villebertin sought to be discharged from having to pay a tax on his woods at "Aulnay" (Aunay). Of course, he enlisted the support of his father-in-law, who either allowed him to invoke his name, wrote letters on his behalf, or both. The request appears to have fallen between the cracks during an administrative changeover, for in early 1681 Seignelay acknowledged as much, and wrote André-Jubert de Bouville, the intendant of Moulins, to see to the resolution of this matter. Seignelay further requested that Bouville attend to the granting of another petition of "Le se de Villebertain," namely, that he not be obliged to pay for the two stallions that had died in his stables since the officials in charge of the stud program attested to his efforts to care for these horses, who were, as it happened, sterile. Seignelay added that the intendant should additionally make certain that no royal stallions were put in Villebertin's stables in the future, presumably to spare him further inconvenience.\footnote{Seignelay to Bouville, 25 February 1681, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fols. 30v-31r.} On the same day, Seignelay wrote to Thomas Hue de Miromesnil, intendant of Champagne, on behalf of another of Vauban's relatives, this time the cousin of Villebertin, Jean de Mesgrigny, governor of the citadel of Tournai and one of
Vauban's long-time collaborators. Seignelay noted that while he was certain that Miromesnil would render justice to Mesgrigny and his family concerning an investigation of them and some woods they owned, he wanted to add his hope that Mesgrigny would receive the outcome he desired.\footnote{Seignelay to Miromesnil, 25 February 1681, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fol. 31v. See Augoyat, Aperçu historique, 1: 78-79, for a brief summary of Mesgrigny's career.}

These two letters provide an insight into Seignelay and Vauban's attitude toward one another. Of course, Seignelay referred to the just nature of the cases of Villebertin and Mesgrigny in urging the two intendants to grant their respective requests; nevertheless, Seignelay's main argument in favor of granting them satisfaction was clear: these two gentlemen are relatives of Vauban, who is someone "pour qui le Roy a une consideration particuliére."\footnote{Seignelay to Bouville, 25 February 1681, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fols. 30v-31r; to Miromesnil, 25 February, ibid., fol. 31v.}

Like his father earlier in his recommendation of the engineer to Colbert du Terron, Seignelay was fully cognizant aware of Vauban's standing with the king. The secretary was anxious to satisfy his royal master by pleasing those whose services he valued, and Seignelay was eager to insure that his own subordinates did likewise. But there seems to be a difference between this instance and Colbert's earlier recommendation to du Terron. Colbert had written to the marine intendant to vouch for Vauban's abilities and to warn that they were so appreciated by the king that to ignore Vauban's advice would be a political mistake. Seignelay, on the other hand, wrote on Vauban's behalf in a personal matter relating to his family, and this was likely at Vauban's own instigation, showing that he was not averse to asking Seignelay for a personal favor. Even though historians have lacked access to Vauban's letters to Colbert, there is no evidence either in Colbert's letters to Vauban and others, and no evidence elsewhere of even a limited patron-client relationship between them.\footnote{Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 42, noted that Colbert was not a welcoming granter of favors. See Meyer, Colbert, 119-21, on Colbert as a patron.} It would be unwise to make too much of these few letters, although it is suggestive that
they were written in the month after Colbert’s unflattering appraisal of Vauban, perhaps revealing a difference of opinion between the father and the son. But they offer evidence that Vauban and Seignelay were on good enough terms for them to function as client and patron, as will be explored further on.

Despite their better relations, Vauban still had criticisms of the way Seignelay conducted the business of his department. Pilgrim has laid to rest the notion that Seignelay was a lazy hedonist who neglected his duties. In fact, he argues, when letters rested unanswered in his cabinet at Versailles, it was because Seignelay failed to delegate power when he was away on one of his many inspection tours. If anything, he was perhaps too intimately involved in the details of his charge. Clément correctly noted another of Seignelay’s flaws: his fierce desire to show his mettle and carry on the gloire of the Colbert’s, especially in the face of the despised Le Telliers. In this, Seignelay surpassed his father in the “hardiesse des vues et la grandeur des projets” and revealed a romantic vein in his desire to be at sea with the fleet off Genoa and Brest rather in his bureau at Versailles. Clément blames the failure to realize these designs on Seignelay’s alleged deficiency as an organizer of resources and men. But Pilgrim has shown that the collapse of the naval system was inherent in the original design of the elder Colbert and resulted from factors that go well beyond the personal limitations of Seignelay, which have been misidentified and overrated by most historians.

Thus, Vauban saw his projects rest longer on the secretary’s desk than he thought they ought, and said as much to Basville, the intendant of Languedoc. Greeting the

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1131 Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 11-21, 44, 194. On differing opinions about Seignelay’s prioritizing of work and play, see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 3 pt. 2: xv (Madame de Maintenon said his pleasures came first; later, however, she allied herself with him when Louvois lost her favor), xxx and xlii (Clément demurred), xxxix (Fénelon seemed to detect rampant hedonism), and xlii (the Count of Forbin said "La France a eu peu de ministre si actifs, si laborieux, si vigilante que lui...").

1132 Ibid., ii, iii, vi, ix-xiv, xxvii, xxxiii, xxxvxi-xl. Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 192-93, agrees that perhaps Seignelay was a frustrated admiral.

1133 Ibid., 200.
news that the intendant had "enfin" received the orders to begin work on the canal to join the Canal du Midi to Villeneuve-d’Avignon, Vauban went on to observe in commiseration:

c’est, je vous assure, avec bien de la douleur que je vois une belle nonchalence, mais ce n’est pas pour cet endroit-là seul qu’on en a, j’en rencontre souvent dans mon chemin qui sont d’aussi grande conséquence.\footnote{Vauban to Basville, 5 August 1686, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 271.}

Vauban also held Seignelay’s engineers in low esteem, remarking to Louvois that Seignelay’s man Renau—who was also one of Vauban’s clients—was more knowledgeable about engineering than all of Seignelay’s department put together.\footnote{Vauban to Louvois, 14 November 1688, ibid., 301.}

Another matter of contention between Seignelay and Vauban concerned \textit{entrepreneurs} and the regulation of their contracts. As secretary of the marine and as master of a portion of the fortifications of the kingdom, Seignelay was constantly building and repairing this or that naval facility or land bastion. Colbert had always driven a hard bargain when negotiating the terms of a contract, except, of course, when the contractor was a client or relative, in which case a certain laxness crept in, as we saw in Alsace.\footnote{When Colbert served Mazarin as his personal intendant, he had no illusions about the greed and shady dealings of the cardinal, according to Meyer, \textit{Colbert}, 82, 150. For Colbert’s personal greed, help to his family, and tolerance of financial mismanagement by subordinates, see ibid., 77, 109, 121, and Trout, \textit{Colbert}, 47, 100, 156. Colbert’s connections with the world of financiers, contractors, and suppliers is described by Daniel Dessert and Jean-Louis Jourmet, "Le lobby Colbert: un royaume, ou une affaire de famille?" \textit{Annales: Économies-Sociétés-Civilisations}, 30 (1975): 1303-36.}

Seignelay generally followed suit.\footnote{Pilgrim, "Administration of Seignelay," 59-65, analyzes the contract system and shows why many suppliers were reluctant to deal with the government.} But neither secretary was averse to imposing a reduction in the price to be paid to an entrepreneur for his work if during the course of construction it seemed that the original rate had been set too high.\footnote{On price reductions forced on contractors, see Guttin, \textit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 61-71.}
Vauban himself had had to endure this high-handed practice by the royal government when he had served as entrepreneur and engineer at Brisach in the 1660s. In his manual of administrative procedures, Vauban denounced in general terms this mania to find the lowest prices possible, but with a vigor born of personal experience. Such a preoccupation with false economies, he asserted, only resulted in a host of problems: they attracted inexperienced and inept contractors, perpetuated work beyond reasonable completion dates, pushed costs above original estimates, encouraged sloppy and faulty construction, drove engineers to distraction, and put strongholds at risk of enemy seizure.\footnote{Vauban, Directeur général, 61-62, 141-44.}

Vauban censured these practices in both departments of fortification, yet he had fought and largely won the battle in Louvois’s jurisdiction.\footnote{For some conflicts within Louvois’s department over contracts and contractors, see Vauban to Louvois, 22 October 1668, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 20; Louvois to Vauban, 20 April 1678, ibid., 165-66; 20 November 1679, ibid., 187; 17 September 1683, ibid., 224; Vauban to Louvois, 25 September, ibid., 225-26; 2 May 1691, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 13.} As his activity for the Colberts increased, he encountered these reductions with disturbing frequency. In 1678, when the augmentation of the port of Dunkirk had begun in earnest, Seignelay sought to mediate between Vauban and the commissaire de la marine Hubert, who were in dispute over contractors. Seignelay wrote Vauban a letter that appeared to defer to his judgment in the choice of entrepreneurs and wrote Hubert to urge him to give Vauban all he asked for punctually and with no grounds for complaint. But a week later, Seignelay wrote Hubert that if he found the means to negotiate contracts more advantageous to the king than those made by Vauban, he was to inform the secretary right away. Eventually, Vauban’s argument that the solidity of the work necessitated the more costly contractors convinced the secretary, who was anxious that nothing delay
a work so important to the naval build-up. Thus, Vauban prevailed and the old entrepreneurs were rehired.\footnote{Seignelay to Vauban, 31 October 1678, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fol. 281; to Hubert, 7 November, ibid., fols. 291v-292; to Decomes, 3 December, ibid., 326v-327; to Hubert, 30 December, ibid., fol. 357. Hubert served at Dunkirk from 1671 until he was cashiered in 1680 (Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 3 pt. 1: 434 n. 2). See Vauban to Seignelay, n.d., Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écris}, 2: 266-67 n. 1, for his poor opinion of Hubert. This undated letter from the B.N. Clairambault Collection mentions a past incident at Dunkirk involving Hubert and an officer that took place "sept ou huit ans" before. This suggests a date for the letter of somewhere between 1680 and 1687 or 1688. In this same letter, Vauban requested a favor for M. de Fricambault, "enseigne de la marine." Since Vauban's 1685 request for Fricambault referred to him as a "bon officier" (Rochas, ibid., 267, said a "lieutenant de galiote"), the letter was probably written after 1680 and before 1685.} Vauban knew that knowledgeable and honest contractors were difficult to find, and because of ill-use by ministers as well as local engineers, hard to keep. Consequently, he often served as their advocate both in Paris and on the building sites, which put him at odds with Seignelay. In some cases, the secretary deferred to his judgment and others did not.\footnote{For examples, see Colbert to Rouillé, 7 February 1673, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 3, fols. 54-55; to Chantereau-Lefebvre, 20 April 1675, ibid., vol. 5, fols. 57v-58v; to Morangis, 23 January 1676, ibid., vol. 6, fols. 17v-18v; to Moyenneville, 11 July 1677, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 198; Colbert to Vauban, 20 August 1678, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 8, fols. 227v-228; Seignelay to Vauban, 3 September 1678, Clément, \textit{Lettres de Colbert}, 5: 219; Seignelay to Vauvré, 5 August 1679, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 9, fols. 169-171; to Vauban, 17 September 1679, ibid., fols. 200v-201v; Seignelay to Desclouzeaux, 25 January 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 6v; 2 May 1691, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 13. Vauban was not, however, blind to the faults of contractors, even when defending them (see his letter to Seignelay of 17 September 1685, discussed in note 1139 above). See also Vauban to Louvois, 15 November 1678, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écris}, 2: 175-76. In a 10 March 1679 letter to Seignelay, Pierre Arnoul, the naval intendant at Toulon, praised Vauban's contracts as just (Marine B² 32, fol. 180.)} In 1685, Vauban wrote Seignelay a very frank letter on the matter of contracts and contractors. Sent by Seignelay to investigate the shortcomings of the engineer at Belle-Isle, Vauban used the opportunity to vent his long-felt conviction that the policies of the secretary himself bore a portion of the blame for the disorder and delays he uncovered. Vauban pointed to the disruption caused by the habit of writing
contracts by year rather than for a particular portion of a project, and the confusion brought on by "fréquents rabais qui se font dans vos ouvrages." He further argued that the savings they supposedly gained were either short-term or chimerical. Citing the resultant cost-overruns, delays, frauds, poor quality contractors, and faulty work, he urged Seignelay to mend his ways:

En voilà assez, Monseigneur, pour vous faire voir l'imperfection de cette conduite; quittez-la donc, et au nom de Dieu rétablissez la bonne foi; donnez le prix des ouvrages et ne plaignez pas un honnête salaire à entrepreneur qui s'acquittera de son devoir; ce sera toujours le meilleur marché que vous puissiez trouver.\footnote{Vauban to Seignelay, 17 September 1685, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 262-66. Rochas marked Louvois as the recipient (Guttin, \textit{Corps des ingénieurs}, 68-69, quoting from Rochas, also cited Vauban's advice as having been offered to Louvois), but this is incorrect. The context clearly deals with Seignelay's department. Another of Seignelay's letters (actually his reply to this letter) thanked Vauban for his letter of 17 September and proceeded to answer many of the points contained in the letter mismarked in Rochas (4 October, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 189-91).}

Seignelay replied that he agreed with Vauban that the \textit{entrepreneurs} had been handled badly in this district and that he had ordered Descliouzeau, the naval intendant at Brest (responsible for all Brittany, including Belle-Isle), to regulate all contracts "à des prix raisonnables" in the future.\footnote{Vauban to Seignelay, 17 September 1685, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 263.} But this ignored the fact that Vauban's indictment had been of Seignelay himself and this practice throughout the entire department. Nevertheless, the secretary did agree to one of the reforms Vauban proposed, although he offered this excuse for his past policy:

La raison pour laquelle jay donné par le passé les ordres de faire des marchez a l'année et non pour tous les ouvrages [two unreadable words added], cest que jay connu clairement qu'en plusieurs endroits de mon departement, les marchez n' estoient pas portez a leur juste valeur et qu'il estoit difficile en l'estat ou estoient les choses d'y resoudre les entrepreneurs, mais a present qu'on a plus de

\footnote{Seignelay to Vauban, 4 October 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 189-91. He also asked Vauban to encourage good \textit{entrepreneurs} he knew or encountered to seek these contracts, implying that he could let them know that they would henceforth be under reasonable conditions.}
connaissance du juste prix des ouvrages, je donneray ordre qu'on fasse les
marchez pour le tout et non pas a l'année. 

Despite these disagreements, Seignelay had such confidence in Vauban's understanding
of entrepreneurs that he solicited his advice that November on the selection of good
entrepreneurs for the projects the engineer had sent him during the past months.

An echo of this contention surfaced in 1689, when Vauban reproached Seignelay for
his "extrème envie d'épargner." The king did not always fund the works Vauban
proposed, and in some years even cut over-all expenditures on fortifications, as in
1686. But in his 1689 remonstrance, Vauban brushed aside any such excuses for the
sorry state of the chateau of Taureau, a small place on the Breton coast just east of
Paimpol. Vauban asserted that Seignelay had "longtemps négligé" this fortress, only
now seeking to correct its deficiencies with an ill-conceived design not based on any
observation of the place whatsoever. Of this "plus mauvais dessin qui fut jamais,"
Vauban observed, half in jest:

si j'étais d'humeur à me venger, je n'aurais qu'à laisser faire pour avoir le plaisir
de vous y faire trouver au premier voyage que vous y auriez fait, la plus achevée
sottise en fait de fortific[ation] qui fut jamais....

Then excusing himself for expanding his criticism into a general discussion of "mauvais
ménages" resulting from false economies, Vauban ticked off examples at Oléron, Belle-

1146Ibid.

1147Seignelay to Vauban, 30 November 1685, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 225v-
227.

1148Vauban to Seignelay, 6 April 1689, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 27-28 (Rochas,
Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 310-11, published part of this letter, but not this portion). This
was written while preparing the coast against possible English descents in the early
months of the War of the League of Augsburg (see the account beginning on p. 406
above).

1149See Seignelay to Vauban, 15 January and 3 March, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16,
fols. 1-3v and 22, announcing these budget cuts.

Isle, and the dock at Brest, adding that he could list many others but wanted to spare Seignelay, who could do with these observations what he wished, for he had washed his hands of the matter. Vauban proceeded to lecture the secretary that good management in fortifications consisted only of building what was necessary both solidly and at a fair price; anything else was "mesquinerie" (stinginess), which was at the core of all the faults he had described.\footnote{Ibid.}

Seignelay’s reply to this letter would make interesting reading. We know that he came under the lash of Vauban’s tongue a number of times that year, especially concerning the matter of privateering. Unfortunately, his register book for that year is missing; nevertheless, a few conclusions may be suggested. Vauban was growing increasingly frustrated by what he saw as an accumulation of administrative and policy mistakes on the part of Seignelay. For his part, Seignelay continued to rely on Vauban and show him and his clients marks of his favor, but the secretary was pained by the increasing tension between them. This was the state of their relations when both became seriously ill shortly afterwards. Seignelay never recovered, dying in November 1690.

**Patron, Client, and Broker**

It must be reiterated that not all of Vauban’s experiences with the Colberts were negative, and this was especially the case with Seignelay. There was a patron-client-broker element in their relationship that had been absent from the engineer’s dealings with Colbert. Of course, Louvois was Vauban’s primary patron, and had been so since their collaboration began at Lille in 1667. But at least by the beginning of the 1680s, Seignelay and Vauban had developed their professional association into a friendship that lent itself to the distribution of favors and services to others.

As we saw earlier, Kettering identified a number of characteristics in patron-client relationships: they are personal, emotional, continuous, and voluntary bonds between two individuals of unequal social station; and they are reciprocal, for patrons protect
their clients and dispense material advantages, while clients respond with loyal service.\textsuperscript{1132} If we apply these criteria to Vauban's interactions with Seignelay, we discover an exact fit. The bond between the engineer and the marine secretary was clearly more than a working relationship. This is suggested by the fact that, notwithstanding Colbert and Vauban's professional relationship and the ability of both to deliver such patron-client goods as material benefits, services, protection, and loyalty, there is no evidence of a patron-client link between the two. Given the personal barriers between them, this is not surprising. But a genuine affection seems to have developed between Seignelay and Vauban. They exchanged sentiments of friendship and support on a number of occasions: at the death of Colbert, upon Vauban's successful capture of Luxembourg, and at the marriage of one of Vauban's daughters.\textsuperscript{1133} And, as we have seen, Vauban felt secure enough in their friendship to be painfully frank with Seignelay in those instances where he thought it necessary. The secretary reacted in a manner that suggested friendship: either by submitting to Vauban's rebukes or expressing hurt feelings. Otherwise, we might expect the reaction of a social and administrative superior angrily replying to an impudent inferior. For his part, Vauban apologized to Seignelay when he felt he had offended his friend, as in their 1689 clash over privateering, when

\textsuperscript{1132}Kettering, \textit{Patrons, Brokers, and Clients}, 13.

\textsuperscript{1133}Seignelay to Vauban, 2 October 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fols. 163v-164r, said "J'estois persuadé de la part que vous me temoignez dans [la] perte que je viens de faire puisque je ne doutois pas de vostre amitié ainsi que vous pouvez compter sur la mienne m'intéressant autant que je fais en ce qui vous regarde." Seignelay to Vauban, 18 June 1684, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 14, fol. 89, offered his compliments on the capture of Luxembourg. Seignelay to Vauban, 20 June 1686, Rochas, \textit{Vauban, ses écrits}, 2: 270, assured him that "Je me suis de tout temps intéressé à ce qui le regardait, mais cette nouvelle considération augmente de beaucoup celle que j'ai toujours eue pour sa famille. Je vous prie d'être bien persuadé et de croire que j'aurai un plaisir sensible de trouver les occasions de vous le témoigner."
Seignelay intimated his unhappiness with Vauban for having shared his criticisms of naval policy with Louvois. 1154

That patron-client ties that bound Seignelay and Vauban together are reflected in their correspondence of nearly a decade. 1155 Of course, historians are at the mercy of their primary sources, for in such matters we can know only what made its way into writing, either in a letter, note, mémoire, diary, or other record. Many conversations—which must have been the ideal way to present most requests for the fulfillment of patron-client responsibilities—have left no trace in the paper trail of history. 1156 We know that Vauban and Seignelay worked together quite often, usually at Versailles but frequently enough on the frontier and especially at the ports.

The unequal nature of the connection between Seignelay and Vauban is, of course, obvious, for one was a secretary of state and the other was a military engineer and officer. 1157 But it is possible to ascertain just how great the gap was that separated them, which will be useful in our discussion of Vauban as a power broker. Jon D. Rudd has written an intriguing article suggesting that epistolary etiquette can provide us with clues

1154 See Vauban to Seignelay, 17 September 1685, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 262-66 (which Rochas mistakenly thought was written to Louvois [see note 1139 on page 438 above for the reasons why Seignelay as the recipient makes more sense]); Seignelay to Vauban, 4 October, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fols. 189-91; 6 April 1689, B.I.G. in-Fo 31, vol. 7, fols. 27-28 (a portion was printed in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 310-11); 16 June, A.N. Marine B1 59, fols. 341-42; Seignelay to Vauban, 20 (?) June 1689, ibid., fol. 339; Vauban to Seignelay, 1 July, ibid., fols. 349-50.

1155 Of the eighteen letters of Vauban to Seignelay I have been able to locate outside the Rosanbo collection, eleven contain requests for favors of various kinds. Six of Seignelay's many letters to Vauban refer to the granting of favors.

1156 Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 8-10, discusses the problems of evidence and sources.

1157 Vauban's "Abregé des services" (1704) contains a table summarizing his move up the ranks: brigadier of infantry in 1674, maréchal de camp in 1676, and lieutenant-general in 1688, just below the lofty rank of marshal of France. He served as governor of the citadel of Lille from 1668, governor of Douai 1680-83, and commissaire général des fortifications from 1678. See Martin, "The Army of Louis XIV," 117-18, for the rigid table of ranks established by the king at the outset of the Dutch War.
about contemporary understanding of social hierarchy. Using various late seventeenth-century and early to mid-eighteenth-century manuals of style—especially one based on the procedures of the controller-general’s secretariat dating back to 1689—Rudd has established a hierarchy of letter closings that paralleled social rankings. Those at the bottom of the heap received nothing from the controller-general by way of closing other than his signature. Those on the next rung of the ladder above warranted a variation of the "à vous" closing: the higher the rank of the recipient, the more elaborate the closing (e.g., from "tous à vous" to "Je suis, Monsieur, très parfaitement à vous"). Higher still was the "affectioné serviteur" category, and at the very top, the "obéissant serviteur" grouping. The closing "très humble et très obéissant serviteur" was used exclusively for superiors and with equals.\footnote{Jon D. Rudd, "A Perception of Hierarchy in Eighteenth-Century France: An Epistolary Etiquette Manual for the Controller General of Finances," French Historical Studies 17 (1992): 791-801.}

Unfortunately, as Rudd notes, much of the published correspondence from this period omits closings, and this is often the case with Vauban’s printed exchanges with the royal ministers. Nevertheless, coupling the bits and pieces still attached to the printed sources with the letter registers of the Colberts, we can suggest more precisely Vauban’s changing status with the marine secretaries. In 1685, Vauban closed a letter to Seignelay with the "très humble et très obéissant serviteur" formula, but proceeded it with "Je...suis de tout mon coeur avec tout le respect et la soumission possible, Monseigneur..."\footnote{Vauban to Seignelay, 27 November 1685, B.N., Clairambault, 873 A-B, fol. 143 (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 266-67, published part of this but misread the date as September). Similar closings are found in letters of 29 March 1685 and 12 August 1690, Dechène, Correspondance de Vauban, 10, 14. In one of the few letters to Colbert from Vauban I have found outside the Rosanbo collection, Vauban ended with "je suis avec tout le respect et la soumission possible Monseigneur vostre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur" (from the papers of the controller-general, 24 March 1682, A.N., G’ 543e, plaq. 4, piece 251).} When we look at the letters from Colbert beginning in 1670, Vauban received no closing, but in 1674 he merited a "Je suis à vous," and later in the
year "Je suis tout à vous." Vauban received this latter closing from both Colbert and Seignelay until August 1684, but after that date it was embellished with either with a "toujours," "veritablement," "toujours entierement," or "Je vous prie de me croire," only occasionally falling back into a plain "Je suis tout à vous." By 1686 these closings remained embellished and become even more so (e.g., "Je...suis toujours avec estime veritablement à vous" but often "Je suis entierement à vous").

Does Vauban's march up the social hierarchy as suggested by these closings correlate with any events in his career? Not surprisingly, it does. The 1674 transformation from receiving no closing to warranting one is easily explained: on 30 August 1674 Vauban was raised to the rank of infantry brigadier, the bottom grade of general officers. But his subsequent promotions and offices did not augment his closing within the "à vous" grouping. What did merit the increased embellishment dating from August 1684 was his brilliant siege from 8 May to 3 June of the Spanish fortress of Luxembourg, a strategic link between Holland and the Empire that many had regarded as nearly impregnable. The éclat of this action reverberated throughout Europe, adding to the incentives for the Dutch States-General to abandon their effort to force the French king to disgorge the gains made by his Courts of Reunion. To the dismay of William of Orange, in late June and August Holland, followed by the Empire and other allies, signed a twenty year truce with the French allowing Louis XIV to keep most of the territorial gains made since the

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160 After it became routine, the copyist sometimes left off the closing altogether or put merely "Je suis" or "Je suis etc.," which appears to have been a common clerical shortcut for established closings. For the letter registers of the Colberts, see B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 1-18. There are, however, numerous gaps, and unfortunately they include 1688 and 1689 (there were no letters to Vauban in 1690 due to his illness; see note 1084 on page 418 above). That the Colberts' commis were sensitive to these gradations is borne out by the absence of closings for most of the engineers. Moyenneville, an intendant des fortifications, received a variation on the "Je suis" theme, but he was also a trésorier de France (for example, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fol 43; see Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 127 n. 1 for a brief biographical sketch). Cardinal de Bonzi, Archbishop of Narbonne, merited a (on descending lines and moving to the right of the page) "Monseigneur/De V'[ôtre] Em[inence]/Le tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur" (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13, fol. 5).
end of the Dutch War in 1678.\textsuperscript{1161} The fall of Luxembourg also echoed in the halls of Versailles, where both Louvois and king expressed their great joy, and Seignelay was so impressed that he penned his only letter to Vauban of congratulation for a military action.\textsuperscript{1162} The further elaboration of his letter closings to Vauban, which had become established by 1686, may reflect Seignelay’s immense satisfaction with the extensive tour of coastal areas that the engineer undertook for him in 1685-86.\textsuperscript{1163}

It is worth noting that it was not Vauban’s assumption of Clerville’s old title of commissaire général des fortifications in 1678 that enhanced his status as reflected in the naval secretary’s letter closings. That office certainly added to his already growing role as coordinator of the fortifications of the realm, but it served largely to confirm and augment his power within the bureaucracy rather than to bump him further up the social ladder. What merited more lofty and embellished letter closings was the status Vauban had accrued outside the bureaucratic structure of the Colberts, where Vauban was after all only a subordinate, albeit an increasingly important one.

This points to the reciprocal nature of the patron-client relationship between Seignelay and Vauban, for while the secretary was certainly in a position to aid and protect the engineer, Vauban was not without resources to serve Seignelay. These were largely derived from his military rank and his growing indispensability to the execution of the king’s strategic planning. His rank, title, family name, and wealth added little or nothing to the trust people invested in him, but Vauban was well-respected by most of that generation of military men, both in France and throughout Europe, where his fame spread with the rise or fall of every new bastion.\textsuperscript{1164}

\textsuperscript{1161} For the decisive siege of Luxembourg, see Duffy, \textit{Fortress in the Age of Vauban}, 27, and Baxter, \textit{William III}, 189, 191, 193, for a non-French viewpoint.

\textsuperscript{1162} Louvois to Vauban, 7 June 1684, Rochas, \textit{Vauban ses écrits}, 2: 250; Seignelay to Vauban, 18 June, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 14, fol. 89.

\textsuperscript{1163} See the account of this beginning on p. 392 above.

\textsuperscript{1164} See Kettering, \textit{Patrons, Brokers, and Clients}, 43, on credit (crédit).
One of the first occasions when Seignelay endeavored to do Vauban a favor was in 1680. Seignelay wrote again the following year to revitalize his request, which had languished due to a change of intendant. His letter contains some very revealing language. Seignelay mentioned that the person for whom he was asking the favor was Vauban’s son-in-law, but disclosed his true reason for intervening with the new intendant by noting that since the engineer was a man “pour qui le Roy a une consideration particulièr je serois bien aise de luy faire plaisir en cette occasion.” A letter of the same day to another intendant sought assistance in a case involving another of Vauban’s relatives, mentioning the same credit Vauban enjoyed with the king.\textsuperscript{1165}

It was this credit in the military hierarchy and with Louvois and the king that rendered Vauban a powerful broker as well as a useful client. As a client, he was able to provide Seignelay with powerful backing for the further elaboration of the land portion of the naval machine since his recommendation of a project carried great weight. In addition, Vauban provided Seignelay with the kinds of technical assistance—including even highly-skilled military personal trained by himself—to supplement the sometimes technically limited architects who made up much of his department, or to personally handle a matter of political delicacy.\textsuperscript{1166}

Vauban was also well-placed to help make up for the administrative deficiencies of the department of the Colberts. They could import their hated rival’s tested managerial procedures by doing so through Vauban rather than having to go through the humiliation of asking Louvois to borrow them. No one was fooled, but face was saved. In fact, Vauban’s initial efforts for the controller-general perhaps inadvertently saved Colbert from losing his entire responsibility for frontier fortifications. The ineptness of his

\textsuperscript{1165}See p. 429 above for these requests relating to forest policy and the haras.

\textsuperscript{1166}For instance, 23 November 1685, Seignelay wrote Vauban that he needed two or three brave, intelligent engineers who had campaigned with him and who could move earth. He asked that he send him which ever of his subalterns qualified and whom he could spare (A.N. Marine B' 55, fol. 558v). In 1690, Seignelay used Vauban’s expertise to help resolve a touchy matter involving Madame de Maintenon’s brother (see note 1091 above).
organization and personnel had irritated the king during the Dutch War and had eventually cost Colbert the control of certain provinces. If Vauban had not served as consultant in the early 1670s to rectify many of these faults and to get the construction underway at an acceptable pace, Colbert might have suffered further humiliation and loss of other or all frontier strongholds.

One of the most important parts of being a client was loyalty, especially in a relationship that was by its very nature so personal. It is not difficult to see why Vauban could never have been Colbert’s client. But he was capable of at least a measure of loyalty to Seignelay. This would seem to account for Seignelay’s apparent pain and offense at learning that Vauban had complained of him to Louvois for his alleged weak support for the guerre de course. What increased Seignelay’s vexation was having been informed of this by the king, which must have been quite embarrassing in the context of the clan rivalry with the Le Telliers.

Like most clients—especially those in command of rather extensive power resources of their own—when Vauban drew on Seignelay’s resources as secretary of state for the marine, he did so not only for himself but especially for his own clients.1167 As a broker, Vauban was a conduit of favors, relaying requests to Paris and dispensing the king’s largess in the provinces. Of course, relatives and fellow natives of the Morvan constituted the natural circle of any nobleman of the seventeenth century. For a poor region like the Morvan this native son was an important asset, bridging the geographical, political, and social gap between the provincial nobility and the powerful ministers at Versailles.1168

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1167 Seignelay to Vauban, 15 January 1686, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 268-69, spoke of obtaining a monetary gratification for him from the king. On 11 March, he announced to the engineer “avec plaisir” that the monarch had accorded him 12,000 livres and that it would be sent in a few days (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 13, fol. 81; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 269, published part of this).

1168 For instance, Vauban to Seignelay, 27 November 1685, B.N. Clairambault 873 A-B, fol. 143, requested a naval commission for a man from the Morvan, a brother-in-law to a councilor in a parlement who was known to the secretary’s uncle Croissy, the foreign minister (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 266-67; Rochas misread the month as
The peripatetic nature of his métier also meant that Vauban's clientele extended its branches throughout the kingdom to those frontier places, both on land and along the coasts, that were subject to his visits. These places were concentrated in particular areas. For instance, his many years on the Flanders frontier, coupled with his governorship of the citadel of Lille--where he had what was perhaps his principal residence--plunged him into the affairs of that region. He also developed a clientele at Dunkirk, where he spent long years improving the fortifications and the port. His preoccupation with privateering widened his network of clients in that port and at other places along the coast, including Saint-Malo, the other major center of corsaire activity. But Vauban sought to help individuals all along his path, sometimes at his instigation, other times because his reputation and open nature drew supplicants to enlist his aid. Thus, he served as a patron to individuals and corporative bodies throughout the kingdom.

Vauban's circle of clients included some marine officials he had encountered on his tours and regarded as worthy of his protection. On one occasion, Vauban beseeched Seignelay on behalf of a former marine intendant he judged to have been unfairly

September and did not print this portion). See ibid., 266 n. 1, for an undated letter of recommendation. On 10 April 1681 (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 10, fol. 54), Seignelay informed Vauban that he had sent the brevet of garde de marine he had requested for a certain St-Eloy, whose connection to Vauban is unknown.

See for example, Vauban's letters to his client, the Baron de Woerden, 25 (Rochas mistakenly says "15") December 1680 and 4 January 1681, in Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 194-97. Vauban mentioned lobbying both Louvois and Seignelay on a matter, concluding that he had pressed the former as far as he could and noting that he had written the latter "un peu fortement...."

For his lobbying efforts on behalf of privateers, see Symcox, Crisis of French Sea Power, 177-79. On 30 June 1686, Seignelay informed the syndics of Saint-Malo that the king had approved the quay they wished to build at their own expense since Vauban had said it would be beneficial to the city (B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 16, fol. 95v).

For example, Seignelay mentioned to Bouchu, the intendant of Burgundy, that the Capuchines of Auxonne had Vauban ask the king to allow them to extend their garden to the old city rampart (21 January 1682, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 11, fols. 2v-3).
cashiered some years earlier. His fault had been some small matter blown out of proportion by the machinations of the commissaire de la marine Hubert. Vauban had advised this unfortunate officer to rehabilitate himself by availing himself of every opportunity to serve the navy—and thereby the naval secretary—in some capacity or other. In language invoking both his status as Seignelay’s client and the officer’s broker, Vauban entreated:

Ayez donc la bonté, Monseigneur, de le protéger tout de votre mieux et d’obtenir du Roi son pardon. Je prendrai particulièrement sur mon compte toutes les bontés que vous aurez pour lui en ce rencontre, et je m’en ferai volontiers une affaire auprès du Roi, même à qui j’en parlerai en votre présence si vous l’avez pour agréable et que vous jugiez que cela lui puisse servir.1172

Although he acknowledged his need for Seignelay’s influence with the king, Vauban demonstrated that he was not without his own power assets. Thus, Vauban was clearly a broker, as opposed to a mere go-between.1173

Seignelay recognized Vauban’s credit as a broker. In announcing the promotion of a garde de marine to ensign, the secretary of state observed that “j’ai été bien aise de le faire, puisque vous m’avez témoigné prendre part à son avancement.” Seignelay elaborated on this theme in discussing another of Vauban’s requests:

Je crois que M. de Langeron vous pourra dire que c’est à votre considération particulière que j’ai voulu passer sur bien des fautes que sa légèreté lui avait fait faire à mon égard, et je vous prie de croire que, dans tout ce que vous pouvez désirer de moi, vous y trouverez toujours des marques sincères de l’estime que j’ai pour vous...1174

Vauban had many "needy" kinsmen, neighbors, and friends, both in the Morvan, Flanders, and the other frontier posts he visited. But this alone did not account for his ties of patron-client with Seignelay. Their friendly relations and cooperation appears to have pre-dated their assumption of these roles by several years. Despite some rough

1172Vauban to Seignelay, n.d., Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 266-67 n. 1 (see note 1136 above on the dating of this letter). See also Seignelay to Vauban, 27 December 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 255, promising to help two gentlemen of the marine he recommended to him.

1173The latter was merely an intermediary, whereas the broker had power resources of his own. See Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 42, 56-57.

moments—especially when they clashed over the guerre de course—their friendship and their patron-client bonds seem to have endured, even though Vauban harbored reservations about Seignelay’s administrative abilities and some of his policy decisions, and even conspired with Louvois behind his back. Indeed, their patron-client relationship was tested by the fact that Vauban was clearly the client of Louvois, the long-time and bitter adversary of the Colberts. Such an arrangement of multiple patrons was common, for the ability to tap into more than one source of favors and protection increased the power and attraction of a broker. The danger came, however, when rivalry between two patrons forced the client/broker to choose sides. Vauban was fortunate in that his own crédit was so extensive and he was of such value to Seignelay, a show-down of this magnitude never materialized. Seignelay may have been prevented from demanding one for a number of reasons, the most important being that he recognized Louvois’s role as the engineer’s primary patron, from whom flowed the major portion of the favors Vauban acquired for others. In addition, given his client’s eminence, it would have been difficult for the naval secretary to deny for long Vauban’s requests, even had he been so inclined. This was especially true during the decade when Seignelay served alone as marine secretary, for the War of the League of Augsburg only added to Vauban’s stature and his value to the king. Nevertheless, personal enmity could and did often overcome pragmatism. Vauban himself had been quite willing to do without the favors that could have flowed from the powerful patronage of Colbert. So we return to the conclusion that there was a genuine friendship of some sort between Seignelay and Vauban, and it was this more than anything else that prevented a rupture between the two when their interests diverged.

When Seignelay passed from the scene in 1690, Louvois’s triumph seemed complete. He inherited part of his rival’s administrative empire, and the only Colbert remaining in the king’s inner circle was Croissy, with whom Louvois often cooperated in aggressive policies abroad. And while Louvois’s “homme” Vauban had become an increasingly powerful patron and broker in his own right, drawing on the resources of

1175Kettering, Patrons, Brokers, and Clients, 59.
Louvois's rival Seignelay as well as his crédit with the king, the engineer remained primarily a client of the Le Telliers. Louvois's appointment to control all fortifications—even those facing the sea—only consolidated his position as Vauban's principal patron. But, Vauban had climbed too high on the social ladder and had attained too much eminence to remain merely the "créature" of Louvois. When that minister followed his rival to the grave in less than a year, Vauban's increasingly independent stature was thrown into stark relief by the new power arrangements decided upon by the king. Barbézieux was too weak and Vauban too strong for that young man to inherit his father's clientage intact.\footnote{On Barbézieux, see Ronald Martin, "The Marquis de Barbézieux as Secrétaire d'État de la guerre, 1691-1697," Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History 3(1975): 60-67, which is cautiously revisionist.}
CONCLUSION

Louis XIV has been known by many names. When he entered the world, he was greeted as "Le Dieudonné" by a kingdom anxious for an heir to the aging king. As a young monarch Louis chose the sun as his symbol and has been best known since as "Le Roi Soleil." His enemies abused and lampooned him with many an uncomplimentary epithet, while the king's propagandists countered with panegyrics and flattering titles. Historians have offered further labels, usually of a more analytical nature and aimed at increasing rather than obscuring our understanding of Louis.

John B. Wolf has justly called Louis XIV France's last "Soldier-King." Far from being the coward portrayed by enemy libels or the dilettante his own battlefield entourage of courtiers and mistresses suggested, Louis was a brave and able commander. Glory-seeking aristocrats longed for the pell-mell of the pitched battle, but Louis recoiled from such uncertainties. Vauban benefitted from the king's preference for the methodical, controlled action of a siege. In fact, Louis's presence was often required at a siege so that as nominal commander he could assure obedience to Vauban's orders since many officers were loath to subordinate themselves to a minor nobleman and "mere" engineer. Additionally, Louis had the wisdom to employ Vauban's talents in planning the repair or demolition of old fortresses and in creating new ones along his expanding frontier.1177

John C. Rule has focused our attention on another aspect of Louis XIV: his role as "roi-bureaucrate." As Wolf observed, even a good portion of Louis's work as a military commander was on the administrative side of warfare. Rule demonstrates that this was just one manifestation of the "bureaucratic impulse" Louis inherited from Richelieu and

Mazarin. Here was a king who truly meant not just to reign but to rule, and this included his family, his councils, foreign affairs, domestic matters, and the military. Louis sought to consolidate the administrative gains that emerged from the previous period of international and internal strife. Orderly and hard-working himself, the monarch sought servants who were the same and closeted himself with them either in various councils or individually to tackle the tasks of governance in an increasingly routinized fashion.\footnote{Ruie, "Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate," 8-11, 21-35, 48-53, 91-92.}

Vauban was one of these royal servants who collaborated closely with Louis XIV in his quest for administrative efficiency and regularity. Yet, this part of his work is often overlooked or given cursory treatment. This is because so much emphasis has been placed on the engineer's brilliant sieges and the host of designs for powerful fortresses that emerged from his creative mind. It has been the contention of this paper that Louis XIV discovered in Louvois's chief engineer not only a competent technician but an able administrator. The \textit{roi-bureaucrate} enlisted the services of this \textit{ingénieur-bureaucrate} to assist him in reshaping the administrative arrangements that he had inherited from the past and had settled upon in the early years of his personal reign.

The legacy for the management of royal fortifications from the previous reigns was certainly a mixed bag of procedures, personnel, and administrative interconnections. At the end of the Wars of Religion, Henri IV and Sully assembled the flotsam of the Middle Ages and the jetsam of the Valois's last century of dynastic and civil war into a workable system. The \textit{surintendant des fortifications} in Paris and the provincial governors supervised the various administrative and financial personnel in the provinces, who in turn directed and supported the engineers and skilled and unskilled laborers who actually constructed the fortifications. The all-important matter of financial supervision, especially the negotiation of contracts, was ultimately controlled by the governor in the provinces and overseen by the \textit{surintendant} in the capital. This rudimentary bureaucracy worked fairly well. Henri's productive reign was also marked by numerous demolitions
of unneeded and dangerous fortresses and by the construction of new strongholds along the vulnerable frontiers.

This system was reduced to a shambles, however, after Henri IV’s death by an assassin’s dagger in 1610 and the ensuing disorder. The surintendant quickly ceased to play a discernable role and many of the governors asserted their independence from the weak ministers who directed the young king’s affairs. When Louis XIII finally took the offensive, he and his cardinal-minister faced a long and bitter struggle against a variety of entrenched centripetal forces. This was certainly the case with regard to fortifications. The internal war against the Huguenots which Louis XIII and Richelieu pressed with such vigor and effectiveness provided compelling reasons for the king to reassert his control over all fortifications. The need became even more pressing when France openly entered into The Thirty Years’ War against the Habsburgs. But governors, both of provinces and strongholds, had largely ceased to be reliable agents of the king’s will. And many fortification personnel had likewise escaped the monarch’s grasp when, hungry for cash to fight its foreign and domestic foes, Louis’s government had turned their posts into offices and sold them.

Nevertheless, the royal government eventually succeeded in re-establishing its control over the management of its fortifications during the 1630s and 1640s. The primary agents of this process were intendants, royal commissaires employed to remedy the defaults of the uncooperative or rebellious officeholders and great nobles. We have seen that the most important of these were the army intendants and intendants of conquered provinces who operated on and beyond the borders of France during wartime, and the provincial intendants who took over when territories were incorporated into the realm at the end of a war. Governors were largely supplanted by these intendants who now negotiated the contracts and supervised the building sites. But this change came only slowly and by fits and starts. And some of the new positions created, such as the intendants des fortifications, constituted a new set of venal office holders potentially unresponsive to the royal will. The gradual restoration of royal power in this as in other areas resulted more from the ad hoc measures of wartime crises than any sort of rational plan of administrative renovation.
The control mechanism in the capital evolved in the same manner. At the top, just below the king, was the chief minister, who was intimately involved with both big and small matters concerning fortifications. He was seconded by the four secretaries of state, surintendants of finance, and the chancellor, although the latter role was much diminished by the end of Richelieu’s ministry. Despite the anachronistic assumption of many that the war secretary was the chief supervisor of the fortifications service prior to 1661, this was simply not the case. The war secretary controlled all bastions captured in enemy territory during war time. As a secretary of state, however, he supervised the fortifications in only an approximate quarter of the existing provinces, and most of these were not even on the frontiers. Thus, when peace finally came between the Bourbons and both branches of Habsburgs, Le Tellier’s fortification department actually experienced some shrinkage, although he did gain permanent control of several of the new conquests.

When Louis XIV began an ambitious building program along his frontiers after 1661, the provincial intendants were clearly masters over the local fortification administration in all but two provinces: Picardy and Champagne. These ancient royal provinces were both crucial links in the defensive chain of fortresses gradually being forged to keep out the hated Habsburgs. Their fortifications were administered by the venal intendants des fortifications. When Louis empowered Colbert to commence an equally ambitious construction program along the coasts, he employed commissaires called marine intendants to supervise the creation of arsenals and coastal fortifications. Thus, by 1661 orders from Paris were carried out at the coastal and frontier fortifications by commissioners of one kind or another save along the vulnerable north-eastern border.

In 1661, Colbert emerged as head of the king’s finances. He used this leverage to wrest the actual supervision of frontier and coastal fortifications from the secretaries of state who had had them under their care. Only Le Tellier’s provinces escaped his control. Although the other three secretaries of state remained nominally in charge and Colbert had to send his official dispatches through them until he became a secretary of state himself in 1669, his direct control in the everyday supervision of fortifications was unchallenged. Far from this representing a loss of power for the war secretary or a
partition of the fortification administration between that secretary and Colbert, this was a power grab by the king’s intendant of finances.

The fortification department entrusted to Colbert was clearly the more extensive of the two, both in the territory it covered and in the number of places it contained. Two separate fortification bureaucracies emerged, each with a different set of administrators, engineers, and procedures. Le Tellier’s small department relied on the provincial intendants to supervise construction projects and so was spared the inconveniences of venal intendants des fortifications. Colbert, however, operated with three mechanisms of control, which included these two very different types of intendants as well as the naval intendants. Some semblance of technical unity was provided, at least in theory, by the creation of a new office in 1662 that was an echo of the past: the commissaire général des fortifications de France. This position was given to Clerville, one of Mazarin’s créatures who had been inherited by Colbert. But Clerville did not please the Le Telliers, and they gave him little to do, although Colbert kept him quite busy on a variety of tasks besides fortifications.

This balance between the two ministers began to tip the other way in 1667 with the War of Devolution. Louvois had by this time emerged as his father’s close collaborator in the war ministry and the king’s partner in his quest for secure borders and personal gloire. When the war ended the following year, in a break with past practice, all the new conquests were added to the department of the war secretary, which was thus considerably augmented. A massive building program began almost immediately to secure Flanders and the other new territories against a Spanish counter-attack. The hostility of the Le Tellier’s prevented Colbert’s engineer Clerville from fully playing the role that was his by right of office. Louvois and the king instead entrusted these many projects to Vauban, who had helped capture Lille and other places in 1667. Vauban designed the new fortifications and then organized and supervised their construction.

Vauban, an unhappy client of the Colberts, availed himself of this opportunity to acquire a new patron. So great was his technical and administrative prowess that he emerged as Louvois’s chief assistant in Flanders by the next summer of 1668. By the
end of the year he was off to apply his keen eye and organizational abilities to the other fortifications of Louvois’s department. From that time on he was the war secretary’s inspector and second-in-command for all the places in his care. Vauban presided over several years of building activity that not only impressed Louvois with his worth but pleased the king as well.

The year 1669 marked an important advancement for Colbert when he became secretary of state for the Maison du Roi and for the newly created marine ministry. It also marked a significant development in fortifications since all his correspondence strictly related to this matter was consolidated in one registry of out-going letters. At the same time, Colbert dispensed with the venal intendants des fortifications, relying instead on a directeur for Picardy and perhaps one for Champagne, both of whom were commissioners and were assisted by various sub-directors.

As the preparations for war with the Dutch accelerated Colbert was increasingly reminded of the inadequacies of the preparations at the places under his supervision. Early in 1671 the fortifications directeur for Picardy was removed, and his responsibilities were transferred to the already hard-pressed provincial intendant at Amiens, who was assisted by his sub-delegate. This arrangement paralleled the management system employed by Louvois in Flanders and his other provinces since it relied on the provincial intendant. But it differed in one significant point, and this may have constituted its fatal flaw: there was no inspector or roving administrator to serve as a link between Paris and the provinces. Clerville functioned as a troubleshooter whose efforts never seem to have included Colbert’s entire department at any one time. The chevalier often he spent years on one project, as when he scoured the coasts for sites for new ports. If any one person drew the whole department together, it was Colbert himself, laboring long hours in his study over the sheaves of paper he demanded from his many subordinates throughout the realm. But the administration of fortifications was just one of his many concerns, albeit it an important one.

Louvois was also a busy administrator. He reserved to himself final say as to what proposals would go to the king for his consideration and what would not. Unlike Colbert, he often made extensive excursions to the places under his care. But Louvois
knew how to delegate responsibilities and authority. Vauban served as his chief deputy in matters regarding fortifications, gathering and evaluating information, coordinating efforts among the engineers, and inspecting places and personnel all along the frontier to verify that what the war secretary was told in letters was actually what was being accomplished at the work sites. These tasks kept Vauban quite busy. Even so, his inquisitive mind wandered into several related military matters. Louvois listened to his friend’s thoughts and proposals, encouraging some and discouraging others. But never did he dilute Vauban’s efforts by assigning him duties outside the field of fortifications or related engineering matters, except when soldiers and engineers were kept busy during peacetime at the Aqueduct of Maintenon. Unlike Colbert and Clerville, Vauban could focus all his energy and attention in Louvois’s department on fortifications.

In an age where kings often went to places in person to assert their authority, it is clear that a critical element of Louvois and Vauban’s system of fortifications administration rested on the engineer’s almost annual circuit of the frontiers, which commenced in 1668-69. When Vauban wearily took to the roads each winter, he at least travelled with the knowledge that he had no rival as chief engineer in Louvois’s department and enjoyed the full backing of both the secretary and the king. Clerville, however, departed on his peregrinations with no such assurance with regard to his royal master. Although Clerville retained Colbert’s confidence, Louis largely stood by and allowed the chevalier to suffer several humiliations at the hands of Vauban and Louvois from the opening days of the War of Devolution and after.

Louis XIV’s war against the Dutch, which began in 1672, led to further alterations in the administration of fortifications. The work along the portion of the frontier entrusted to Colbert had been floundering for some time. This was due in part to the chronic inadequacies of the control system at the provincial level. When the venal intendants des fortifications had been replaced in 1669 with one or more directeurs, they still had too many projects to supervise over too large a territory. Additionally and perhaps decisively, these directeurs were not armed with adequate police, judicial, and financial authority to command the resources needed for the massive building projects being undertaken along the north-eastern frontier.
The decision in 1671 to entrust the fortifications of Picardy to the provincial intendant seemed to have resolved this problem. But the return of war the next year dramatically increased the other activities of that harried administrator to the detriment of fortifications. Enemy probes along the French frontier late in 1672 had sent the king into a near panic. Louis ordered a complete evaluation of the entire northern and eastern frontier and dispatched Condé and Vauban to see which places ought to be kept and which demolished. Vauban had caught the royal eye at the outset of the Dutch War both by the solidity of the frontier strongholds he had constructed during the previous five years and by his brilliant and innovative siege of Maastricht in 1672. This re-thinking of the idea of frontier resulted in several assignments for Vauban in the department of Colbert, a minister he had come to both distrust and dislike. Vauban was reluctant to work with Colbert or to add to his pressing administrative responsibilities for Louvois, from which he was already distracted by his siege activities and voyages of inspection into conquered territories.

Further French reverses late in 1673 and the threat of an allied invasion early the next year led to a further administrative innovation. Colbert revived the position and title of intendant des fortifications, but with some significant differences. These supervisors were commissioners, not venal officeholders. They also had charge of a much smaller area and fewer fortresses than had their predecessors. And, once again, their power was largely independent of that of the provincial intendant since they had the power to conclude contracts and since they reported directly to Paris. The provincial intendant, who merely acted as one of their number, was himself charged with only a limited portion of the work in Picardy. The intendancy regained a supervisory role over the intendants des fortifications once a new intendant was named, but otherwise this new system lasted until the end of the Colberts’ department in 1690.

Adding to Colbert’s difficulties during the war with Holland was the scandalous failure of his cousin as provincial intendant in Alsace. The incompetent and unsavory Colbert de Saint-Marc had left Brisach in 1671 under a cloud of suspicion, but even worse had failed to complete the fortifications the king hoped would close that porte to Imperial troops. Colbert, working through Clerville, likewise failed in his efforts to get
these projects underway to the king’s satisfaction. In 1673, Alsace and its defensive works were assigned to the more capable hands of Louvois and Vauban.

Although this scandal known as the "affaire de Brisach" had almost wrecked Vauban’s career, his name was cleared by the end of summer in 1671. Historians have focused almost entirely on Vauban’s part in these financial improprieties, but as we have seen this imbroglio was more threatening to the Colbert clan and ultimately had a greater impact on that family’s fortunes than it did on Vauban. But the resolution of this scandal, coming as it did on the eve of the Dutch War, had a number of important results for Vauban as well. It finally dissipated the shadow that had hovered over him since his work in Alsace, thus removing a potential obstacle to his further advancement in the king’s service. Louvois had won him as a client in 1667, but Vauban’s dislike for Colbert, confirmed and deepened by this brush with disgrace, served only to bind the engineer more firmly and fervently to the war secretary.

The Dutch War thus constituted a turning point both for Vauban and for the administration of the king’s fortifications. Indeed, the two were becoming increasingly intertwined. The War of Devolution had offered new territories and vast construction projects to Louvois, but the two fortification departments likely would have remained separate had it not been for the deficiencies of Colbert and his subordinates during the various alarms of the war. Vauban was content to confine his activities to Louvois’s existing department even if that minister was not. But the engineer’s own achievements cost him dearly in terms of time and effort as he was increasingly drawn into the management of Colbert’s fortresses in Picardy and Champagne. The prime mover behind these changes was Louis XIV, who set aside considerations of departmental jurisdiction and the prerogatives of Clererville’s title when it was a matter of defending his frontier. By the fall of 1674, Vauban’s earlier role of occasional consultant in Colbert’s fortification department had metamorphosed into that of chief inspector and planner for Picardy, to which was added the Three Bishoprics and Champagne within a few months. Initially, there was resistance to this interloper from the rival department’s camp; but backed as he was by the king, Colbert, and his own administrative skills, Vauban prevailed.
The death of Clerville in December 1677 cleared the way for Vauban to receive the title whose functions he had exercised in Louvois’s department since 1668 and in Picardy and Champagne for Colbert since 1674. This office, coupled with Seignelay’s assumption of the day-to-day administration of his father’s department of fortifications, led to a further expansion of the inspection and administrative activities of the new commissaire général des fortifications. While Clerville still lived, Vauban had done little along the coasts, but from 1678 on he became an active collaborator in the naval department’s port-building program. Thus, by 1678, Vauban had come to be the chief administrative deputy to both ministers who supervised the king’s fortresses.

Nevertheless, the two departments remained separate. Each had its own engineers, still recruited from largely different social milieux, regions, and professions. Each received its orders from a different set of administrators and commis in Paris and generally reported to different types of administrators in the provinces. Colbert and Seignelay utilized provincial intendants in most provinces and marine intendants at the great port- arsenals, but in Picardy and Champagne they relied upon the non-venal intendants des fortifications. Many of these latter were trésoriers de France, drawn from the same world of finance from which Colbert himself had emerged. In Louvois’s department, however, the engineers were mostly army officers, and they exercised greater administrative responsibilities than did those who served under the Colberts.

The one source of unity this bifurcated fortification service possessed besides the king was Vauban. He injected into Colbert’s department many of the administrative practices he had developed in his years serving Louvois. These were contained in his little manual, written about 1674, that was meant to define the responsibilities of the various members of the department, from the minister and his chief inspector on down the administrative hierarchy to intendants (both provincial and des fortifications), engineers of various grades, and foremen over laborers. In both departments Vauban had a significant influence over the selection, training, posting, and promotion of engineers, although there were limits to what he could do with those entrenched veterans attached to the Colberts. But while it is useful to point out those elements of the classic Weberian bureaucratic organization Vauban was helping Louis and his ministers to
create,\textsuperscript{1179} it would be unwise to exaggerate their achievement. Vauban lived and willingly operated in a milieu where patron, client, and emerging modern bureaucrat often wore the same wig. And the unity Vauban represented had its limits, for \textit{au fond} he remained Louvois's man, more than willing to betray the confidences of Colbert and Seignelay to their rival minister. Vauban had become the chief engineer in the department of the Colbets, but it should be remembered that this was a department in which engineers played a lesser administrative role than did financial officials. Vauban's frustration at these limits are clear in several of his outbursts at the administrative policies of the Colbets. Even under Seignelay, toward whom he was personally better disposed, he felt limited in what he could accomplish.

Vauban very nearly died at the beginning of the 1690s, but it ended up being the younger ministers for whom he worked who died in rapid succession. Between 1690 and 1691 the two departments were joined together. Louvois had less than a year to gloat over his clan's victory at the expense of the Colbets. When he in turn died in July, it was not his son who governed this newly created fortification entity. Rather it was Michel Le Peletier de Souzy, an experienced civilian administrator who headed a department divorced from the ministry of war. The engineers were now on their own when it came to matters of repair, construction, and demolition. They and their fortifications were subject neither to the navy nor to the army. Vauban retained his role as chief inspector, designer, and planner. Yet, he had done his job so well that when he died in 1707, the department of fortifications continued on as if he were still alive. If there were failings after his passing—and it is often argued that the defenses at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession were not on a par with those of the era of Vauban—it was due more to a failure of design rather than a failure of execution. Vauban's successors may not have possessed the technical brilliance of their mentor or the eye for

terrain that made him a master of defensive fortifications, but he had bequeathed them an organization in which his reasoned and tested procedures had become routinized.

Louis XIV's long reign contributed a great deal to the growth of the modern state. Certainly, we must be careful not to push the roi-bureaucrate's claim too far or to forget the legacy he owed his father and the two cardinal-ministers. But Louis and his chief collaborators added considerably to this process. The king had an eye for talent and the wisdom to support it, which he did on enough occasions to benefit the various aims he pursued. In fortification matters, Louis recognized Vauban's skills from an early date and put them to good use. Vauban besieged and built but he also inspected and administered. The great preneur des places and architect of France's frontière de fer also deserves to be known as Louis XIV's ingénieur-bureaucrate.
## Appendix A

**Fortifications in the Department of the Le Telliers**

The major strongholds and towns whose fortifications were under the supervision of Michel Le Tellier and Louvois are listed below. They are generally grouped by intendency. French territorial gains and losses are noted in parentheses, as are transferrals of responsibilities among the secretaries of state and ministers. It should be recalled that Colbert and Seignelay supervised the fortifications in provinces that in other matters were supervised by secretaries of state other than the war secretary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dauphiné (to Croissy/Colbert and Seignelay 1680):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort-Barraux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exilles (to France 1631-1713)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outre-Mont (in Piedmont):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pignerol (to France 1631-97)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cazal (to France 1681)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artois (to France 1659)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arras</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hainaut (to France 1659)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avesnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landrecies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condé (1678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maubeuge (1678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravelines (1659)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort de la Scarpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armentières</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tournai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binche</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippeville</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briançon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenestrelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Béthune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Quesnoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valenciennes (1678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bavay (1678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders (1667-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourbourg (1659)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nieuport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coutrai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oudenaarde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleroi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Roussillon (to France 1659):
- Perpignan
- Port-Vendres
- Fort-les-Bains
- Villefranche
- Collioure (Fort Miradoux)
- Bellegarde
- Prats-de-Molló
- Montlouis

Ducal Lorraine and Bar (occupied by France 1633-61 and 1670-98):
- Nancy

Alsace (from Pomponne/Colbert 1673):
- Philipsbourg (to France until 1679)
  - Brisach
  - Landser
  - Thann
  - Belfort
  - Huningue

Three Bishoprics (from Pomponne/Colbert and Seignelay 1680):
- Toul
- Metz
- Verdun
- Marsal

Franche-Comté (to France 1668, 1678-)
- Besançon

The war minister also had responsibility for fortifications in all occupied territories from the War of Devolution and after. From 1684-97 these included Spanish Flanders, Luxembourg, the Palatinate, and the places on the right bank of the Rhine.
Appendix B
Fortifications in the Department of the Colberts

These fortifications were under Colbert and Seignelay even when in a generality under another secretary. Transfers among the secretaries of state are noted in parentheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picardy</th>
<th>Champagne</th>
<th>Burgundy</th>
<th>Provence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardres</td>
<td>Monthulin</td>
<td>Charleville</td>
<td>Saint-Jean-de-Losne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreuil</td>
<td>Rue</td>
<td>Mont-Olympe</td>
<td>Verdun-sur-le-Doubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbeville</td>
<td>Hesdin</td>
<td>Stenay</td>
<td>Fort de l’Ecluse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Quentin</td>
<td>Doullens</td>
<td>Château-Regnault</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amiens</td>
<td>Corbie</td>
<td>Donchery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Péronne</td>
<td>Le Catelet</td>
<td>Marville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laon</td>
<td>Guise</td>
<td>Langres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Capelle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Béarn:
- St Jean Pied-de-Port
- Navarrein
- Dax
- Lourdes

Maritimes Places on the Channel and Atlantic coasts:
- Dunkirk Ambleteuse
- Calais Fr. de Nieuw
- Boulogne Le Tréport
- Le Havre Dieppe
- Fécamp Honfleur
- La Hogue Saint-Malo
- Brest Chateau du Taureau
- Belle-Isle Port Louis
- Chateau de Nantes La Rochelle
- Ile de Ré Rochefort
- Brouage Le Chapus
- Ile d'Oléron Fort de la Prée
- Château de la Chaume Blaye
- Fort Médoc Bordeaux
- Bayonne Hendaye

Languedoc:
- Sète (Cette)

Alsace (from Pomponne to Louvois 1673):
- Brisach Philipsbourg
- Belfort Landser
- Huningue Thann

Three Bishoprics (from Pomponne to Louvois 1680):
- Verdun Metz
- Toul Marsal (to France 1663)
- Sierck Moyenvic
- Thionville (?)

Dauphiné (from Louvois to Croissy in 1681):
- Fort-Barraux Briançon
- Exilles
Appendix C  
Seignelay's Department of Fortifications, February, 1685

Based on a circular letter in B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 15, fol. 14v-15. All the administrators listed are referred to as "intendants," but without further specification. Some were provincial intendants, while others were marine intendants and commissioners, and one was an intendant des fortifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intendants</th>
<th>Engineers</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moyenneville</td>
<td>Richer</td>
<td>Calais, Fort de Nieulay, Ardres, Boulogne,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Montreuil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patoulet</td>
<td>de Combes</td>
<td>ports of Dunkirk and Ambleteuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montmort</td>
<td>Guihou</td>
<td>Le Havre, Fécamp, St.Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pyuert (?)</td>
<td>Dieppe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desclouzeaux</td>
<td>Massiac</td>
<td>precincts of Brest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Molart</td>
<td>battery of Leon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>de Luc</td>
<td>citadel of Belle-Isle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Aignan</td>
<td>de Luc</td>
<td>Port Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnoul</td>
<td>Ferry</td>
<td>Isle de Ré, pays d'Aunis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ris</td>
<td>Ferry</td>
<td>Blaye, Château-Trompette, Bayonne, Hendaye,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>places of the Pyrenees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vauvré</td>
<td>du Cairon</td>
<td>places of the dept. of Toulon and Marseille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlay Bonneuil</td>
<td>Duplessis</td>
<td>Auxonne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renart</td>
<td>Dupuy</td>
<td>Sedan and Stenay [places of Champagne]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raulet</td>
<td>Rocroi, Charleville, Mezières, Mont Olympe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chantereau-Lefebvre</td>
<td>Mercier</td>
<td>Ham, La Fère, Guise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chauvelin</td>
<td>Garand</td>
<td>Doullens, Péronne, St Quentin, citadel of Amiens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix D
Shared Correspondence

Vauban readily vented to Louvois his frustrations with Colbert, describing the controller-general’s shortcomings in detail. For his part, Louvois was usually eager to receive Vauban’s revelations of the plans, inner-workings, and deficiencies of his rival’s administration. In December 1670, for instance, Louvois wrote Vauban: “Je serais bien aise de savoir ce que c’est que cette thèse que vous avez soutenu sur la marine.”\(^{1180}\) A few days later he reiterated his request, promising to evaluate the two or three “belles choses” on the marine Vauban claimed to have in his head.\(^{1181}\) The exact subject of Vauban’s proposal is not known, although it is likely that it concerned the design for the port of Dunkirk, which he later complained was hampered by Colbert’s puny conception of its potential.\(^{1182}\)

It was common to send extracts or full copies of the letters of one individual to another in the course of administrative business, as witnessed by the many references to such activity throughout the letter registers of the Colberts and Vauban himself.\(^{1183}\) But

\(^{1180}\)Louvois to Vauban, 9 December 1670, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 38 and n. 1.

\(^{1181}\)Louvois to Vauban, 11 December 1670, ibid.

\(^{1182}\)Vauban to Louvois, 11 September 1671, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 47-48. In light of his enduring and avid interest in the affairs of Colbert’s department, Louvois’s reply to Vauban that “il faut se contenter de bien servir le maître en ce dont il nous charge, et ne pas nous inquiéter du reste...” seems rather hypocritical and self-serving (Louvois to Vauban, 28 September, ibid., 49-50).

\(^{1183}\)For example, Seignelay to Richer, 17 May 1683, B.I.G. in-Fo 205, vol. 12, fol. 60, informing the engineer Richer that his letter on the work at Fort Nieulay would be sent to Vauban. Seignelay said he would transmit to Richer Vauban’s letter on the same subject.
many of the copies Vauban sent to Louvois appear to have been of a different nature. In 1674, for instance, Vauban sent the war minister copies of his mémoires on Ham and La Fère, two places in Colbert’s department; he also communicated to Louvois duplicates of his accompanying letters to Colbert. In early 1675, as his service to Colbert was expanding, Vauban relayed one of that minister’s letters to Louvois. Later that month, he sent Louvois “les fruits” of his six-week tour of Colbert’s province of Picardy, asking only that if the war minister decided to look at these mémoires he should make certain they were sent to Colbert afterwards.

As the general superintendant of the posts, Louvois was in a unique position to view Vauban’s letters to Colbert without the latter’s knowledge. With Vauban’s connivance, Louvois could peruse his friend’s letters to Colbert simply by extracting them from the postal bureau during the period between their arrival in Paris or at court and their final delivery to their addressee. No one was the wiser or at least able to stop him. That this was their probable modus operandi is attested to by a letter of Vauban to Louvois during Seignelay’s ministry. The engineer sent Louvois the project for Toulon he had just completed for the naval secretary, telling Louvois to look it over quickly and then send it on to Seignelay since the marine intendant and others in Toulon would surely let Seignelay know that the project had been sent to him by the same courrier that had carried their letters.

1184 These copies in the Archives de la Guerre are noted by Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 111 n. 1. For one of these letters, see Vauban to Louvois, 10 March 1674, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 106-07.

1185 Louvois to Vauban, 2 January 1675, ibid., 120.

1186 Vauban to Louvois, 29 January 1675, ibid., 122.

1187 For Louvois and the postal service, see Corvisier, Louvois, 222-40.

1188 Vauban to Louvois, 10 March 1679, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 179-81.
It is difficult to say how often Vauban shared his letters to Colbert with his adversary. But it is certain that this had become a well-established practice that persisted into Seignelay’s ministry, despite Vauban’s improved relationship with Colbert’s heir. In 1679, Louvois wrote Vauban: “J’ai lu avec plaisir ce que vous demandés à Mr de Seignelay sur le port de Cette. Je doute que cette lettre lui soit fort agréables.” Nearly two years later, Louvois remarked to Vauban that since Seignelay had not shared with him the engineer’s design for a particular place, he would view with pleasure the copy Vauban had promised to send him. In 1682, Vauban promised Louvois copies of the mémoires on Toulon and Antibes he had just completed for Seignelay; he also sent the war minister secret information drawn from the naval intendant on the upcoming attack on Algiers. Rousset asserted that “Il est certain que Vauban communiquait d’abord à Louvois les rapports et les projets qu’il faisait pour Colbert.” But he cites only three examples, all within a few weeks of one another. Yet, duplicates of the letters of the Colberts appear in the war archives only sporadically. This sharing of correspondence with Louvois was not the standard policy whenever Vauban communicated with one of the Colberts. Instead, it appears to have been reserved for special occasions, when it was a matter of particular interest to the

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1189 Examples are: Louvois to Vauban, 1 January 1671, a request for advice on approaching Colbert about possible fraud at Saint-Quentin (Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1: 279 n.); Louvois to Vauban, 15 January 1671, on Saint-Quentin (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 41); Vauban to Louvois, 20 January 1673, sharing what he will write to Colbert concerning Guise (ibid., 89); copies of Vauban’s mémoires for Colbert on Guise and Ham in the war archives (Clément, Lettres de Colbert, 5: 111 n. 1; Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 106-07; A.G. A1 418, p. 164); Louvois to Vauban, 2 January 1675, returning letter from Colbert Vauban lent him (Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 120).

1190 Louvois to Vauban, 10 October 1679, A.G. A1 625, p. 205.

1191 Louvois to Vauban, 15 August 1681, Rochas, Vauban, ses écrits, 2: 199. The letter is unclear as to what place is in question.

1192 Vauban to Louvois, 19 May 1682, ibid., 211-15.

1193 Rousset, Histoire de Louvois, 1:278-79 n. 2.
minister of war, such as the plan for some large-scale project, or when Vauban wanted to criticize the Colberts.\textsuperscript{1194}

\textsuperscript{1194}See p. 409 above when Louvois wanted information on Calais and p. 318 above when Vauban wanted Louvois to take on responsibility for Dunkirk.
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