A Mediterranean Connection: French Ambassadors, the Republic of Venice, and the Construction of the Louisquatorzien State, 1662-1702

Sherrod Brandon Marshall
Syracuse University

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Abstract

Historians of Louis XIV’s reign have debated evolutions in the king’s administration. Such studies, despite heterogenous conclusions, better define our understanding of absolutist authority in the ancien régime as manifested through a process of so-called bureaucratic centralization. Scholars debate to what extent the monarchy achieved centralization amid the interests of individuals and corporations suspended in traditional hierarchies and socio-cultural expectations. Recently, scholars have posited that Louis’s government accommodated the concerns of its ministers through gratifications and social advancement compelling obedience to the Bourbon dynastic state. This dissertation considers for the first time how a politics of accommodation characterized the Crown’s rapport with a selection of diplomats in the years of Louis XIV’s personal rule.

Specifically, I examine five ambassadors serving Louis XIV in the Republic of Venice. Focusing on French ambassadors in Venice accomplishes three tasks. First, ambassadors’ stories highlight how dynasticism perfused the personal ambitions of diplomats as much as it did those of the Crown. The dynastic imperative informed the choices of individuals within the diplomatic corps, and a desire to advance personal fortune and family honor fueled their participation in Louis’s foreign ministry. Secondly, diplomats’ correspondence from Venice elucidates French politics with Venice, other Italian states, and within the commercial and maritime spheres of the Mediterranean Sea. I consider how centralization facilitated or impeded Louis’s hegemonic strategies in Italy and in the sea. Finally, I argue that the Venetians maintained diplomatic relevance for the French until 1702. Traditional narratives claim that Venice “declined” on the international stage by the mid-seventeenth century, but I underscore that Louis XIV viewed Venice as a robust polity critical to the success of dynastic politics throughout most of his reign.
A Mediterranean Connection:
French Ambassadors, the Republic of Venice, and the Construction of the

_Louisquatorzien_ State, 1662-1702

by

Sherrod Brandon Marshall

B.S., Harding University, 1999
M.A., University of Arkansas, 2006
M.S. Edu., Syracuse University, 2011
M.Phil., Syracuse University, 2011

Dissertation
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For

Mary Jo, Janet, and Di

...esurivi enim et dedistis mihi manducare
sitivi et dedistis mihi bibere
hospes eram et collexistis me....

- secundum Matthæum, 25:35
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This dissertation carries much debt.

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Flying from Syracuse to the archives in France and Italy, I owe debts of enormous gratitude to those who helped me in the world of the manuscripts. At the archives du ministère des affaires étrangères, La Courneuve my task became lighter through the help of Lionel Chénéder, a friend indeed. Also the kind attentions of Mesdames Catherine and Édith made long days in the microfilms pass with pleasure. Thanks to Mr. Jean-Charles Neto. I extend thanks too to Dr. Jérôme de la Gorce for generous help in my first forays with seventeenth century script.

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Comments on Terminology and Conventions

1.) The terms “louisquatorzien” and “ludovician” are employed in this work. They are conventional adjectival forms meant to denote characteristics, events, and details associated with Louis XIV’s reign.

2.) The terms “diplomat,” “diplomacy,” and “diplomatic” are employed in this dissertation. I am fully aware that these terms were not yet in use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

3.) The term ordinary ambassador (ambassadeur ordinaire) referred to resident ambassadors who remained in their posts for extended missions. The term extraordinary ambassador (ambassadeur extraordinaire) referred to an ambassador sent on special and often immediate missions. Extraordinary ambassadors did not normally remain at the site of their embassy for extended periods.

4.) The term incognito (unkown or as-yet-unrecognized) was an official appellation utilized in the early-modern period to describe ambassadors arriving early in the state to which they were assigned to serve. Diplomats remained incognito – having no rights to extraterritorial protection and its attendant privileges – until after the state ceremonies in which they presented credentials and received official recognition of their representative status.

5.) When referencing the principal ambassadors of each chapter I will call them most often by their family names rather than their titles or appanages, hence “Bonsy” rather than “the Bishop of Beziers.” I do use titles at intervals to avoid monotony.

6.) Historical actors, especially popes, doges, and Ottoman sultans, changed frequently in the decades I examine. I have provided lists of these actors in the end matter.

7.) In an effort to avoid confusion, the names and titles of rulers and other historical actors are rendered in their languages. I use “Felipe IV” for the king of Spain, “Benedetto” for the Venetian savvio del consiglio, rather than “Benedict,” etc. Popes, however, retain the conventional English rendering of their names.

8.) Where I mention “Italy,” “Italians,” “Italian princes,” or “German princes” I am referring to the geographic regions as they were known in the early-modern period and the people groups associated with them. Additionally, the majority of geographic place names are rendered in their common English spelling, thus, “Mantua” rather than “Mantova,” and Rome instead of “Roma,” etc.

9.) At times I use “Venice” and “Venetians” to indicate the place, its people, and its socio-political institutions. When it is appropriate I specify nuances such as the “Venetian senate” or “Venice’s populace,” etc.

10.) The term “stato da mar” (literally sea state) refers to the territories beyond Italy across the waters of the Adriatic, Ionian, and Mediterranean Seas under the dominion of the
Venetian government. The “terraferma” (literally fixed land) was the appellation Venetians used to refer to territories on the Northern Italian mainland under their rule.

11.) Where the terms “relazione,” “relazioni” appear they refer to detailed final reports Venetian ambassadors were to write and then read aloud before the Venetian collegio upon returning home to Venice from their embassies. These reports did not figure into French diplomatic praxis (“relations”) until mention of them appears after 1683, and then only in one instance that I am aware of.

12.) The names of wars in which France was involved I call by the most common English name when used in other secondary literature focusing on France. Where wars are mentioned in which France was not directly involved, such as the “Candian War” or the “Morean War,” I employ conventional appellations used in secondary literature focusing on the state in question.

13.) As this dissertation focuses largely on a French perspective, place names, truces, and treaties use the French spelling: thus “Strasbourg” rather than “Strasburg” and “Ratisbonne” instead of Regensburg, etc.

14.) In Chapters 3 and following readers will encounter the terms “chambres de réunions,” “réunions,” or “politics of réunions.” These terms refer to the controversial means through which Louis XIV and his administration undertook a series of territorial acquisitions on the kingdom’s eastern frontiers with the Holy Roman Empire and the Spanish Netherlands. After the Treaties of Nijmegen (1678) and Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1679) that ended the Dutch War (1672-1679) the king authorized the establishment of a number of chambres de réunions. In these courts, or chambers, French lawyers produced documentation containing often-tenuous proofs of French rights to territories in imperial and Spanish dominions related to earlier treaties or addendums to acquisitions through recent wars. They were to expand French land even further through allegedly legal precedent without recourse to war. These “réunions à la couronne” (reunions to the Crown) shocked Europeans through the audacity of a king who believed he could convene courts of law to dictate over other European sovereigns’ territorial rights. Subsequent violent invasions of Strasbourg (1681) and the Duchy of Luxembourg (1682) among others that the chambres sanctioned further outraged Europeans against the French in the early 1680s. Scholars still debate which of Louis’s ministers may have devised this method of expansionism. The war minister, the Marquis de Louvois, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Marquis de Croissy, have been suggested.

15.) All translations from the original French or Italian sources are fully my own. I accept responsibility for any faults in meaning or nuance.
In Regards to Venetian Government Institutions

Venetian patricians were entitled to a seat in the maggior consiglio (Great Council) and to a vote in state affairs undertaken in consiglio. This body numbered between 2,000 members in the sixteenth century to 1,000 members by 1797. Venice’s government and society became increasingly dominated, however, by the decisions and authority of smaller councils like the collegio and the Ten by the late seventeenth century. Many of the same prominent Venetian families regularly came to hold seats in these deliberative councils forming what Filippo De Vivo has called a “conservative oligarchy” that vexed the broader aristocratic population. Readers will encounter the following Venetian government officials and institutions throughout this work. I attempt briefly to explain their functions below for clarity.¹

1. *Il Doge* (the duke): Doges were the elected heads of the Venetian state, and they represented the incarnate image of the republic. They held little delineated executive power, but they held much authority in terms of their capacity to persuade and to advise in councils. The prominent families from which they were drawn placed them within factions espousing the direction of foreign and domestic policies at any given moment. Foreign ambassadors had personal access to Doges only during state occasions to which they were invited.

2. *Il senato* (senate): Because the maggior consiglio was too numerous to make all state decisions quickly, the senate, variously comprising up to 300 elected men, evolved to facilitate more efficient policy making. The same senators often held seats for decades. It was in the senate that debates and votes regarding foreign and domestic policies occurred.

3. *Il collegio* (the college): The composition of this body changed over time, but it held between 23 and 26 members who effectively controlled the Venetian state. The collegio normally comprised the Doge, 6 dogal counselors, 6 savii grandi, the 3 heads of the quarantia criminale, 3 state inquisitors, and 3 chiefs of the Council of Ten. It was the collegio that determined important affairs that should be passed to the senate for votes. The collegio was also the body that controlled diplomacy. Foreign diplomats negotiated with the senate via the collegio, and they only ever appeared in person for official audiences before the collegio. It should also be noted that the savii grandi set the agenda for both the collegio and the senate. Members of the other councils informed the savii of business and information to be passed between councils. Their privileged access to knowledge and its transmission between councils gave them great authority within the government. Venetian ambassadors read their relazioni – concluding reports of their embassies - aloud to the collegio upon their return to the republic.

4. Il consiglio dei dieci (Council of Ten): Founded in 1310, the Ten were charged with safeguarding the state and especially, although ironically, the privileges of the patriciate over whom they often acted as judges. This council’s role included the prosecution and judgment of cases related to the patriciate and to the collection of all secret and classified information related to affairs of state and state security. The Ten also controlled the state archives. By the seventeenth century the Ten were involved in almost every aspect of state business, and their power within the government was a source of tension among the state’s nobility. They communicated regularly with Venetian ambassadors at foreign courts. The information the Ten collected was transmitted really on a “need to know” basis to entities like the collegio and the senate. Theoretically the intelligence the Ten collected was only rarely to pass among the broader Venetian government bodies.

5. Gli inquisitori di stato (State Inquisitors): Founded in 1539 at the behest of the Council of Ten, the 3 state inquisitors were drawn from among the Ten and functioned as an even more restrictive instrument of that council. The inquisitors’ business was to collect information about those within Venice and abroad who had or who were believed to have compromised Venetian state information and security. Through their numerous spies and informants in Venice — known as confidenti — they sought at once to root out and squelch the leakage of intelligence and to collect knowledge of use to the Ten and thus to state security. Venetian ambassadors interacted with the inquisitors and became, in their turn, spies. The Ten and the inquisitors employed secretive and sometimes brutal tactics to garner information or to safeguard state secrets.
Abbreviations

France

AAE  Archives des Affaires Étrangères, La Courneuve, Paris

Com  Comptabilités

CP  Correspondance Politique

MD  Mémoires et Documents

AN  Archives Nationales de France, Paris

AE  Affaires Étrangères

CCR  Correspondance Consulaire-Raguse

MA  Marine

B¹  Series B¹

B⁷  Series B⁷

BnF  Archives et Manuscrits, Bibliothèque nationale de France (site Richelieu), Paris

CL  Clairambault

EP  Estampes et Photographes

MC  Mélanges Colbert

NaF  Nouvelles acquisitions Françaises

SHAT  Service Historique de l’Armée de Terre, Chateau de Vincennes, Paris

GR  Guerre

A¹  Series A
**Italy**

**ASV**  *Archivio di stato di Venezia*, Venice

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Fig. 6 Pierre II de Bonsy, Bishop of Beziers, c. 1672. Bnf, EP, N², vol. 184, image D094183.


Fig. 8 Jean-François, Abbé d’Estrades. BnF, EP, N², vol. 521, image D137054.

Fig. 9 Michel-Antoine Amelot, Marquis de Gournay, c. 1697. BnF, EP, N², vol. 3, image D285867.

Fig. 10 Engraving of a Venetian Nobleman, c. 1688, taken from Maximilien Misson (1650-1722), *Nouveau voyage d’Italie: avec un mémoire contenant des avis utiles à ceux qui voudront faire le mesme voyage,* Tome I, 4th ed. (The Hague: Bulderen, 1702), 252.

Fig. 11 César, Cardinal d’Estrées, c. 1704. BnF, EP, N², vol. 522, image D137068.

Chronology of Ambassadors, Chargés d’affaires, and Consuls in Venice during the “Personal Rule” of Louis XIV, 1661-1715.²

Ambassadors and Chargés d’affaires:

Pierre II de Bonsy, Bishop of Beziers, ambassadeur ordinaire (1662-1665)

Paul Vedoa consul de la nation française and chargé d’affaires (1665-1668)

The Président de Saint-André, ambassadeur ordinaire³ (1668-1671)

The Comte d’Avaux, ambassadeur ordinaire⁴ (1672-1674)

Pailleroles, chargé d’affaires (1674-1675)

Jean-François d’Estrades, Abbé de Moissac

(known as the Abbé d’Estrades), ambassadeur ordinaire (1675-1678)

Pinchesne, chargé d’Affaires⁵ (1678-1679)

The Sieur de Varangeville, ambassadeur ordinaire (1679-1682)

Michel-Antoine, Sieur d’Amelot, ambassadeur ordinaire⁶ (1682-1685)

Denis II de la Haye, Sieur de Vantalet, ambassadeur ordinaire (1685-1701)

César, Cardinal d’Estrées, ambassadeur extraordinaire (1701-1702)

Hennequin, Sieur de Charmont, ambassadeur ordinaire (1701-1704)

Champigny, chargé d’affaires (1704-1705)

The Abbé de Pomponne, ambassadeur ordinaire (1705-1722)

² N.B. Ambassadors discussed in this dissertation are bolded above. Dates following their names are the years they served in Venice. This chronology does not take into account a number of extraordinary and incognito envoys that Louis and his ministers sent to the republic most notably the Comte de Rebenac’s incognito embassy in 1691. Additionally, listed in the following notes are the secretaries of ambassadors of which I am aware.

³ Abraham-Nicolas, Amelot de la Houssaie (1634-1706) served as secretary to the Président de Saint-André. He should not be confused with the ambassador, Michel-Antoine, sieur d’Amelot. They were possibly related by marriage.

⁴ Alexandre-Toussaint Limojon de Saint-Didier (1630-1689) served as secretary to the Comte d’Avaux.

⁵ François-Martin, sieur de Pinschesne served in Venice and Turin as secretary to the Abbé d’Estrades.

⁶ Roger de Piles (1635-1709) served as secretary to the sieur d’Amelot.
Consuls:

Paul Vedoa, *consul de la nation française* (1661-1679)

Jean-Guillaume Le Blond, *consul de la nation française* (1679-1718)
Maps of Venice Indicating Sites Relative to French Ambassadors

Fig. 1 The map above is Hendrik van Loon’s 1695 *Venise, Ville Capitale de la plus Célèbre, et Illustre République de l'Europe*; it is taken from Nicolas de Fer’s 1720, *Atlas ou Recueil des Cartes Géographiques*. The map was dedicated to the Dauphin. The black-circled zone to the top left-center indicates the confines of the *lista dei francesi*, the extraterritorial zone protected under French immunities, in the *sestiere* of Cannaregio.

A.) The site of the French embassy during the reign of Louis XIV.

B.) The church and piazza of the Madonna dell’Orto

C.) Relative site of the church and the piazza of San Francesco della Vigna

D.) The Venetian arsenal.

E.) Relative site of Santa Maria Gloriosa. Attached to the church was the Franciscan monastery (colloquially *ai frari*).

F.) Saint Mark’s Square and environs. In this area were the buildings of Venice’s government institutions, the *Broglio*, and prisons (*cachots noirs*).
Fig.2 Detail from Ludovico Ughi’s 1729 Iconografica Rappresentazione della Inclita Città di Venezia al Reggio Serenissimo Domino Veneto. The arrow indicates the position of the palazzo of the French embassy.

Fig.3 Façade of the actual Palazzo Paloral. Pursuing the rio into the distance one arrives at the piazza della Madonna dell’Orto.
Introduction

Louis XIV’s Foreign Policies and the Republic of Venice Reconsidered through Five French Ambassadors.

By the close of the seventeenth century the dynastic pretensions of Louis XIV provoked the states of Europe into three wars. Within the kingdom of France a rigid royal court and an increasingly entrenched bureaucratic administration characterized the later decades of Louis’s reign. Ludovician rule became synonymous inside and outside of France with bullying foreign policies, economic turmoil, a miserable populace, and a crusty dévot court. These legacies progressively defined the rule of a sextuagenarian monarch enshrined-qua-entombed in the rituals of Versailles.¹ Contrastingly, in Paris a younger coterie flocked around the Dauphin in a milieu distanced from the king. In the capital the Dauphin’s circle was often to be found at the

¹ Georgia Cowart, “Carnival in Venice or Protest in Paris? Louis XIV and the Politics of Subversion at the Paris Opéra,” Journal of the American Musicological Society 54, No. 2 (2001), 265-266. See Fig. 4 for the frontispiece to Campra’s work.
académie royale de musique. Here artistic representations of Italian culture - especially the Venetian carnival - provided an ideological foil to Louis XIV’s absolutist regime and the militaristic imperatives of Bourbon dynasticism that informed the preceding decades of French culture.²

André Campra’s opéra-ballet, Le carnaval de Venise, appeared at the académie on 28 February 1699 on the eve of the War of the Spanish Succession. This piece, with its subtle satirization of a megalomaniacal Louis XIV, according to Georgia Cowart, epitomized the disillusionment of French subjects as the reign and the century dragged on. The subjects of the king in the piece’s prologue can ultimately find solace from their cares only in the fantasy of the republic’s famed carnival and its culture of masks. Likewise, Parisian theatergoers away from Versailles looked for an escape in the hedonism and mythologized freedoms of the republic and through its artistic representation.³ Such idealized entertainments, however, masked a marked juxtaposition with the king’s actual diplomatic relations with the Republic of Saint Mark. As the seventeenth century ended, from Louis XIV’s perspective, the long amicable rapport between France and “cette république” – that republic – as the king condescendingly referred to Venice, outlived its usefulness. This had not always been the case.


The aim of this dissertation then is to trace the trajectory and ultimate disintegration of Franco-Venetian relations in the late seventeenth century through the diplomatic efforts and experiences of five of Louis XIV’s ambassadors to Venice. Central to this investigation is a focus on how the independent decisions of individual ambassadors posted to Venice informed and delineated many choices in Louisquatorzien foreign and domestic politics. The concretization of dynastic foreign strategies into de facto action, in part, resulted from ambassadors’ decisions distanced from the conseil d’en haut.4 Their actions on France’s periphery, however, were central to French diplomacy. They were taken outside the king’s gaze in spite of a propaganda “machine” upon which were predicated idealized notions that the reins of power were held in the hands of the omniscient autocrat.5 If Louis was omniscient he was so because of the efforts of his ministers.6

Traditional narratives depicting the resultant evolution of Louis XIV’s foreign policy goals and the formation of the absolutist French bureaucracy should be viewed from French ministers’ efforts outside of the kingdom as much as from those within. To understand more fully the longue durée adaptations in Louis’s pretensions to territorial expansionism, historians

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4 The “high council.” It was in the conseil d’en haut where international affairs were most often discussed, dispatches read, and official decisions taken. Lucien Bély, Louis XIV: le plus grand roi du monde (Paris: Éditions Jean-Paul Gisserot, 2005), 85- 86.


must also peer diachronically through lenses held in the hands of the ambassadors posted outside of France within states like Venice. Like domestic policies within Louis XIV’s kingdom, Ludovician foreign policy comprised a series of quotidian accommodations and concessions vis-à-vis the states in which ambassadors were posted, the ambassadors themselves, French ministries, and, ultimately, the king. Acting as decision makers outside of France, ambassadors became central to policy compelling the monarch and his government to react to their choices with lasting ramifications for French international relations and domestic institutions.

I investigate the careers and embassies of five particular ambassadors posted in Venice during the decades of Louis XIV’s so-called “personal rule” (1661-1715). The diplomatic rapport between France and Venice devolved from one of apparent sovereign equality and expectant mutual benefit in the early 1660s as the personal rule began to one of scorn and near-rapture by 1702. For the rest of the eighteenth century relations with the republic ceased to be of great consequence for French foreign affairs. With this contention in mind, I chose to delimit my investigation to five significant embassies from 1662, when the king posted his first ambassador to Venice after taking up the reins of government, through 1702 when the rapport withered.

Louis XIV officially posted nine ordinary ambassadors and one extraordinary ambassador to the republic in the decades of his personal rule. Of these, the five ministers chosen provide insight into remarkable moments in the history of Franco-Venetian diplomacy and evidence of the broader claims I make throughout the dissertation. The six chapters of this study focus on the experiences in Venice of Pierre II de Bonsy, Bishop of Beziers (1662-1665), Jean-François d’Estrades, Abbé of Moissac (1675-1678), Michel-Antoine, Sieur d’Amelot (1682-1685), Denis II de la Haye, Seigneur de Vantelet (1685-1701), and César, Cardinal d’Estrées (1701-1702). Their roles as representatives of Louis XIV’s authority expands our understanding
of developments in French policies with the Republic of Venice, the Habsburg monarchies, and various states of Italy. Moreover, they partially open a window onto the French government’s strategies to hegemonize maritime and commercial politics in the Mediterranean Sea. Affairs in the Mediterranean as much as continental politics connected Louis XIV’s France and the Venetian republic.

**Why France and Venice?**

Why study diplomatic relations between Louis XIV’s France and the Republic of Venice? Was not Venice an irrelevant polity on the international stage by the late-seventeenth century? It might seem that the great monarchies surrounding the Most Serene Republic eclipsed and overshadowed it as a “secondary state.” Was not Louis XIV’s preeminence in Europe an established verity? The ideological, military, and commercial expanse between the two states seems insuperable through historical retrospection. The initial questions, however, are fraught. Some have posited or suggested that the Republic of Venice was obviously in “decline” or inconsequential by the last half of the century. In his well-known study, William Bouwsma noted:

> It can hardly be denied that Venice in the long run did not, and probably could not, rise to the challenges with which she was confronted. By the second quarter of the seventeenth century her decadence was evident, though less so to contemporaries than to us. Yet her adjustment to novel conditions was more successful, and some of its incidental accomplishments were more significant for the future, than has often been recognized. To characterize the sixteenth century as the decadence of Venice is premature, at the least. Venice retained her vigor through the sixteenth century, her European importance through the first half of the seventeenth, and, under improbable conditions, her independence until Napoleon.

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I hope to demonstrate in part that characterizations of Venice’s “European importance” - read diplomatic relevance - like Bouwsma’s to contemporaries should be extended instead at least to the advent of the eighteenth century within the context of French foreign policy.

The mid-century Candian War (1645-1669) between Venice and the Turk depleted Venice’s state coffers and cast doubt upon the state’s future authority in the Mediterranean Sea and continental Europe to be sure.9 The war, however, did not portend with any certainty that the republic was on a trajectory either of irrevocable dissolution or international irrelevance.10 On the contrary, by 1699 at the end of the First Morean War (1684-1699) Venice had regained almost all of its Mediterranean empire while simultaneously inspiring artistic representations of its cultural and political renown upon stages as far afield as Paris. There existed, therefore, no discernable synchronicity between the ultimate demise of the Republic of Venice in 1797 and the events contemporaries observed in the last half of the seventeenth century.

Through an examination of Franco-Venetian diplomacy, I argue that the republic remained decidedly pertinent in European international politics prompting Louis le Grand, who came to dominate international affairs in the last half of the century, to maintain vigorous diplomatic ties with it. From the perspective of a purported Venetian “decline” this counterpoint is significant. European contemporaries still did not presuppose the inoperable death throes of

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10 Joanne Ferraro posits that generalized discussions of “decline” do not reflect the realities of the late-seventeenth-century Venetian economy or the republic’s vigor in broader European and Mediterranean affairs. Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 174-175, 176.
the republic even while noting the government’s economic distress and internal socio-political strife up to and after the First Morean War.\textsuperscript{11} The Englishman, Joseph Addison, for example, observed in early 1702 to the Whig Lord Sommers, his patron and advisor to Louis XIV’s adversary, King William III, that “Among all of these difficulties the republic will still maintain itself, if policy can prevail upon force; for it is certain the Venetian senate is one of the wisest councils in the world…. The preservation of the republic is that to which all other considerations submit.”\textsuperscript{12}

The Venetian state had not been the only European polity to experience turbulence and uncertainty in the mid-seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{13} France too endured crises. The fraught regency of Anne of Austria, the Frondes (1648-1652), endemic corruption in state finance, and the Franco-Spanish War left the kingdom in economic turmoil and internally unstable.\textsuperscript{14} The subsequent long personal rule of Louis XIV only progressed gradually in the decades thereafter. Scholars have understood that the personal rule of Louis XIV propelled France to the apogee of its international and cultural authority. This did not happen overnight on 9 March 1661, and this

\textsuperscript{11} That is not to say that there was no mention of Venetian difficulties among contemporaries. In his controversial history, Amelot de la Houssaie dedicated Part V of Tome II, “Des Causes principales de la décadence de la République de Venise,” to a discussion of the commercial and moral decline of the republic. He noted that among the reasons was a shift to Atlantic trade, political and social corruption, and the republic’s seeming inability to create a military force to protect its terraferma dominions. Amelot did not, however, suggest that the state was inconsequential vis-a-vis European or Mediterranean affairs. He outlined the ongoing political alignments that Venice maintained with European states. It should be noted, however, that his history was written and first published in 1676 just after the loss of Crete and before the First Morean War when Venice aligned with Leopold I and began the reclamation of its lost Mediterranean territories. Abraham-Nicolas Amelot de la Houssaie, Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise, Tome II (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1705), 497 passim. For works concerning Venice and its relations with the Ottomans from the time of the loss of Crete and through the First Morean War see: Jean Georgelin, “La République de Venise et la fin du dominio del mare (1699-1718),” Revue d’Histoire Diplomatique 90 (1976): 193-219; Le relazioni fra Venezia e la Turchia dal 1670 al 1684 e la formazione della Sacra Lega,” Archivio Veneto-Trentino 7, (1925): 1-46; S. Perini, “Venezia e la guerra di Morea (1684-1699),” Archivio Veneto S5, no. 153 (1999): 45-91.

\textsuperscript{12} Joseph Addison, Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, Etc, In the years 1701, 1702, 1703 (London: J. & R. Tonson, 1767), 63.


\textsuperscript{14} Jean-Pierre Clément, Histoire de la vie et de l’administration de Colbert (Paris: Guillaumin, 1846), 74.
was not certain at Cardinal Mazarin’s death in spite of the international successes of the League
of the Rhine and the Peace of the Pyrenees.\textsuperscript{15} The untried Bourbon king’s individual ability to
rule over an economically and militarily exhausted kingdom was not yet assured despite his
subsequent mythologized \textit{prise de pouvoir}.\textsuperscript{16} By 1661, therefore, both Venice and France were
weakened, war-weary, and, arguably, on the brink either of change or further ruin.

In that year, European governments waited to see how Louis XIV would fare as sole ruler
in a kingdom accustomed to canny first ministers. Coincidently they watched to see if Venice
could defend its sovereignty over the island of Crete and its stature as Queen of the Adriatic Sea.
Although territorially smaller, the Most Serene Republic of Venice remained an established
polity vaunting a time-honored conciliar government and a republican political ethos free of the
succession crises neighboring monarchies experienced in the middle of the century. The “myth”
of Venice’s stability and freedom undergirded industrial and commercial regrowth and a robust,
if not, as Richard Mackenney said, “ambiguous” political-cultural heritage among European
states still in the last half of the century.\textsuperscript{17} This mythologized stability, however, could not cover
the internal socio-political fractures – hence the ambiguity of stability – that French ambassadors
reported to the king from within the republic. Ultimately, the absolutist regime of Louis XIV and
the stability of the Most Serene Republic rested upon mythologies of power very much in vigor
as the century closed. Idealized projections of authority aimed at those excluded from

\textsuperscript{15} These achievements succeeded much internal strife even if successful for Mazarin’s foreign policy aims. Condren, \textit{Louis XIV et le repos de l’Italie}, 18-19, 22-23.
governance were to mask the realities of economic and commercial fluctuation; the uncertainties accompanying territorial expansionism and its losses; and the tensions between centralizing government institutions and aristocracies covetous of their prerogatives.

France and Venice faced change and challenge in the last four decades of the century. Both governments encountered simultaneous crises again at the dawn of the eighteenth. The gloire (glory) that came to characterize Louis XIV’s reign by 1702 dimmed. French domestic prosperity staggered after the War of the League of Augsburg as the Grand Alliance challenged the king’s geopolitical dominance.18 After two protracted wars with the Ottoman Turks ending in 1699 - the year Campra’s Le Carnaval de Venise appeared in Paris - Venetian institutional and economic distress threatened an increasingly costly French dynastic politics. Louis’s authority was stretched to its limits as the final acceptance of Carlos II’s will in 1700 catapulted European states into the War of the Spanish Succession. Venice’s international affinities had always been of consequence to Ludovician policies in Italy and the Mediterranean Sea, but the republic’s diplomatic attachments after the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz pitted it against Louis XIV by 1701. During the First Morean War the republic regained much of its Mediterranean empire and considerable prestige in the offing. Along the way, however, the Venetian treasury and military-naval resources diminished and public debt surged ever upward.19 As it scrambled to reestablish authority in its stato da mar, Venice’s government looked to allies who might help defend Mediterranean interests against Ottoman hatred. An opprobrium, with no coincidental irony, that French ambassadors in Constantinople intensified against the republic.20

Venice’s increasingly destabilized status by 1702 troubled Louis XIV because the republic deferred to the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold I. The senate claimed neutrality among European dynastic affairs, but French ministers described a different reality. From 1683 to 1699, Venetian neutrality became a fiction from the French perspective. Leopold assisted the Venetians dividing Ottoman forces on land through his conquests in Hungary and the Balkans. Pursuant to the Treaty of Carlowitz, Joseph Addison reported, “...the Venetians are under articles with the Emperor to resign into his hands whatever they conquer of the Turkish dominions, that has been formerly dismembered from the empire. And having already very much dissatisfy’d him in the Frioul and Dalmatia, they dare not think of exasperating him further.”21

The Venetian senate begrudgingly, if quietly, cast its lot with Leopold. Additionally, the troops and money of German princes aided Venice in successful naval battles during its penultimate Mediterranean conflict. From the vantage of Louis XIV, his ambassadors, and other European commentators, Venice was not a neutral state when the war for the Spanish throne began in September 1702. Addison further noted correctly:

“...the common people of Italy, who run more into news and politicks than those of other countries, have all of them something to exasperate them against the King of France…. The Venetians will tell you of his leagues with the Turks…. That, however, which I take to be the principal motive among most of the Italians, for their favouring the Germans above the French, is this, that they are entirely persuaded that it is for the interest of Italy to have Milan and Naples rather in the hands of the first than of the other.”22

Venice’s government would not ally against Leopold in favor of French dynasticism affording him assistance in the terraferma and the Adriatic Sea. It vexed Louis XIV not to be able to control Venice’s foreign policies as he had sought to do with other Italian states.

21 Addison, Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, 61-62.
22 Ibid., 39-40.
Ambassadors’ correspondence with the court, travel accounts, and other sources reveal, therefore, an energetic, thriving Venetian state. Although beset with challenges, the republic’s government gave Louis XIV’s dynastic politics in Italy and the Mediterranean Sea the proverbial “run for the money” when it wanted during the forty years that I examine. Furthermore, the Serenissima’s acridulous political environment and international interests received or aided in forming robust French ambassadors who represented and informed Louis’s policies. Venice’s senate could not be bullied in spite of the disparities in the size of its dominions and fewer resources compared to those of the king. French policies were altered as a result of interactions with diminutive states like the republic. For such reasons, the value of an investigation of louisquatorzien relations with the Serenissima is timely and appreciable.

The International Connections of France and Venice

Louis XIV’s dynastic imperative informed and formed his international strategies.23 French diplomacy was meant to bolster Bourbon territorial expansionism and renown. Additionally, Colbertist mercantilism with its commercial, industrial, and maritime innovations fed the financial and military needs of the Bourbon state and its expansion.24 Diplomatic relations too fed the demands of louisquatorzien institutions and worked either toward international complicity or the appeasement, bullying, or outright subjugation of neighboring states that would not be easily swayed to accept the king’s dynastic and hegemonic intentions.

An important systemic aspect of Louis’s rule, diplomacy delineated the policies that his ambassadors were to press at foreign courts. Louis XIV believed foreign relations to be a chief

concern for the monarch alone and central to the *métier du Roi*. Through royal instruction ambassadors exported the skeletal requirements that Louis’s evolving expansionist framework demanded. Officially ambassadors mediated and negotiated in favor of French policies vis-a-vis the needs and concerns of international neighbors. Unofficially, these ministers worked behind the scenes through political and industrial espionage and subterfuge in an effort to actualize Louis’s administrative goals. It is significant to the story of Louis’s rule that many of the successful foreign policy aims that ambassadors in Venice accomplished resulted from nefarious intelligence practices rather than from the idealized official role of the ambassador as an honorable simulacrum of the sovereign.

Venice proved to be rather impenetrable in relation to the *louisquatorzien* monolith against which some other ships of “secondary states” like the Republic of Genoa crashed. Responses of international neighbors like Venice to French foreign policy were often beyond Louis XIV’s control, but his diplomats were expected to solidify the policies of their master. Correspondingly, France’s neighboring states had their geopolitical ends to promote. Diplomacy is a story of compromise and accommodation whenever possible accomplished within “...a set of assumptions, institutions, and processes — a practice....” This was the story with Louis XIV’s ambassadors. The inability of these ambassadors consistently to persuade the Venetian government’s total complicity through accepted diplomatic channels underscored that Louis XIV’s authority was not absolute either over the abilities of the ministers he sanctioned or in the demands of the international arena.

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Three principal international connections permeated and informed the “diplomatic narrative” connecting Louis XIV’s France and the republic. These connections emerge from the correspondence of the ambassadors; they were directly interwoven with the king’s territorial expansionism, the push for commercial and maritime hegemony, or the protection of *louisquatorzien* prestige and honor. First, France and the republic were connected through a strategic “friendship.” Since the sixteenth century French kings looked to Venice as an ally in the states’ mutual antagonism toward the Habsburgs.

Since the reign of Henri II the French considered Venice to be a counterpoise in the Italian peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea against the dynastic pretensions of Austrian and Spanish monarchs. Venice too believed that friendly ties with France could offset the threat of the two Habsburg states and their Italian satellites amid which it was wedged. This relationship survived and strengthened under Louis XIII during the crises of the Valtellina through the League of Avignon and the later Mantuan Succession. Mutual anti-Habsburg strategy held sway from the sixteenth century until, as I argue further along, Louis XIV’s administration disillusioned the republic’s government in its pleas for assistance against the Ottomans in the Candian War.

Venetians’ affinity for the French moldered after desultory French forces failed to impede the loss of Crete in 1668-1669 despite Venetian assistance in the king’s ongoing feud with Pope Alexander VII. The republican government soon understood that the young monarch viewed its collaboration, while often necessary, with an annoying condescension. From the 1670s and into

the eighteenth century, the Venetian senate gained a mistrust for the territorially greedy king, and, while upholding neutrality among European dynastic states’ interests, the republic veered decidedly into a favorable rapport with Leopold I. Finally, an open alliance, the revived Holy League, cemented Venice’s preference for the emperor from 1684 through the remainder of Louis XIV’s reign; although the Venetians officially tried to downplay their anti-French sentiment through the rhetoric of neutrality, this pact strengthened Leopold’s resolve against French policies. It also partially determined Louis’s other strategies in Northern Italy and among Mediterranean polities like the Republic of Ragusa and the Ottomans.

The triangulation between France, Venice, and the Ottoman Empire formed a second facet of Franco-Venetian diplomacy. The manipulative strategies that Louis XIV and his ambassadors employed against the Venetians in Constantinople throughout the last decades of the century underscored the ongoing importance of Venice in Mediterranean and European affairs. Louis XIV and his ministers were careful in the 1660s to avoid upsetting France’s long-held alliance with the Ottomans and offending Mehmet IV by lending overt military assistance to Leopold I or the Venetians in their conflicts with the sultan. Louis dangled the possibility of financial and military aid before Venice’s senate while he declared to his ambassador there that he had no intention of sinking men and funds into a war that could provide little benefit to France. Ultimately, it would also have damaged Franco-Ottoman relations.

Colbertist economic and maritime policies demanded a healthy relationship with the Ottomans to bolster flagging French commercial interests in the Mediterranean. The renewal of the trade capitulations in 1673 helped France toward this goal. Louis’s strategies regarding the

sultan thereafter offended the emperor, the pope, and the Venetians. The republic’s senate looked with bewilderment at the king’s machinations with the infidel and rage at his unwillingness to counter the Turk during the 1683 siege of Vienna. Venetians saw Louis’s arrogant accord with the Sultan as contrary to the values of a Christian prince and a menace to its own sovereignty over the Adriatic Sea and surrounding Dalmatian territories.

French ambassadors in Constantinople undermined Ottoman sentiment against the Venetians, and, as the republic began earnestly reclaiming its Mediterranean empire during the Morean War, French diplomats to the sultan further inflamed anti-Venetian sentiment. French ambassadors in Venice used the threat of possible Ottoman attacks against it to intimidate the republic and its continued alliance with Leopold I and the papacy. One French ambassador in Constantinople, the Marquis de Ferriol, however, claimed that Leopold I incited the Turk against Venice to press his claims in Italy, but by 1702 the Venetian senate was concerned enough about the threat French ambassadors to La Porte posed that it resentfully sent an extraordinary ambassador to Versailles ultimately prostrating itself to accommodate the king.31 The relationship between France, Venice and the Ottomans was distinctly related either to their commercial or territorial interests in the Mediterranean Sea and their stance toward Leopold I. Louis mobilized the Turk through diplomacy to destabilize the emperor and the Venetians to press French policies in Europe, and, in response, these states drew closer together.32

Finally, Italian peninsular politics connected the tangled webs enmeshing France and Venice. The rapport between France and Italian states at this time has received scholarly

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Recent investigations have benefitted in part from new appraisals of the history of diplomacy and the broader history of the Mediterranean in the period. I believe that an increased appreciation for the role that small, seemingly inconsequential states can play in the development, application, or enervation of the authority, prestige, and credibility of large states should drive further investigations among early modernists. Recent “modern” geopolitics reflect such realities with violent precision and urgency; the meddling and manipulation of larger states in the social, economic, military, religio-cultural, and political spheres of “small” states yield unforeseen consequences no matter how ideologically self-assured and militarily superior a larger state may be. Ludovician political interests among Italian states in the late seventeenth century reflected such realities.

Scholarship has focused upon Louis XIV’s diplomatic and strategic rapport with states like Parma, Modena, Mantua-Monferrato, Savoy, and Tuscany. On one hand, I have


intentionally avoided treading upon the current and ongoing research of scholars working in
depth on these topics. On the other hand, Louis XIV’s instructions to and the correspondence of
French ambassadors revealed that the thrust of the king’s diplomatic approach to Venice was
aimed only indirectly, albeit with intention, at his policies with other Italian states. Ambassadors
in Venice were to keep abreast of news coming from these states and correspond with
ambassadors in them when necessary.

French ambassadors referenced the authority and influence that the republic’s
government - equaled only by that of the papacy - wielded over other Italian governments and
their international alignments. As French ties with Savoy and Tuscany were relatively strong
throughout much of the late seventeenth century and those of Venice with Savoy were almost
non-existent because of the two states’ long-time feud over Cyprus and arguments related to
ambassadorial precedence only sporadic communication relative to French interests with these
states appeared in the diplomatic records.35 Instead the king and the secretaries of foreign affairs
instructed ambassadors to prompt and to pressure the Venetian government’s collaboration and
complicity in French policies toward the papal court in an effort to guide other Italian polities.

Upon this second triangular rapport - France-Venice-Papacy - hinged a number of Louis
XIV’s domestic ecclesiastical and external political decisions. Much like the unofficial Franco-
Venetian accord against Habsburg hegemony so too Venice’s government and that of France
supported one another against the ecclesiastical pretensions of the papacy since the late sixteenth
century.36 The questionable religious convictions of Henri IV and Venice’s 1606 interdict crisis
*inter alia* created an often-shared diplomatic block in the face of successive pontiffs’ claims over

36 Di Biase, *Alla ricerca di un nuovo equilibrio*, 40-41, 43-44, 45-48, 158-159,
church doctrine, political interventions, and ecclesiastical nominations and jurisdiction surviving well into Louis XIV’s reign.

The king and his ambassadors utilized a shared and traditional Venetian antipathy for the papacy. The king watched with interest how the senate stubbornly dealt with its own quarrels over jurisdiction with popes like Innocent XI. A compliant senate, through Venetian ambassadors in Rome, could also bolster the king’s indirect control over states like the duchies of Modena and Parma who superficially relied on the king for protection against the potential encroachments of Spanish, papal, and imperial monarchs. Venetian cardinals in alignment with those of France or others in the French camp might counter Francophobe members of the Sacred College in papal politics while manipulating the outcomes of conclaves. Without fail ambassadors’ parting instructions from secretaries of foreign affairs directed them to remind the senate of Venetian cardinals’ traditional attachments to those of France at the Roman court.

The Marcian Republic, however, benefitted from papal funds, warships, and ideological support in its conflicts with the Ottoman infidel throughout the later decades of the century to such an extent that, in much the same vein as the Venetian rapport with Leopold I, the senate became increasingly reluctant to vet wholesale French policies in Rome. The senate’s hesitation grew as Louis XIV’s territorial acquisitions, military depredations across Europe, politics of réunions, and machinations in the Mediterranean threatened to alter traditional Venetian spheres of sovereignty in the sea and Northern Italy.

The king’s occupation of Casale in 1681 after its purchase from the Duke of Mantua in conjunction with the already-held fortress of Pinerolo on the Savoyard border provided the king leverage in Italy that frightened the Venetians. French protectionism of Parma, Mantua, and Modena and the brutal bombardment of the city of Genoa in 1684 enraged Venetians and further
tempered their willingness to assist the king in Roman politics. By 1683 Venice’s government preferred alliance with Leopold I and the popes to the detriment of Louis’s expanding authority in Italy as his control over international affairs faltered. With the 1689 election of the Venetian Pope Alexander VIII, both France and the republic, however, experienced a rare accord with the papacy that lasted through the terminal date of my investigation. This particular link binding the two states weakened then contributing to the breakdown of significant diplomatic ties that occurred by 1702.

The attention that ambassadors in Venice paid to these issues and to the republic’s interventions in them underscored the continuous part Louis XIV expected Venice’s government to play in French international aims; the republic’s “European importance,” \textit{pace} Bouwsma, endured well beyond “the first quarter of the seventeenth century.” The function of ambassadors was decisive in facilitating the direction of these diplomatic ends. They acted as the vehicles through which theoretical foreign policy emanating from the king and his secretaries manifested into tangible action - or not - that then required subsequent royal reaction, response, and adjustment.

\textbf{Historiography}

\textbf{The French Dynastic State and the Politics of Accommodation}

In a 2011 survey of French absolute monarchy Hervé Drévillon concluded, “…war and diplomacy would appear...as the measure of an absolutism inscribed upon transnational reality remaining to be explored.”\footnote{Hervé Drévillon, \textit{Les rois absolus, 1629-1715} (Paris: Belin, 2011), 564.} My project is one response to such calls to explore ambassadors as extensions of Louis XIV’s ministry of foreign affairs and to analyze the networks the ministry employed to achieve royal aims. My study intersects with an extant literature that argues that
louisquatorzien governance utilized traditional élite social networks to solidify royal authority while expanding bureaucratic innovations at the ministerial level to bolster a distinctly dynastic vision of the state. The dynastic imperative in seventeenth-century French social structures informed not only royal motivations but also those of the ministerial clans and ambassadors whose families received the king’s immediate patronage with its socio-cultural benefits. It is timely for a study that investigates such administrative transformations as they emerged in the work and functions of French diplomats serving beyond the borders of France within a conversation about administrative centralization.

No one denies that Louis XIV’s authority can be characterized as absolute within France in the context of seventeenth-century theoretical politics. Nor would scholars disagree that the king’s control upon actual domestic governance was not literally absolute: all agree that there were constraints to Louis’s power. The king, however, remained, in propaganda and theory if not in overall practice, the fulcrum of power. No one challenged his rights as sovereign in France. Be that as it may, the historiography of louisquatorzien absolute monarchy has been divided into divergent categories. Since the nineteenth century some studies have argued that the king’s administration provided the roots for the would-be modern nation-state while simultaneously eroding the ancien régime monarchy - a trend linked to Alexis de Tocqueville’s investigation. From this vantage a forward-thinking Louis XIV’s centralizing tendencies

38 Rowlands, The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV, 12-13, 14-15.
signaled a decided shift from feudal networks and administration harbingering the advent of the post-revolutionary republican nation-state and providing the roots of modern bureaucratic praxis.

Later twentieth-century revisionist scholarship interpreted Louis’s approach to governance differently. They saw developments in his administration as exchanges of compromise and collaboration between the royal government and elite networks and corporations throughout the kingdom. Scholars variously deployed a Marxian social emphasis on classes and the particular pressures they placed upon the monarchy at the provincial-urban and court patron-client levels. Such studies importantly eschewed earlier assumptions about the teleological growth of the state. They preferred to reconsider the institutions of the monarchy on their own terms without recourse to a state-building project that overlooked the ways in which Louis XIV’s administration contended with traditional socio-political networks while embarking on centralization. These studies placed the momentum of monarchical government within the context of a royal administration trying to maintain control over numerous entities that challenged it.

Most recently historians have begun to examine the process and politics of accommodation between the royal center and the numerous individual, corporate, and geographic peripheries throughout France. They have argued that it was, rather, the Crown that imposed a model of fiscal, administrative, and socio-cultural adhesion-cum-centralization upon state corporations that in turn were expected to comply with a totalizing royal authority. In these

studies, the pressures of elite groups within a kingdom suspended in traditional early-modern social hierarchies have been seen less as motivating forces demanding response from the Crown. Instead, these scholars have argued that the Crown considered and facilitated individual and coporate needs as a means of satisfying mutual socio-cultural expectations but always with the understanding that the Crown’s concerns should dominate all others. Scholars sharing this perspective have examined institutions like the court and royal ministries. Others have examined the trend of accommodation in the church, army, guilds, and merchants and urban elites in cities such as Marseille.43

Returning to Drévillon’s remark, my investigation of ambassadors expands upon such studies of accommodation. Three of my subjects were of the high clergy and two were robe nobles. Their stories further illustrate that the louisquatorzien dynastic state and its apparati incorporated and responded to the individual expectations of these men for social advancement within the existing hierarchical system that the dynastic monarchy oversaw. In return they displayed unwavering loyalty to the Crown and compliance in the administrative tasks that secretaries at the ministerial level set for them. The instructions they received from the monarch and succeeding secretaries of foreign affairs demonstrate the diachronic centralizing, vertical tendencies of royal authority that occurred within the ministry of foreign affairs - and from the

late 1680s that of the marine too - in their work outside of France. In return, they expected, and
in these test cases, received advancement for themselves or members of their family within either
the Crown’s administration or the French aristocratic hierarchy.

The interpretation of Louis XIV’s administration as an “information state” has received
recent attention, and, here too, I believe that the volume, content, and frequent requests for all
types of intelligence between the ministry of foreign affairs and the ambassadors I survey
correspond to this characterization.\textsuperscript{44} I contend, however, that the volume of information did not
decline after Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s death in 1683. Information emanating from Venice actually
increased as triangular paper trails developed between diplomats, consuls, and both the ministries
of foreign affairs and the marine from 1688 onward.\textsuperscript{45} Along the way I also comment upon how
ambassadors fed the economic and cultural programs associated with the growth of
\textit{louisquatorzien} dynasticism. Ambassadors’ individual choices and ministrations affected the
reaction of the Crown in foreign and domestic policy. Such realities lend further weight to our
understanding of how \textit{louisquatorzien} bureaucratic developments and attempts at hegemonic
expansionism beyond France came to depend upon its ministers as much as ministers depended
upon the Crown for advancement.

\textbf{Mediterranean Studies}

By zooming in on \textit{louisquatorzien} absolutism-cum-statecraft through diplomacy outside
of the kingdom, my topic follows the exportation of the king’s dynastic policies into the
contested spaces of the Mediterranean. Here I speak to a growing literature that has reevaluated
the significance of the Mediterranean Sea to French history. To put it another way, scholars have

\textsuperscript{44} Jacob Soll, \textit{The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s Secret State Intelligence System} (Anne Arbor, MI:
2009); Ben Kafka, \textit{The Demon of Writing: Power and Failures of Paperwork} (Cambridge, MA: 2012); John C. Rule
and Ben S. Trotter, \textit{A World of Paper: Louis XIV, Colbert de Torcy, and the Rise of the Information State} (Montreal:
2014).

\textsuperscript{45} Soll, 154.
been putting France back into a literature that refutes Mediterranean decline in the early modern period. Through a study of Franco-Venetian relations over four decades, I demonstrate one instance of what Megan Armstrong and Gillian Weiss defined as “the Mediterranean as contact zone and site of exchange.”  

To speak of Mediterranean studies is to evoke the monumental 1949 study of Fernand Braudel, *Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*. In spite of scholarly criticism of Braudel’s study “…as ahistorical, deterministic, and imperialist,” all agree that the great *annaliste* opened a galvanizing conversation. A growing literature has shown the ongoing relevance of the sea after the sixteenth century as a dynamic and volatile theater in which early modern states still, one one hand, sparred for economic, cultural, religious, and maritime supremacy. On the other hand, scholars have characterized the sea as a permeable membrane across which ideas, goods, cultures, and individuals interacted, changed, and collaborated as states utilized the sea to maintain, cement, or augment authority.

No one would contest the primacy of the sea in the history of the Republic of Venice. However, scholars have lamented and, in turn, began to remedy a relative inadequacy in depictions of the sea’s role in the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. For

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decades it was assumed that after the “Age of Exploration” and into the later centuries of the early modern period that the Atlantic Ocean came to dominate Western European states’ - *inter alia* French - naval, commercial, and colonial interests. The Mediterranean was allegedly “marginalized.”49 Discussions of this marginalization followed Braudel’s “Northern Invasion” thesis arguing that the Dutch, French, and English “swarmed into the Mediterranean” destroying the ancient socio-cultural diversities and trade networks in vigor from Gibraltar to the Levant.50 Reappraisals of the varied French interactions and experience in the nearer and further Mediterranean Sea reveal that France was but one of many states in the seventeenth century seeking dominance in the sea, but French commercial hegemony was far from confirmed until the mid-eighteenth century.51 Even then the French were forced to contend with the British navy to protect their short-lived commercial dominance in the sea.

Later French ascendance in the Mediterranean could not have occurred, however, without the shifts in French international, institutional, commercial, and maritime policies that occurred in the late seventeenth century as my study suggests. I show that, at least in the context of Franco-Venetian relations, in the early 1660s Jean-Baptiste Colbert used ambassadors to import through espionage Venetian artisanal and industrial resources that had already made the republic rich for centuries throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. France had to steal from the small

50 Greene, “Beyond the Northern Invasion,” 42; Greene noted that early modern sources show that, in reality, commerce grew slowly outside of the Mediterranean in the early modern period. The Mediterranean remained a vigorously contested commercial space among European states and the Ottoman Empire especially in the seventeenth century. Greene, “The Early Modern Mediterranean,” 98-99.
republic at the beginning of Louis XIV’s personal rule. French commercial and maritime interests in the Mediterranean in the 1660s and 1670s still lagged far behind those of other European states as Colbert dealt with consular reforms, the augmentation of the merchant marine, North African piracy, and the tempering of existing Dutch and English authority in the sea during the Dutch War.\(^{52}\)

I concur that it was not until the 1680s and after that French hegemonic interests in the Mediterranean developed sufficiently that ambassadors were finally expected to negotiate with the Venetian senate for the protection and respect of French merchant vessels. Likewise, they lobbied to safeguard the fair treatment of French merchants and their wares in Venice’s stato da mar dominions and the sealanes over which the republic was sovereign. Louis XIV rhetorically claimed commercial primacy above other European states in the sea after the renewal of the 1673 capitulations with the Ottomans and the 1684 diplomatic triumph of the “affair of the sofa” at the Ottoman court, but it would not be until 1702 that the king could boast with some accuracy that he had discomfited Venice as one competitor in the Adriatic lending a further boost to the French commercial ascent that occurred by mid-century. I argue that individual ambassadors and consuls across the Mediterranean in states like Venice were critical instruments in constructing the foundations for later French advantages in the sea.

**The “New” Diplomatic History: Ambassadors as Individual Agents Provoking Political Developments**

My study’s focus on five ambassadors contributes also to the “new” diplomatic history. This “new” study argues in part for investigations of individual diplomatic actors as agents of political change in the broader institutional frameworks within which they functioned. Their

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\(^{52}\) Horn, “Lessons of the Levant,” 80.
experience as vehicles of the political process at the international level is critical.\textsuperscript{53}

Ambassadors’ stories allow us to understand how broad geopolitical and historical narratives developed. Traditional histories of early modern diplomacy of the early twentieth century, handmaiden to political history and the study of international relations, focused upon the development of the “balance-of-power” theses of scholars such as Garret Mattingly and Harold Nicholson that posited the emergence of diplomacy as a means toward the maturation of modern nation-states.\textsuperscript{54} Frequently, in these narratives, ambassadors as individuals and their contributions were lost in discussions surrounding the titles denoting them - ambassador, plenipotentiary, envoy, etc.\textsuperscript{55} The political developments that ambassadors’ labors and weaknesses helped to construct overshadowed them as individual on-site builders affecting change in international designs of Louis XIV as chief architect. Their quotidian lives and efforts had lasting effects in this process.


With the linguistic and cultural turn that occurred among historians from the 1980s, conventional political and diplomatic history faced a decline. Historians saw older metanarratives of diplomatic history as teleological arguments lacking nuance in regards to diplomats and the methods they employed in their professions. As scholars of the history of international relations, and diplomatic history in particular, have since brought the nature and the development of the nation-state in the early modern period under scrutiny, studies have appeared in which the cultures of the diplomatic process within the “society of princes” emerge. Such studies have initiated a varied understanding of the importance of social networks to individual diplomats and the institutional pressures affecting their work at the international level. As one scholar of international relations, Paul Sharp, has pointed out, diplomats were in a binary “predicament,” and, he concluded:

For this, we must look to more imaginative accounts that focus on what I shall refer to as the subjective and objective articulations of this predicament. By subjective, I mean how diplomats appear both to themselves and others from vantage points within societies sending them and receiving them. By objective, I mean how their predicament appears when they look at each other, or we see them, as a class of people situated between those they represent.

I acknowledge this predicament, and I seek to situate the five ambassadors I examine within the socio-cultural confines of the *louisquatorzienn* dynastic state and its systemic expectations both from the vantage of the ambassadors themselves and the monarch they served. Moreover, I consider the ambassadors from the perspective of the Venetian government with its

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sometimes-violent reaction to the methods French ambassadors employed as the Other in its domestic environment. These ambassadors’ individual experiences indicate that international processes not of their making and their own personal advancement required their expedition to Venice. However, succeeding stages in the ever-changing international and domestic evolution of Louis XIV’s policies resulted from their efforts in the republic in conjunction with those of ambassadors at other posts and ministers back at the French court. This, in turn, effected the progression of *louisquatorzien* dynastic policies and, thus, the nature of the king’s authority.

**Dissertation Chapters and the Rationale Behind the Choice of Ambassadors**

Chapter One sets the stage in Venice for the ambassadors examined. I describe the tightly controlled Venetian socio-cultural and political context in which ambassadors functioned. I consider the roles and tasks expected of ambassadors to give some idea of what they physically did in service to Louis XIV. I describe the spaces in which ambassadors lived and worked evoking their quotidian physical, emotional, and physiological trials and pleasures. The chapter includes ambassadors’ testimonies regarding their private lives including the expenses they accrued and how financial turmoil affected performance. Contextualizing ambassadors’ circumstances illuminates the developments in high politics described in the chapters of Parts One through Three.

Following Chapter One I divide the dissertation into three distinct chronological Parts. Vignettes introduce chapters and also signify the unpredictability inherent in an ambassador’s experience and how events led directly to or demonstrated shifts in Louis XIV’s foreign policies and international affairs. Part I’s chapters consider two embassies in Venice during the early decades of Louis XIV’s “personal rule.” In the early 1660s Louis XIV and his ministers hoped to take advantage of a period of peace in Western Europe to stabilize France’s domestic
administration and flagging economy. In these decades ambassadors functioned within relationships established prior to the moments in 1661 when Louis took up the reins of government. In Chapter Two I investigate the embassy of Pierre de Bonsy, Bishop of Beziers. Bonsy was the first ambassador Louis XIV posted to Venice at the beginning of the “personal rule.” Bonsy’s embassy in Venice elucidates the varied roles that ambassadors were meant to fill beyond the kingdom in the early 1660s through social networks at the court established under Cardinal Mazarin.

The chapter explores ways in which diplomats were connected with ministers, most notably Jean-Baptiste Colbert. The bishop’s interventions in the war-wracked republic extends our view of what French ministers just after Mazarin’s death considered matters of high foreign policy as Louis and Colbert indicated the direction of a centralizing bureaucracy. Functioning within an emerging administration, the bishop’s ministrations provoked considerable changes in commercial, cultural, and international facets of Ludovician bureaucracy at Venetians’ expense. The results of the bishop’s diverse connections in the administration provided the genesis for embittered relations between the two states.

Chapter Three, the embassy of the Abbé d’Estrades, opens a window onto the effects that the accompanying anxieties of a burgeoning aristocratic career occasioned in foreign policy. The expenses associated with diplomatic service in Venice elicited errors of judgment in his service to Louis XIV. Estrades cultivated a robust and far-reaching intelligence network among spies throughout Italy. His personal appropriation of these networks, although expected in the system of patron-client relations in vigor in the French bureaucracy, exhibited the inherent difficulties and opportunities that mixing personal interests in Crown affairs could occasion in the Crown’s international affairs.
The Bishop of Beziers’s collaboration with various ministers back at the French court deliberately obtained important benefits during the initial solidification of Louis XIV’s state programs. Estrades, while forming intelligence links to benefit French politics, employed these webs to insure his personal advancement in exchange for favors. One such favor, the abbé’s undeclared abuse of royal authority in the attempted murder of a profligate composer, inspired a diplomatic furor threatening Louis XIV’s reputation and Estrades’s future career. The chapter culminates with Estrades’s frantic and penitent revelation of a further secret diplomatic negotiation with consequences for his future, the possible expansion of French territory, and the growing fear of Venetians for the dynastic and military intentions of Louis XIV in the shadow of the peace of Nijmegen.

Chapters in Part II evoke the negative shift in Franco-Venetian diplomatic relations throughout the 1680s. In this decade Louis XIV’s geopolitical dominance incited fear and retaliation across Europe culminating in the War of the League of Augsburg. French ministers in Venice experienced the government’s opprobrium toward the king’s bullying military and diplomatic expansionism. Moreover, the republic’s senate entered the First Morean War through which it began an aggressive reclamation of its Mediterranean empire. Naval successes against the Ottomans and alliances through the Holy League added confidence to Venetians’ obliquial treatment of French ambassadors.

Chapter Four demonstrates the extent of Venetian dissatisfaction with Louis XIV’s foreign policies just after the Congress of Nijmegen. Through the complicated and tumultuous embassy of the Sieur d’Amelot from 1682-1685 I consider the aggressive use of *confidenti* on the part of the Venetian state inquisitors and the Council of Ten to harass Amelot and his household. This signaled a violent repudiation of French foreign policy. The Venetian senate’s
overt alliance with Leopold I in 1684 laid bare the contradictions in Venice’s traditional politics of neutrality from the French perspective. I use Amelot’s embassy to suggest the emerging role of ambassadors as functionaries comprising and manifesting the praxis of centralizing administrative developments in Louis XIV’s ministry of foreign affairs and ministry of the marine.

Chapter Five examines how the collaboration of Denis II de la Haye-Vantalet and the French consul, Le Blond, illustrated the extent to which the role of the ambassador by 1688 further emerged as a professionalized function in concert with the increasingly similar role of the consul. The changed interactions of these ministers in Venice to one of near equality by 1688 demonstrates the evolution in French bureaucratic institutions while highlighting the effects of the Colbert clan’s dominance over the separate ministries of foreign affairs and the marine. The chapter indicates the French government’s preoccupation with Louis XIV’s hegemonizing efforts in Mediterranean commerce as the members of the Holy League repulsed and weakened the Ottoman sultan’s maritime authority. Taken together, Chapters Four and Five, emphasize the inability of French ambassadors to intimidate the Venetian government away from its increasingly anti-French and pro-Habsburg foreign policies.

Part III considers the diplomatic circumstances that evolved between France and Venice during the escalation of the War of the Spanish Succession. Chapter Six focuses on the extraordinary embassy of Cardinal d’Estrées in 1701-1702. I examine the ways in which the Venetian government betrayed its rhetoric of neutrality from the French perspective through covert support of imperial armies in Northern Italy and the Adriatic Sea. Estrées attempted during many months of secret negotiations in 1701 to persuade the senate to ally outright with France to expel Leopold’s armies from Italy. I assert that Estrées utilized a politics of fear
capitalizing upon the double execution of two French operatives ordered by the Venetian state inquisitors in 1702 to assert Louis XIV’s dominance over Venetian politics and traditional lordship of the Adriatic Sea.

I contend that circumstances during Estrées’s embassy further facilitated the advent of French dominance in eighteenth-century Mediterranean commerce. Estrées’s exploitation of a seemingly trivial event, I argue, altered eighteenth-century diplomatic relations between France and Venice. Furthermore, I argue that scholars should examine the diplomatic stagnation between Venice and individual European states like France to question Venetian diplomatic and political “decline.” I argue for investigations of “decline” in specific diplomatic rapport rather than the acceptance of retrospective narratives of Venice’s international diminishment.

Sources

This dissertation is not a dual history of French and Venetian diplomatic relations in the late seventeenth century. Its focus, rather, is the evolution of French foreign and domestic policy as seen through the example of individual ambassadors who crafted Louis’s ties to Venice. Readers will find, therefore, that an analysis of the French perspective dominates throughout the narrative. I explore, however, the Venetian government’s motivations in foreign, commercial, and maritime politics with Louis XIV’s government.

Much of this work relies upon ambassadors’ correspondence with Louis XIV and the French ministry of foreign affairs contained in the correspondances politiques of the Archives du ministère des affaires étrangères at La Courneuve. Dispatches from ambassadors and the responses from the king and secretaries of foreign affairs provided the material through which to reconstruct Louis’s official and unofficial politics regarding the republic. These sources indicated the king’s judgment in regards to ambassadors’ personal performance and independence of
action while serving in Venice. Documents contained in the mémoires et documents at La Courneuve proffered copies of letters sent from the king and foreign ministers to ambassadors or directly to the Venetian senate not necessarily found in the registers of dispatches. The mémoires et documents also provided complete Italian transcriptions of Benedetto Capello’s accounts of confidential meetings held with Cesar d’Estrées for Chapter Six as well as various travel accounts and memoirs describing conditions in Venice and Northern Italy.

Paris’s Bibliothèque Nationale de France houses the Mélanges Colbert containing ambassadors’ correspondence with Jean-Baptiste Colbert. These sources open a window onto the commercial and cultural tasks that Louis’s minister expected ambassadors in Venice to undertake in the reinvigoration of French commerce and the king’s cultural programs in the 1660s. Private letters from the Abbé d’Estrades and his father, the Marshal d’Estrades, found in the BnF’s Clairambault series flesh out the personal motivations of Estrades in his role as ambassador. The Archives Nationales’ affaires étrangères and marines yielded the sources to reconstruct French Mediterranean commercial and maritime interests as well as the evolution of the collaborative relationship between French ambassadors and consuls in Venice in the 1680s. Finally, the archives at the Service historique de l’armée de terre at the Chateau of Vincennes provided further insights into French military preoccupations in Northern Italy and the Mediterranean.

Contained in the official French diplomatic record were copies or original versions of the Venetian senate’s responses to French ambassadors’ audiences and requests as well as copies of the ambassadors’ statements to the senate. I also used copies of the king’s direct correspondence with Venice’s government found at La Courneuve. This being the case, while in Venice’s Archivio di Stato, I examined sources that offered insight into the republic’s classified concerns and strategies in its dealings with Louis and his envoys. I utilized three particular classified
intelligence trails found in the series of communications of the Venetian inquisitors of state with ambassadors in Paris and with confidenti – spies – in Venice and Northern Italy. First, the comunicazioni degli ambasciatori and lettere dagli ambasciatori in Francia to the inquisitors provided an understanding of Venetian ambassadors observations and ministrations from Paris to the highest levels in the Venetian government. Secondly, the inquisitors’ lettere agli ambasciatori in Francia detailed the inquisitors’ prompts and instructions to ambassadors regarding matters of state security. Finally, the riferte dei confidenti and avvisi contained the often-daily surveillance reports of intelligence operatives in Venice and Northern Italy set to spy upon French ambassadors, their households, and their intelligence networks. It is hoped that the conversation between these French and Venetian sources provides a clear depiction of a thorny geopolitical rapport through the eyes of French ambassadors. This, despite Amelot de la Houssiaie’s ambiguous 1676 appraisal that “It is admitted...France is a little more in favor in Venice than Spain, less than one might consider for anything concerning its (France’s) ambassadors, more is to be desired there.”58

Chapter One

Fig. 5
“...S’en allant ambassadeur du Roy à Venise”¹:
French Ambassadors and the Late-Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Cityscape of Venice

A cavaliere della stola d’oro – a Knight of the Golden Fleece – and sixty senators of the highest rank clad in scarlet velvet received Louis XIV’s arriving resident ambassador to Venice. The reception occurred in the Eremite church on the Island of Santo Spirito.² After a ritual invitation to enter the church the cavaliere and senators strode two-abreast to the center of the nave where they found the French ambassador attending them. The church was filled with the new ambassador’s entourage and many French guests living in Venice. The cavaliere greeted the French envoy in Italian on behalf of the doge and senate. The ambassador responded in French whereupon the Venetian extended his right hand to the ambassador positioning him on his right flank; the senators similarly paired with a member of the French delegation.

The company progressed to ornately sculpted gondolas making the eight-mile voyage back north to the city winding to the French embassy. Once at the ambassador’s domicile, the troupe entered the building in similar fashion as it had left the church with the new ambassador the last to exit his gondola. Following a ceremonial reception in the embassy the Venetian delegates departed and the French ambassador extended his right hand assisting the cavaliere to mount a gondola. The first day of the entrée ended with the embassy doors and gardens thrown

¹ Ambassadors “going to Venice” received an instruction from the king that secretaries of foreign affairs composed. Instructions included some version of this formulaic introduction. See the following to Bonsy as one example, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Lionne to Beziers, F. 104.
² The king and ministers of foreign affairs expected French ambassadors to write detailed descriptions of the entrée to record any changes in its ritual upholding the status of French representatives in the republic. Michel Amelot wrote one of the most detailed descriptions after the king rebuked his first uninspiring version. See AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 15 Oct. 1682, F. 127r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 31 Oct. 1682, passim Fs. 157r-162r; Amelot de la Houssaie, Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise, Tome I, 43, 146; Baschet provides a thorough discussion of the importance of the entrée. See Armand Baschet, Les archives de Venise: Histoire de la Chancellerie Secrète (Paris: Plon, 1870), passim 472-478. Ambassadors either spent the night before the chosen day in a specially prepared suite in the monastery or arrived early on the morning of the entrée. Ibid., 471-472; Saint-Didier, former secretary to the Comte d’Avaux, ambassador in Venice 1671-1675, also describes the entrée in his 1680 history of Venice. Alexandre-Toussaint Limojon de Saint-Didier, La Ville et la République de Venise au XVIIè siècle: histoire, institutions, moeurs et coutumes (Paris: Librairie Charles Délagrave, 1891), 167-168. The following narrative of the entrée uses these accounts in conjunction with those of the ambassadors studied here.
open for Venetians of all classes to admire the latest in French interior adornments and to partake of wine, candied fruits, iced creams, and music into the night.

The following day the cavaliere and senators returned early to the French embassy to invite the ambassador to accompany them to the palazzo ducale. Once there, the cavaliere led the ambassador through the open door of the sala del collegio to the doge and the twenty-two assembled members of the collegio. The doge rose removing his cornet and the other members followed suit. The French ambassador traversed the hall making nine réverences – low bows – as he approached the tribune. Mounting to a seat beside the doge he doffed his hat, sat, and pronounced an introductory harangue in French. A secretary of the collegio repeated the same in Italian after which the envoy delivered lettres de créances – credentials - through which the king of France acknowledged him as royal representative to the republic. The doge conversed briefly with the ambassador before the envoy rose, donned his hat, and exited the sala backwards performing again nine réverences. The ritual return to the embassy was repeated except the doge sent along rich gifts of pastries, liqueurs, and wines. Finally, the ambassador opened the embassy for another evening feteing the Venetian public. The entrée ended; the French ambassador was officially in residence.

The ceremonial entrée provides a fitting introduction. This chapter describes some of the quotidian physical, socio-cultural, and psychological circumstances that French ambassadors experienced upon arriving in Venice. The choreography of an ambassador’s official entrée into the Most Serene Republic was engineered to welcome and acknowledge his status. The entrée, however, also targeted the ambassador as the official representative of the French - foreign - Other.³ Both cases were distinctly political.⁴

As the rituals illustrate, the French ambassador as an individual was officially recognized in a Venetian socio-cultural context. He was expected to adapt quickly to the functions his royal master demanded. The pressure was on. As Ellen McClure described, “the ambassador would seem to be a figure occupying the liminal space not just between two sovereigns but between the universals of rational precepts and the infinite contingencies of international events.” They were foreigners thrown into long hours of work punctuated with taxing state ceremonial and audiences before the Venetian collegio and populace. They were the public image of the French king and people. It must not be forgotten, however, that diplomatic sources do not always tell the whole story, and here personal letters, memoirs, spies’ reports, and gazettes reveal that diplomats enjoyed the pleasures of the republic as well as its perils.

This study asks the reader to consider five French ambassadors as independent, individual actors. Like everyone, ambassadors were creatures of biological and historical circumstance. They were prey to physical, environmental, and institutional constraints, conventions, and prejudices. The five ambassadors whose embassies I study digested, adapted, and reacted to the broader international webs into which they became enmeshed. They were also expected to make critical decisions while enduring the day-to-day experiences associated with a foreign socio-cultural milieu.

5 Bély, 362; Sharp, 20.
The present work investigates how the Bishop of Beziers, the Abbé d’Estrades, the Sieur d’Amelot, the Sieur de la Haye-Vantelet, and the Cardinal d’Estrées adapted to and negotiated within the Venetian context. This chapter aspires to the reification of similar circumstances ambassadors encountered in Venice in contrast to the distinct political moments each addressed. Ambassadors’ adaptational capacities illuminate facets of the evolution in Louis Quatorzeien domestic and foreign politics. Ultimately, from within the closed Venetian environment, these men assisted in the construction of broader developments characterizing the histories of France, Venice, and the Mediterranean Sea.

Spaces of Representation, Mediation, and Negotiation in Venice

Ambassadors were restricted in Venice, or, as Amelot de la Houssaie alleged in his 1676 Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise, foreign emissaries were considered “hidden enemies and honorable spies.”⁹ It was illegal for Venice’s patricians to fraternize with foreign envoys, and the city’s embassies were off limits to Venetians.¹⁰ Official sources suggested that foreign envoys spent much of their time in the embassies and government structures to which the Venetian government invited them. The French embassy in the late seventeenth century was a discretely imposing sixteenth-century palazzo in the sestiere of Cannaregio.¹¹ Although the late-seventeenth-century embassy was little more than a mile from the palazzo ducale it seemed far-

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¹⁰ Ibid., 33; The journal of the expatriated French Huguenot Maximilien Misson from his trip to Italy in 1687-1688 provides an invaluable perspective on Venetian society and culture. Misson, Lettre XVII, à Venise 14 Février 1688, 254; Roosen, The Age of Louis XIV, 151.
¹¹ The palazzo exists today housing the Boscolo Venezia Hotel located at Fondamenta Madonna dell'Orto 3500, 30121 Venice, Italy. The hotel’s website boasts of its former diplomatic tenants. For some idea of the sumptuous interiors see images on the hotel’s website, http://venezia.boscolohotels.com (see Fig.3 for an image of the façade). I thank Ms. Mickey White who first told me that the French embassy had been in this building and who walked me there. The embassy remained in this palazzo at least through the tenure of the Abbé de Bernis (1752-1754), but later in the eighteenth century the French transferred to the Palazzo Surian still in Cannaregio. Baschet, Les Archives de Venise, 451; Roosen, The Age of Louis XIV, 114; Mémoires et lettres de François-Joachim de Pierre, Cardinal de Bernis (1715-1758), Tome I, ed. Frédéric Masson (Paris: Société d’Éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, 1903), 418-419 n. 3.
removed from the city’s spaces of political authority. Traveling by foot, sedan chair, or in one of Venice’s reputed “thirty thousand gondolas” through labyrinthine canals, bridges, or rios required time.\textsuperscript{12} The location of the residence of Venetian ambassadors in Paris changed at least twice in the decades of Louis XIV’s personal rule, and they rented the spaces.\textsuperscript{13} The French embassy in Venice, contrastingly, remained in the same rented palazzo until later in the eighteenth century.

The designated area delineating the extraterritorial space associated with the French embassy was sometimes referred to as the \textit{lista dei Francesi} (see \textit{Fig.1}).\textsuperscript{14} This included the embassy proper, outbuildings attached to the ambassador’s household, and the walkways surrounding these structures. Originally constructed for the Paloral family the palazzo opened in front onto the \textit{rio della Madonna dell’Orto}. Behind was a private garden laid out in the French manner; beyond this the boundary of the \textit{fondamente nove} with the island of Murano in view.

The embassy was situated almost equidistantly between the church and convent of Sant’Alvise to the left of its \textit{portone} – the main entrance - just beyond the rio de’ Zecchini and the church and gardens of the Madonna dell’Orto to the right.\textsuperscript{15} Moving past the Madonna dell’Orto’s piazza one arrived at the \textit{sacca della misericordia}. The sources mention the Madonna dell’Orto frequently as a space ambassadors used for devotion, negotiation, and espionage.\textsuperscript{16} The \textit{lista dei

\textsuperscript{12} Misson, \textit{Lettre XVI, à Venise 20 Janvier 1688}, 201; Roosen, \textit{The Age of Louis XIV}, 115.
\textsuperscript{14} Baschet, \textit{Les archives de Venise}, 451.
\textsuperscript{15} Misson, \textit{Lettre XVI, à Venise 20 Janvier 1688}, 199.
\textsuperscript{16} The following are just two of many examples, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 29 Aug. 1682, F. 99r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 19 June 1688, F. 157r.
Francesi stretched traditionally from the rio de’ Zecchini to the wall where the piazza della Madonna dell’Orto began.\footnote{Colbert de Torey, Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur Abbé de Pomponne, Conseiller du Roy en Ses Conseils, l’un des Aumosniers de S. M. allant à Venise en qualité de Son ambassadeur du 28è Janvier 1705 à Marly, in Du Parc, 138.}

Unfortunately, I have found no sources detailing the floorplan or number of rooms in the embassy. It is clear that there were reception rooms on the pian nobile including a sumptuous audience chamber. Here stood a respectfully vacant armchair – fauteuil – elevated on a dais symbolizing the presence of Louis XIV.\footnote{Muir, Ritual in Early Modern Europe, 247; The French used the portego of the palazzo as the antichambre for the audience hall. Alliette de Pracomtal, Un ambassadeur de Louis XIV à Venise, 1679-1682 (Lunéry, France: Éditions Bertout, 1989), 34; For the important role of the portego to Venetian patricians’ status and domestic expectations see, Margaret A. Morse, “The Venetian portego: Family Piety and Public Prestige,” in The Early Modern Domestic Interior, 1400-1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities, eds. Campbell, Miller, and Consavari (London: Routledge, 2013), 90-91.} Below the dais sat an additional two fauteuils where the ambassador received guests. The chamber included a royal portrait that changed over time with fashion and as the monarch aged. Additionally there were portraits of members of the royal family.\footnote{For example, in her study of the Sieur de Varangeville, successor in Venice to the Abbé d’Estrades, Aliette de Pracomtal noted that, at that time, a copy of Pierre Mignard’s 1677 equestrian portrait of the king before the siege of Cambrai was on display. (see Fig.2 for a similar portrait). Ibid., 34-35. It is unclear if ambassadors carried portraits of the king with them in their wares or if the court sent them regularly.} Flanking the dais were two mirrors of solid silver inlaid with crystals above two silver tables. Looking at ambassadors’ lists of wares accompanying them reveals that the other public spaces of the embassy were richly appointed; furnishings, plate, and fabrics showcased the best in French luxury production and artistry.\footnote{Amelots’s list of furnishings provides the best example of rich items ambassadors took with them to their embassies in Venice. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108, Mémoire des Hardes et des vaiselles d’argent et choses dont le Sr. Amelot s’en allant ambassadeur du Roy à Venise envoy a son sortie du Royaume, 1 April 1682, passim Fs. 57r-59r; Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 361.}

Of the nine official ambassadors posted in Venice from 1662 to 1715, Cardinal d’Estrées alone did not to reside in the embassy proper. The cardinal remained incognito throughout his twenty months of service preferring to lodge at the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria
Gloriosa (known colloquially as *ai frari*). The Venetian Reverend-Father General of the Franciscans, Vincenzo Coronelli, a long-time associate of Estrées, leant the cardinal his chambers in the monastery. Residing in a space beyond the embassy allowed Estrées more easily to maintain his *incognito* status. Moreover, the position of the *frari* in the heart of Venice with its proximity to the ducal palace facilitated negotiations the cardinal undertook with the *savvio del consiglio*, Benedetto Cappello. Estrées negotiated foreign policy too at Cappello’s bedside in his home when Cappello’s gout made travel impossible for him.

Beyond the embassy ambassadors participated in state functions like the *festa della sensa* during which the annual *sposalizio del mare* – marriage of the sea – occurred. Dogal feasts, public processions, and the celebrations surrounding Christmas took ambassadors to the Basilica of San Marco, the doge’s palace, and onto the ducal gondola or *bucintore*. For Louis XIV it was to be understood that French ambassadors outranked all others at these events save the papal nuncio. Attendance at state functions allowed the diplomat access to the doge, senators, fellow foreign envoys, and government officials affording opportunities to collect and pass intelligence.

Individual ambassadors thrived in different contexts. The ministers informally mingled often wearing masks with Venetian patricians to avoid the censure of either party. The Bishop of Beziers attended private gatherings and enjoyed the company of women whereas the Sieur de la

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Haye preferred going to mass routinely. Both attended public operas. None of the ambassadors’ sources explicitly mentioned opera houses as locations for the collection of information or unofficial negotiation. Neither did they mention the politically themed elements of Venetian operas although recent scholarly work indicates that opera houses were undeniably political spaces.

Operas were dedicated to ambassadors during geopolitical turbulence in which Venice aligned with different European states. During the last decade of the Candian War, for example, Venice regarded Louis XIV as a potential ally against the Turks. The librettist and owners of the theater San Luca dedicated the opera *La Dori* to the Bishop of Beziers on 1 January 1663. Later in the early 1680s, when Venetians entered into an alliance with Leopold I and shunned French ambassador Amelot, German princes were frequent opera dedicatees. Additionally, one of the franchises accorded to French ambassadors in 1664 and thereafter was the privilege to rent boxes in any of the city’s opera and commedia theaters. This might seem like a hospitable gesture. Given the political nature of Venice's seventeenth-century opera houses and operatic narratives,

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28 Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan E. Glixon, *Inventing the Business of Opera: The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth Century Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 332; Romano, “Why Opera?,” 403-404; It must be assumed that the dark depiction of Assyrian-qua-Turkish despotism was meant to persuade Beziers of why French assistance against the infidel in the struggle for Crete was an imperative. Selfridge-Field, *The Calendar of Venetian Opera*, 89, n. 50.
29 This did not mean Amelot did not have dedications. The first opera of the 1683 season was dedicated to him upon his arrival. Events deteriorated between the ambassador and the senate soon after, however. Mamy, “Les Français à Venise,” in Duron, 23; Selfridge-Field, 155.
and the close surveillance of ambassadors in general, designated boxes provided *confidenti* of the inquisitors of state other means to supervise diplomats. That the doges drew lots for the allocation of boxes for ambassadors to guard against problems of precedence too demonstrated the political associations entertainments carried.\textsuperscript{31}

No discussion of Venice would be complete without reference to *carnevale*.\textsuperscript{32} There are only limited descriptions of the events associated with *carnevale* in their papers, but ambassadors made numerous references to the celebrations and the many foreign princes and dignitaries drawn to the city for them.\textsuperscript{33} *Carnevale* provided ambassadors with opportunities to engage with Italian princlings like the Duke of Mantua and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. The atmosphere of the *carnevale* afforded French diplomats a brief respite from the constraints that spatial and ceremonial restrictions imposed upon them, and Venice’s culture of the mask would have freed ambassadors from the restraints of their formal duties.\textsuperscript{34}

The sanctioned space of diplomatic negotiation in Venice was the *palazzo ducale* specifically the *sala del collegio*. It was only with the *collegio* that ambassadors officially interacted.\textsuperscript{35} The palazzo’s physical spaces have been described elsewhere; suffice it to say they were hard to access. Ambassadors did not have freedom of movement in the doge’s palace; for an ambassador to enter he either had to be invited or to request audience.\textsuperscript{36} Pages and secretaries

\textsuperscript{31} The doges drew lots to allocate boxes sending the box keys to the ambassador afterwards. Ministers kept these same boxes throughout their tenures in the republic. AAE, MD, vol. 45, Venise, *Des Droits et prérogatives utiles, 1664*, F. 180v.
\textsuperscript{32} Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 87.
\textsuperscript{33} Misson also remarked upon the huge crowds drawn to carnival, Misson, *Lettre XVI, à Venise 14 Février 1688*, 240; Muir, 87
\textsuperscript{35} De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*, 71.
\textsuperscript{36} Saint-Didier, 139.
relayed messages between the Venetian government and the French embassy. Ambassadors and their secretaries included originals or copies in dispatches. Ambassadors informed Louis XIV that it irritated the collegio if they requested secretaries to come to the embassy, and, unlike in France, there was no Venetian minister of foreign affairs with whom ambassadors communicated on a more informal basis. Diplomats asked to address the collegio for a range of issues: to present and negotiate complaints or propositions regarding commercial and foreign policy; to announce royal births, deaths, and marriages; and to vaunt international events such as military victories.

The collegio utilized restricted access to avoid thorny decisions and to alienate ambassadors in heated diplomatic moments. Michel Amelot and César d’Estrées noted that the Venetians refused or delayed sending secretaries to them or to receive theirs during turbulent circumstances. Others, like Bonsy and la Haye recorded punctually their rather more frequent audiences and alleged private discourse with doges during ceremonies. These details demonstrated to Louis XIV individual capacities to maneuver within the Venetian political system and ambassadors’ skills of persuasion and sociability. Moreover, ambassadors contended with the long absences of the Venetian aristocracy from the city from 12 June to the end of August. They exited the city again on the 4 October until early November. During these periods patricians resided in their terraferma villas to escape the heat and humidity of the lagoon.

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37 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, 259r. Ambassadors sent their pages to the collegio or the collegio sent secretaries to the embassy to relay written messages from the government. Amelot de la Houssaie, Histoire du Gouvernement de Venise, Tome II, 537. Ambassadors negotiated through the twenty-two members of the collegio who then passed the taking of decisions onto the senate, or the pregadi, the select group of one hundred twenty senators representing the combined will of the members of the maggior consiglio. By the late seventeenth century, the six savii grandi sitting in the collegio ordered the business of the collegio and that of the pregadi. Lane noted that the members of the collegio were effectively the nerve center of the Venetian government. Within this center, however, the savii and the three state inquisitors wielded an enormous, and almost absolute authority. Lane, Venice: A Maritime Republic, 254-254, 428.

38 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, F. 259r.

39 See the subjects of Chapters 4 and 6 for fuller discussions of these issues.

40 Le Roy Ladurie, Saint-Simon and the Court of Louis XIV, 351.
while overseeing the harvest on their estates. They returned just before the beginning of carnival the 10 December.

The last formal interaction ambassadors had in Venice was the audience de congé – taking leave. When an ambassador finished his tenure in the republic he took leave of the Venetian government in the sala del collegio. In a ceremony similar to the entrée, ambassadors read speeches of departure. At the end of the ceremony the ambassador received a golden chain and a letter of congé from the collegio. He then departed. Normally a departing ambassador awaited the arrival of his replacement who remained incognito until the next entrée. The departing ambassador apprized his successor of the points of protocol - les formes ordinaires - requisite in the city. Additionally, the outgoing ambassador informed the new envoy of relevant information for negotiation providing - or bequeathing - the names of trusted informants.

Domestic Arrangements: Ambassadors, Households, and Individual Experience in Venice

French ambassadors' households in Venice varied in size and the types of staff each included. The rank of the diplomat did not necessarily affect the size and dynamic of his household and staff. Of the five, three were ecclesiastics and two were drawn from the noblesse de robe. Ambassadors-ecclesiastic were unmarried, whereas, Michel Amelot's wife accompanied him to the republic, and Denis II de la Haye had wife(s) and children in the embassy with him. The sources communicate that both of these ministers' French wives detested life in Venice away from the court and Paris. Only Venetian spies' reports record that Amelot's consort was

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41 Francesco Monicelli, Ville Venete: The Villa Civilization in the Mainland Dominion (Verona, Italy: Arsenale Editrice, 2005), 17.
42 See AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 20 Jan. 1684, F. 408r. Amelot noted that his gold chain was worth two hundred and fifty pistoles. His secretary, de Piles, also received a gold chain worth seventy pistoles.
44 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to state inquisitors, 2 Sept. 1685.
allegedly involved in espionage and that she played the organ. La Haye's second wife, Catarina Groppo, an Italian, was the widow of the Signor Beatiano, a spy for the French; the links between ambassadors and the world of espionage became closely entwined.

Of the sources I surveyed, only the Bishop of Beziers provided a summary of the members of his suite. Detractors in Venice and Paris accused the bishop of being parsimonious in his service to the king, but he defended himself with a detailed list of his staff. The *Liste des Domestiques de Monseigneur l’Evesque de Beziers, Ambassadeur de S. M. à Venise*, recorded that forty-one individuals worked at the embassy:

- A chamberlain……………1
- 2 Secretaries………………2
- An under secretary……..1
- 2 clerics……………………2
- An equerry………………1
- A Maistre d’hostel…………1
- 2 chamber valets…………2
- 1 Tailor…………………1
- 1 Surgeon………………1
- 4 Pages……………………4
- 2 Little Turks……………2
- 8 footmen………………8
- 2 Swiss guards…………2
- 2 Cooks………………..2
- A kitchen page…………1
- 2 Someliers……………2
- Eight Gondoliers………8

Bonsy boasted that he paid for more domestics than any French ambassador to Venice “in the last thirty years.” Other ambassadors did not leave such accounts. Michel Amelot, however,

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45 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, state inquisitors to Foscarini, 2 April 1683.
46 BnF, MC, vol. 126bis, *Liste des Domestiques de Monseigneur l’Evesque de Beziers, Ambassadeur de S. M. à Venise*, Beziers to Colbert, 20 Dec. 1664, F. 506r. Bonsy and later, Amelot, commented on their gondolieri. In the Venetian context gondolieri became close associates of their employers. Misson remarked that they knew all of the secret places of Venice and how to get to them. They could be paid to do any job no matter how onerous, and they often formed a sort of bodyguard. Misson, *Lettre XVII, à Venise 14 Février 1688*, 247;
47 BnF, MC, vol. 126bis, Beziers to Colbert, 503r–503v. It appears the bishop’s household in Venice exceeded the norm for seventeenth-century French aristocrats that averaged “between twenty and thirty servants.” Such excess
noted in 1683 that he employed six gondoliers.\textsuperscript{48} This being the case, I deduce that each ambassador’s household varied in size and dynamic but included probably no fewer than forty-one people. Ambassadors also purchased and paid for the upkeep of at least two if not more stately gondolas for transportation.\textsuperscript{49}

It is clear that each diplomat maintained at least one secretary who wrote dispatches and organized the details of the ambassadors’ households. Secretaries also facilitated the clandestine acquisition of intelligence.\textsuperscript{50} Scholars of early modern diplomacy have commented on the importance and problematic nature of ambassadors’ secretaries.\textsuperscript{51} Michel Amelot’s secretary, Roger de Piles, became a target for the Venetian senate’s ire as there was ample proof that he organized a contreband ring paying spies for the collection of Venetian state secrets.\textsuperscript{52} Besides the French secretaries who accompanied and served them, ministers who did not speak Italian employed Italian secretaries. Amelot in particular did not speak Italian, and he included an Italian secretary, Signor Bartolomeo Franceschini, among his household.\textsuperscript{53} The other ambassadors all either spoke Italian fluently or employed a translator without mentioning him.

A noteworthy minister working in Venice with whom ambassadors interacted was the French consul. Consuls theoretically mitigated and facilitated French commercial interests in the city and states belonging to Venice, but during the embassies of Bonsy and Estrades the consul appeared more as a functionary and advisor with access to the knowledge of the formes...
ordinaires - as seventeenth-century diplomats called protocol - and as attaché in the interims between ambassadors in residence.⁵⁴ Throughout the 1660s and 1670s the French consul in Venice was Paul Vedoa. Ambassadors in Venice considered themselves superior to the consul as the example of Michel Amelot indicated; Amelot included Vedoa among the members of his household as well as Monsieur Comel, the vice-consul.⁵⁵

The relationship between Louis XIV’s ambassadors and the consul changed, however, in the 1680s. Denis de la Haye-Vantelet and Consul Jean-Guillaume Le Blond collaborated almost as equals. The nature of this collaboration reflected the elevation of consuls as consequential ministers in the French ministry of the marine serving similar functions as the ambassador for the secretary of the marine.⁵⁶ From 1688 onward, ambassadors and consuls in Venice worked in tandem updating ministers in Louis XIV’s conseil d’en haut of political and commercial affairs from Venice and the Mediterranean. The shift in their relationship, as I argue farther along, reflected the rise and entrenchment of louisquatorzien bureaucratic practice beyond the borders of the kingdom.

From their correspondence the personal lives of these five men and the pressures the office and the environment exerted upon them became clear. The difficult requirements of the role of ambassador, namely to represent, mediate, and negotiate, emerge through their frequent communications with Louis XIV and the ministers of foreign affairs. Beyond their official tasks, however, emotional and physiological experiences in Venice stood out. These men benefitted from the king’s call to serve, but it also battered them.

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⁵⁴ For one example of claiming the consul as an advisor on protocol see AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bezier s to Louis XIV, 28 Oct. 1662, F.128r-128v; Roosen, The Age of Louis XIV, 103-104.
⁵⁵ After 1685 there were no longer vice-consuls in Venice as the post was considered to be useless. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, 5 May 1685, F. 69r; Roosen, The Age of Louis XIV, 103.
⁵⁶ See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of this shift.
Although not every ambassador mentioned personal struggles, some left strong indications. The young Abbé Jean-François d’Estrades described homesickness. In January 1677 Estrades wrote to Cardinal d’Éstrées, “I do not mind seeing the snowy streets here as they remind me of those in Paris; I must admit that I would be overjoyed if I could but hope to return there as soon as your Eminence will.”

Estrades maintained a regular correspondence with his father, the Marshal d’Estrades suggesting his close ties with his family. Homesickness was not the only hardship. There is also evidence that Estrades’s nostalgia may have resulted from lovesickness. The Marquise d’Uxelles wrote the young abbé that she heard of the magnificence of his entrée into Venice adding the cryptic verse: “but lost is the time/ that one does not spend loving.”

Ambassadors may have faced loneliness as free conversation was restricted between ambassadors and most Venetians, as Maximilien Misson remarked in 1688, “what hardness, that a Government cannot be happy without destroying the connections and the communication of Society, these are among the most tender things in life!” Furthermore, Estrades faced the death of his brother in battle while la Haye experienced the death of a partner. Adding to the emotional fatigue of their tasks, Venetian ambassadors in France occasionally harassed the French ambassador’s family members. This was the case with Michel Amelot whose mother at the French court was threatened with her son’s ultimate ruin if she did not pressure him to change his attitude toward the Venetian government.

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58 BnF, CL, vol. 584, the Marquise d’Uxelles to Estrades, 12 May 1676, F. 199r.
59 Misson, Letter XVII, à Venise 14 Février 1688, 254, see Ibid., 235 as added evidence of how foreigners were avoided. Colbert de Torcy, Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur de Pomponne, in Du Parc, 147.
61 ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Foscarini to state inquisitors, [date unclear] early 1683.
Aside from loss, nostalgia, and threats ambassadors dealt with illness. The humid climate of the Republic of Venice was considered insalubrious, and ambassadors commented that it was necessary to exit the city occasionally for their health. Adding to the pressure was the knowledge that the Venetian government considered an ambassador’s departure for illness or religious contemplation, even for short periods, as indications of nefarious activities. Both la Haye and the Cardinal d’Estrées were septuagenarians, and their health concerns figured in their dispatches. Not surprisingly gout and the infirmities of age were noted in these two ambassadors’ correspondence. La Haye begged the king to allow him to retire in 1700 after serving in various posts for forty years. Estrées, in particular, mentioned that he could not walk and take stairs as well he used to. Gout afflicted his right hand affecting his writing that the tortured script of his letters confirmed.

Other facets of ambassadors’ lived experience included moments of respite from their tasks. Ambassadors mentioned the hunt, promenades, soirées, and religious retreats to the shrine of the Madonna di Loretto. Ambassadors shopped. They purchased gifts for patrons, friends, and family back in France. Despite royal legislation forbidding the purchase and entry of Venetian glass into France after the 1665 establishment of the royal glass manufactury, Amelot and la Haye remarked that they purchased quality Venetian mirrors and glassware for family

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62 See BnF, CL, vol. 584, Estrades to Senate, 19 Sept. 1676, F. 387r; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 5 Nov. 1677, F. 695r. In his history, Saint-Didier spent one chapter describing and commenting on the remarkable character of Venice’s difficult “air”. Saint-Didier, *La Ville et la république de Venise au XVIIe siècle*, 84-85, 86, 86; Venice’s weather and *acqua alta* contributed not only to problems of health but also to the expedition of information, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, Fs, 116v-117r. Misson did not exactly agree with Saint-Didier on the point as he said some Venetians lived long lives, bad air notwithstanding. Misson, 234.


67 Roosen, 178.
members or patrons. 68 The ambassadors likewise collected Venetian artwork, books, textiles, and gondolas. 69 Acquisitions and the upkeep of their households and health cost them. Ministers’ finances added constraints to their tasks and comfort.

**The Cost of Serving Louis XIV in Venice**

The everyday costs of functioning in a foreign environment as an ambassador were many. The requisite outlay for pomp and the collection of information from informants added to everyday expenses. 70 Venetian patricians often refused their election as ambassadors precisely because of the immense finances required. They were either fined or exiled ignominiously for refusing the call of civic duty. 71 The ambassadors of Louis XIV to Venice, however, did not turn down the king’s nomination to the embassy with the hope of augmenting their prestige in the aristocratic hierarchy and their personal fortunes through later rewards. 72

French ambassadors used their own incomes and the stipends paid them from the Crown to survive in their posts. A precise reconstruction of the income and outlay of ambassadors in Venice is difficult. It is possible, however, to note that annual stipends from the Crown began at eight thousand écus in 1662 and remained relatively unchanged at twenty-four thousand livres in

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68 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Mémoire servant seulement pour éclaircir quelques dates et dets sans dont Monsr. Foscarini n’a pas été bien instruit, sent in dispatch of Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, F. 263r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to the Marquis d’Arès, 28 Feb. 1688, F. 56r; Saint-Didier, La Ville et la République de Venise, 22, Misson, Lettre XVIII, à Venise 15 Février 1688, 277.

69 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Mémoire servant seulement pour éclaircir quelques dates et dets sans dont Monsr. Foscarini n’a pas été bien instruit, sent in dispatch of Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, F. 263r.

70 In an age when “baroque representations of power” demonstrated authority, ambassadors were ridiculed if they lived frugally. Picavet, "La Carrière Diplomatique en France," 398; Roosen, The Age of Louis XIV, 87; Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 361; Giovanni Careri, Baroques (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 151. A prime example was the papal nuncio, Pompeo Varese, in Paris from 1676-1678. Varese was stingy and lived shabbily contributing to the failure of his embassy as he appeared disrespectful to Louis XIV. Bruno Neveu, “Un Rival de l’Avare : Le nonce Varèse à Paris (1676-1678),” Journal des Savants, no. 1 (1982), 59-60.

71 Andrea Zannini, “Economic and social aspects of the crisis of Venetian diplomacy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,” in Frigo, 118, 121-122.

72 Roosen, 126.
The government paid stipends erratically in the 1660s, but by the close of the century they were paid biannually. Ambassadors sometimes received advances before their departure to purchase necessary furnishings for the embassy. It is telling that the Bishop of Beziers and the Abbé d’Estrades wrangled with Jean-Baptiste Colbert to receive the installments of the stipends owing them and the pressures this placed upon their own personal finances. Repaying the expenditures they accrued in Venice troubled them; although neither ambassador fully specified what each of these costs entailed.

One expense was the rental of the embassy. According to Consul Vedoa, Bonsy paid seven hundred livres annually for the building. The bishop defended himself to Colbert against accusations that he was unwilling to use his personal fortune to pay for the expenses accrued in the king’s service. He claimed “there has not been an ambassador of the king who lived with more magnificence and expense in all things than myself: be it at table, furnishings, livery of gondolas and the number of domestics.” He allegedly paid for all of this from his personal income to the tune of seven thousand écus annually as he waited for the Crown stipend. Estrades allegedly ruined himself in debts to Venetian bankers as he fought for the conferral of

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73 Bonsy was the first ambassador posted to Venice during Louis XIV’s “personal rule.” The post had been vacant since early 1661. Bonsy remarked to Colbert that he would like to receive the same sum of eight thousand écus as his predecessor, the Archbishop d’Embrun. BnF, MC, vol. 109, Beziers to Colbert, 10 June 1662, F. 205r; In 1692 la Haye made 24,000 livres per annum. AAE, MD, France, vol. 45, États des Appointments des Ministres Étrangers pour les 6 derniers mois de l’année 1692, Fs. 100r; La Haye drew the same sum in 1698, AAE, MD, vol. 305, 1698, [untitled], F. 171r; AAE, Comptabilité, Finances du Ministère, vol. 1, En 1698 les ambassadeurs que le feu Roy tenoit dans les Cours Étrangères avoient les appointments marquez cy après, F. 9r.

74 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplément, Ordre de 8,000 Livres pour le Sr. Amelot nommé ambassadeur de Venise pour son immeublement, 26 Janv. 1682, F. 11r.

75 For examples of their financial difficulties with Colbert see the following, BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 5 Nov. 1677, F. 691; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 18 March 1678, F. 833.

76 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81 supplément, Vedoa to Lionne, 16 Feb, 1665, F. 52r. Vedoa reported that the Savoyard ambassador occupied the embassy briefly until a new French ambassador arrived there. The ambassador of Savoy paid one thousand two hundred and fifty livres for the palazzo. Ibid.

the income of the abbacy of Moissac from the pope.⁷⁸ That I am aware, later ambassadors, - Amelot, la Haye, and Estrées - expressed less financial concerns than Bonsy and Estrades.⁷⁹

Funds sent to the ambassadors and consuls in Venice were expedited as letters of credit that they delivered to Venetian bankers in exchange for ducats.⁸⁰ In Venice the ambassadors used the bank of the signori GioGalli, Samelli, and Piatti. Piatti’s bank was continuously used until the end of the century to provide credit.⁸¹ From the funds exchanged ambassadors certainly paid the members of the embassy household and for necessary supplies. Ambassadors and consuls also used these funds to secure spies and informants who provided political and military secrets relayed to the court.⁸²

Money was not the only currency ambassadors used to reimburse their households. Michel Amelot recorded that he paid staff members with the wine and flour that he accessed through the privileges of the franchises.⁸³ The wine and bread of Venice were apparently so

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⁷⁸ See Chapter 2 for an analysis of how Estrades’s financial concerns influenced his work. Le Roy Ladurie, Saint-Simon and the Court of Louis XIV, 206. Estrées, however, had already faced financial distress earlier in the 1680s in diplomatic service in Rome. How and if his personal finances ameliorated by 1701 remains unclear. Saint-Simon reported at his death in 1714 that Estrées had no debts, but Pelletier notes that this may not have been the case. Monique Pelletier, “Scientific Connections, Ambitions and Financial Difficulties of the D’Estrées Family,” Globe Studies, no. 55/56, Papers, Read at the 11th Symposium, Venice 2007, and other contributions (2009 for 2007/2008), 158-159.

⁷⁹ La Haye asked for his stipend in 1688 after lacking it for three years, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, Fs. 15v-16r. This was the last mention of income in the volumes of dispatches I read.

⁸⁰ For mention of the bills of exchange see: BnF, MC, vol. 121bis, copy of a bill of exchange from the notary Angelo Maria Piccino attesting to the exchange of twenty-five thousand écus through the bank of GioGalli, Samelli, and Piatti, notarized 6 June 1664, sent from Beziers to Colbert, F. 1000r; AN, MA, B¹ Venise, vol. 2, la Haye to Seignelay, 5 June 1688, F. 70v.

⁸¹ Bonsy was the first to name these Venetian bankers. BnF, MC, vol. 121bis, Beziers to du Pont de Saint Pierre, 7 June 1664, F. 997r; In 1688 the consul, Le Blond, and Ambassador la Haye spoke of Giovanni Piatti still as banker to the French. AN, MA, B¹, Venise, vol. 2, Le Blond to Seignelay, 27 March 1688, F. 37r; AN, MA, B¹, Venise, vol. 2, la Haye to Seignelay, 5 June 1688, F. 70v.

⁸² For evidence that Crown salaries were used to pay spies and informants see: AN, MA, B¹, vol. 2, Le Blond to Seignelay, 1 May 1688, 45r-45v; Roosen, “The Functioning of Ambassadors under Louis XIV,” 319-320; Bély, Espions et Ambassadeurs, 98-99.

⁸³ For a full description of the controversial franchises ambassadors received in Venice see: AAE, MD, vol. 45, Venise, Des droits et prérogatives utiles, 1664, F. 180r-180v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Mémoire servant seulement pour éclaircir quelques dates et details dont Monsr. Foscarini n’a pas été bien instruit, sent in dispatch of Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, Fs. 261v-262r, 262v, 263v. Amelot claimed he fed the gondolieri “day and night” through the franchises.
“disgusting” to foreign ambassadors that they were spared the horror. Misson noted that Venetian wines were “terribly disagreeable” and of the bread that the “paste was so hard...that you had to break it like biscuits, thumping it like a hammer.”\footnote{Misson, \textit{Lettre XVII, à Venise 14 Février 1688}, 235. Misson opined that he was luckily treated and ate well in Venice’s “Auberges Françaises.” Ibid.} The \textit{franchises} allowing ambassadors to import better wine and flour for their tables benefited their domestics too.

Amelot allocated ten barrels of wine and thirty sacks of flour each to the consul, Le Blond, and vice-consul, Comel. Additionally, he gave his six \textit{gondolieri} each twenty-four sacks of flour and one hogshead of wine. Sometimes servants in turn sold these goods illegally to augment their income.\footnote{Saint-Didier remarked that French domestics had often been the most heinous offenders in this “sordid” trade. \cite{Saint-Didier, \textit{La Ville et la république de Venise au XVIIè siècle}, 251.} The acquisition and distribution of the commodities allowed as \textit{franchises} became a source of tension for Amelot and other foreign ambassadors as the Venetian government frequently alleged that they abused these privileges for lucre. In Amelot’s case, the abuse was real. The fallout regarding the ambassador’s misuse of diplomatic privilege and the violence of his \textit{gondolieri} formed a considerable portion of his official correspondence.\footnote{Although the embassy of the Seigneur de Charmont is not analyzed in this work, it is relevant to note that Charmont returned from Venice in shame in 1704 after being caught illegally using the privileges of the \textit{franchises} to bolster his own fortune. See Colbert de Torcy, \textit{Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur Abbé de Pomponne}, in Du Parc, \textit{passim} 140-145; Picavet, "La ‘Carrière’ Diplomatique," 407.}

The Culture of Diplomatic Correspondence and Types of Intelligence

Lucien Bély remarked when one approaches diplomatic correspondence to beware “that it can drag on.”\footnote{Lucien Bély, interview by author, Paris, France, Paris IV: La Sorbonne, 4 Oct. 2012. His caveat soon made sense to me. There are fifty-six volumes of dispatches and supplemental correspondence from Venice alone between the years 1662 to 1702 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ \textit{correspondance politique}. I read thoroughly twenty-three volumes of communication from the five ministers examined here. Each of these volumes ranged normally from two hundred to six hundred \textit{recto-verso} folios. Excluded from these are the various volumes of administrative papers and documentary \textit{mémoires} contained in the same archive’s \textit{Mémoires et documents}. Beyond the official volumes in the foreign affairs archives, I read personal correspondence at the \textit{Bibliothèque nationales}. Additionally, the \textit{Archives nationales} contain the communications of ambassadors and consuls with the secretaries of the marine.} It is only by closely following ambassadors’ long and often personal correspondence, however, that one can become acquainted with them as distinct individuals and,
as Gordon Craig opined, “only someone who is insensitive to the role of the individual in history could be bored by this kind of literature.”

The matters discussed in correspondence revealed that ambassadors relayed a wide range of information to the court. Four areas of communication stood out: **Internal Information, External Information, Practical Information,** and **Information of Potential Interest.** First, what I refer to as **Internal Information** related to knowledge ambassadors relayed concerning the Republic of Venice itself. Information regarding the republic internally and its foreign policies was the ambassador's primary concern. This information regarded the internal socio-political, military-naval, and economic-industrial institutions of the republic. **Internal Information** included important points vis-a-vis the Venetian government's foreign relations and policies towards European powers such as the Holy Roman Emperor, the popes, Italian and German princes, the Ottomans, the Knights of Malta, the Republic of Ragusa, and Louis XIV. Ambassadors reported their alleged interactions with the Venetian doge and senate sending along copies of responses or complaints from the senate to their inquiries and concerns. Additionally, the senate’s commentaries upon the deaths of royal family members, military victories, and royal births figure in this category. If the Venetian senate published laws that might be of particular interest copies were sent to France.

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88 Craig, “On the Pleasure of Reading Diplomatic Correspondence,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 26 (1992), 382. I add that carefully read diplomatic correspondence reveals the personality of the writer. It became clear early on, for example, that the Bishop of Beziers had a robust sense of humor tinging his political reportage with Italian witticisms. In the letters of the novice Abbé d'Estrades the fear of professional and financial ruin surfaced. Similarly, anxiety over personal safety, psychological insecurities, and anger emerged in the dispatches of Michel Amelot. The exhaustion of age, constant fatigue, and a sincere devotion to Louis XIV materialized in the writings of La Haye and Estrées. Such detail peppers the pages of official intelligence.

89 Roosen delineated three categories of information ambassadors were to send: “personal,” “military,” and “miscellaneous.” I do not believe that these three categories describe adequately the Venetian context. For Roosen, for example, personal information referred to the lives of prominent political actors. In my estimation such news belongs in the internal socio-cultural and political institutions of the state. Roosen, “The Functioning of Ambassadors under Louis XIV,” 316-317, 318; Roosen, *The Age of Louis XIV*, 129, 143.

90 Roosen, 315.

91 Each of the following five chapters provides ample evidence of this.

92 For example see AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, *Proclama Publicato d’Ordine dell’Illustri. et Eccellentiss. Signori Sopra Provveditori alle Biave, De 15 Febraio 1676, In Materia, che non si possi vender, ne comprar Pane, così...*
The second category, *External Information*, comprised relevant news and points of interest ambassadors acquired regarding the states surrounding Venice. The Ottoman Empire was one example. Ambassadors regularly communicated with their counterparts in Constantinople waiting for and then sending along packets of dispatches and letters from the ministers there along with their own.93 In Venice, ambassadors learned much about the geopolitical aims of the Viennese and Roman courts, the Duke of Mantua, the Knights of Malta, Polish kings, and various German princes visiting the republic. This list is in no way exhaustive, but it illustrates the wealth of international intelligence ambassadors relayed. Both *Internal* and *External Information* were linked, but they were distinct types of classified intelligence as close reading of the sources confirms.

Third, unlike the categories above, *Practical Information* was not necessarily classified. Ambassadors sent along reports, memos, and *mémoires* that they or others wrote concerning information not directly linked to politics. Some detailed the ministers' impressions of the Venetian people while others outlined items such as international weights and measures, current international exchange rates, and prices for commodities in Italy like grain and hay.94 Finally, *Information of Potential Interest*, delineated intelligence that provided the Ludovician bureaucracy insight into foreign socio-political and cultural perspectives and attitudes. Ambassadors collected and sent letters that Venetian subjects favorable to Louis XIV wanted

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93 For evidence of this see, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 13 March 1683, F. 313r.
delivered to the king. Some asked to be made knights of Saint Michel while others asked if they could name their son after the king. Newly printed or as-yet-unpublished political pamphlets, histories, or tracts that demonstrated the prevailing geopolitical mood in Venice or Italy were sent along. At times Venetian subjects wrote histories of France dedicating them to Louis XIV or the Dauphin. They expedited complimentary copies and letters of introduction by way of ambassadors to the court. These writers received a letter of thanks from the dedicatee, a small sum of money, and the occasional diamond for their trouble. Included in all of these categories, however, were pieces of information acquired through the extensive intelligence networks ambassadors spearheaded.

**Ambassadors as Intelligence “Case Officers”**

The chapters that follow illustrate the importance of espionage to ambassadors. Not every ambassador proved adept at managing webs of intrigue. Becoming a master "case officer" was challenging. Of the ambassadors examined, those with prior experience, Bonsy, la Haye, and Estrées demonstrated patience and discretion in this role. Dealing with sensitive information and “intelligence agents” providing information demanded exposure to the process of espionage and its contingencies. F. M. Begoum, a former trainer of CIA agents, observed “a human being in a stress situation is a complicated personality, and the interviewing officer must penetrate

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98 A case officer is considered to be an intelligence agent who leads, organizes, and collects information gleaned in a system of espionage. Based upon the ambassadors’ correspondence I have read, I contend that seventeenth-century ambassadors’ were expected to fulfill this more recently defined role. F. M. Begoum, “Observations on the Double Agent,” *Studies in Intelligence* Journal, 1962 (Declassified and released 18 Sept. 1995), 61.
below the surface, sensing the man’s emotions and mental processes.” Seventeenth-century ambassadors were undoubtedly no different. Their roles demanded a proficiency in penetrating below the surface of the intentions of their many informants.

It could be argued that the inexperienced Abbé d'Estrades demonstrated subtlety as a "case officer." He managed and protected spies and information with relative ease and genuine concern. His financial struggles, however, as discussed in Chapter Six, led him to make a number of precipitous personal errors of judgment regarding patrons he believed instrumental to his personal advancement. Fear of ruin contributed to the missteps he took by withholding sensitive intelligence from the king. Begoum noted, “only timely and full reporting to your headquarters will permit it [information] to help you effectively.” Estrades learned this before it was too late. Ultimately, the secret negotiations he was forced to divulge to the king secured him further diplomatic appointments. His skills, despite the personal blunders, paved the way for the French purchase of the important enclave of Casale in 1681.

Michel Amelot was inexperienced in espionage and the sang froid required to manage stressful situations out of which intelligence gathering arose. Amelot’s service in Venice was the most personally brutal of the five diplomats examined here. His case revealed how diplomacy, like most human endeavors, required exposure to circumstance, calm under pressure, and a personality adapted to the demands of the particular profession. Amelot was unable to hide from the Venetian inquisitors of state the close interpersonal ties he formed with informants and their families as well as the illegal means that he and his secretary facilitated to pay them. When this shortcoming became problematic vis-a-vis his official role as royal representative, his credit in Venice crumbled.

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100 Ibid., 61.
Amelot tried to mask his insecurities and inexperience by demonstrating an offensive haughtiness towards the Venetians. His correspondence suggested an upwardly mobile aristocrat self-satisfied in his nomination to the Venetian embassy. It seemed he went to Venice assured of his own primacy as Louis XIV’s man.\textsuperscript{101} When the stressful realities of diplomatic service and espionage surfaced he was shocked that the king and Colbert de Croissy left him to suffer the fallout of his own mistakes.\textsuperscript{102} Estrades and Amelot learned that diplomacy required patience and circumspection under strain. They became aware that they were relevant to Louis XIV only in so far as they facilitated Bourbon dynastic aims through their reportage. Independence of action was lauded so long as it succeeded.

Conclusions

The examples of Estrades and Amelot prove that Venice could harden novice ambassadors. Despite the controversies they faced in Venice, these ambassadors went on to serve in other diplomatic posts. The services of the experienced Bonsy, la Haye, and Estrées, however, demonstrated that the Republic of Venice continuously merited the presence of highly skilled diplomats from the French court. The embassies of Bonsy and Estrées in particular contradicted the idea, \textit{pace} Picavet, that the \textit{louisquatorzien} foreign ministry only sent robe nobility to Venice.\textsuperscript{103} The tenures of the bishop and the cardinal in the republic, almost like bookends for this study, revealed that Venice commanded ambassadors of superior status, high clergy in this case, until the dawn of the eighteenth century. As I argue, the Venetian government remained an important factor in French-\textit{qua}-European geopolitics. The formation and ministrations of ambassadors in Venice was another crucial facet of this reality. Time spent in the \textit{Serenissima} tested the personal resilience of French ambassadors - experienced or not.

\textsuperscript{101} See Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{103} Picavet, "La 'Carrière' Diplomatique en France," 389.
I cannot say with certainty whether or not Louis XIV and his secretaries of foreign affairs sent some ambassadors to Venice for an “education” in diplomacy and espionage. Amelot de la Houssaie had concluded in his history:

An Embassy in Venice is not ordinarily of great importance for negotiation, as the Senate applies all its force to maintain Peace; however, it is the most difficult, as well as the most idle, of all [posts], and that which demands the most intelligence, because there one treats with Mutes, and one only learns through enigmas. Because of this one calls Venice the school and the touch stone of Ambassadors, for it is there that Princes put their subjects to the test, to know the just cost [of service].

Such sources suggest that the king and the foreign ministry understood the Most Serene Republic to be a difficult environment capable of sharpening and “professionalizing” ambassadors-“case officers.” The ministers’ social networks in France and their abilities recommended them; Venice’s rough geopolitical climate sharpened them or demanded that they mature. Keeping these ideas in mind, the following chapters endeavor to tell the stories of one Italian and four French ambassadors representing Louis XIV.

PART I:

Structuring Franco-Venetian Diplomacy, 1662-1679
Chapter Two

Fig. 6
Venice’s senate presented Louis XIV with a gift. The French ambassador, Pierre II de Bonsy, Bishop of Beziers (1631-1703), informed Jean-Baptiste Colbert and Hugues de Lionne that the senate offered Paolo Veronese’s *Feast in the House of Simon* to the king.¹ This news came at the end of thirteen months of clandestine negotiations on the part of the bishop to purchase the master’s painting from the Venetian Servite friars who owned it.² Other princes vied for the canvas, but they could not afford the price tag the indebted friars demanded for it. That the republic’s senate requisitioned the piece from the Servites, however, came as a surprise to Bonsy and the king.³

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¹ BnF, MC vol. 122, Bonsy to Colbert, 5 July 1664, F. 186r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 85, Bonsy to Lionne, 2 Aug. 1664, F 59; Armand Baschet, “De l’hommage d’un tableau de Paul Veronèse que fit à Louis XIV la République de Venise en 1664,” Gazette des beaux-arts: la Doyenne des revues 24 (1868), 287. The painting is now in the Salon d’Hercules at Versailles where it came to reside in 1730 after staying at the Louvre and the Gobelins throughout Louis XIV’s reign.

² BnF, MC, vol. 115bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 12 May 1663, F. 962v.

³ BnF, MC, vol. 122, Bonsy to Colbert, 5 July 1664, F. 186r.
Scholars have discussed some aspects of Venice’s gift to Louis XIV, but none sketched fully the political contexts framing the *Serenissima*’s calculated gesture.\(^4\) The giving of gifts was a critical part of early modern diplomatic praxis, but it is necessary to understand why the senate commanded the friars to sacrifice the costly painting rather than allow its purchase to pay their debts to the state.\(^5\) The circumstances that brought illegal secret negotiations for a painting into the realm of high politics illuminates Franco-Venetian relations at the outset of Louis XIV’s personal rule. The episode underscored the relevance of cultural politics in *louisquatorzien* foreign policy just after the death of Cardinal Mazarin to be sure, but it highlighted much more than simply the importance of art to Louis XIV’s prestige.

In particular the senate’s gesture corresponded with its early interactions with Louis XIV as he undertook to rule France alone.\(^6\) As such, an analysis of Franco-Venetian politics during Bonsy’s embassy from 1662 to 1665 adumbrates the relationship between French dynastic expansionism that historians have recently explored.\(^7\) The growth of *louisquatorzien* centralization depended upon extant domestic and international contexts. The rapport between

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\(^4\) Dumesnil argued Venice offered the painting in exchange for French Gobelin tapestries, but he said no correspondence existed to prove his hypothesis. Baschet’s 1868 article parsed the details of the acquisition of the painting primarily from the perspective that Louis XIV and Colbert were searching for a Veronese for the royal collections. In the 1666 memoir of Michel-Angelo Mariani, secretary of Venetian Ambassador Alvise Grimani, in Paris from 1661-1663, Mariani indicated the king’s collection already contained works of Veronese. Marguerite Allain-Launay described the transaction most recently. She believed the scandal surrounding the April 1664 “affaire des domestiques” of Ambassador Alvise Sagredo prompted the republic’s gift. These studies, while valuable, did not consider the complicated web of international and domestic circumstances examined in this chapter. See cited above Dumesnil, *Histoire des plus célèbres amateurs français et de leurs relations avec les artistes*, tome II, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (Paris: V. Jules Renouard, 1857), 223; Baschet, “*De l’hommage d’un tableau de Paul Veronese que fit a Louis XIV la République de Venise en 1664*” 282; BnF, LB, vol. 37, 5200, Michel-Angelo Mariani, *Il più curioso e memorabile della Francia di Michel-Angelo Mariani all’Illustissimo, et Eccellentissimo Signor Cavalier Antonio Grimani Procurator di S. Marco. Con il sommario degli avvenimenti et l’indice delle cose notabili*, in Venezia, M. DC. LXXIII. Presso Gio:Giacomo Hertz, 111; and Allain-Launay, “Un gage de l’amitié franco-vénitienne,” in *Le Repas chez Simon, Veronèse: Histoire et restauration d’un chef-d’oeuvre* (Paris: Alain de Gourcuff, 1997), 70-71.

\(^5\) Ibid., 61.


\(^7\) Ibid., 48-49; Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 1, 8-9, 48-49,
France and the Republic of Venice illuminates the French government’s drive to hegemonize the Mediterranean world. *Louisquatorziens* dynastic politics did not rest solely upon adaptations between the crown and domestic elites. It contended with a plurality of sovereign states beyond France’s borders whose international engagements acted upon Louis XIV’s foreign policies.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in relations between France and Venice. These two states, moreover, competed in the Mediterranean in regards to their historical attachments to the Ottoman Empire. France maintained a privileged commercial relationship with the Turks since 1536. Over time Franco-Ottoman relations became more complex through commercial and diplomatic accommodations.\(^8\) But Venice’s rapport with the Turk preceded those of France.\(^9\) The republic built its wealth upon Mediterranean commerce in conjunction with the Sublime Porte. By the time that Louis XIV began to rule, Veneto-Ottoman relations soured. The republic warred with Mehmet IV over the island of Crete and, ultimately, for the survival of its *stato da mar*. Louis XIV’s expansion into the Mediterranean and in Italy materialized in the context of the last stages of the protracted Candian War (1645-1669).

The republic’s reputation among European states as a Mediterranean power rested upon the struggle for Crete. At the beginning of Louis XIV’s personal rule Venice believed the young monarch might furnish the resources necessary to repulse the Turk in the Mediterranean. Venice’s senate lobbied for French support to maintain the island, and in exchange, Louis XIV and his ministers gambled on Venetian cooperation in French Italian and Mediterranean policies.\(^10\) In Italy the king particularly lobbied for Venetian support against the papacy. As Bonsy arrived in Venice in 1662 a diplomatic furor raged between the king and Pope Alexander

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\(^8\) Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 110; Takeda, 81-82.


\(^10\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Paul Vedoa to Lionne, 23 April 1661, F 10; AMAE, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 16 Dec. 1662, F 195r.
VII. Louis and his ministers hoped that Venetian pressure could persuade the pope to bend to French demands.

Louis XIV worked under a dynastic imperative inherited from the late Cardinal Mazarin to extend Bourbon authority in opposition to the Habsburgs. The lure of dynastic expansion and the commerce that could facilitate it motivated the king as the 1660s opened. The fragmented Italian peninsula offered one theater where the king tested his strength against Habsburg authority. French might bore down upon the states of Italy in the fallout of the Corsican Guard Affair in Rome wedging Northern Italian princes between Louis XIV and the pope. French military advancement into the peninsula menaced Venice’s *terraferma* possessions and incited anxiety that its crisis with the Ottomans might tempt Louis XIV to expand French authority in Italy.

Venice feared French expansion into Italy. To a large degree the Candian War drew the attention and resources of Venice’s government away from the peninsula and prompted a willingness to mitigate the king’s expansionism rather than provoke his ire in refusing. The Bishop of Beziers was the vehicle in the republic through which Louis XIV sought accommodation for dynastic politics. He was the first ambassador Louis’s government deployed to Venice, and his dealings there set the tone for all subsequent interactions between the king and Venice’s senate. Bonsy dangled possible French military and financial aid against the Ottomans before the senate, and he negotiated Venetian acquiescence in French policies in Italy.

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13 AAE, CP, Venice, vol. 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 6 Jan. 1663, F 243r.

Furthermore, Louis’s emergent international authority depended upon commercial and industrial expansionism. The French economy stagnated and fought for survival when the king took up the reins of power in 1661. The image of a prosperous and thriving absolutist state characterizing France in later decades was yet to materialize as Bonsy arrived in Venice, but his role was tied distinctly to the monarchy’s plans for commercial growth. In France, Louis’s minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, undertook the revitalization of almost every aspect of the French economy. Critical to Colbert’s program was the overhaul of French commercial and maritime interests in the Mediterranean. Colbert’s investigations indicated that French interests in the sea were severely compromised through the neglect and malfeasance of French consuls and the instability of French commercial links with the Ottomans provoked through the ongoing Cretan war. The paltry fifty-six French vessels on the seas as Louis’s personal rule began placed the kingdom far behind states in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean like the United Provinces, England, and Venice. French commercial vessels had little protection then from the Crown, and the French navy would have to wait more than a decade before it was adequate enough to achieve maritime victories.15 French ministers and consuls around the Mediterranean were increasingly to participate in the Crown’s bid to increase commercial enterprises and revenue that the sea could afford.

Louis XIV and the foreign ministry manipulated and avoided responding to the Venetian senate’s repeated calls for French aid in the Mediterranean to enhance France’s own relations with Mehmet IV. Louis’s administration sought to demonstrate to the Turk that he was unwilling to attack France’s time-honored commercial partner in an effort to renew the privileged status of the French monarchy and its merchants. Additionally, Colbert set Bonsy the task of industrial espionage. The bishop already proved adept at this in his prior service to France in 1661 while in

in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Colbert’s program in the early 1660s included the development of domestic French luxury industries, and he charged Bonsy with tasks in Venice related to the expansion particularly of the French glass and lace industries.

The bishop facilitated the defection of Venetian artisans and their expertise that helped diminish Venice’s “industrial supremacy.” Richard Rapp argued that the enervation of Venice’s leadership in industries like lace and glass manufacturing contributed more to its “decline” than the traditional narrative of Mediterranean-wide commercial decay. In fact, Colbert’s interest in redefining a strong French presence in the sea against that of states like Venice, England, and the United Provinces with stronger trade networks in the sea revealed the extent to which Mediterranean commerce remained paramount as French commercial endeavors in the Atlantic and the New World foundered. Bonsy’s embassy underscored the role of the ambassador as a critical link through which one Western European state’s industrial capacities benefitted from and then superceded those of the republic. Louis’s government filched Venice’s industrial secrets while simultaneously striving to expand its own commerce in the sea.

This chapter aims to highlight the extremities in which both France and Venice found themselves in the 1660s. Louis XIV’s government faced the difficult reorganization of the kingdom’s domestic economic and cultural institutions alongside its post-mazarine political stature on the international stage. The Republic of Venice faced the unknown outcome of an ongoing war that could redefine its traditional maritime role. The embassy of the Bishop of Beziers demonstrated that the king wanted to draw Venice’s government close as an ally in

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attempts at an hegemony over Italian politics while waiting to see the outcome of Venice’s Mediterranean conflict to gauge better how to proceed with mercantilist expansion and Ottoman relations.

Ultimately, Bonsy’s reportage and mediation facilitated royal maneuvers during the Franco-papal feud; the transfer of French troops across Venetian territory as the feud came to an end; and the successful establishment of two nascent French industries to the benefit of Colbertisme and royal prestige. Such varied tasks amplify our view of what the role of French ambassadors comprised as Louis’s personal rule began. Moreover, Colbert instructed the bishop to acquire Venetian art to expand the royal collection and to contribute to a growing Louisquatorzien cultural machine. Thus, along the way Bonsy manipulated Venice’s war-weariness to procure an artistic masterpiece. The gift of the Veronese painting symbolized much as Louis XIV received it at the Louvre later in 1664.19 The canvas signalled the Republic of Saint Mark’s willingness to accommodate Louis XIV to a point. The gift served though as a reminder that Venice was a sovereign state controlling its domestic affairs and honor despite one French ambassador’s infiltrations. The republic, too, could still choose upon whom it bestowed its favors.20

The Bishop of Beziers and the Venetian Political Context

Cardinal Mazarin bequeathed a dynastic vision to Louis XIV. On the surface, Mazarin’s final achievement, the Peace of the Pyrenees, brought France and Spain closer while laying foundations for French ascendance among European states.21 Louis XIV used the momentary peace in Europe in the early 1660s to assert authority within France. Furthermore, the monarch

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21 Vierhaus, Germany in the Age of Absolutism, 118.
demonstrated his resolve to command international affairs. The king quickly enacted his personal approach to foreign policy through the affair of the Spanish ambassador in London (1661), the Treaty of Montmartre with the House of Lorraine (1662), and the affair of the Corsican guards in Rome (1662).\footnote{22 McClure, \textit{Sunspots and the Sun King}, 169, 184; Jonathan Spangler, “A Lesson in Diplomacy for Louis XIV: The Treaty of Montmartre, 1662, and the Princes of the House of Lorraine,” \textit{French History} 17, no. 3, (2015), 225-226.}

He then moved to expand Bourbon authority against Habsburg preponderance in Italy. The Spanish Habsburgs long controlled much of the peninsula dominating, for instance, papal politics in mid-seventeenth century Rome.\footnote{23 Savoy, Mantua, and the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany were tied to the French court by marriage, whereas, Parma and Modena looked to France for protection against the Habsburgs and the papacy. In 1655 Cardinal de Retz recorded that the Spanish crown still had the most authority in Rome through the number of cardinals it controlled. Jean François-Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz, \textit{Mémoires}, eds. Michel Pernot and Marie-Theres Hipp (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 919; Gianvittorio Signorotto, “The Squadrone Volante: ‘Independent’ Cardinals and European Politics in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century,” in \textit{Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700}, eds. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 188; J. Valfrey, \textit{La Diplomatie française au XVIIe siècle: Hugues de Lionne, ses ambassades en Italie, 1642-1656} (Paris: Didier, 1877), 6-7.} To test his neighbors the king struck at the papacy in the fallout of the Corsican Guard affair (20 August 1662) in a moment when neither Felipe IV nor Emperor Leopold I could afford to challenge him. French measures against Pope Alexander VII could not ignore other Italian sovereigns. Of Italian states Venice was unique in its reputed neutrality in the affairs of its European neighbors. The republic lay sandwiched between the states of the Habsburg \textit{reichsitalien}.\footnote{24 With the exception of the republics of Venice, Lucca, and Genoa, numerous small Italian territories lying north of Rome were traditional feudatories of the Holy Roman Emperor. They are collectively referred to as \textit{Reichsitalien}. Erik A. Lund, \textit{War for the Every Day: Generals, knowledge, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe, 1680-1740} (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1990), 28, 29-30.} Although “neutral” it was often amicably inclined toward France in the early decades of the century as a countermeasure against the Habsburgs surrounding its \textit{terraferma} frontiers.\footnote{25 Valfrey, \textit{La diplomatie française}, 4-5.}

Matching Habsburg and papal authority required robust diplomacy with the \textit{Serenissima}. To prevent the republic from allying itself outright with either the papacy or Habsburg princes...
Louis XIV dispatched Bonsy as his first ambassador to Venice since Mazarin’s death. The bishop entered the republic officially on 21 December 1662. His instructions were to assure the republic of royal support as Venice languished in the Candian War. Upon closer examination the intent of the ambassador’s embassy clearly indicated that the king wanted a compliant republic willing to cooperate with him. Venice’s context required a minister skilled in the web of Italian politics. Of Florentine descent, Bonsy was reared under his uncle, the late Bishop of Beziers. Saint-Simon averred decades later that Bonsy “pleased Cardinal Mazarin at an opportune time.” Through his clientage to Mazarin, Bonsy succeeded in his uncle’s bishopric. He was soon engaged in the 1661 negotiation of Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans’s marriage to Ferdinando II de’ Medici’s heir, Cosimo. In Mazarin’s circle Bonsy became attached to Hugues de Lionne and Jean-Baptiste Colbert ensuring the prelate’s entrée further into French politics. Both ministers depended upon Bonsy.

On one hand, the Italophile Lionne appreciated his diplomatic skill and loyalty; the two ministers worked especially well together. Their dispatches evinced a deep knowledge of and affinity for Italian politics. The ministers’ correspondence revealed that they shared a ribald humor aimed often at Alexander VII. On the other hand, Bonsy’s letters to Colbert demonstrated formal but no less loyal attachments. Colbert required information related to

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26 Loménie de Brienne, Instruction a Mr. L’Evesque de Beziers s’en allant ambassadeur à Venise du mois de septembre 1662, in Recueil des Instructions données aux Ambassadeurs et Ministres de France depuis les Traité de Westphalie jusqu’à la Révolution Française, publié sous les auspices de la Commission des Archives Diplomatiques au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, XXVI, Venise, ed. Pierre du Parc (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1958), 43-44.
27 Ibid., 45-46, 47.
29 Ibid.
30 A. Cheruel, Mémoires sur la vie publique et privée de Fouquet surintendant de finances d’après ses lettres et des pièces inédites conservés à la Bibliothèque Imperiale, tome II (Paris: Charpentier, 1862), 146.
31 See AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 4 Nov. 1662, F140r; AAE, MD, Italie, vol. 3, cote 26, Lionne to Bonsy, 6 Feb. 1663, F 246v; AAE, CP, Venise, 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 6 Jan. 1663, F 243v.
32 AAE, MD, Italie, vol. 3, cote 26, Lionne to Bonsy, 6 Feb. 1663, F 246v; Ibid., Lionne to Bonsy, 13 March 1663.
cultural and industrial programs, and he knew the bishop would punctiliously oblige. The Venetian artistic treasures, notably the *Feast in the House of Simon*, arrived in France because of Colbert’s collaboration with Bonsy. The ambassador received instructions and requests from Lionne and Colbert with equal attention and as correlatives to their triangular dedication to the king’s glory. The collaboration of these ministers revealed shared horizontal negotiations and the collection of information characterizing French ministries at the beginning of Louis XIV’s personal rule. This system would change across the decades as ministries increasingly centralized under their respective secretaries who in turned answered to the king in the crucible of the *conseil d’en haut*.

**France, Venice, and the War of Candia**

Bonsy entered a republic on the defensive. Analyzed in conjunction with the Franco-papal crisis unfolding in Rome, the Candian War proved critical in leveraging Venetian accommodations to Louis XIV’s foreign policies. I will consider these concomitant crises separately. Since 1645 Venice warred with the Ottoman Empire for the island of Crete. In spite of its size, the republic maintained an aggressive front against Ottoman attacks and earned the admiration of Europe. Conflict was mostly on the seas in a number of spectacular maneuvers that left the governments of Mehmet IV and Venice in a momentary stalemate and the city of Candia under siege. The reign of Venice’s doge, Domenico II Contarini (1658-1675), had only recently begun. The duke presided over a republic whose factionalism the war exacerbated. The crisis provided a moment of historical redefinition for Venice, and, though protracted and costly, it allowed the republic to cast itself as protector of Christian values against Ottoman invasion. The

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33 Ample examples of this correspondence will be analyzed below.
34 Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 192-193, 205.
35 Guido Candiani, “*Conflitti di intenti,*” 161.
immediate question for Venice in 1663 was how to sustain the war and whether retaining Crete was worth further expenditure.\textsuperscript{36}

Venice’s patriciate warred within itself as much as it did against the Ottomans. Increasingly the nobility quarreled over the authority of government institutions. Would Venice remain a republic over which its aristocracy ruled \textit{in toto} through the councils or devolve into a limited oligarchy tyrannized through privileged, powerful entities like the Council of Ten and the state inquisitors? The crisis of identity rocking the \textit{Serenissima} gained momentum as the war progressed. The state required nobles and cities of the \textit{terraferma} to pay heavy taxes, and many cities and villages there were forced to sell regional properties to lagunal patricians to fund the war.\textsuperscript{37} The nobility’s ranks swelled with new land, and new families bought titles to offset Venice’s wartime financial crisis. Many patricians found themselves enriched through state purchases of war material, its transport, and profiteering.\textsuperscript{38} The alleged loss of traditional liberties and the degeneration of government further into the hands of the \textit{giovani} offended many traditionalist patricians. European states spoke not of a doomed republic as the war progressed, but they watched with interest to see how far the war would alter the republic’s famed conciliar stability.

The debate among the old patrician families raged over Crete and impacted diplomatic relations with France. In the senate \textit{neutralisti} patricians believed that Venice should cede the island to the Ottomans or even to France in order to consolidate its resources and focus on governing the \textit{terraferma} and territories like Dalmatia in the Adriatic.\textsuperscript{39} They maintained that the

\textsuperscript{36} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 5 Jan. 1663.
\textsuperscript{38} Candiani, “\textit{Conflitti di intenti},” 157, 159-160.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 152-153; AMAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 5 Jan. 1663; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 22 March 1664, F 113r-113v.
republic might partially conserve the *stato da mar* and prosperous Mediterranean commerce this way. Detractors of this view—the *attivisti*—believed that losing the status the kingdom of Crete conferred upon it in the Mediterranean would irreparably damage Venice’s international reputation.\(^40\) It should also be noted that many *attivisti* were in clans either newly ennobled because of the war or belonged to those older families profiting from it.

*Terraferma* nobles of ancient lineage often refused to acknowledge the hegemony of the lagoon, and many of them baulked at the further diminution of liberty the war caused.\(^41\) Some of these approached the French ambassador offering friendship to Louis XIV. Bonsy alerted the king to a significant number of *terraferma* nobles with Francophile loyalties. Dispatches from Bonsy demonstrated that Louis XIV, who recently reinstated the Order of Saint Michel, bestowed the order on interested Venetian nobles. Bonsy reported that the French government profited in the past from such honors and the king should continue to do so.\(^42\) As in Rome cardinals of the French faction could sway the Sacred College to French interests, so too a divided patriciate might ease Venetian policy towards France.

The war stretched the republic’s financial limits.\(^43\) It underwent a noticeable economic crisis as the war continuously sucked immediate finances and military resources, yet, according to economic historians like Richard Rapp Venice’s domestic economic prosperity did not suffer irremediable decline as a result.\(^44\) Historians like Sanchez and Rapp reveal that Venetians feared a potential loss of status among European states if Crete fell to the Turk more than the loss of

\(^{40}\) Candiani, *“Conflitti di intenti,”* 154.


\(^{42}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 24 Feb. 1663, Fs 323v, 328r.


\(^{44}\) Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turk*, 206; Rapp, 12-13, 149, 152-153.
commerce in the 1660s.\textsuperscript{45} Mehmet IV menaced the \textit{stato da mar} with every indication that he intended to prosecute the war and, more ominously, to extend hostilities into the Adriatic against the Dalmatian coast.\textsuperscript{46} The senate scrambled to secure financial and military assistance to avoid losing its territory by recalling domestic debts and importuning European neighbors.\textsuperscript{47}

In Rome the Venetian ambassador, Basadona, lobbied for a league of Catholic princes to counter the Ottomans that was to include the empire, the papacy, France, and Spain.\textsuperscript{48} In Paris Venetian ambassadors pressed Louis XIV and his ministers to support either the league or the republic outright.\textsuperscript{49} Shortly before his death Mazarin had sent four thousand French troops and a number of galleys to assist the Venetians in Crete. French efforts affected little, and the Ottomans routed and enslaved a number of them.\textsuperscript{50} This turn of events damaged the potential for further French participation in the war, and in counsel the king stipulated that he would aid Venice only when it could afford offensive measures.\textsuperscript{51}

The late Cardinal Mazarin gave Venice two hundred thousand livres meant to assist in the war and bequeathed six hundred thousand more in his will.\textsuperscript{52} He stipulated that the pope was to decide if the bequest should be given to Venice or to Leopold I whose Hungarian borders Mehmet IV’s troops ravaged.\textsuperscript{53} Louis XIV determined that Alexander VII should accord Venice

\textsuperscript{46} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, anonymous to Bonsy, 16 Feb. 1663, F 312r.
\textsuperscript{47} Setton, 205.
\textsuperscript{48} Louis XIV to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, 1 Oct. 1661, in \textit{Mémoriaux du Conseil de 1661}, tome III (Paris: Boislisle, 1905), 127. Louis XIV remarked that Venice wanted this league only for its own defense. It could provide nothing advantageous to the other members because of its war with Mehmet IV.
\textsuperscript{49} AMAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, January 1663, F. 270r.
\textsuperscript{50} Setton, \textit{Venice, Austria, and the Turk}, 189, 190-191.
\textsuperscript{51} Colbert in council, minutes, 26 March 1661, in Boislisle, 217-218.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 218; Treasure, \textit{Mazarin}, 264.
\textsuperscript{53} Colbert in council, minutes, 26 March 1661, in Boislisle, 218; Treasure, \textit{Mazarin}, 264.
The king wrote Cardinal Antonio Barberini that he would publicly consider a league against the Turk, but he secretly had no intention of committing to it. He wanted to weaken the emperor, and he wanted to maintain cordial relations with Mehmet IV. Mazarin’s money would be more strategically spent assisting Venice — the republic could save enslaved French troops besides.

Mazarin’s bequest set in motion a conflict of interests threatening Franco-Venetian relations throughout 1663. After his death his fortune and the fulfilment of his testament were left to the crown. As relations between Louis XIV and Alexander VII deteriorated, the disbursement of funds from France trickled; the crown still owed fifty thousand écus of the cardinal’s subsidy. Departing Paris in early 1663, the Venetian ambassador Alvise Grimani noted in his dispatches to the senate that he petitioned the king and his ministers for the remaining money. Grimani reported that Colbert confirmed that the money would be paid. Grimani remarked upon the king’s desire that Venice secure the release of enslaved Frenchmen. The crown demonstrated that assistance for the republic required reciprocity.

Grimani soon sped south to Lyon to arbitrate in the mounting crisis between Louis XIV and Alexander VII. The “formal and dry” Nicolo Sagredo replaced him in Paris. Ultimately, Sagredo’s embassy procured little more than equivocations from the king in regards to the war. The king and Lionne learned from Bonsy that funds already sent to Rome were secretly

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54 Colbert in council, minutes, 26 March 1661, 218.
57 ASV, IS-DA, Filza 131, March to July 1663, Grimani to Collegio, undated, F 4, 6-7; ASV, IS-DA, Filza 131, March to July 1663, Grimani to Collegio, 22 April 1663, F 50; ASV, IS-DA, Filza 132, Grimani to Collegio, 25 March 1663, F 34.
58 Ibid.; Mariani, Il più curioso e memorabile della Francia, 147, 176.
59 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 18 Nov. 1662, F 157v.
60 ASV, IS-DA, Filza 132, Sagredo to Collegio, 19 June 1663, F 231; ASV, IS-DA, Filza 132, Sagredo to Collegio, 3 July 1663, F 260; ASV, IS-DA, Filza 132, Sagredo to Collegio, 6 July 1663, F 283.
disbursed to the Venetians with the understanding that they in turn subsidize Leopold I’s possible military intervention against the king in his struggle with Alexander VII. The king’s rapport with the republic tensed as the initial roots of an affinity for Leopold I appeared.

The king alluded to the betrayal in an audience with Sagredo adding that all French funds were expressly for its war. According to Lionne, the ambassador assured the king that it was so, but Louis XIV rejoined, “No, Monsieur Ambassador, you do not seem well to understand me.” Sagredo misapprehended that the king now held the pope and Venice responsible for the misuse of monies given to Leopold I. If Venice wanted more money the king resolved that it would have to solicit it from Rome. Sagredo continued to lobby for the remaining fifty thousand écus, and Bonsy relayed that honoring Mazarin’s will would elevate Venetian public opinion toward the king benefitting maneuvers against the pope. Lionne wrote Bonsy noting that the king sanctioned the payment honoring his debt, but Venetian and papal collusion would have to change “if wisdom guides the stars.” Louis XIV paid the remaining fifty thousand écus, but it was more politic to make Venice beg for it as the fight with Alexander VII reached fever pitch.

Venice’s cooperation with Alexander VII provided an excuse to delay provisions for the republic and another accusation the king could level at the pope. The monarch remarked to Bonsy: “sooner or later I will find a way of shoving this down the Chigis’ throats.” News of the Veneto-papal misappropriation of French money in a bid for imperial reinforcements against

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62 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 24 Feb. 1663, F 328v.
64 AAE, MD, Italie, vol. 3, cote 26, Lionne to Bonsy, 10 April 1663, F. 275r.
67 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Lionne, 27 Jan. 1663, F 284r.
the French contributed to the king’s subsequent invasion of the papal enclaves of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin in July.\textsuperscript{70} The French annexation of papal lands appalled the republic, but it hoped the pope would be persuaded finally to negotiate a peace.\textsuperscript{71} Bonsy noted that Venice could be excused slightly due to its dire circumstances in the war.\textsuperscript{72}

Louis XIV played a double game with Venice. While initially eschewing Venetian diplomatic intervention in the Roman affair the king manipulated Venetian ambassadors and the republic’s fear.\textsuperscript{73} He instructed Bonsy to remind the Venetians that their only concern should be events in the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{74} Sending further aid to Leopold I or taking directives from Alexander VII would ruin the possibility for further French intervention. This proposition seemed unlikely anyway as the king believed “it would be easier to send fifty thousand men to any other place than to send even one thousand to Candia.”\textsuperscript{75}

The king jeered at the inability of the Venetians’ “long Pregadi” to resist getting involved in what he believed was his business with Rome.\textsuperscript{76} The republic should save its energies for their war. It appeared too that Venice intentionally prolonged the fight for Crete; Bonsy accused patricians of sustaining the war solely to increase private fortunes.\textsuperscript{77} He believed that any further assistance France might send to the republic would procure only mediocre recompense.\textsuperscript{78} Venice could not be trusted to use French funds, and it seemed the Venetians stubbornly prosecuted a

\textsuperscript{70} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 24 Feb. 1663, F 340v; French personel finally entered the territories on 27 July 1663. Mouy, \textit{L’Ambassade du Duc de Crequi}, tome II, 200; SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1} vol. 245, \textit{Arrêt de la Cour de Parlement de Provence portant réunion de la Ville d’Avignon et Comtat Venaissin au Domaine de la Couronne}, 26 July 1663, Piece 217.

\textsuperscript{71} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 83, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 18 Aug. 1663, F 206.

\textsuperscript{72} SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1}, vol. 245, Bonsy to Lionne, 17 March 1663, Piece 213.


\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{75} AAE, MD, Italie, vol. 3, cote 26, Louis XIV to Bonsy, 6 Feb. 1663, F 45.


\textsuperscript{77} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 23 Feb. 1664, F 80r; Candiani, “\textit{Conflitti di intenti},” 160.

\textsuperscript{78} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 23 Feb. 1664, Fs 79v-80r.
lost war for gain rather than necessity. Bonsy’s reportage indicated that Louis XIV would be foolish to send either men or money in the foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{79}

Increasing Venetian acquiescence was the imminent descent of a French army into Northern Italy as Louis XIV menaced an invasion of the Papal States. Although the king reassured the republic through Bonsy that French troops would not come into contact with Venetian territories, the senate remained alarmed.\textsuperscript{80} The republic was in no position to defend its western borders in the event that the monarch opted to do more in the peninsula than humble the Chigi. Throughout 1663 Bonsy suggested to the Venetians that French assistance would be forthcoming as soon as the pope honored the king’s demands, and Venetian ambassadors in Paris, Lyon, and Rome labored to convince Alexander VII.\textsuperscript{81} Although afraid of the French military presence crossing the Alps, the republic appeased the king beginning negotiations with Bonsy for supplies of grain and hay from the \textit{terraferma} as had the Republic of Genoa.\textsuperscript{82}

Louis XIV stated: “Venice depended upon me more than any other prince.”\textsuperscript{83} His boast reflected the republic’s diplomacy vis-a-vis France toward the end of 1663. The Candian War was at a standstill throughout the year, but intelligence reports arriving from the Mediterranean warned that, not only were the Turks continuing the siege of Candia, but they were also set to attack the coast of Dalmatia.\textsuperscript{84} Because many patricians believed Louis XIV to be the only Christian prince strong enough to assist them, ultimately, they made little effort to block French

\textsuperscript{79} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 23 Feb. 1664, Fs 79v-80r; Candiani, “\textit{Conflitti di intenti},” 160.
\textsuperscript{81} ASV, DA, Filza 132, Sagredo to the Collegio, 6 July 1663, F 284.
\textsuperscript{84} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 5 Jan. 1664, F 14r; Finkel, \textit{Osman’s Dream}, 265.
policy aimed against Alexander VII. In later decades Venice would not forget the king’s obstinacy when it held the upper hand.

**Louis XIV, Venice, and the Affair of the Corsican Guards**

The attack on the French embassy in Rome on 20 August 1662 plunged France and the papacy into eighteen months of open hostility. The violence that occurred in Rome between Louis XIV’s ambassador, the Duke de Crequi, and the pope’s Corsican Guard are described in a detailed literature elsewhere. Mazarin undoubtedly passed onto Louis XIV a personal antipathy for Alexander VII and his papacy. Mutual Franco-papal obstinacy fueled a series of events that ultimately led to the passage of French troops in Avignon, the Comtat Venaissin, the Milanese, Modena, Parma, and Monferrato. Throughout the crisis of 1663 the king used Venetian ambassadors and the Veneto-Ottoman gridlock to further demands in regards to the pope.

On the surface the attack on the French embassy violated the *ius gentium*, but the king saw it as an opportunity to increase French authority in Northern Italy and in Rome against that of the Habsburgs and a Hispanophile pope. Abbé Regnier-Desmarais, secretary to Crequi, later remarked that Felipe IV knew and feared Louis XIV’s actions would diminish Spanish authority in the peninsula, but there was little the aged king could do as his resources were engaged in a war with Portugal. Bonsy reported that no one in Venice believed that the peace of the Pyrenees would hold; the French king would seek to supplant Spanish authority with the

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86 Louis XIV, *Mémoires*, 59; Regnier-Desmarais, 2, 3-4, 123; Moi, tome I, 16-7, 16.


88 Ibid., 20, 57.

potential to expand French influence among Italian princes or acquire territory there as his ancestors had done.\(^{90}\) The monarch sought diplomatic preferment over the Habsburgs in London and in Venice and received satisfaction in both instances. Royal actions undertaken against the pope and in favor of the Francophile dukes of Parma and Modena attested to the king’s resolve to countermand Spain’s interests in Italy first through an attack on the papacy.

Louis XIV stressed that he was not attacking Alexander VII as head of the universal church. Instead, the king claimed he sought the satisfaction of dynastic honor from the House of Chigi. Be that as it may, the Chigi were attached to the Spanish crown.\(^{91}\) They, like the Medici cardinals, vetted Spanish policies at the papal and other Italian courts.\(^{92}\) With the accession of Alexander VII in 1655, Felipe IV rejoiced that Spain’s dominance in the peninsula would be reinforced through the pro-Spanish pontiff.\(^{93}\) Louis XIV needed only a reason to force his hand across the Alps to vindicate French obligations to the Este and the Farnese. Mazarin’s desire to strengthen a French presence in Italy spurred the king and Hugues de Lionne. Louis and Lionne shared in the late cardinal’s belief that Italy was a springboard for further expansion. The personal hatred for Alexander VII of Mazarin and Lionne continued to underscore official policy.\(^{94}\)

Governments often precipitate crises to achieve desired political outcomes. Crequi, the French ambassador in Rome, was reputedly arrogant and obstinate.\(^{95}\) The king knew this, and yet he sent Crequi to the most difficult diplomatic post in Europe to deal with a pope who was

\(^{90}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 5 Jan. 1664, F 12v-13r.
\(^{92}\) The elderly Giovanni Carlo de’ Medici was the Cardinal-Protector of Spain in Rome; see Book Three of Cardinal de Retz’s Mémoires for a description of the Spanish faction’s dominance at Alexander VII’s election. Cardinal de Retz, Mémoires, 917, 918-919; Moüy, tome I, 67-68, Valfrey, La diplomatie française, 203.
\(^{93}\) Dandelet, 207.
\(^{94}\) Moüy, L’Ambassade du Duc de Crequy, tome I, 9, 15, 97, Valfrey, 251, 321-322, 323-324.
\(^{95}\) Moüy, tome I, 115, 117; McClure, Sunspots and the Sun king, 184; Valfrey, 194-195.
equally intractable and Francophile. Crequi’s insolence toward the pope and his Chigi relatives and the unruliness of the papal bodyguards provoked a firestorm. The ensuing attack of the Corsican Guards on Crequi’s household at the Palazzo Farnese, the new French embassy in Rome, proffered a pretext for French intervention in Italian politics.

Louis XIV immediately demanded reparations. Initially the king aimed his demands mostly at members of the Chigi clan and the pope’s Corsicans. Louis ultimately stipulated that the pope disincamerate – disgorge – states annexed into the Roman Camera to their original lords – the territories of Castro and Ronciglione to the Duke of Parma and Comachio to the Duke of Modena. Mazarin earlier tried in vain through short embassies undertaken by Lionne and the Président Colbert (future Colbert de Croissy) to affect the return of these lands to Parma and Modena, and the Peace of the Pyrenees obligated Felipe IV to defend the dukes’ rights to the lands. Louis XIV believed his reputation hinged on honoring Mazarin’s stipulations. If the king successfully bullied the pope, the Este and Farnese would be obliged to sustain French policies. These conditions had nothing directly to do with the attack on the embassy in Rome, but they represented elements of the king’s Italian policies for which the incident afforded advantage.

Accords with Parma, Modena, Mantua, and Savoy provided a strong counterbalance in Northern Italy against Spanish predominance there in the Milanese, Genoa, Rome, and Tuscany. Unrest in the Kingdom of Naples already saw the arrival in France of pleas to assist in an overthrow of Spanish power there. In 1663 only the Republic of Venice refused officially to commit to either Alexander VII or the king. The republic vacillated claiming publicly that it

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97 Moüy, L’Ambassade du Duc de Crequi, tome I, 12-16 passim.
98 Regnier-Desmarais, Histoire de Désmelez, 63-64;
99 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Bonsy to Louis XIV, between the 14-18 Feb. 1663, F 306r.
desired peace and would act as a neutral arbiter.\textsuperscript{100} In private Venice entertained Alexander VII’s approaches to Leopold I in exchange for papal aid against the Ottomans and in fear of French entry into Italy. This plan infuriated Louis XIV who wanted Leopold I occupied with the Ottomans to benefit domestically from a protracted era of peace in Europe.\textsuperscript{101} The king wanted to give Colbert time to reinforce French commerce, and he would not compromise the Franco-Ottoman rapport that could guarantee commercial advantages in the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{102}

Bonsy negotiated the republic’s role in the king’s policies with the papal court. Louis XIV expected Venetian relations with Alexander VII in no way to hinder the disincameration of Castro, Ronciglione, and Comachio.\textsuperscript{103} Initially Louis XIV rejected Venetian and Spanish offers to arbitrate over the conflict with Mehmet IV.\textsuperscript{104} In Rome, however, the Venetian ambassador, Basadona, obtained a private promise from Alexander VII to reconsider the disincamations if French troops did not march into Italy. Basadona sent this information to Grimani in Paris, and the ambassador, thinking he held the upper hand, offered once again to arbitrate along with the Spanish ambassador Iturietta.\textsuperscript{105} The Venetians did not know that a Maltese agent in Rome had already passed the news of the pope’s promise along to French intelligence, and Louis XIV prepared a trap.\textsuperscript{106} Grimani and Iturietta signed a letter of intent to arbitrate based upon the papal

\textsuperscript{100} Regnier-Desmarais, \textit{Histoire des désmelez}, 21.  
\textsuperscript{101} Louis XIV to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, 1 Oct. 1661, in Boislisle, 127-128.  
\textsuperscript{105} ASV, IS-DA, Filza 130, Grimani to the Collegio, 20, Feb. 1663, F 267.  
promise to disincamerate. The honor of Spain and the papacy, as well as Venice's reputed neutrality, were now implicated should the pope's word prove false.  

Royal troops marched on Northern Italy as the pope stalled to fulfill his private promise to disincamerate. All of Italy feared the potential for French conquest; echoes of previous French invasions of Italy abounded. Rumors circulated in Venice that the king intended to occupy the Mantuan enclave of Casale or the Spanish Milanese. Venetians' anxiety intensified because they had no resources to counter the French. As the months of 1663 passed so did conferences between the respective emissaries. The pope tergiversated, but, finally, pressure placed upon Alexander VII from Venice and Spain in conjunction with the presence of the French army in Italy weakened papal pride. A conference of the involved parties ensued in Pisa in February 1664. The resolutions were humiliating for Alexander VII who finally conceded to all of Louis XIV's demands in the Treaty of Pisa signed on 12 February. The pope disincamerated Castro, Ronciglione, and Comachio to the dukes of Parma and Modena, and the personal apologies of the papal nephew and legate, Cardinal Flavio Chigi, given to Louis XIV at Fontainebleau on 29 July 1664, concluded the crisis.

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107 ASV, IS-DA, Filza 130, Grimani to the Collegio, 27 Feb. 1663, F 275; Escrit donne par l'Ambassadeur de Venise Grimani, & par le Sieur Iturietta, Agent d'Espagne, en consequence du Pouvoir qui leur avoit este donne de Rome, in Regnier-Desmarais, Preuves servent a l'Histoire, 134; Moüy, tome II, 124-125.

108 Ibid., 124.


111 Regnier-Desmarais, Histoire des désmelez, 118; Regnier-Desmarais, Preuves servent a l’histoire, 139.

112 Regnier-Desmarais, Histoire des désmelez, 281.

113 Ibid., 285; For the full text of the Treaty of Pisa see Regnier-Desmarais, Preuves servent a l’Histoire, 145-163; For the text inscribed on the famous pyramid of shame erected in Rome publicizing Louis XIV’s victory see ibid., 163.

114 Articles I and II in the treaty specify the terms of the disincamerations. Ibid., 146-152; Regnier-Desmarais, Histoire des désmelez, 288; Moüy, L’Ambassade du Duc de Crequi, tome II, 341-342, 343-344. For full texts of the legate’s apology and the king’s response see ibid., 345-346.
Many in Venice’s senate believed that the end of the tensions between the pope and the French king would benefit Venice militarily and financially in the Mediterranean. Neither Louis XIV nor Alexander VII, however, committed to the republic regarding the conflict over Crete. The pope denied the republic more money complaining of the prohibitive expense of Cardinal Chigi’s extraordinary embassy to France, and Louis XIV believed it more politic to show slim solidarity with Leopold I as the Ottomans menaced Hungary.\textsuperscript{115} As 1664 opened, Venice had no assurances from the king, and the republic soon experienced French troops crossing its terrafirma to fight with Leopold I’s armies against Mehmet IV.

**Bonsy, Venice, and the Habsburg-Ottoman Crisis**

Europe’s attention in 1664 turned to Western Hungary where the Ottoman forces invaded.\textsuperscript{116} Louis XIV had been careful not to ally openly with Venice against Mehmet IV, but as the crisis with the papacy ended in February he decided to send a small contingent of men to assist Leopold. On one hand, he wanted to reaffirm that the recent papal feud had been with the House of Chigi and not against the pope. On the other hand, the king saw a vacuum of power among the Transylvanian princes of Hungary as an opportunity to position a member of his family as an alternative ruler there. From Venice, Bonsy, echoed that if the king had any interest in ruling Hungary the unrest there was timely.\textsuperscript{117}

In the spring of 1664 the ambassador achieved Venetian approval to move royal troops, facilitating their organization under the suspicious eyes of the senate. The republic feared the entry of a French army into its lands. Some suspected Louis XIV of using Italy as a stepping stone toward universal monarchy.\textsuperscript{118} Senators suggested that a possible partition of the Milanese

\textsuperscript{115} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 22 March 1664, F 114r.
\textsuperscript{117} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. supplements, Bonsy to Louis XIV, January 1665, F 136r, 140v; Spielman, 47-48, 49.
\textsuperscript{118} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, anonymous letter acquired by Bonsy sent to Lionne, 28 Feb. 1664, F 89r.
between France and Venice could profit the latter if the king decided to move openly against Spanish authority in the peninsula.\textsuperscript{119} The king’s troops were in Italy because of the Affair of the Corsican Guards, but, as the ink on the Treaty of Pisa dried, it was time to remove them.\textsuperscript{120}

Twenty-six companies were to march north to Hungary.\textsuperscript{121} Leopold I wrote to the senate and to the Duke of Mantua for permission for free passage of French auxiliaries across their boundaries. Bonsy petitioned the senate’s approval in April for the passage.\textsuperscript{122} The senate approved, but it required details of the number of troops, their route, and provisions. The bishop acquired these details, and negotiated for Venetian observers to accompany the army. The companies passed through the Friulian lands. The army then joined imperial forces at Marsburg in Styria proceeding into Hungary where it fought with Raimondo Montecucculi at the River Raab.\textsuperscript{123}

Franco-Imperial forces defeated the Ottomans in the Battle of Saint Gotthard on 1 August.\textsuperscript{124} Like other European rulers, the settlement Leopold I accepted with Mehmet IV at Vasvar shocked Louis XIV.\textsuperscript{125} French efforts to acquire the Hungarian crown in the interval proved futile, but the king could claim his willingness to help — although only minimally — his

\textsuperscript{119} Bonsy suggested this action to Lionne: AAE, CP, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 5 Jan. 1664, 12v.
\textsuperscript{120} Prince de Condé to the Queen of Poland, 29 February 1664, in Lettres Inédites du Prince de Condé et le Duc d’Enghien à Marie-Louise de Gonzague, Reine de Pologne, 1660-1667, ed. Émile Magne (Paris: Émile-Paul Éditeurs, 1920), 15
\textsuperscript{121} Bonsy describes the speech he made to the senate upon receiving his orders to negotiate the crossing. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 25 Jan. 1664, Fs 43v-44r.
\textsuperscript{122} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 5 April 1664, F 141r; Ibid., Bonsy to the Senate, 7 or 8 April 1664, Fs 154r-154v; Ibid., Bonsy to Louis XIV, 18 April, 1664, F 161v.
\textsuperscript{123} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to the Senate, 7 or 8 April 1664, Fs. 154r-154v; Ibid., Senate to Bonsy, 8 April 1664, F 155r; The senate’s official license for the passage can be found on F. 157r of the same volume; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, avviso, 9 April 1664, F 158v. Ibid., Bonsy to Louis XIV, 18 April 1664, 182r-182v. The stipulations for the passage of French troops can be found in the following folios: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81 suppléments, Memoire from Bonsy, 24 April 1664, Fs 62r-65r; Ibid., Bonsy to Lionne, 24 April 1664, Fs 66r-67r; Ibid., Bonsy to Lionne, 25 April 1664, F 68r; Ibid., Ordre de la Marche des Troupes du Roy sur les Estats de la Rep. de Venise en trois brigades, April 1664, F 72r; Ibid., Response au Memoire envoye par Monsieur l’Amb. de Venize, April 1664, Fs 74r-83r; Spielman, Leopold I of Austria, 49.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 49-50; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turk, 192; Vierhaus, Germany in the Age of Absolutism, 125.
fellow Christian prince against the infidel. Bonsy ably mitigated Venetian concerns in favor of Louis XIV. The republic reluctantly opened its frontiers to French troops headed to fight the Ottomans as a maneuver in the Cretan conflict. Bonsy noted that the republic still hoped to have Louis XIV’s assistance now that the Franco-papal feud was over and as the king appeared willing to counter Mehmet IV in Hungary. The senate’s generosity was to solicit the king’s good will and influence with the Ottomans. Bonsy capitalized on this, even while counseling the king that it was more politic to let the republic lose Crete to the Turk.

**Bonsy, Colbert, and the Subversion of the Venetian Lace and Glass Industries**

Bonsy’s interventions in industrial politics illuminates yet another facet of the ambassador’s role in the mid-seventeenth century. The bishop proved himself a valuable impresario in industrial espionage in 1664. He was instrumental in the expansion of French lace and glass production as Colbert marketed French luxury goods abroad. The ambassador’s actions demonstrate how exportation of industrial knowledge and production, more than the shift in trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, doomed the republic’s monopoly over these products.

In short, Bonsy stole Venetian industrial secrets for Colbert.

It is well known that Colbert intended to improve French luxury textile manufacturing. Prior to the 1660s France relied on imports of brocade, damask, silk, and fine point lace. French elites — including the royal family — purchased brocades and other cloths from Venice. Royal orders became matters of state as Venetian artisans demonstrated their skill and quality abroad. Bonsy brokered royal purchase of five hundred “brasses” of Venetian brocades to

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126 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 23 Feb. 1664, F 78r; Ibid., Fs 80r-80v.
127 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 23 Feb. 1664, Fs 80r-80v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 22 March 1664, F 114r.
129 BnF, MC, vol. 121bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 28 June 1664, F 1027v.
cover the canopied beds of queens Marie-Thérèse and Anne of Austria. Colbert made royal wishes for cloth known to Bonsy who commissioned and oversaw production of the fabrics.

Bonsy and the French consul arranged the delivery of these textiles to France; two cases were sent along later with Paolo Veronese’s painting as it crossed the Alps by wagon. Other royal parcels did not leave the republic until after Bonsy’s departure from Venice. His discussion of expense and Colbert’s hesitancy to pay gave an idea of the amount of capital that the monarch himself provided to Venetian weavers. Paul Vedoa informed Colbert that one parcel of fabric cost fifteen hundred écus de France. Cole asserted that, “900,000 livres to 1,200,000 livres was spent each year in Venice.”

The example of royal expenditure alone for luxury cloth no doubt contributed to Colbert’s promotion of domestic textile production. His initiative to regulate and increase French cloth production intersected with Bonsy’s involvement in appropriating Venetian artisans and their products. He confirmed to Colbert in December that he would export Venetian artisans to France. Venice’s expert female workers were in high demand abroad. Bonsy and his household came into contact with female cloth and lace makers. “What I can do,” the ambassador wrote, “is send the girls of some of the best workers who can instruct those in France

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130 BnF, MC, vol. 121bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 28 June 1664, F 1027v. Because the weavers did not have the beds in Venice to measure they produced large quantities to be certain of enough.
131 BnF, MC, vol. 120bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 3 May 1664, F 670r; BnF. MC, vol. 121bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 21 June 1664, Fs 789r-789v; Ibid., Bonsy to Colbert, 28 June 1664, Fs 1027r-1028r.
132 BnF, MC, vol. 123bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 27 Sept. 1664, F 1035r; BnF, MC, vol. 120, Paul Vedoa to Colbert, 7 March 1665, F 222r.
133 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
not neglecting at the same time my efforts to find some glassmakers.”

In August 1665 Colbert declared the creation of the *Manufacture royale des points* and in 1666 prohibited importation and even the donning of foreign lace. Glass soon followed lace.

While a loss for the republic, lace drew far less outcry than did the ongoing dissolution of its “state-of-the-art” glass industry. The republic’s *specchieri* – mirror makers – were the acknowledged European experts in the creation, refinement, and exportation of quality cut crystal and large-scale plate glass and mirrors. Victor Tapié alleged that “the interior of any house above the borderline of poverty included a Venetian mirror, whether large or small,” while Frémy observed that the French imported two hundred *caisses* of glass, mirrors, and wrought crystal annually from Venice. The few French glass workers profiting from the initial forays into the industry of Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert paled in comparison to the Venetians. As early as 1662, Colbert planned to entice Venetian *specchieri* to France to teach French apprentices. Paul Vedoa informed Hugues de Lionne as early as 1661 that France contained suitable sand for the Venetian process. In 1664 Colbert asked Bonsy to learn exact information about the industry with the aim of establishing state manufacturies.

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140 Rapp, 109, 137.
142 Tapié, *France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu*, 262-263; Fremy, 17
143 Ibid.
Venice imposed strict legislation against the alienation of industrial knowledge, and the republic’s economy could not withstand more economic loss as the Candian war progressed.\footnote{BnF, MC, vol. 125, Bonsy to Colbert, 8 Nov. 1664, F 220v; Rapp, \textit{Industry and Economic Decline}, 35.} In his initial response to Colbert, Bonsy asserted that he had thought “for some time now to propose to you the manufacture of mirrors for the good of the kingdom’s economy (commerce) having noted that a few workers already in France have achieved success.”\footnote{BnF, MC, vol. 125, Bonsy to Colbert, 8 Nov. 1664, F 220r.} He indicated that Venetian glass production impressed him. Bonsy researched glass manufacturing and the artisans who knew it best through his access to the republic’s Muranese glassworks, Bonsy researched glass manufacturing and the artisans who knew it best.\footnote{BnF, MC, vol. 125, Bonsy to Colbert, 8 Nov. 1664, Fs 220r-221r.} His remarks revealed a prescient understanding of Colbert’s commercial objectives and his participation in state-sanctioned industrial piracy.

Colbert sought \textit{specchieri} willing to place themselves and their families in danger for leaving the republic. The ambassador described the menaces \textit{specchieri} faced if they left Venice. He assured the minister “given the necessary expertise needed to avoid angering the republic…I will not falter in doubling my efforts to overcome all of the obvious obstacles for the success of this very glorious enterprise that you inspire for His Majesty and for the good of the kingdom.”\footnote{Ibid..} In 1664, Bonsy contacted four glassworkers willing to go to France.\footnote{BnF, MC, vol 125bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 22 Nov. 1664, F 441r-441v.} He enticed them with promises of wealth and privileges — including exemption from the \textit{droit d’aubaine}.\footnote{Peter Sahlins, \textit{Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 50, 191; Frémy, \textit{Histoire de la manufacture royale des glaces}, 27.} The Muranesi \textit{specchieri} Della Rivetta, Barbini, Civrano, and Marasse absconded to Paris where they established ovens in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.\footnote{Frémy, \textit{Histoire de la manufacture royale des glaces}, 27.} It became increasingly common
throughout the century for glassworkers to be drawn to the higher income that foreign states offered.  

Colbert’s interactions with the Venetians were tedious due to the specchieris’ demands for money and privileges, but the glassworkers finally agreed to teach French apprentices.  

Their Venetian gastaldo, the warden of the glassmakers’ guild, feared this the most. The renegades taught successfully. Letters patent of 8 October 1665 established the manufacture royale des glaces. The monarch’s tour of the manufactory legitimized the trade. The cooperativo degli specchieri was horrified that its countrymen betrayed artisanal secrets; they lodged formal complaint to the inquisitori di stato on 3 July 1665. By the time Venetian Ambassador Marc-Antonio Giustinian succeeded in luring them back to the lagoon in 1667 they had made France a competitor in the glass industry.

Muranesi specchieri identified themselves with their specialized knowledge. But the specchieris’ gastaldo identified the trade with Venice lamenting to the inquisitors: “One of the most precious gems that crown the diadem of the Republic is the glassmakers’ peculiar art belonging solely to this city, of which the ovens of Murano are recognized as one of its major foundations.” He added that the renegade workers’ actions destroyed “our art and took away one of the major privileges that our Lord God entrusted to this Holy City.” The loss threatened

153 Rapp, Industry and Economic Decline, 37, 42.
154 ASV, IS-LAF, Busta 153, Inquisitors to Giustiniani, 4 July 1665, F 39; Ibid., Inquisitors to Giustiniani, 5 July 1665, F 40.
155 Fremy, 53
156 Ibid., 35
157 ASV, IS-LAF, Busta 153, copy of a letter from the Gastaldo of the Specchieri to the Inquisitors of State, 3 July 1665, F 39.
158 ASV, IS-LAF, Busta 153, Inquisitors to Giustiani, 9 June 1667, F 58; Ibid., Insquisitors to Ascanio II Giustinian, 14 April 1677, F 437, Fremy, 46, 48-49, 50.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
the republic’s economy and reputation, and the effects of their expatriate colleagues contributed to the long-term relative decline in the Venetian markets that Richard Rapp described.\textsuperscript{161}

These long-term effects were not yet clear to contemporaries, and the republic could only lodge strong complaints. Arguably the greatest symbol of Venice’s industrial loss was the later-constructed Hall of Mirrors at Versailles that reflected French dominance in European glass production and Venice’s defeat.\textsuperscript{162} Despite its irritation Venice’s government could not risk overtly offending Louis XIV. For his part, the French king agreed in 1669 to send troops and ships led by the Duke de Navailles to assist in the war for Candia, but the King’s procrastination proved too little too late for the \textit{Serenissima}.\textsuperscript{163} Bonsy the industrial pirate had assisted in engineering Venice’s misfortune. He facilitated the concerted alienation of industrial secrets from Venice. By the time the \textit{specchieri} returned to Murano the bishop was in Poland. In 1670, his successor, ambassador Saint-André, would continue receiving the senate’s complaints about the theft of industrial secrets.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{Bonsy, Colbert, and Venetian Art: The Politics of Culture}

While Bonsy secretly enveigled Venetian artisans to contribute to French commerce, he also engaged in secret cultural politics. Although a small state, the republic’s cultural prestige, like its maritime and commercial prestige in the Mediterranean, loomed above that of the young Louis XIV. The king and Colbert took keen interest in Venice’s artistic and industrial resources both from the perspective of economic supremacy as well as the push for cultural dominance

\textsuperscript{161} Rapp, \textit{Industry and Economic Decline}, 165.
\textsuperscript{162} Ziegler, \textit{Louis XIV et ses ennemis}, 186, 189, 190-191.
\textsuperscript{163} SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1}, vol. 238, \textit{Copie de l’instruction donnee a Mr. le Duc de Navailles s’en allant en Candie}, 2 april 1669, F 13r-13v; Setton, \textit{Venice, Austria, and the Turk}, 220-221, 222.
\textsuperscript{164} AN, MA, B\textsuperscript{7}, 51, tome I, M. de St. André, \textit{sur l’affaire des glaces et des points de Venise}, 15 March 1670, F 158v; Ibid., tome II, M. de St. André, \textit{sur l’affaire des glaces et des points de fil de Venise}, 13 June 1670, F 114v. Numerous other pieces in the AN record that the discourse over the commerce in lace in glass was far from over; Fremy, 63-64.
over the Italian aesthetic.\textsuperscript{165} These facets of the ambassador’s role emerged clearly through Bonsy’s correspondence with Colbert, who soon after became Superintendent of Buildings and Manufactures (1664) and then Comptrolleur General of Finance (1665), had spurred the ambassador to collect Venetian art.

Letters between the two ministers invoke the breadth of a French ambassador’s obligations as a cultural and commercial attaché that was critical to foreign relations in the mid-seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{166} Some scholars downplay the cultural interventions of ambassadors as ancillaries to the “real work” of high politics.\textsuperscript{167} Bonsy’s involvement in the cultural aspects of the \textit{arcana imperii}, however, expands our understanding of what Louis XIV and his ministers considered pertinent foreign policy as the personal rule began. Ambassadors’ involvement in the relay of artistic and musical culture from Italy was critical to the extension of the state’s prestige, and these interactions reinforce recent scholarship regarding the relevance of cultural politics to the expression of \textit{louisquatorzien} glory.\textsuperscript{168}

Bonsy, as Colbert’s protégé, proved himself as adept at cultural espionage as in commercial intelligence when he served as extraordinary ambassador to Florence in 1661. He accompanied the difficult Princess Marguerite-Louise d’Orléans to her groom in that year.\textsuperscript{169} Aside from his duties during the nuptials, Bonsy secretly investigated the grand ducal court.\textsuperscript{170} He provided construction details, costs, and manpower required to operate Tuscan galleys, and

\textsuperscript{165} Anthony Blunt, \textit{Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 217-218, 232; James R. Anthony, \textit{French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau} (Portland, Oregan: Amadeus Press, 1997), 64; Burke, \textit{The Fabrication of Louis XIV}, 54, 191. Burke makes specific mention of the acquisition of the Servites’ painting as part of Colbert’s cultural program, but he stated the canvas acquired was “a Last Supper of Veronese.”

\textsuperscript{166} Burke, 54.

\textsuperscript{167} As an example see Roosen, \textit{The Age of Louis XIV}, 69.

\textsuperscript{168} Burke, 50, 54, 187-191 \textit{passim}.


\textsuperscript{170} Cheruel, \textit{Mémoires}, 146.
he recruited trainers of “ferocious beasts” for the Duke de Mazarin at Colbert’s behest. The bishop returned to France in great favor, and he was soon dispatched to Venice because of “his…great experience…acquired…through the management of…various important tasks that have been confided to him both within and out of the kingdom.” En route to Venice Bonsy continued to supervise Colbert’s commissions from the grand ducal fabbriche delle pietre dure – workshops of precious stones – through Florentine connections. Passing through Montpellier Beziers ordered two tables “of the most beautiful stones and ornaments to have sent to France to have them modeled for the service of the King.” Institutions like the Gobelins manufactory benefitted from the interventions of ambassadors in cultural politics.

Bonsy was one of a number of agents researching Italian art and expertise. The bishop located Venetian paintings that could be bought for the king. Colbert’s art expert, Potestà, journeyed to Venice, and along with Bonsy’s associates, scoured the republic and its environs for suitable chef d’œuvres. The ambassador told Colbert on 21 April 1663 that he would serve as “director and guide for the market paying the most attention possible to secure the best price one can [for several paintings]….“ By May Bonsy described three of the most coveted canvases of

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171 BnF, MC, M.F. 8444, Bonsy to Colbert, 10 Sept. 1661, F 101.
172 Brienne, Instruction a Mr. l’Evesque de Beziers, 41.
177 BnF, MC, vol. 113, Bonsy to Colbert, 2 Dec. 1662, F 782; BnF, MC, vol. 115, Bonsy to Colbert, 14 pril 1663, F 573v; BnF, MC, vol. 115bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 21 April 1663, F 626r.
178 BnF, MC, vol. 115 bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 21 April 1663, F 626r.
Veronese and Titian. One of these, Veronese’s famed *Feast in the House of Simon*, caught Colbert’s attention. Ambassador Sagredo quipped that Colbert’s counsel to the king in such matters went unchallenged, observing “that when Colbert has driven the nail, there is no imaginable motive or persuasion that can withdraw it.”

Venice’s Servi di Maria commissioned the *Feast in the House of Simon* from Veronese in 1573, and it hung in their refectory at Cannaregio not far from the French embassy. The friars were indebted to the state, and the republic recalled debts in 1663 as it struggled to cope with a new levee of ten thousand troops to succor Candia, to reinforce Dalmatia, and strike against convoys to Constantinople from Alexandria. In November, Venice’s *provveditori sopra li monasteri* – superintendents of monasteries – reinforced legislation from 1657 prohibiting religious houses from making profit without declaring it to the state; they surely took notice too of unreported foreign appeals to the Servites for the Veronese.

Louis XIV was not alone in his interest in the painting. Other Italian princes and ambassadors were unable to muster the resources to pay what the Servi asked. They refused the Spanish Ambassador de la Fuentes’s offer, the Duke of Modena’s proffered ten thousand ducats, and the large sum of twenty thousand ducats that the Duke of Mantua offered to pay. Cosimo III de’ Medici too made overtures for the canvas revoking his offer when he learned of

179 BnF, MC, vol. 115bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 12 May 1663, F 962v.
184 AAE, MD, Venise, vol. 11, Public decree from the *Provveditori sopra li monasteri*, 20 Nov. 1663, F 220.
Louis XIV’s interest. The purchase would not be easy, as the senate would also have its honor to consider. Communications from Bonsy to Colbert regarding the canvas ceased for some months as affairs in Rome dominated. After the signing of the Treaty of Pisa in February, the feud with Rome came to an end.

The conclusion of Bonsy’s successful negotiations for the movement of French troops across Venetian territory in the spring of 1664 revealed that the king’s desire for the Veronese was not forgotten. Venetian concessions to Louis XIV characterized Franco-Venetian relations in 1664. The feud with Rome over, Louis XIV’s troops marched across the terraferma, and the ambassador devoted time again to Colbert’s commercial and cultural interests. The king reminded the ambassador of his desire for Veronese’s painting. A major work of Venice’s cultural patrimony, however, was not something it would willingly surrender as it had come to appreciate its cultural prestige among Europeans. Venetian law forbade the Servite friars to negotiate without its permission with foreigners. In fact, the republic was right to be suspicious of commerce between religious houses and foreign emissaries as the Servites were later implicated in the exchange of secret information with the French — Bonsy’s negotiations with the brothers in 1663-1664 procured more than just the painting.

Meanwhile, Bonsy would not risk Venetian ire through negotiations that could be considered acts of espionage. Three issues compelled Venice’s senate to cede the canvas. First, and most urgent, was the Venetians’ war with the Ottomans. Louis XIV was still considered the key donor for troops and money. The king’s flagrant concessions to Leopold I rather than to the

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187 BnF, MC, vol. 120bis, Bonsy to Colbert, 31 May 1664, F 1106r.
189 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Louis XIV to Bonsy, 2 Jan. 1664, F2r.
191 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 617, Fra Ottavio to Pron, undated avviso, 1668.
republic in 1664 against the Turk pressed the senate further to oblige him. The loss of a major masterwork, while unsavory, was far more palatable in this moment than was the risk of further irritating Louis who could provide them resources and men in the Mediterranean. The consignment of the painting represented a means to ensure the king’s continued goodwill. The gift could remind the king of the republic’s war against Mehmet IV. The masterpiece could serve too as thanks and reward to Louis XIV as the senate permitted a disciplined French army to pass through its territories without incident during the early summer.

Venice’s second motive was the republic’s honor. Art historians comment on the sale of valuable works of art in the early modern period and the connection between gift giving and the honor of the donor in diplomatic rapports. The king of France was no ordinary collector, and the Republic of Venice, especially in its wartime circumstances, could not afford to appear in such distress as to be dependent upon the price of a painting. The gift then became attached to the republic’s honor as a sovereign power willing to gratify the desire of an equal as a matter of friendship and good faith rather than duress in a moment of distress. While state secrecy and policy would be compromised if the purchase were left in the hands of the foreign emissary, Bonsy, the Republic of Venice’s show of generosity to the French monarch would communicate confidence and stature.

A tertiary incident in Paris recommended the gift. Ambassador Sagredo alleged that royal horsemen menaced and humiliated him and members of his household in the street on 16 April. He made an internationally publicized ultimatum to Louis XIV calling for their execution. A

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194 Ibid.
195 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 84, Bonsy to Lionne, 18 April 1664, F 185v, 188v; Ibid., Copia di una lettera scritta dal S. Ambasciatore Sagredo ad un suo amico, 23 April 1664, Fs 188r-189v; Ibid., Bonsy to Lionne, 3 May 1664, F.
royal inquest found the men innocent of the charges leaving Sagredo and Venice’s government embarrassed before a young king who proved exacting when his reputation was threatened. According to Allain-Launay, the “affair of the domestics” was the impetus for Venice’s decision to offer Louis XIV the painting. The affair, however, while annoying to the king, was not substantial enough alone to explain such a high profile gift.

Sagredo’s allegations certainly played a role, however, as it presented an opportunity for Bonsy to petition the senate for the sale of the painting. The bishop sought to persuade the government to negotiate the sale as he would negotiate other foreign policy. Cultural politics were high politics in the mid-seventeenth century. The ambassador renewed the king’s assurances of friendship for the republic after the Sagredo debacle in an audience before the collegio. In a well-placed concluding remark at the end of his speech Bonsy added that the king had taken notice of the Servites’ Veronese. He requested that the senate allow negotiations with the friars for its purchase. Seeing a more advantageous opportunity the senate soon after voted with a majority to satisfy royal desire. Bonsy penned a letter to Colbert on 5 July: “the Republic is delighted to make a gift of [the painting] to His Majesty.” Bonsy’s own rhetorical maneuver again produced results for his master.

The senate and the Council of Ten supervised negotiations with the Servites after the vote. The senate penned the legislation to take the painting from the friars. The bishop informed Colbert of the task of dismantling the fragile three-piece canvas. It was delivered to the

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200r-200v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81 suppléments, Informations faite par nous Jacques Taudieu conseiller du Roy en ses conseils et lieutenans commis de la ville prevoste et vicomte de Paris suivans l’ordre du Roy et a la requeste de S. M. au Chastellet, let tesmoignages par lay administrez lesquelles despositions et...fait rediger par nostre Greffier ainsy qu’il en suit, 8 May 1664, Fs 84-90r; Ibid., Louis XIV to the Republic of Venice, 1 June 1664, F 93r.
197 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81, Fs 62, 92; Baschet, 284.
198 BnF, MC, vol. 122, Bonsy to Colbert, 5 July 1664, F 186r.
199 Baschet transcribed the senate’s decrees and the documents issued by the Council of Ten in his article. See Baschet, 284-285, 286-287, 289-290.
embassy on 23 September, and he detailed news of its subsequent transport across the Alps by wagon from Venice to France.200 Bonsy kept abreast of the painting’s journey seeming genuinely relieved when it finally arrived in Paris in November.201 News of Bonsy’s success pleased Louis XIV.202 Other Venetian masterpieces followed, but none received the same attention as the *Feast in the House of Simon*. The king received it at the Louvre in December — twenty-one months after Bonsy first informed Colbert that it was for sale. Although critical of the painting, Louis XIV sent a letter of thanks to the republic that Paul Vedoa delivered to the *collegio* in January 1665.203

Cultural politics were important facets of diplomatic negotiations. That the republic forbade the sale provided an opportunity for Colbert and the ambassador to demonstrate the king’s clout in international circles. Venice’s troubles left it willing to gratify royal wishes in cultural affairs where others had gone away empty handed.204 For its part, Venice took control of the negotiation to curb further uncontrolled interactions between the French embassy and Venetian subjects. Such unsanctioned communications between foreign ambassadors proved to compromise state knowledge and security. The French undercut Venetian industries, but the republic retained the right to control its artistic heritage.

202 ASV, IS-DA, Filza 136, Sagredo to Collegio, dispatch and addendum of 5 and 12 August 1664, F 261.
203 Baschet, 290-291; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81 supplement, Bonsy to Louis XIV, undated Jan. 1665, F 166r-166v. Chantelou records that Louis XIV criticized the painting upon seeing it. This may account for why it was transferred to the Gobelins into Charles Le Brun’s care where it appears to have stayed until his death in 1693. Art historian Peter Humphrey noted that this painting was recognized to be of lesser quality than other works by Veronese. Humphrey, Author’s conversation with Dr. Humphrey, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, 10 March 2014; Chantelou, *Voyage du Cavalier Bernin*, 220-221.
204 Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 193.
Conclusion

Bonsy left Venice for Poland in January 1665. The republic’s regard for Louis XIV, while officially amicable, would never again prove as accommodating as during the final phase of the Candian War. The French embassy remained vacant until 1668. Subsequent French ambassadors reckoned with the mistrust that Bonsy engendered while benefitting from communication networks such as those within the convent of the Servite friars. On the surface it appeared that the Republic of Venice accommodated Louis XIV’s every need throughout Bonsy’s embassy. This analysis suggests that policies and circumstances of other states affected Louis XIV’s pretensions international and economic hegemony that began to appear in the early years of the personal rule. Venice toiled in a long and costly struggle with Mehmet IV. The Candian War threatened its economic and naval vigor, sovereignty, and prosperity. Venice was under duress, but it was not irrelevant. As Bonsy relayed at his departure that Venice would “take all possible precautions to reassure itself of Your Majesty’s intentions…and give with care and ‘esclat’ visible examples of its fidelity.” In its turmoil Venice reluctantly accommodated the king’s emergent policies.

Louis XIV could not disregard the republic. His foreign policy toward Pope Alexander VII and the growth of a French hegemonic authority in Northern Italy required that French ambassadors maneuver with a regard to Venetian interests. The king boasted that Venice depended upon him more than any other prince in Europe, but his policies in Italy rested upon the republic’s uncertain context. The senate could very well have allied with the pope and the Habsburgs to thwart French pretensions. Alexander VII invited Venice to do so, but the senate refused further collusion against Louis XIV. The king did not run roughshod over either

205 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 81 suppléments, Bonsy to Louis XIV, 3 Jan. 1665, F 125r.
Venetian sovereignty or territory. French policy in Italy throughout 1663 and 1664 adapted to a series of international contexts. Once in Paris, it seems Veronese’s *Feast in the House of Simon* languished at the Gobelins throughout the king’s reign. The gift was far from the king’s gaze, but the evolution of what many states feared were *louisquatorzien* designs to construct a universal monarchy that would include Italian territories would have to contend with the embittered republic that sacrificed a part of its cultural heritage.

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207 Chantelou, *Voyage du Cavalier Bernin*, 222.
Chapter Three

Fig. 8
Assassins pummeled composer Alessandro Stradella on 10 October 1677, leaving him for dead in the streets of Turin. Alvise Contarini, the musician’s Venetian employer, had ordered the assault in retribution for Stradella’s elopement with his mistress, Agnese van Uffelle. Leaving Venice to pursue the composer, the assassins carried a letter of protection from the Abbé d’Estrades, the French ambassador in the republic.¹ In themissive Estrades enjoined the Marquis de Villars, Louis XIV’s ambassador to the Duke of Savoy, to lodge the Venetians. Private revenge became scandal when it was learned that Contarini’s henchmen sought asylum at the French embassy after their attack on Stradella. The Duke of Savoy in turn demanded explanations from Louis XIV for the attempted murder of the composer in his state. The attack contravened the duke’s sovereignty, and the unusual involvement of French ambassadors in a personal affair without his foreknowledge outraged and embarrassed Louis XIV.²

After the king rebuked the Abbé d’Estrades for overextending his authority without royal consent, the ambassador feverishly defended his actions in letters to his master and to colleagues.³ In his explanation to Louis XIV, the abbé revealed another secret negotiation that he was spearheading with the Duke of Mantua for a French purchase of the stronghold and territory of Casale in Northern Italy.⁴ Explanation for the Stradella affair read in conjunction with the Casale negotiations highlight the complex networks the ambassador cultivated from Venice to serve Louis XIV and his own burgeoning career. Estrades sought to demonstrate to the king that

the untoward interventions in the life of a mere musician should not vitiate his character as royal representative. To deflect attention from the Stradella affair, Estrades offered a diplomatic morsel to Louis XIV that soon led to the French acquisition of another Italian enclave. The ambassador aimed to vindicate his role in the republic. His independent actions in Louis XIV’s name required response and resolution from the Crown. That the monarch should have to react to rather than generate policy speaks to the difficulties of the absolutist bureaucracy in managing ministers at great distances from the centers of royal command.

Estrades’s story contributes to our understanding of the international context of

*loisquatorzien* centralization and expansionism. Historians have considered absolute monarchy as a politics of collaboration and accommodation between the monarch and the various entities and individuals within the kingdom vying for authority. I stress that foreign relations represented another context in which accommodation materialized *externally; loisquatorzien* centralization was forced to adapt to contingencies occurring far from the center of royal authority. Using Estrades as a lens, the reversal of center and periphery in relation to traditional views of absolutism comes clearly into focus. Embassies like that of Estrades in Venice revealed the level of adaptation that foreign affairs and ministers to foreign courts demanded from the Crown. Rather than a solely domestic project whereby the monarch imposed royal will upon the periphery, Estrades’s story highlights how events outside of the kingdom necessitated response from the seat of the absolute monarch-*qua*-periphery. Foreign affairs acted upon Louis XIV’s aspirations to centralized authority while providing unforeseen opportunities to hegemonize beyond France.

The ambassador’s involvement in scandal was not an example of personal malfeasance. The affair demonstrated, rather, Estrades’s able – if overzealous – cultivation of constituents
sympathetic to France. Using the scandal as a point of departure we discover that Estrades was a crucial and strategic conduit in an information system linking Venice and Rome to plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Nijmegen (1675-1679) and Louis XIV’s foreign ministry. Estrades aligned himself with members of the Venetian nobility and the Roman curia in service to Louis XIV. The scandal represented the level of involvement French ambassadors to Venice could attain among Venetian government officials and others like gazeteers. Similarly, it underscored the continued role of Venice as a diplomatic outpost and Venetian politics and its patricians in determining those of France. Estrades’ complex communication networks and his relationship with French allies among the Roman and Venetian nobility, like the Contarini, created the strands linking him to the attempted murder of Alessandro Stradella.

The Abbé d’Estrades’s service in the republic amplified the process of cooperation the monarchy employed among nobles filling state offices while Louis’s international dominance grew during the Dutch War (1672-1679). Ambassadors in Louis’s government utilized their appointments to further personal careers as clients of ministers close to the crown. Sara Chapman noted that horizontal associations between “allies” of “political and social equals” existed within the hierarchy of the centralizing state. Embassies like Estrades’s in Venice revealed that such connections among nobles seeking preferment crossed states’ borders through international networks. The Stradella affair resulted from the creation of such horizontal alliances as a royal minister, and an examination of the events surrounding Estrades’s involvement in the attempted murder of Stradella illustrates how a well-connected French ambassador melded personal interest with that of the Crown.

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5 Chapman, Private Ambition and Political Alliances, 3.
International Aims of France on the Eve of the Congress of Nijmegen (1678-1679): Framing the Stradella Affair

The Bishop of Beziers was instrumental in distinguishing the French monarch’s reputation and dynastic objectives in the *Serenissima*, and in the early 1660s Venice had represented an embassy through which to augment French authority in Italian affairs. The Franco-Venetian rapport provided a counterpoise against the papacy and in so doing also a tool to weaken Spanish preeminence in the peninsula. Moreover, the bishop promoted economic and cultural growth through negotiation and subterfuge. Upon Beziers’ departure in 1665 a *chargé d’affaires*, Pailleroles, and Paul Vedoa, the French consul, kept the foreign ministry abreast of events in Venice. New resident emissaries returned again in 1668 when the President de Saint-Andre (1668-1671) and then the Comte d’Avaux (1671-1675) served as resident ambassadors.

During these years Louis XIV’s dynastic pretensions generated the War of the Devolution (1667-1668) and the so-called Dutch War (1672-1678) as the king sought to incorporate lands in the Spanish Netherlands into France’s borders. Carlos II had formed an alliance with the United Provinces in 1673, and belligerents were obliged not only to fight on land but also in a number of sea battles. The Spanish king ruled the southern Italian peninsula and Sicily, and cities such as Naples and Messina were key to Spanish commerce and strategy as well as to their Dutch allies. French naval victories from 1674 to 1676 further established the bid for French hegemony in the Mediterranean Sea, and they promised the continued possibility of French ascendance over Spain in Italian affairs and the progress of French commerce in the sea amid the Venetians, Dutch, and English. The wood to be found in forests in the Sicilian

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7 The French navy won against the combined Dutch and Spanish navies in a series of battles in the waters off Sicily especially at Agosta and Palermo (1676). The death of Dutch captain, de Ruyter, at the Battle of Palermo brought the French brief ascendency in the western sea. Clément, *L’Histoire de la vie et de l’administration de Colbert*, 383-
interior drew French interest also as it was necessary for the construction of galleys. Additionally, the naval successes of Admirals Vivonne and Duquesne against Spanish and Dutch fleets, led by the formidable Admiral de Ruyter, pushed the Messinese and Neapolitans to encourage Louis XIV to release them from Spanish rule. The Italians’ importunements to the king and the hatred of the Messinesi for Spain enticed Louis XIV to strengthen his forces in the waters around Southern Italy.

By 1675 European states already pressed to end the war. Plenipotentiaries set off for the city of Nijmegen to negotiate a peace. The outcome of the congress meeting at Nijmegen and of the king’s policies in the Mediterranean depended to some extent upon French advances in Southern Italy. The French presence there and along the Barbary Coast foreshadowed the commercial and diplomatic enterprises that developed in later decades. Bourbon foreign and commercial policies across the sea and Europe required a constant diplomatic and consular presence in the port cities encircling the sea and to the systems of knowledge they afforded as the Congress of Nijmegen began. French emissaries and commerce would later stretch from Tangier to Jerusalem and beyond to trade routes onto which the Mediterranean gave access as far afield as Persia and Siam before the close of the century. French ministers in port cities such as the Republic of Venice helped to lay the groundwork for these contacts providing a buffer of political representation as Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s commercial legislation encouraged the vast maritime networks that would develop in the late 1680s and 1690s. This was not yet fully realized in the late 1670s.

384; Charles-Édouard Levillain, Vaincre Louis XIV, 18, 273; Cornette, Chronique du Règne de Louis XIV, 207, 223; Vierhaus, Germany in the Age of Absolutism, 120.

AN, MA, B7, vol. 209, Memoire sur le commerce d’Espagne donne par le S. Mayne, 1675, F. 1v.

9 For an example of such requests see: AN, Marine, B7, vol. 209, Fra Acangelo di Messina to an Illustrissimo Signore, 8 June 1675, F. 8.

10 AN, MA, B7, vol. 209, Memoire sur le commerce d’Espagne donne par le S. Mayne, 1675, Fs. 1r-1v.

11 Ibid., 1v-2r.
For the French the republic remained an outpost from which to press Mediterranean economic and political interests. Venetians saw France as another competitor in Mediterranean commerce during Estrades’s embassy. The republic already vied with Dutch merchants in the sea who outnumbered those of France and Venice in the early 1670s. Dutch diplomats, trading companies, and merchants established relations with the Ottoman Sultan first in 1612. Capitulations with the northern republic were renewed in 1634. The confirmation of French trading privileges with the sultan in 1673 and then of the English in 1675 saw Venice further discomfited from its role as the chief European state with links to the sea.\footnote{12} As Louis XIV’s navies threatened to establish permanent French authority in Southern Italy through the war, Venetians warily witnessed its northern neighbor pressing further into its former spheres of authority.

**The Troubles of a Novice Ambassador: Estrades Balances the Friction of Family-qua-Personal Interests with Louisquatorzien Politics**

Constant communication then from Venice with French envoys at Nijmegen attested to the utility of the Mediterranean and Italian theaters to Bourbon policies as Jean-François d’Estrades, Abbé de Conches and Moissac and the “Persona” of Heerlen (1647-1705) traveled to the republic\footnote{13} The abbé’s father, Godefroy, Marshal d’Estrades (1607-1686), Louis XIV’s chief plenipotentiary at Nijmegen, averred to his son, “the word you send to us of the advantages we have in Sicily is very considerable, and I hope that the conquest of that kingdom will be assured for the king.”\footnote{14} Moreover, Estrades’s instructions from the foreign ministry were to cultivate the


\footnote{13} The title of “persona” was attached to the benefice of Heerlen. It referred to the cleric who received the benefice’s revenue even though not resident in the area until he appointed a regular pastor for the parish. Régis de La Haye, “Un Bénéfice aux Pays Bas pour Jean François d’Estrades, Abbé de Moissac,” *BSATG* 115 (1990), 3-4.

\footnote{14} BnF, CL, vol. 584, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 27 Nov. 1676, Fs. 191-192; See also BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 23 June 1676, F. 59r; Pomponne, *Memoire du Roy pour servire d'instruction au...
“good disposition” of the Marcian Republic toward the king; a disposition that had been continued overtly since the loss of Candia through gifts such as gondolas and gondoliers for the canal of Versailles given earlier in 1673.¹⁵ No doubt such gifts were to dispose the king favorably to the republic as his armies swallowed up territory and as his navies grew under Colbert’s reforms threatening to move further eastward into Venetian maritime spheres throughout the war. The recent rehabilitation of French commercial links with the Ottomans through the 1673 capitulations contributed to the Venetian senate’s apprehensions toward the king. Louis promoted aggressive representation in Venice to utilize its renown as a reputedly neutral state, its location, and Venetian politicians to advantage while re-assuring the republic that he had no greater designs in Italian affairs; a point far from true that still required royal abnegation.¹⁶

Estrades arrived in Venetian territory on 24 December 1675 remaining incognito and learning of protocol from Pailleroles and Vedoa who acquainted him with spies and Francophile

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¹⁵ Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d’instruction, 75. While most often remarked that Venice sent the gifts to Louis XIV in 1674, the dates of the French court’s letters of thanks to the republic are from 1 January 1674 meaning that the gifts were given in 1673. The plaque in the park of Versailles marking the spot for la petite venise also incorrectly gives 1674 as the date of the gift for the king’s canal. For gondolas and personnel see AAE, CP, Venise, Pomponne to the Comte d’Avaux, 1 Jan. 1674, Fs. 116, 123 and Ibid., d’Avaux to Pomponne, 24 Feb. 1674, F. 131; Cornette, Chronique du Règne de Louis XIV, 242 is one example of this chronological oversight.

¹⁶ Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d’instruction, 81-82; Simone Lonardi, L’anima dei governi. Politica, spionaggio e segreto di stato a Venezia al secondo Seicento (1645-1699) (PhD Diss.: Università degli Studi di Padova, 2015), 177-178.
Venetians that his predecessors used to gather information. Estrades’s initial months incognito allowed him time to find the “habits and channels” that would provide critical intelligence to send to the court. He connected with diplomatic colleagues throughout Italy writing to Pomponne “to make him aware of the things of which he needed to be informed.” He began accessing sources of information immediately passing much of 1676 forming relationships and relaying the knowledge that he gleaned through them.

Estrades made his ceremonial entrée on 14 April 1676, and according to Armand Baschet, “the more the reign of Louis XIV advanced, the more pomp and outlay in all that could strike the viewer and denote grandeur was applied to the expense of these solemnities.” Following the example of previous ambassadors, Estrades’s entry into the city was no less ostentatious. “I can assure you, Monsieur,” the abbé remarked to the secretary of state, “that by the richness and number of the gondolas and those of my household and the other things that happened everywhere, I maintained the honor that the King bestowed upon me and that you procured for me by sending me here.” All of this expense, however, soon took its toll on Estrades’s finances and consequently decisions he made in his work.

News of Estrades’s first audience in the collegio reached Paris and his father at Nijmegen. His friend in Paris, the Abbé de Marcillac, remarked, “the gazettes recounted for us the magnificence of your entrée, but there has been no word from you. I have always noticed that you are truly a subject of virtue and that you are above such small things.” On 15 April, the day

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18 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 7 Jan. 1676, F. 53v.
19 Baschet, Les Archives de Venise, 475.
20 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 18 April 1676, F. 134v.
21 BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 7 May 1676, F. 27r.
following his entrée, as was customary, the ambassador was brought before the collegio to present lettres de créances and to pronounce the first speech. The language of the harangue complimented Venice. Estrades remarked that the king could leave the repose of Europe “in no more sure hands” than those of the republic. He made it plain that Louis XIV agreed with the choice of a Venetian envoy as mediator at Nijmegen: “in this way,” he said, “all of Europe will well enjoy a profound rest through your happy participation if the holy intentions of the King, my master, go unopposed.”

Estrades became a strategic conduit for intelligence. He was only twenty-eight years old upon becoming ambassador to Venice, but the abbé’s diplomatic pedigree and ability to acquire intelligence for the king, Pomponne, and his father soon proved accomplished. Estrades’s embassy differed from that of the Bishop of Beziers remarkably as the abbé represented Louis XIV when the king’s international political and military authority advanced briskly. Certainly among contemporary observers the king’s reputation throughout the 1670s became ominous to international observers. Commentators such as the Venetian ordinary ambassador to France from 1676 to 1679, Domenico Contarini, distant kinsman of Alessandro Stradella’s Venetian patron, later remarked of the king that, “Fortune, favoring Louis XIV, who reigns gloriously, opened the way for him to progress towards European domination, making him arbiter no less in peace than in war.”

The success of Bourbon dynastic politics in Europe emerging as the congress opened can be credited, in part, then to Estrades’s talent for utilizing intelligence networks. The broader

23 Baschet, Les Archives de Venise, 410.  
24 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades’s harangue before the senate, 15 April 1676, F 124v.  
25 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades’s harangue before the senate, 15 April 1676, F. 125v. Italics mine.  
26 Cornette, Chronique du règne de Louis XIV, 243.  
27 Rudolph Vierhaus, Germany in the Age of Absolutism, 120-121.  
international connections of the Estrades clan, diverse and rich through his father’s long service to the crown, benefitted the young abbé.²⁹ His father had a colorful diplomatic and military career that began under Cardinal Richelieu. Godefroy d’Estrades and his family continued as clients of high-ranking members of the court including Louis XIV’s brother, Philippe, Duke d’Orléans, who personally recommended the Abbé d’Estrades to the Venetian senate.³⁰ The Estrades clan was closely connected to secretary of state Simon Arnould de Pomponne to whom the abbé owed his position as ambassador and to whom he spoke affectionately in his dispatches.³¹

For as much as the Estrades clan was ingratiated into Pomponne’s circle of clients, they were often annoyed with members of the Colbert dynasty – enemies of Pomponne – as the correspondence of the abbé and the marshal attested.³² Work required that both ministers interact with Colbert and members of his family, but neither the seasoned plenipotentiary nor his son cared for the Colbert clan. The Estrades languished under the financial burden of diplomatic service. Both were subject to Colbert’s tight reign on Crown finances and remuneration of personal expenses used in royal service.³³ Friction between great ministers close to the monarch posed difficulties – especially regarding finance – for their creatures.³⁴

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²⁹ Letters from the Duke d’Orléans to the Republic of Venice and exchanged between him and Estrades testify to their close ties. See BnF, CL, vol. 584, Fs. 18, 163, 172, and 236-237; La Haye, “Un Bénéfice aux Pays Bas,” 3-4.


³¹ AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 18 April 1676, F. 134v.

³² Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 192.

³³ For examples see, BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 3 July 1676, F. 71v-72r; BnF, CL. Vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 6 Nov. 1676, F. 186r; BnF, MC, vol. 175, Estrades to Colbert, 25 Nov. 1677, F. 466r-466v.

The Estrades’ complaints about the Comptroller General of Finances showed no sympathy for the strain that expenditure for the war provoked. Both ambassadors complained of Colbert’s slowness in paying Crown stipends and the embarrassment arrears caused them with creditors. Marshal d’Estrades worked closely with Colbert’s brother, the Marquis de Croissy, who served with him as plenipotentiary at the congress. The Marshal complained to his son that the Comptroller ignored his requests for funds, and remarked of Colbert’s brother, Croissy, “he is a man of incompatible humor and I get along with him only because the King expressed his desire for me to do so….”

Financial difficulties aside, the Marshal d’Estrades warned his son that his career depended upon his performance as ambassador in Venice saying, “You must do everything possible to remain in service because you will have no other opportunity than that in which you find yourself to advance your fortune.” During the abbé’s years in the republic, his father reminded him of familial obligations and the effect his role as ambassador might have on his relations. The abbé’s younger brother, Jacques, Chevalier d’Estrades, was a maitre-de-camp in the royal army. He was imprisoned in the Bastille in January 1677 “for malversations committed in his regiment” the marshal wrote to the abbé, “this greatly worried me for a number of considerations of which you can well judge the consequences.” Estrades’s tenure in the republic positioned him to succeed in further royal service, and his success could provide a buffer against embarrassing mistakes within the Estrades family when ministerial clans vied

35 BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 6 Nov. 1676, F. 186.
36 BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 9 July 1677, F. 548.
37 The archbishop of Cahors, Estrades’s uncle, brought a court case against the abbé regarding the revenues and jurisdiction of Estrades’s rights to the abbacy of Saint Melaine another of his benefices. The bishop believed the abbacy should fall under his jurisdiction. The marshal believed that the chevalier’s indescretion could negatively affect his younger son’s – and the family’s – affairs with such legal and financial difficulties pending. BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 19 Jan. 1677, Fs. 271-272; AAE, CP, Venise, Pomponne to Estrades, 6 Jan. 1677, F. 7r.
against one another for royal favor at the council level and when his own relatives looked for preferment through them.

His father importuned the abbé on a number of occasions to assist members of their family through his position in Venice. The marshal asked Estrades to find military employment in the republic’s armies for his older brother, Louis, and a family cousin, the Marquise de Saumerdik, niece of the former French ambassador to Venice, the Comte d’Avaux. The marquise was engaged in a costly court case against her mother and for whom it was thought the abbé could use his influence to procure funds Venetian creditors owed former Ambassador d’Avaux to assist the family in the case. Neither request proved possible to fulfill, but it was believed that the abbé might help in these matters. The pressure was on the ambassador from his father to pursue family interests as well as those of Louis XIV when he entered the republic.

Estrades and the Failed Election of Giovanni Battista Nani as Arbitrator to the Congress of Nijmegen

An important facet of Louis XIV’s “holy intentions” for Venice and partially underlying Estrades’s visit was facilitating the choice of emissary Venice might send to Nijmegen as a neutral arbiter for the talks. He was also to warn Venice’s senate against collusion with Spain as Louis XIV’s military successes during the ongoing war intimidated the republic. Plenipotentiaries at Nijmegen asked the senate to consider sending one of its patricians as an intermediary at the congress, and the senate nominated the procuratore di San Marco, Giovanni Battista Nani, for the duty. Louis XIV highly approved the choice. Nani served as

39 Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d’instruction, 78-79; The marshal also reminded Estrades of the importance of persuading Venice to break its ties with Spain in favor of France. BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 10 May 1676, F. 31.
40 BnF, CL, vol. 584, Pomponne to Estrades, 6 Jan. 1676, F. 33; Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d’instruction, 78.
extraordinary ambassador to France from 1659 to 1660 showing himself pro-French and stanchly anti-Spanish in subsequent foreign affairs upon his return to Venice.\textsuperscript{41}

Carlos II and Leopold I attempted to recruit Venetian sympathy against Louis XIV’s incursions into Spanish dominions throughout the Italian peninsula toward which the republic too nourished a definite fear.\textsuperscript{42} Both powers, however, blamed Venice for Spain’s ongoing defeats in Sicily and Naples because the republic, in its neutral posture, denied imperial troops passage through the Adriatic to fight the French. Spanish and imperial ambassadors argued against Nani’s nomination, but their objections to the Francophile Nani were as much political reprisals for Venice’s political choices as they were biases against the procurator’s approval of the French.\textsuperscript{43}

Estrades’s father strongly pressed his son to encourage Nani’s nomination among Venetian patricians, and he reminded the abbé of the procurator’s qualities and experience and the benefits for French policies he could provide in the negotiations.\textsuperscript{44} Venice’s senate used the prospect of Nani’s nomination to rebuff the emperor and the Spanish while pandering to the French making certain that his nomination was publicized but not a \textit{fait accompli}. Estrades wrote in March to Cardinal César d’Estrées, “the senate seems completely resolute to uphold its choice [of Nani] in case it is obliged [to act], being dissatisfied with the House of Austria, whose conduct could not be more imprudent and more advantageous to His Majesty’s interests.”\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{41} Pomponne, \textit{Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction}, 76, 77-78; AAE, CP, Venise, Vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 22 Feb. 1676, F. 70r; Cozzi, \textit{Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani}, 193.
\textsuperscript{42} BnF, CL, vol. 584, Estrades to Card. d’Estrées, 14 March 1676, F 92. Numerous \textit{riferte} from domestic spies to the Venetian \textit{inquisitori di stato} testify to the French menace. For Venetian concern about the French in the Milanese see ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Badoer to the inquisitors of state, 27 Nov. 1676.
\textsuperscript{43} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 26 Feb. 1676, F. 75r.
\textsuperscript{44} BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 3 July 1676, F. 67v-68r; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 1 Sept. 1676, F. 151r.
\textsuperscript{45} BnF, CL, vol. 584, Estrades to Card. d’Estrées, 14 March 1676, F. 92.
with many matters of foreign policy, the neutral republic dangled possible favors before the 
states that most threatened it.

Venice’s losses to the Ottomans in 1669, however, caused the Venetians to turn inward in 
succeeding years to deal with inevitable domestic conflict in the fallout.\textsuperscript{46} In the years following 
Venice’s defeat to the Ottomans many nobles were censured for their personal gains in the war, 
and the former Venetian commander, Francesco Morosini, faced an embarrassing trial for his 
failure. Furthermore, the acerbic political climate inspired a debate over the limited number of 
patrician families dominating the powerful Council of Ten and the tribunal of the inquisitors of 
state.\textsuperscript{47} There had been controversial “corrections” – correzioni – of the Ten since the sixteenth 
century, but the most recent came on the heels of the Candian War in 1668 and again in 1671. 
The correction of the council was a means to limit the types of state prosecutions – many aimed 
at patricians – that could fall under the Ten’s jurisdiction and, more importantly, to prohibit the 
same noble families from repeated access to seats in the council and as inquisitors.\textsuperscript{48} A small 
oligarchy of powerful patricians repeatedly held the offices abusing their influence and wealth 
while fueling patrician grudges.\textsuperscript{49} Throughout 1676 factions in the maggior consiglio, jealous of 
inequalities of wealth and access to the highest state offices, pressed for another correction. Soon 
those in the consiglio calling for the correction convinced the body, and names were put forth for 
elections as correttori.\textsuperscript{50} Giovanni Battista Nani was prominent in the debate, and despite

\textsuperscript{46} Louis, Comte de Voinovitch, \textit{La Monarchie Francaise dans l’Adratique: Histoire des relations de la France avec 

\textsuperscript{47} The first correzione of the Ten was in 1582-1583. There followed corrections in 1629, 1668, 1671, and 1677. 
Lonardi, \textit{L’anima dei governi}, 113-114, 132-133, 134-135; Cozzi, \textit{Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani}, 200-201, 
202, 208-209.

\textsuperscript{48} Lonardi, 120.

\textsuperscript{49} Cozzi, \textit{Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani}, 200-201, 202-203, 204; Lonardi, 140-141.

\textsuperscript{50} Estrades remarked that members of the Bernardo and Mocenigo clans called for the correction, and Gaetano Cozzi 
confirmed that it was Leonardo Bernardo who finally argued convincingly in 1677 for the correction to occur. AAE, 
CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 12 Sept. 1676, Fs. 294r-294v; Cozzi, 204.
venerable service to the republic, his reputation among the partricians fell by the end of 1676 as he lobbied against the Ten’s authority.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 12 Sept. 1676, Fs. 294r-294v; Cozzi, 204-205.}

Meanwhile, as the tumult in the Venetian government continued, other facets of Estrades’s embassy related to French foreign policy in Italian and Mediterranean affairs emerged bringing Estrades closer to the intervention in the life of Alessandro Stradella. Stradella’s misfortune would occur almost two years into Estrades’s tenure in the Serenissima, and, uncharacteristic of Estrades’s judgment as it was the affair demonstrated the abbé’s loyalty to constituents sympathetic to France and to his career that he was constructing throughout 1676.

The roots of the scandal lay in 1676 as Estrades pressed for Nani’s election as a mediator. The French offensive against the Dutch and the Spanish off the Southern Italian coasts provided leverage for the French at the congress as the war dragged on. Estrades’s father remarked in June 1676 that his son’s communiqués regarding French success there “will help me not a little to influence affairs for peace.”\footnote{BnF, CL, vol. 584, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 23 June 1676, F. 59; Ragnhild M. Hatton, “Louis XIV and His Fellow Monarchs”, in Rule, 170-171.} Estrades also became convinced throughout the year that Venetian senators were favorable to the French cause and thus also to Nani’s election. Secret meetings with patricians led Estrades to suggest an open alliance between Venice and Louis XIV who, in turn, promised renewed access to port cities that the republic had lost during the war if they would raise no objections to his continued offensive against Spain and the United Provinces in the south. The king and Pomponne agreed that such offers — easily revoked — would dissuade Venice from siding with the Spanish who pressured Italian states to rebuff Louis XIV.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 7 March 1676, F. 82r; See also, AN, MA, B\textdegree, vol. 209, 
\textit{Manifeste publie en Italie touchant l’Affaire de Casale joint a la lettre du Sr. Cotoledi du 12 Janvier 1680}, Fs. 101r, 102r.}
Estrades was to insinuate this offer in private conversation with Venetian senators rather than make overt statements to the senate as he had proposed.\(^{54}\) The ambassador reported his compliance using circumstances like a private audience accorded to the outgoing Venetian ambassador to France in 1676, Domenico Contarini. Contarini, having a “great inclination for France used all of his credit to go there out of the fear that he had that he would be sent to Spain.”\(^{55}\) Estrades flattered Contarini even further, remarking to him “that his house was already well-considered, and that his person would be much esteemed [in France].”\(^{56}\) Such flattery was hoped to inspire assistance in Nani’s election and to entice republican politicians away from France’s enemies.

While Venice’s senate considered the position of mediator and officially nominated Nani to attend the congress, the senate’s confirmation of the procurator to the post was hindered through the objections of Leopold and Carlos. Through their ambassadors they refused to begin peace negotiations until Nani’s nomination was either withdrawn or mitigated through the election of a co-mediator with less sympathy for the French. Finally, Estrades regretfully wrote to Pomponne in December that “no one speaks any more of the departure of Monsieur le Procurator.”\(^{57}\) If French enemies had not succeeded in blocking Nani’s nomination outright, their prostrations in conjunction with the senate’s manipulation of its possible intervention in the congress, impaired the election beyond hope.

The refusal to elect Nani as a mediator was a slight setback for French influence at the congress to be sure, and it can also possibly be explained because Nani was a proponent of limiting the Council of Ten during the months in which his election was debated. His subsequent

\(^{54}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Pomponne to Estrades, 25 March 1676, F. 97v.
\(^{55}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 28 March 1676, F. 100v.
\(^{56}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 28 March 1676, F. 100v.
\(^{57}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 19 Dec. 1676, F. 369r.
inclusion as one of the five patricians elected in February 1677 to correct the Ten possibly provides further insight as to why the factions in the government may have denied him another prestigious international appointment. The republic responded to the geopolitical threats materializing around it in the late 1670s seeking to distance its internal political structures and state secrets from foreign emissaries through the surveillance of the same Council of Ten and the state inquisitors whose authority “troubled” Venetian patricians and for which the 1677 correction materialized. As domestic political debates continued, Venice still remained uncertain of the objectives of neighboring states in Italy – especially those of Louis XIV. The Venetian government could not be certain of the complete allegiance of its own aristocracy like Contarini who maintained affinities for foreign courts. Estrades’s efforts to sweeten the ears of Venetian politicians for Nani’s election had failed, but he had gained allies among patrician households like the Contarini clan and the access they provided to state secrets.

**Estrades as “Case Officer”: Webs of Intelligence Within Venice**

The republic’s formalized yet porous government institutions left the ambassador to rely more heavily upon clandestine sources of intelligence, as Filippo De Vivo asserted, “In practice, it proved impossible to stop informal communication.” The king’s international successes during Estrades’s embassy in conjunction with negotiations at Nijmegen exacerbated Venetians’ fear of the French. Informants working for the Abbé d’Estrades confirmed royal successes in Messina and Naples and provided intelligence from within the Venetian government. Similarly, Venetian spies reported rumors of Louis XIV’s initial movements to supplant Spanish rule in the

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58 Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani*, 204. Nani died not long after on 5 November 1678.
59 Estrades remarked to Pomponne on the power the Ten exercised and the fear they inspired in “everyone.” AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Pomponne, [date unclear but late 1677], F. 193v.
Milanese adjoining the terrafirma. The industrious confidente, Camillo Badoer, apprised the inquisitors of these rumors and the names of numerous agents supplying Estrades data. Badoer seems to have made the French embassy his particular concern over the next decade, and he cultivated an affable and familiar relationship with anti-French informants detailing intimate conversations with the Spanish ambassador and with associates in the English and imperial embassies as well. Badoer’s focus, however, was the lista dei francesi where had no less than seven contacts in the French embassy proper including one of Estrades’s secretaries. The majority of Badoer’s reports revealed a distinct distrust for the French ambassador, his household, and his network of informers ranging from prostitutes to high-ranking Venetian noble houses like the Contarini. Badoer’s evidence reflected the role of the ambassador himself as a

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62 For evidence of the confidenti’s reports regarding the alleged French negotiations with Lombard nobility for French interventions in the Milanese see the following inter alia: ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza (Badoer) to the Inquisitori di Stato, 29 Jan. 1676; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitori di Stato, 27 Nov. 1676; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitori di Stato, 9 Dec. 1676. Camillo Badoer was a constant presence around the foreign embassies of Cannaregio for the next decade, and he figures in this chapter and Chapter Four. For a detailed examination of Badoer and his service to the republic see Simone Lonardi, “The Dissemination of News in Early Modern Venice: A Walk in the Company of the Informer Camillo Badoer,” in Making Sense as a Cultural Practice: Historical Perspectives, ed. Jorg Rogge (Bielefeld, 2013): 136-146 and Lonardi, “6:1, Un informatore al lavoro,” In L’anima dei governi, 321-344.


64 For the contacts confidenti maintained see ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Castelnovo (Badoer) to the Inquisitors of State, 26 Feb. 1676.

65 Lonardi, L’anima dei governi, 324-325.

66 The anti-French sentiment expressed in Badoer’s riferte should be read through a personal bias that he expressed to the inquisitors. Apparently members of underground intelligence networks menaced his brother, another spy, Fra Constantino, constraining him for his safety to stay in Rome where he had been working. It seems that both Badoer and his brother made spying on the French a matter of primacy. Badoer noted that his brother had been compromised vis-à-vis the French embassy in Venice. His return to the city would, in turn, endanger many others who were connected to the French party. He added that “[the French ambassador] is certainly right to want him [Fra
spy who on one hand represented officially the image of Louis XIV while on the other hand labored as the purveyor of secret and privileged information that could only be acquired through espionage.

For this reason Venice maintained tight scrutiny through the inquisitors informants of those whom De Vivo called “professionals of intelligence” interacting with foreign ambassadors. Estrades became an important patron and protector of sources useful to French needs, entertaining spies from across Italy who brought information to share with colleagues in Rome, his father at the Congress, and with the foreign ministry. Spies informed the inquisitori di stato that through myriad intermediaries the abbé received constituents in Venice such as the Messinese Don Domenico, who relayed “secret letters that he had from Rome and Messina” containing “many notable avvisi.” Writers of anti-Spanish memoirs in favor of the French seizure of Sicily and known informants like the Jesuit Father Francesco Maria Leone, a priest bringing frequent news of Spanish actions from his native Messina, looked to Estrades for safety. Pomponne’s dispatches relayed the king’s pleasure at such resourcefulness, and the inquisitors’ domestic agents’ riferte – referrals – corroborated the scale of information exchange that fed the abbé’s dispatches to the foreign ministry and the plenipotentiaries at Nijmegen who continually requested more.

Spain aimed to silence Estrades’s sources in Venice. Through the influence of their ambassador, the Marquis de la Fuentes and the Hispanophile papal nuncio, Airoldi, Spain

Constantino] kept far away from Venice.” It seems though that his brother returned to Venice by February 1676. ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitors of State, 9 Jan. 1676.
67 De Vivo, Information and Communication in Venice, 75.
68 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitori di Stato, 12 Jan. 1676.
69 For evidence of Estrades’s interactions and exchanges of information with Father Leone regarding Messina and Naples see the following: AAE, CP, Venise, vol.97, Estrades to Pomponne, 6 Feb. 1676, F. 65r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Pomponne to Estrades, 4 March 1676, F. 80; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 9 April 1676, F. 107v.
employed spies and pamphleteers in the republic for its use or to sequester them and to have
them expelled. When the marquis himself failed to bribe Leone he engineered the priest’s arrest
and interrogation before a Jesuit tribunal. In a demonstration of loyalty to his source, Estrades
petitioned the senate to allow the priest to leave Venice. Highlighting Louis XIV’s protection of
him and his own seeming attachment to the father, Estrades stated that the king regarded Leone
“as his own true subject,” adding that, “neither justice nor reason, nor any type of right can
permit me to suffer that anyone disturb the well being of Father Leone.” The ambassador’s
interventions went unheeded, however, and the republic, usually so caustic where the Jesuits
were concerned, deferred to the Company, drolly commenting that it never interfered in their
internal affairs.

Sensing possibly that favors extended to Louis XIV might prove useful in its clashes with
the papacy and given French success in the south, Venice’s senate allowed the priest to leave for
Ancona. Exchanges between Estrades and Pomponne revealed that Louis XIV granted the priest
permission to take refuge in France should he believe himself safer there than in Rome. The
priest did not waste the opportunity accepting the invitation. He opted for an indefinite sojourn
there after boarding a vessel from Messina. Estrades informed Pomponne of the informant’s
decision for asylum in France on 24 October 1676 after receiving a last letter from him. The king
showed no special sympathy for the Jesuit despite his service, but Estrades’s persistance

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72 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to the Senate, (11 or 12) July 1676, Fs. 224v-225r.
74 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 25 July 1676, F. 238v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 1 Aug. 1676, F. 246v; AAE, CP, Venise, Pomponne to Estrades, 5 Aug. 1676, F. 248v; AAE, CP, Venise, Pomponne to Estrades, 12 Sept. 1676, F. 293r.
75 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 24 Oct. 1676, Fs. 327v-328r.
demonstrated a considerable concern for the elderly prelate who was one of his earliest sources of information after arriving in the republic.

Venice, as much as Spain, considered Estrades’s sources dangerous because of their involvement in French interventions in Italy. The Venetian government recognized a long-term threat in the exchange of clandestine information. Informants maintained careful surveillance not only of spies but also of authors writing anti-Venetian propaganda and gazetteers in the city that praised foreign authority and publicized sensitive information in the many avvisi and gazettes to be read there. Printing houses and published works were of special concern to the inquisitori di stato who collected evidence of memoires impugning the republic and its government.

The French ambassador encouraged and sustained some of these authors. In December 1676, Badoer asserted: “Venetian liberty, which permits authors to write what they want in its periodicals, in the circumstances of the present wars, has made them increasingly venal, to such a degree that no one expects them to write the truth, but to satisfy foreign wit in favor of their own interests.” To support his own criticism of the republic’s liberality toward the press and pamphleeters’, he reported that the gazetteer Benedetto Giuliani, “supported the party of France in his papers,” and that protected by “ministers of that Majesty, he had secured an annual stipend of fifty doppie.” What Badoer did not report to the inquisitors in detail, however, as Estrades informed Pomponne two months earlier, was that the Spanish ambassador threatened Giuliani’s life for refusing thirty écus a month to write on Spain’s behalf.

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76 Lonardi, L’anima dei governi, 144.
77 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Castelnovo to the Inquisitori di Stato, 26 February 1676. When dealing with the ASV it should be considered that folders in different busta, while marked a certain year, often contain letters from other years that have been misfiled.
78 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitori di Stato, 19 December 1676.
79 Ibid.
80 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 3 Oct. 1676, Fs. 313r-313v.
After explaining to Pomponne the nature of Venice’s economy of information, the abbé petitioned the king to provide a stipend to Giuliani, a service that Estrades “assured” Pomponne “is more necessary in Venice than one would imagine.” The ambassador said Giuliani, “who writes the broadsheets here, is attached by inclination to France… and he is the only one to write for the advantage of our people.” Having procured the pension of five hundred livres, the ambassador remarked: “he is very useful to the King’s service through the ease with which Italians believe the news that one puts out and through the other advantages that our enemies find in publishing false (reports).” Estrades framed the discussion around Giuliani’s safety, but certainly he knew that the writer’s services could be bought if the French refused him a better offer. The ambassador also omitted the extent of Giuliani’s usefulness to him that became clearer in the negotiations for Casale in 1677. The abbé learned to spend for intelligence and the loyalty of his sources. Indeed, Estrades’s beneficence towards Giuliani earned a lifetime supporter of French interests, and Giuliani’s loyalty would, as chapter four will show, bring tragedy to his own family.

Although the king was known to be generous in paying for information, the state of Estrades’s finances indicated that more than likely he was expected to pay sources out of his own income. Some sources, however, received gifts directly from the court. Badoer warned the inquisitors that the Marchese Annibale Porroni, and accomplices who, through letters written to France, “had offered themselves against enemies in the event that the king decided to bring armies into Italy.” He added that Porroni “dedicated his book to the Dauphin of France coming off the presses five months ago and entitled Trattati Universal Moderno. I know that the

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81 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 3 Oct. 1676, Fs. 313v-314r.
82 AAE, CP, Venise, vol.97, Estrades to Pomponne, 3 Oct. 1676, Fs. 313r-313v.
83 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 12 Dec. 1676, Fs. 364r-363v.
84 Sebastiano Foscarini, Relazione, 1678-1683, 376.
85 ASV, IS-RC, Nizza to the Inquisitori di Stato, 9 Dec. 1676.
ambassador, Signor Abbate d’Estrades sent abroad the books and dedicatory letters to both the
King and to the Dauphin on his behalf.” “The Signor Marchese,” the confidente added, “speaks
badly of the Venetian nobility through ignorant concepts… and in the bottega of the earlier
mentioned Nicolini [a publisher] foments many unjust ideas.” Estrades verified Porroni’s
attachment to France, and he delivered the works of Porroni to whom the Dauphin made a gift of
diamonds and a personal letter. Political literature became particularly unsettling to the
Venetian government in 1676, and the French government tolerated works that undermined
Venice’s mythologized stability and freedoms.

Printed Friction between Louis XIV’s Monarchy and Venetian Republicanism

For as much as Louis XIV publicly courted Venice as an ostensible ally, his broader
pretensions to expansionism illustrated the possibility of encroachments upon Venetian
authority. Estrades relayed that a senator made reference to Charles VIII’s Italian campaigns
while discussing the growing presence of the French in Sicily. If Louis XIV promoted anti-
Spanish propaganda in the south and in Lombardy fomenting rebellion, then French
encouragement of anti-Venetian propaganda and of proponents of a French military presence in
the peninsula indicated that the king’s future ambitions could include hegemonic policies in
Italy. Venetians’ traditional affinities for the French as counterpoise to the Habsburgs tensed
after the loss of Crete and as French military might in Italy promised to grow.

The diminished stato da mar injured Venice’s reputation abroad enough, but published
critiques might undermine the reputed domestic tranquillity of the Serenissima in the eyes of its

86 ASV, IS-RC, Castelnovo to the Inquisitori di Stato, 7 Dec. 1676.
Estrades, 24 Feb. 1677, F. 40v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Pomponne, 5 June 1677, Fs. 128r-128v; AAE,
CP, Venise, vol. 99, Pomponne to Estrades, 9 June 1677, F. 130r.
88 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Pomponne, 19 June 1677, F. 141r.
European neighbors exposing its weaknesses to future depredation. The unfolding correction of the Council of Ten added evidence to an international audience that Venice’s famed stability was not without its limits. The state inquisitors sought even to control unflattering literature beyond its borders. Their response to the French publication of Abraham-Nicolas Amelot de la Houssaie’s *Histoire du gouvernement de Venise* in March 1676 underscored the republic’s insecurity toward works publicizing domestic dysfunction.

Amelot de la Houssaie had been secretary to Estrades’s predecessor, the Président de Saint-André. In his two-volume work Amelot described in uncomfortable detail the institutions of Venice’s government, and the secretary asserted that the losses to the Ottomans in the sixteenth century and in the recent Cretan war contributed to the republic’s “decadence.” Although decline was not yet a certainty, Amelot painted a picture of a fractured government tyrannized through the Council of Ten and plagued with patrician greed and immorality. Amelot revealed the alleged realities of a state that prided itself upon the impenetrability of its institutions. That these assertions came from a French secretary heightened the government’s distrust of subsequent French envoys as Louis XIV’s authority expanded.

According to Lucien Bély, Amelot’s work no doubt delighted Louis XIV as the king disdained republics. The *Histoire* earned Amelot a short stay in the Bastille after protestations from ambassador Domenico Contarini. Contarini claimed to suppress “the torrent” attempting to have all of the copies siezed “to stop prejudice” that “mortalmente wounds” the image of the

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90 The inquisitors of state prompted the then Venetian ambassador, Domenico Contarini, to suppress Amelot’s work and to inform Louis XIV of how offensive the work was. See Contarini’s responses to the inquisitors, ASV, DAF, 1668-1683, Busta 436, Contarini to the state inquisitors, January 1677; ASV, DAF, Busta 436, Contarini to the state inquisitors, 13 May 1676.
republic. Estrades’s dispatches affirmed Amelot’s allegations of an ongoing crisis among the Venetian aristocracy. The abbé confirmed the rifts in political allegiance among patricians through the immense authority councils like the Ten held over the mechanisms of state. The Ten threatened nobles’ privileges and status within the hierarchy, but information leaks from within the government seemed to justify the harsh measures the Ten and the inquisitors employed. Through its detailed coverage of Venetian government practices Amelot de la Houssaie’s history underscored the permeability of the republic’s government and the leaks of intelligence through government officials feeding ambassadors like Estrades with Venice’s state secrets to the benefit of France.

**Estrades’s Judgment Compromised: Pandering to Venetian Patricians and Alessandro Stradella’s Misfortune**

Studies like Amelot de la Houssaie’s indicated the breech in the attempts of the Ten and the state inquisitors to control information leaking from within the government through the aristocracy to foreign envoys. Investigations of Estrades’s correspondence reveals that his information networks consisted not only of spies and newswriters. The French ambassador maintained associates at the highest levels of the feuding Venetian patriciate. His role was to strengthen French policy in the republic, and the fissures among Venice’s nobility proffered nobles eager to benefit from the French association augmenting their prestige as well as swinging

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95 The abbé noted that members of the senate spoke against the Ten and called for another “correction” of their power. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 12 September 1676, Fs. 294r-294v. Estrades gave a particular example of the Ten’s authority saying “…the Council of Ten’s severity makes everyone tremble since they condemned to prison a secretary of the senate just for showing a ducal letter, or a lettre de cachet, to a man who had requested the letter obtaining it even against his own faction’s interests.” AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 98, Estrades to Pomponne, 21 Aug. 1677, F. 193v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol 99, Estrades to Plenipotentaries at Nijmegen, 6 Feb. 1677, F. 296-297; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Estrades to Marshal d’Estrades, 13 Feb. 1677, F. Michael Knapton, “The Terra Ferma State,” in *A Companion to the History of Venice, 1400-1797*, 108. Stanley Chojnacki, “Identity and Ideology in Renaissance Venice,” in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, Martin and Romano, 278.
the ostensibly neutral political elite further toward France. Throughout 1676 Estrades came to believe that many Venetians in the government were inclined to an alliance with France, and closeted conversations with senators and the efforts of operatives with access to the Venetian aristocracy sustained his assumptions. The confidenti confirmed that Estrades consorted with a number of patrician families. Those with whom he did not have personal access like the Contarini provided Estrades with news of the state’s internal politics gathered from them through associates like Father Bonaventura, an “intimate confidente of the Lord Ambassador of France.” Badoer relayed, that, although apparently speaking French only “barbarously,” Bonaventura frequented patrician homes posing as a docent of the language.

Included among the other patrician families to which the ambassador was linked were some of the republic’s oldest clans like the Mocenigo, Giustiniani, and Delfin. These relationships compelled Estrades to provide favors. The various branches of the Contarini family held high offices in Venice. Another member of the clan, Alvise II Contarini, was elected as doge in 1676 during the abbé’s embassy. Estrades worked to maintain links with those like the Contarini, “a family which,” the abbé said, “has already given [the city] so many leaders that it would seem the throne is hereditary due to the virtue which it [the house] is clothed.”

Estrades’s communication networks and his relationship with pro-French Venetian nobility, like the Contarini, created the first strand linking him to the attempted murder of Alessandro Stradella. Luigi Contarini hosted Stradella in Venice after he fled Rome. The composer’s behavior in Venice and escape to Turin then prompted Contarini to capitalize on his family’s association with Estrades. The composer’s employment in the household of Luigi

96 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 21 Nov. 1676, F. 350r.
97 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 566, Nizza to the Inquisitors of State, 12 Jan. 1676.
98 AAE, CP, Venise, Vol. 97, Estrades to Doge Alvise Contarini, 1 Sept. 1676, Fs. 283-284.
Contarini prompted Estrades’s ill-advised letter to the Marquis de Villars in a bid to placate the patrician. The ambassador’s career, however, necessitated that he use an international network in his own interests as well. The letter was compensation for services rendered to him as much as a political connection in Venice for Louis XIV.

**Estrades, Stradella, and the Veneto-Roman Connection**

The second strand linking Estrades to Stradella and evincing his abilities to create networks resulted from French aims in Northern Italy and in Rome. Venice was a beehive of information for purveyors of news. Keeping Estrades’s finger on the pulse of Italian politics along with private informers from Southern Italy were myriad contacts comprising cardinals in Rome. Louis XIV’s tense relations with the papacy became a matter of concern for the abbé. Most immediate to understand the Stradella affair were the abbé’s links in the Roman curia as the struggle between France and Spain required communication between the ambassador in Venice and the papal court.

The long fingers of Spanish authority reached across Italy to Venice through the pro-Spanish papal nuncio, Airoldi, with whom Estrades had an uneasy yet officially cordial rapport and through Spanish emissaries. The republic believed Spain an optional ally should warnings of further French invasions in Italy hold true. The senate considered buying land near Cremona from Spain to increase its own *terraferma* territory, a prospect that Louis XIV would view, according to Pomponne, as Venetian support for Spain. Incipient French seizure of Venetian...
merchant ships off of the coast of Sicily, Naples, and Livorno as the royal navy dominated these 
waters in early 1677 provoked the republic’s disgust and a deeper sympathy for Spain.103 
Whereas Estrades claimed Venice’s attachments to Louis XIV strong in 1676, the outrages of the 
French navy made 1677 uncertain.104 The republic wanted to be “the peaceful and absolute 
master of the (Adriatic) gulf,” and French movement ever closer into eastern waters piqued the 
senate.105 1677 would prove a crucial year not only for France’s rapport with Venice but also for 
Estrades’s personal fortunes in which Spanish cardinals took a role. 

Spanish authority in Italy and the Mediterranean persisted in the late seventeenth 
century106 Indeed it would not be until after Nijmegen that Spain’s international might declined 
definitively before French predominance. Regarding Italian potentates and the Roman curia, “the 
Spanish monarchy had not suffered irreparable damage,” as Gianvittorio Signorotto averred, “for 
the church, it (Spain) continued to represent the greatest source of benefits and wealth” 
supplying notably “most of the cardinals” in the papal court.107 For Estrades the failing health of 
octogenarian Pope Clement X Altieri in 1675 and the anticipated conclave of 1676 represented a 
web of negotiations with Venetian and other Italian cardinals sympathetic to Louis XIV – the 
king and Pomponne foresaw the need to strengthen this web.108

103 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Senate to Estrades, 9 June 1677, F. 131r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Senate to 
Estrades, 12 June 1677, F. 133r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Pomponne, 12 June 1677, F. 136v; AAE, 
CP, Venise, vol. 99, Pomponne to Estrades, 16 June 1677, F. 139r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to 
Pomponne, 19 June 1677, F. 140v-142r; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 13 August 1677, F. 591. 
105 “Venice wants to be the peaceful and absolute master of the gulf.” AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to 
Pomponne, 13 March 1677, F. 59v. 
107 Signorotto, “The Squadrone Volante,” 188. 
108 Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction, 84-85.
The virulence of Franco-papal relations from the time of Alexander VII Chigi endured throughout the Clementine pontificate. As the curia anticipated the ailing pontiff’s death, Louis XIV pressed Venetian cardinals and those in Rome like Cardinals Chigi and Maidalchini to sway an imminent conclave in France’s favor. They instructed Estrades to remind cardinals of their attachments to France. Gallican policies toward the French clergy’s responsibilities to the monarchy and the king’s ability to control clerical nominations would be affected through the choice of Clement’s successor. Religious concerns – among them Jansenism and papal interference in the rights of the régale – and the problematic preponderance of Spanish influence within the curia with its extensive Italian networks were in the balance.

The conclave of 1676 saw the election of Innocent XI Odeschalchi – a pontiff concerned with ecclesiastical reform and purportedly opposed to bilateral papal alliance with any one dynastic power. The pope soon put this policy into practice. Estrades informed his father that the pontiff blocked a Spanish ship en route to Sicily carrying troops acquired in Rome from leaving the city. He remarked “His Holiness showed through this action that he wanted to be neutral and that he did not at all wish to permit either the French or the Spanish from levying troops in his states, which is all the two states could hope from him given his role as common father and mediator of the peace talks.” The pope’s publicized move against Spain, however, although perhaps inadvertently, aided French victories in the south.

The months preceding the election witnessed the exchange of gestures to improve the Franco-papal rapport. From Venice Estrades solicited pro-French clergy such as Cardinals

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109 Pomponne, Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'instruction, 84-85.
112 BnF, CL, vol. 582, Estrades to the Marshal d’Estrades, 13 March 1677, Fs 337-338.
Rospigliosi and Chigi, and he cultivated a relationship with papal secretary of state Cardinal Alderano Cibo while ingratiating himself with Venetian prelates.\textsuperscript{113} Cardinal Delfin supported France, and the abbé reminded him of his obligation to the king.\textsuperscript{114} Princes of the Church could inspire papal cooperation with Louis XIV in Rome and counter the Hispanophile nuncio, Airoldi, in Venice with whom a number of them clashed personally.\textsuperscript{115} Estrades’s correspondence throughout his embassy confirmed Sebastiano Foscarini’s belief that Bourbon foreign policy meant to “snatch the states of Italy from the Spanish.”\textsuperscript{116} The ambassador strove to promote French predominance in Venice and at the papal court through links with cardinals favorable to the king and others cardinals, like Maidalchini, to whom the French king paid handsome stipends.\textsuperscript{117}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Knotting the Strands of an International Scandal}
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Estrades’s career aspirations – and those of his father for him – intertwined with royal and ecclesiastical affairs. The ambassador received the nomination to the abbacy of Moissac in 1669 before he left for Venice, yet he had not received the expensive papal seals – or bulls – that legitimized the sinacure’s revenue.\textsuperscript{118} The cost of maintaining a magnificent household in Venice and payments to informants was far from negligible, and, as Saint-Simon averred much later, the

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\textsuperscript{114} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 97, Estrades to Pomponne, 25 July 1676, F. 239v.
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\textsuperscript{115} BnF, CL, vol. 584, Card. d’Estrées to Estrades, 23 May 1676, F. 223.
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\textsuperscript{116} Sebastiano Foscarini, \textit{Relazione}, 1683, 433.
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\textsuperscript{118} La Haye, “\textit{Un Bénéfice aux Pays Bas},” 6.
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abbé “had indebted himself greatly” in his Venetian embassy. A legal struggle with the Bishop of Cahors for supremacy over the abbacy of Saint Melaine, favors paid for the possibility of a nomination to the archbishopric of Bourges – for which Estrades’s father lobbied for his son – and the latent revenues from Moissac bottlenecked Estrades’s income further in 1677. Such debts could only be settled finally through the bulls’ conferral.

The abbé and his father explained the difficulties of personal finances and the necessity of the bulls to Pomponne, Innocent XI, Cardinal Cibo, the Venetian Cardinal Basadona, and Cardinal d’Estrées. Estrades petitioned to have the bulls gratis foregoing the requisite – and costly – tax to the papal chancery. The business dragged on for months during which time Estrades curried Cibo’s patronage in particular to expedite matters and to demonstrate the “care that he had taken to manage the court of Rome.” The ambassador did not want to appear unable to command ties in the curia. To encourage respect in Rome he undertook special favors even for his French benefactor Cardinal d’Estrées providing protection for the singer Catarina Nardi. The songbird was a Roman protégé of Estrées’ going to Venice possibly to further her career at the new opera house of San’ Angelo that opened in 1677.

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119 “He was the son of Marshal d’Estrades and he was a great success in Venice and in Turin where he was ambassador, but he endeavored himself greatly.” Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon, Mémoires complètes et authentiques du Duc de Saint-Simon sur le siècle de Louis XIV et la Régence, vol. 12 (Paris: A. Sautelet, 1829), 134-135.

120 La Haye, “Un Bénéfice aux Pays Bas,” 8.

121 Although the abbé had never met the Hispanophile cardinal, he asked Basadona for assistance in acquiring the bulls. BnF, CL, vol. 584, Estrades to Card. Basadona, 6 Feb. 1677, F. 83.

122 For the only brief discussion of the role of the tax that I have found see: Jane E. Sayers, Papal Government and England During the Pontificate of Honorius III (1216-1227) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 47-48. It can be assumed through Estrades’s troubles regarding the tax that the system Sayers describes survived in the papal chancery into the early-modern period.


Meanwhile, the Marshal d’Estrades recommended his son personally to the king, the pope, and Cardinal Cibo in hopes that he might receive the *gratis* for the bulls and, of greater importance to the Estrades clan, a nomination to the archbishopric of Bourges which fell vacant in 1676. The Marshal likewise worked in concert with the curia to negotiate the status of Cardinal Bevilacqua, the papal nuncio at the congress, in the hierarchy of ambassadors and plenipotentiaries at Nijmegen and in his controversial request for the personal use of one of the city’s churches. Given the tensions surrounding the negotiations, Estrades’s maneuvers were no small matter. His efforts undoubtedly contributed to his son’s favor with the pontiff.

Finally, in March 1677, Estrades’ entreaties and favors prevailed. Innocent XI granted the *gratis* for the bulls no doubt also as a boon to Louis XIV and the marshal at Nijmegen. The abbé noted that “...even My Lords the Spanish Cardinals were favorable to me.” Estrades immediately set about gratifying those, like Cibo, who acted on his behalf through favors. By so doing the other strand in the Stradella affair emerged. Cibo was implicated when the composer and a castrato of his acquaintance contrived to extort ten thousand *scudi* from a Roman woman engaged into the Cibo family. The scheme failed leaving the Cibo family humiliated. Fleeing for his life, Alessandro Stradella left Rome taking refuge in Venice bringing the composer into Contarini’s household as a musical protégé. In Contarini’s service, Stradella

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125 In his letter to his son of 16 March, Estrades said that he had written Louis XIV to request the archbishopric for his son. The abbé would ultimately not receive the appointment. BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 16 March 1677, F. 342; Bergin, *Crown, Church and Episcopate*, 212; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 24 Dec. 1677, F. 745; BnF, CL, vol. 585, Estrades to Card. d’Estrées, 23 Jan. 1677, F. 33.
encountered his Venetian patron’s mistress, Agnese, with whom he began a love affair. The musician’s subsequent irritating behavior among Venetian nobility, the jealous Alvise Contarini in particular, opened a clear path for Estrades to show his gratitude and to strengthen French aims in Venice and Rome through what seemed a trifle. When Stradella fled Venice for Turin, Estrades complied with Contarini’s importunements to assist in his revenge against the composer.

Here the strands of the Stradella case merged. The abbé provided Contarini and his men with the letter to be delivered to the Marquis de Villars in Turin. “It is true, Monsieur,” the abbé claimed to Cardinal d’Estrées, “I was told if Stradella refused to marry the girl he abducted (Agnese van Uffelle), which was the only way to satisfy M. Contarini, that he would be beaten…. The request (for the letter) did not seem violent, and as I have a natural repugnance for action of that nature, it did not win me over even when I learned that the musician often merited a more severe punishment. But what persuaded me further was that he cruelly injured Cardinal Cibo in Rome.” Estrades claimed innocence in the affair’s violence, but as the acknowledged representatives of Louis XIV, the participation of his ambassadors leant an air of royal approval to an extraterritorial act of aggression. Calm soon returned to Franco-Savoyard relations through the ministrations of Estrées in Turin and Cardinal Delfin writing on Estrades’ behalf. In a Christmas Eve letter Estrades’s father remarked, “I am very pleased to learn…that the affair causing so much noise is over.” The marshal confirmed, indeed that “…the King no longer

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135 AAE, CP, Venise, Estrades to Louis XIV, 18 Dec. 1677, Fs. 293-305; BnF, CL, vol. 582, Marshal d’Estrades to Estrades, 24 Dec. 1677, F. 745
The young ambassador still believed that his reputation, however, could be compromised in the last month of 1677. He penned a long letter to Louis XIV containing documents that he hoped would fully rehabilitate him and his efforts.

**A Penitent Abbé d’Estrades Outing the Negotiations for Casale**

The Stradella incident resulted from the lengths to which Estrades went to secure an intelligence community in Venice and the continued loyalty of the pro-French members of its patriciate in the service of his career and of Louis XIV. The ill-advised involvement in Contarini’s vendetta, however, left him embarrassed, and it compromised his reputation with the king and his patron, Pomponne. The end of 1677 was a low point in Estrades’s nascent career, and as an ambassador maintaining royal favor came through prudent negotiation and personal engagement. Estrades labored under an absolute monarchy constructed through functionaries’ abilities to promote and seamlessly utilize personal bonds of fidelity. These were deployed both vertically and horizontally abroad and in the domestic hierarchy. Louis XIV’s eventual purchase of Casale from Ferdinando-Carlo di Gonzaga-Nevers, Duke of Mantua through Estrades’ connections must be analyzed through the lens of the humiliating Stradella affair and his father’s earlier warning to remain in royal favor.

Count Ercole Francesco Maria Mattioli’s final confirmation to Estrades in November 1677 that the Duke of Mantua was willing to sell Casale to Louis XIV arrived at just the moment when Louis XIV’s opinion of Estrades needed bolstering. The abbé awaited the Duke’s unreserved declaration to enter into negotiations with Louis XIV for the fortress for four months before writing of it to the king. Perhaps because of the Stradella debacle the ambassador believed he should come clean about the heretofore-secret negotiations. His first letter in

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137 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Louis XIV, 18 Dec. 1677, Fs 293r-293v, 298v-299r.
December after learning the king pardoned him for the miscalculation opened submissively.\textsuperscript{139} Then followed twenty-two coded folios detailing secret meetings and correspondence in concert with Count Mattioli and the above-mentioned pamphleteer Giuliani. Estrades detailed the duke’s exact motivations for offering the fortress to Louis XIV. The gratifications the abbé secured for Giuliani in December 1676 were not solely for pro-French broadsheets in Venice. Giuliani served Estrades as intermediary in the early stages of talks just as Mattioli served the duke. The ambassador and Mattioli maintained the deepest secrecy throughout — evading even the vigilant Badoer.\textsuperscript{140}

The Duke’s positive response prompted the abbé to solicit a letter to Louis XIV from the count and an exact plan of the fortifications of Casale’s citadel. Estrades included a coded copy of Mattioli’s letter in his dispatch to his master.\textsuperscript{141} In the letter Mattioli opined that of all the ambassadors the king sent to Venice that Estrades “surpassed them all.” Through his negotiations with the ambassador Mattioli knew him to be “seeking…to procure for Your Majesty the most considerable expansion.”\textsuperscript{142} The count added that his master, alongside his Nevers roots, were “Princes more French than Italian,” and that the current duke desired to accommodate the king.\textsuperscript{143} Mattioli concluded saying that through his efforts and those of the abbé that they also heard from many contacts in the Milanese willing to be rid of Spanish rule there and favorable to the French.\textsuperscript{144}

Details of the subsequent dealings between Estrades and Mattioli for the final French purchase of Casale have been described adequately elsewhere so that a retelling is not necessary.

\textsuperscript{140} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Louis XIV, 18 Dec.1677, Fs. 292r, 294r, 301r-301v, 305r.
\textsuperscript{141} Estrades noted that he would send the plan of the citadel along after he heard from the king. Ibid., F. 300v.
\textsuperscript{142} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Mattioli to Louis XIV, 14 Dec. 1677, Fs. 287r-287v.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., F. 289r.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., F. 289v.
Accounts of the negotiations leading to Louis XIV’s acquisition of the stronghold in September 1681, however, have not fully described Estrades’s motivations through the process before his December 1677 letter of apology to Louis XIV. In his full treatment of negotiations for Casale, Carlo Contessa mentioned only Estrades’s inducements for preferment but nothing of his thorny ordeal in relation to Alessandro Stradella. Indeed to understand the personal nature of Louis XIV’s foreign ministry and the abilities of its actors to create networks of information dependent to some degree on them as individuals such description is illuminating.

Sebastiano Foscarini, Venetian ambassador to France (1678-1683), understood the personal nature of the international system in which he and the abbé negotiated. Through the trenchant reportage of his 1683 relazione to the senate he analyzed not only the hegemonic intentions of Louis XIV, but he captured succinctly Estrades’s personal inducements. Foscarini’s report coupled with Estrades’s letter of 18 December 1677 depicted a clear image of the arrangement’s nuances prior to the well-documented events of 1678-1679 that effectively clenched the deal in favor of France.

Foscarini described in a bleak synthesis his observations in France. For Louis XIV, according to Foscarini, the seizure of Casale, already a fait accompli by 1683, allowed the king a stronghold in Northern Italy and it, along with Pinerolo in Piemonte, provided two “piazze” from which to intimidate the Duke of Savoy who held “the keys to Italy.”

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145 Although Bély places the negotiations’ origins in 1678 rather than 1677 – as the sources attest – for the most recent account of the negotiations as they progressed in 1678 and their final outcome see: Bély, Les secrets de Louis XIV: Mystères d’État et pouvoir absolu (Paris: Tallandier, 2013), 406-412.

146 Contessa’s work is an in-depth treatment of the French interest to acquire Casale and the eventual purchase. Contessa also described Estrades’s continued work toward the acquisition from his new appointment in Turin after 1678. Carlo Contessa, Per la storia di un episodio della politica italiana di Luigi XIV, 32-33.

147 Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 11.

148 Foscarini’s relazione to the senate is not only beautiful to read, but it is also one of the most detailed and descriptive accounts that Venetian ambassadors wrote during the personal rule of Louis XIV. Foscarini, Relatione, 1683, 429.
throughout Europe could materialize with further acquisitions in Italy like Casale.\textsuperscript{149} He expressed Louis XIV’s aspirations to a universal monarchy, admitting that the Duke of Mantua offered himself, perhaps unwittingly, as part of this design. He opted ostensibly to negotiate with France to maintain some semblance of his authority and to augment his pitiful finances.\textsuperscript{150}

Foscarini then described Estrades’s contribution to the potential growth of French hegemony in Italy. The duke was in part pressured from the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs to render Casale to them on a variety of pretexts.\textsuperscript{151} They beset the Duke of Mantua threatening to wrest Casale from him by force. Rather than posit French threats along with those of Spain and Austria, the “…Abbé d’Estrades, at that time the Crown’s ambassador to Your Serenity,” Foscarini continued, through an “active intellect,” manipulated the duke’s vanity. The ambassador, from Foscarini’s perspective, convinced the duke that by “putting Casale in the hands of the Most Christian King,” that he would “…confound the pride of the Spanish….”\textsuperscript{152} Estrades was “happy to keep the threads of the negotiation in his hands until the most opportune moment, neither pulling them too hard nor abandoning them.”\textsuperscript{153} Foscarini implied the abbé, like the Bourbon foreign policy he served, saw that the acquisition of Casale – in conjunction with all of Louis XIV’s other seizures of Spanish territories and piazze across Europe – would allow France “…to render its kingdom inaccessible [to attack].”\textsuperscript{154}

The Venetian ambassador relayed the strategem of the negotiation to the senate. He explained the method through which Estrades plied the prince’s defenses. Well-acquainted with the institutions of French absolutism through his four years at the court, Foscarini understood

\textsuperscript{149}Foscarini, \textit{Relatione}, 1683, 408-409.
\textsuperscript{150}Ibid., 431.
\textsuperscript{151}Ibid., 405.
\textsuperscript{153}Foscarini, 406. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 99, Estrades to Louis XIV, 18 Dec. 1677, Fs. 292r, 305r.
\textsuperscript{154}Foscarini, 406.
Estrades’s position and that his future depended on performance. He offered then an explanation for the abbé’s personal interest in the arrangement. Having admitted Estrades’s intelligence, Foscarini said the ambassador was “…eager to give birth to a transaction in an otherwise fruitless ministry.” The abbé was indeed unable to persuade Venice from its neutrality despite his best efforts through secret channels and through direct representation. Foscarini recognized that the abbé was in Venice for that reason, and he undoubtedly knew that Venice had no intention of allying overtly with France as French forces gathered around Italy and as the king’s plenipotentiaries “dictated rather than contracted peace” at Nijmegen.

Conclusion

Foscarini’s observation of Estrades’s conduct in his final year in Venice was more precise than he might have known. The Abbé d’Estrades’s work in the republic provided French leverage at the Congress of Nijmegen to gain “overlordship of the maritime ports of the Kingdom of Naples and to reenter Sicily.” He had relayed details of French entry into Spanish dominions in Italy and into the “commerce of the Levant and the Mediterranean…impeding its resources to all others” through his dispatches. Estrades reinforced French networks in Rome, and he upheld Franco-Venetian relations in a moment when the republic was growing anxious about its ally’s intentions. Yet, he had failed earlier to secure Giovanni Battista Nani’s nomination as mediator, and he could not shake the Venetians from their position of ostensible neutrality; a neutrality that allowed the republic an economic and geopolitical respite in the years following the loss of Crete. In this period, Estrades made use of the Duke of Mantua’s

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155 Foscarini, Relatione, 1683, 356.
156 Ibid., 405.
157 Ibid., 355.
158 Ibid., 433.
159 Contarini, Relazione, 1676-1686, 327.
predicament during the fallout of the Stradella case, writing “…Sire, this misfortune obliges me to act henceforth in all things through a greater circumspection for which I hope Your Majesty will never have reason to be dissatisfied with my conduct.” He sensed that his reputation and his future came close to ruin. His advancement depended on some advantage to offer the Crown as Venice stubbornly resisted an alliance and became increasingly anti-French.

The duke’s final decision to negotiate with France for Casale through Count Mattioli arrived just as the abbé reeled from the Stradella affair. The confluence of these events, so well symbolized through Estrades’s penitent letter to Louis XIV in which he enclosed those of Mattioli, proved to be the conjuncture of events – both international and personal – to which Sebastiano Foscarini referred. Estrades waited for a fortuitous opportunity before he divulged the secret negotiations with Louis XIV and Pomponne. The prospect of a tidy purchase at Spain’s expense intrigued and pleased the king securing Estrades’s position as successor to the Marquis de Villars as ambassador to Turin where he served from 1679-1685. The French siezure of the enclave in 1681, however, would take place as Louis XIV’s authority across Europe swelled to an alarming degree from the vantage of other European rulers. In the early 1680s an embittered Venice would interpret the French occupation of Casale in conjunction with the king’s emergent politics of réunions and refusal to succor Leopold I against the Turks as evidence that he might soon seek to incorporate other Italian lands into his kingdom. Venetian amity toward the king was to shift to the House of Habsburg.

Part II:

The Republic of Venice: Neutral State or Late Ally of Leopold I? 1680-1700
Chapter Four

Fig. 9
The Ambassador as a Target:
Michel-Antoine, Sieur d’Amelot (1682-1685)

The Sieur d’Amelot attended the solemnities for the Feast of Saint Anthony in the basilica of Saint Mark on 13 June 1684.¹ Inside the sanctuary, Amelot, the French ambassador, accompanied Doge Marc-Antonio Giustiniani, Venetian officials, and other foreign dignitaries. Meanwhile, outside in the crowded piazza, the captain of the sbirri — the guards of public order — conspicuously shoved two of Amelot’s liveried gondoliers and a French tailor living in the city through jeering spectators gathered in Venice’s most public space.² The captain arrested the men for allegedly instigating a brawl in a cabaret abutting the piazza. Rather than moving the men to the prisons in gondolas away from the crowd, he made a scene of their arrest sending messengers into the basilica to alert members of the Council of Ten of the tumult. There followed an aggressive escort through the crowds after which the French prisoners were cast into the “black prisons.”³

¹ Michel Amelot is often referred to as the Marquis de Gournay or Amelot de Gournay in secondary literature. While in Venice Amelot held the honorary title of sieur — lord — as he inherited the lordship of his father’s Picard properties in 1671. Louis XIV did not elevate Amelot to the marquisate of Gournay until May 1685 upon his return from the republic. The title became hereditary 2 April 1693. See, Érection de la terre de Gournay-sur-Aronde en marquisat en faveur de Michel Amelot, ancien ambassadeur du Roi à Venise, mai 1685, in Recueil des documents inédites sur la Picardie, tome II, ed. Victor de Beauville (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1867), 367-369; Baron de Girardot, Correspondance de Louis XIV avec le Marquis Amelot, Son Ambassadeur en Portugal, 1685-1688 (Nantes: La Société Académique, 1863), 69.

² Captains of the sbirri were under the direct control of the Council of Ten. Leopold Curti, Mémoires Historiques et Politiques sur la République de Venise (Paris: Charles Pougen, 1802), 177-178; Paolo Preto, I servizi segreti di Venezia: Spionaggio e contropionaggio: cifrari, intercettazioni, delazioni, tra mito e realtà (Milan: il Saggiatore, 1994), 193. For a discussion of the importance of the piazza on public occasions and the large crowds that gathered there see Iain Fenlon, Music and Culture in Late Renaissance Italy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

³ AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 14 June 1684, Fs. 178r-178v, 182v, 184v, 191r. Numerous taverns existed around the basilica, and they drew many foreigners. Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, Venice Triumphant: The Horizons of a Myth, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Baltimore: The Johns Hokins University Press, 1999), 145-146. The piazza was also a notorious space for the collection of news to be spread to an international audience. The assault on the French ambassador’s men in the square would have become fodder for writers of avvisi and gazettes. Simone Lonardi, “Informazione, spionaggio e segreto di stato à Venezia al prima età moderna,” Bolletino della Società Letteraria 2012, 148.
This was the fourth and most public incident involving members of Amelot’s household since his arrival in Venice; it would not be the last. Amelot’s experience in the republic was punctuated with such events. He feared for his reputation with his master, but he maintained that these humiliations were “premeditated with enthusiasm” and aimed at his legitimacy as ambassador and at the king’s dignity.⁴ Since Louis XIV’s successes through the treaties of Nijmegen and Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1678-1679, the acquisition of Casale in 1681, and the ensuing politics of réunions, many in Venice became hostile to the French.⁵ Despite the controversies surrounding Amelot and his repeated pleas that the king demand satisfaction from the republic, Louis XIV kept the novice ambassador in Venice for almost three years.

Amelot’s service in Venice from May 1682 to February 1685 was the most acrimonious of any French ambassador there in the late seventeenth century. His tenure coincided with France’s greatest territorial expansion and arguably the final ascent of Louis XIV’s authority in Europe.⁶ That the king allowed Amelot to suffer degradations underscored the objectives of French foreign policy in the early 1680s.⁷ Venetian treatment of Amelot revealed anti-French sentiment in these years reinforcing the republic’s pro-Habsburg foreign policy. Venice could not afford openly to attack Louis XIV as his international authority expanded. The government could, however, use state mechanisms to make his representative’s life miserable; it did so as

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⁵ Rule, “Louis XIV, Roi-Bureaucrate,” in Rule, 68; Preto, I servizi segreti di Venezia, 191.
Louis XIV asserted international pressure that threatened Italy and as Venice's senate debated an alliance with Leopold I just prior to the formation of the Holy League in 1684.

Amelot’s embassy illustrated the evolution and the restrictions of the *louisquatorzien* foreign relations apparatus at the apogee of French international authority. Correspondingly, Amelot revealed a republic persevering as a sought-after military and diplomatic ally in Europe and the Mediterranean. The French foreign ministry’s responses to the ambassador in these years showed that Louis XIV understood this. The king believed it necessary to threaten Venice with the possibility of war in Italy to avoid opposition to either French territorial designs in the empire or to compromise Franco-Ottoman relations. Incidents such as that in the Piazza San Marco during the Feast of Saint Anthony allowed the king leverage with the republic while focusing his attention on the depredations of the Spanish Netherlands and the German frontier.

The king proved through reprisals since 1661 that humidifying or attacking his emissaries was intolerable. That he allowed his ambassador in Venice to undergo embarrassment with no retaliation reinforced the reality that Venice posed a viable risk to French international policy in the early 1680s. France needed a neutral Venetian government vis-a-vis the Habsburgs. French territorial and commercial policies, however, compelled the republic into a pro-Habsburg alliance that was to last until the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699. Dangling the inexperienced Amelot in the void, Louis XIV intentionally gave Venetian antipathy a target at which to fire in a

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9 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Louis XIV to Amelot, 29 Sept. 1683, Fs. 519r-519v, 520r.
12 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 31 March 1683, Fs. 319r-319v.
13 Setton, 404.
bid to stop the senate allying with Leopold I while giving a novice ambassador a lesson in diplomacy.

Amelot in Venice: A New Man in the Administration of Colbert de Croissy

Amelot succeeded the Sieur de Varangeville (1679-1682) as ambassador to Venice.\textsuperscript{14} Varangeville maintained the Franco-Venetian rapport after the Abbé d’Estrades’s negotiations for the acquisition of Casale.\textsuperscript{15} Casale cemented France’s foothold in Northern Italy after the Congress of Nijmegen, and the purchase hinted at what many feared were Louis XIV’s designs to incorporate Italy piecemeal into his kingdom.\textsuperscript{16} The shift in foreign ministers that occurred after Arnould de Pomponne’s disgrace in 1679 also unsettled the Venetian government. Charles Colbert, Marquis de Croissy (1679-1696), although friendly to the republic, was unknown among foreign states regarding the direction of French foreign policy under his supervision. The concomitants of French support for Hungarian rebels under the leadership of Count Tekely against Leopold I and the establishment of the first controversial \textit{chambre de réunion} of Metz in 1681 contributed to the senate’s continued disillusionment toward their ostensible French allies and the new minister of foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{17} Consequently, Venice was predisposed to mistrust Louis XIV’s newest emissary.

Of Picard origin, Amelot was born in 1655 to Charles Amelot, Seigneur-Baron de Neury and Brunelles (1620-1671) and Marie Lyonne daughter of Jacques Lyonne, Seigneur de Cuilly and Livri, a former \textit{grand audiencier de France}.\textsuperscript{18} Charles Amelot became a \textit{conseiller} in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplément, Varangeville to Louis XIV, 16 May 1682, F. 69v.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Aliette de Pracomtal, \textit{Un Ambassadeur de Louis XIV à Venise, 1679-1682} (Luneray: Éditions Bertout, 1989), 51.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Girolamo Venier, \textit{Relazione di Francia}, 17 Nov. 1695, in Barozzi & Berchet, 564-565; Black, \textit{European International Relations}, 93-94.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Rule, “Louis XIV, Roi-Bureacrate,” 76.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Louis Moreri, \textit{Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique de Moreri}, Tome I (Paris: Les Librairies Associés, 1759), 454, 456; The \textit{grand audiencier de France} worked in the chancellery overseeing the sealing of royal edicts and
\end{itemize}
parlement of Paris the year Louis XIV was born. In 1674, at the age of nineteen, Michel followed
his father in this capacity, and in 1677 Amelot purchased the position of *maitre de requêtes
ordinaire de l’hôtel du roi*. 19 These charges soon brought him into the closed circle of *conseillers
du roi dans ses conseils d’état et privé* - “the central nervous system of the government.” 20

Diplomacy became more centralized and systematic under the direction of Colbert de
Croissy. 21 As in other areas of *louisquatorzien* bureaucracy, there was a push to elevate men of
*robe* origin to diplomatic posts. 22 Attachment to the king and Croissy rather than noble birth
propelled their careers. 23 They owed continued preferment to the king, and under Croissy the
push to control the training of the crown’s foreign ministry and its functionaries became
exacting. 24 In the context of a centralizing administration and the promotion of able servants,
Amelot was ideal for elevation into Croissy’s ministry. His duties in the king’s *conseils* no doubt
brought Amelot to the attention of Croissy. He received instructions on 17 February to leave for
the Republic of Venice. 25 As Louis XIV was installing his court definitively at Versailles in
1682, the twenty-seven year old Michel-Antoine d’Amelot embarked upon his new career as an
ambassador.

facilitating the legalities related to the royal seal and its use. The office brought Amelot’s maternal grandfather into
close ties with the later chancellors under Louis XIII and Richelieu: Étienne I d’Aligre and Pierre Ségui er. Bernard
19Ibid. The office of *conseiller d’État du Roi en tous ses conseils or dans ses conseils d’État et privé* gained prestige
and more responsibility in 1673 when Louis XIV fixed the number of *conseillers* at thirty. According to Barbiche
the thirty *conseillers* received their titles directly from the king through letters patent upon swearing an oath to the
chancellor. *Conseillers* acted as experts in French legal precedent within the councils working closely with the king
and the ministers as decisions were made. Ibid., 282-283, 284-285.
20Ibid., 284.
22Ibid., 67.
23According to Pietro Venier under Croissy and his son, Torcy, ambassadors were chosen most often as a rule from
*robe* families. Only Rome and Vienna received high-ranking aristocrats as a matter of respect to those courts. Pietro
24Venier, 514-515; Soll, *The Information Master*, 155; Rule and Trotter, 52-53.
He arrived in Venice *incognito* on 10 May along with his suite and an expensive cargo of furniture and plate for the embassy.²⁶ The ambassadress, Catherine le Pelletier de la Houssaie, followed her husband.²⁷ Although his official entrée would not occur until 23 September, Amelot’s troubled rapport with the Venetians began while still *incognito.*²⁸ Venetian suspicion revolved around members of Amelot’s household. His secretary, lackeys, and gondoliers became suspects involved in incidents ostensibly regarding the franchises that all foreign ambassadors claimed in Venice. It is uncertain how many servants Amelot employed, but it seems he had fewer than the Bishop of Beziers.²⁹ Bonsy, for example, noted that he had eight gondoliers in his retinue whereas Amelot employed only six.³⁰ The sources attest that serving Amelot in particular were Roger de Piles, his personal secretary, and a Signor Bartolomeo Franceschi, a “secretary of the Italian tongue.”³¹ For the first time an ambassador in Venice claimed the French consul there,

²⁷ Amelot married Catherine in June 1679. She was the daughter of a *maître de requêtes ordinaire de l’hôtel du roi,* Nicolas II le Pelletier, Seigneur de la Houssaie and Chateau-Poissy, and of Catherine le Picart de Perigny. Moreri, *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique,* 456. I have found no evidence of a family connection between Catherine’s father and Claude le Pelletier who became *contrôleur général des finances* upon the death of Colbert in 1683. The latter was attached as a client to the Le Tellier clan and the disgraced Pomponne - both enemies of the Colberts. Both men were, however, like Amelot and his father, *conseillers* in the parlement of Paris and *conseillers d’états.* Their collective stories illustrate the elevation of *robe* families into prominent offices and the importance of attachments to one another and to the great ministerial clans. The loss of the ministry of finance to a client of the Le Telliers in 1683 also signified the move of the Colbert clan to tighten its grasp around the ministries of foreign affairs and the marine after the death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Spanheim, *Relation de la cour de France,* 299-300, 300n; Rule and Trotter, *A World of Paper,* 192.
Jean-Guillaume Le Blond, and the vice-consul, Comel, as part of his retinue sharing in the privilege of duty free comestibles he dispensed to his household.\textsuperscript{32}

The enterprise of diplomacy and its consequences for foreign policy were not solely dependent upon the ambassador. The details regarding Amelot’s household that emerge from dispatches, affidavits, and the \textit{avvisi} from the inquisitors’ spy, Badoer, revealed the extent to which the ambassador’s dependents fed the organism of espionage. They played a vital role in collecting the news informing the ambassador’s dispatches. Amelot was inexperienced with and allegedly arrogant toward the Venetian government. The discourse regarding diplomatic immunity and Amelot’s prejudice toward his hosts highlighted the problematic nature of early modern diplomats as individuals in representative roles. The scandals of Amelot and his staff exemplified incidents Louis XIV’s foreign ministry hoped to circumvent through the later creation of the \textit{académie politique}.\textsuperscript{33} The foreign ministry increasingly believed a centrally trained pool of ambassadors and secretaries might protect state secrets and avoid mistakes on the part of diplomats.\textsuperscript{34}

Amelot’s papers demonstrate the praxis of Colbert de Croissy’s reorganization of the ministry of foreign affairs after 1679.\textsuperscript{35} Croissy’s creation of a foreign affairs archive began during Amelot’s embassy, and the ambassador’s correspondence with Louis XIV and Croissy highlighted the attempt to control information vertically that characterized the foreign ministry

\textsuperscript{32} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, F. 262v. Jean-Guillaume Le Blond became consul in 1679 after the death of Pierre Cotolendi just months after he was to replace the son of Paul Vedoa. AN, MA, B\textsuperscript{7}, 55, \textit{Provisions de consul de France à Venise pour Guillaume Leblond en remplaçant de Pierre Cotolendi décédé}, 22 Dec. 1679, F. 389.


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 29; Bély, \textit{Les Secrets de Louis XIV}, 258.

for the rest of the reign. Previous ambassadors to Venice, as I have shown, corresponded with a number of ministers at court and ambassadors abroad. Bonsy and Estrades independently undertook cultural and commercial tasks expanding the scope of foreign relations at the instigation of ministers outside the ministry of foreign affairs like Jean Baptiste Colbert. Estrades’s embassy underscored the problems that arose through an ambassador’s independent correspondence, but such interventions are largely absent from Amelot’s papers.

Amelot entered a hostile republic torn, as was Leopold I, between Mehmet IV in the east and the Ottomans’ French ally to the west. The ambassador was to report to Louis XIV any information of Venice’s relationships with Leopold and with Mehmet. Of critical importance too were the Venetian senate’s reaction to French movements in Italy and the republic’s possible negotiations with the Habsburgs in Italian affairs. Copies of communiqués between Amelot and other French ambassadors are rare in the sources. Amelot corresponded often with the ambassador in Constantinople, Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne, Comte de Guilleragues, but this is evident only through references he made to Guilleragues in dispatches to the king. The correspondence with Guilleragues came as a direct order from Croissy as Venice was the closest destination for packets going from Constantinople to France that were to be included in those of Amelot coming from Venice.

The relative dearth of Amelot’s letters to and from other French emissaries in dispatches is, however, hard to account for. A possible explanation is that Amelot’s robe origins and his

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36 Soll, The Information Master, 155-156.
37 Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 263.
39 Ibid.
40 Croissy, Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au Sieur Amelot, 100-101.
relatively new post in the king’s conseils of 1677 left him dependent upon Louis XIV and Croissy until he was established within broader information circles. Amelot’s status as a new diplomat restricted a priori international networks at his disposal. He had no experience with intelligence networks beyond France as had Bonsy and Estrades. Amelot too was the first ambassador in Venice whose communication with Jean-Baptiste Colbert does not survive if it existed. Throughout his embassy Amelot corresponded directly with Louis XIV, writing letters to and receiving letters from Croissy infrequently; this was a different practice compared to previous foreign ministers who maintained triangular correspondences with ambassadors and the king.

Amelot’s inexperience showed in his early writing as Louis XIV instructed Amelot to write more detailed information in his early dispatches.41 The reports of Amelot and Venetian ambassadors’ in Paris attest that he corresponded with personal acquaintances and members of other government ministries in France to be sure.42 None of these letters, however, found their way into the state archives as had Bonsy’s and Estrades’s. In fact, under Croissy’s ministry, the king forbade ambassadors to include personal papers in official dispatches and packets. This practice reflected the complex divisions among Croissy’s commis who had little enough time to

41 An example is Amelot’s sparsely written report of his entrée. Previous ambassadors wrote lengthy and precise descriptions providing evidence in case of breaches of protocol. Amelot claimed he did not want to bore the king with details drawing a command from the king to write a thorough account of the event. AMAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Sept. 1682, F. 124r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 15 Oct. 1682, F. 127r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, mémoire “recue avec la despesche de Mr. Amelot du 31 Oct. 1682,” Fs. 157r-162r.

42 Amelot did correspond infrequently with Jean-Baptiste Colbert, but we learn this only through slight mention of their interactions recorded in the official diplomatic dispatches. He also communicated with the Marquis de Louvois, and the Marquis de Seignelay. The contents of these letters related to cultural and engineering affairs, and these communications appear to have been few in number. Guy Patin to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, 3 June 1683, in Lettres, Instructions et Mémoires de Colbert, vol. V, ed. Pierre Clément (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1868), 566-567; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Amelot to Croissy, 21 Aug. 1683, F. 493r; AN, MA, B7, 56, Seignelay to Amelot, 14 Aug. 1684, F. 38v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 4 Nov. 1684, Fs. 343r-343v; SHAT, GR, A1, 715, Louvois to Amelot, 16 July 1684, F. 406.
handle copious official communications. Louis XIV and Croissy wanted to control the flow of sensitive information with fewer intelligence breaches; fewer distractions from the ministry’s instructions to the ambassador; and no cluttered packets complicating the work of Croissy’s commis overseeing the synthesis of foreign intelligence sources and composing official responses. Amelot complied with this innovation.

A further novelty appeared in Amelot’s instructions. Scholars of early-modern Europe are familiar with the relazioni of Venetian ambassadors; these extensive reports possibly prompted Croissy to command the ambassador to write a final report. No previous ambassador to Venice was asked to do so. This suggests the affinity for documented information that Jean-Baptiste Colbert imposed throughout Ludovician bureaucracy. Colbert’s methodical control of affairs through meticulous documentation influenced his brother’s methods as foreign minister. Curiously, if Amelot wrote a final relation it did not survive among his papers in the archives. Perhaps it has simply been lost although this would be uncharacteristic of Croissy’s formation of the first systematic diplomatic archive in France. Further examination of Amelot’s experiences in Venice, however, may help to understand why the document was either never written or omitted from the ambassador’s extant correspondence.

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47 Ibid., 155-156.
48 Ibid.; Bély, 284.
Amelot Reports the Venetian Response to Louis XIV’s Foreign Policy: Prelude to a Mediterranean War, 1682-1684

Amelot’s communication with Louis XIV provides evidence of the monarch’s overconfidence in his intelligence system to predict the capacities of perceived weaker states vis-à-vis French policy.49 An examination of Amelot’s embassy in the Serenissima amplified the limitations of Louis XIV’s authority. The king and Colbert de Croissy followed a policy meant to maintain peace with the Habsburgs after Nijmegen. Correlative and injurious to this course was the further annexation of lands through the chambres des réunions that the king believed legally belonged to him pursuant to the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nijmegen.50 Croissy’s imperative was to maintain peace while courting states, like Venice, whose loyalty could help avoid another war with the Habsburgs as his politics of réunions’ progressed.51

Amelot revealed that the king and the foreign ministry underestimated the resilience and military strength of the republic and of Leopold I.52 The foreign ministry could not curtail Venice’s disapproval of Louis XIV’s seeming greed and treacherousness. The king’s relatively healthy relations with the Ottomans in the early 1680s provided an opportunity to filch territory along the Rhine while the emperor’s resources were directed toward Hungary and while Venice gauged which enemy was the most pressing – Louis XIV or the Sultan.53 In Venice many - both commoners and aristocrats - believed them to be one and the same.54

49 Spielman, Leopold I of Austria, 94.
50 Saint Hilaire, Mémoires, 4, 5-6; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 263.
51 Spanheim, Relation de la cour de France, 361-362.
53 Ibid., 97-98, 116-117.
54 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 14 June 1684, F. 179r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Amelot to Louis XIV, F. 552v; Jean Nouzille, “La Réconquete de la Hongrie sur les Turcs vue par la France: De la victoire
Amelot began relaying detailed knowledge from the republic. Initially he hypothesized that Venice was engaged in diplomatic and military negotiations with Leopold I and Spain to neutralize the French presence in Italy and the western empire. It is easy to understand why Venice’s concerted mobilization of military forces in 1682 and 1683 appeared directed against the French as much as was Venetian public opinion. The purchase of Casale in 1681 provided Louis XIV a stronger presence in the peninsula. The arrival of French troops into Casale occurred on the same day as the annexation of Strasbourg after the deliberations of the first chambre de réunion. Casale and Pinerolo provided territories with fortresses allowing the king enclaves of authority in which to station French military presence in Italy. These spaces lay suspiciously near the Spanish Milanese although the king claimed he had no intention to expand there. The Duke of Mantua’s further cession of lands in Monferrato to the French in February 1683 seemed to contradict royal reassurances.

The king’s growing rivalry with Pope Innocent XI too gained strength in 1682 as the feud over the rights of régale culminated in the Paris parlement’s acceptance of the Four Gallican Articles cementing Franco-papal tensions for the rest of the decade. It appeared to the Venetian senate that the king might force his will upon Northern Italian princes as he had imposed it upon

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56 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Amelot to Louis XIV, 9 Oct. 1683, F. 552v
57 Spanheim, Relation de la cour de France, 493.
58 Foscarini, Relazione di Francia, 1684, in Barozzi & Berchet, 485-486; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 263; Saint Hilaire, Mémoires, 9-10.
59 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 13 June 1682, Fs. 29r-29v.
60 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitori di Stato to Foscarini, 27 Feb. 1683; Foscarini, Relazione di Francia, 1684, 433, 485-486.
the Dutch and the Spanish in the treaties that followed Nijmegen. Louis separated these states allowing France the upper hand on its eastern boundaries as a possible war on two fronts loomed before Leopold I. The king and Croissy believed Leopold would avoid a double front assuming he would concentrate his forces against the Turk and the rebelling Hungarian nobles under Count Tekely. Louis covertly encouraged both of Leopold’s eastern enemies in a bid to keep the emperor engaged by supporting Tekely with subsidies and reassuring Mehmet IV he would not help the emperor. Amelot indicated that imperial envoys were in Venice and the Milanese suggesting that the senate prepared to join an anti-French coalition in Italy; many in Venice believed they should do so. The republic’s Bailo in Constantinople, Giovambattista Donà, struggled to sustain peace with the Ottomans. Although the senate voted to augment troops and to fortify its traditional chain of strongholds along the Dalmatian coast and in Friuli, there was no indication yet that it aimed to enter a protracted Mediterranean conflict against Mehmet IV. The announcement of the league between Leopold I and Jan III Sobieski soon changed this assumption.

62 ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Foscarini to Inquisitors of State, 13 March 1683.
63 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 3 June 1682, F. 12r; Spanheim, Relation de la cour de France, 363-364; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 31 March 1683.
65 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplément, Compendio del Libro intitolato La Bilancia di Marte overo Ragione per le quali la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia deve stringersi l’Alleanza con l’Augustissima Casa, 1682, Fs. 127r-150v. The anonymous author of this work leveled a number of accusations at Louis XIV and his territorial ambitions suggesting strongly that Venice see the moral imperative to ally with the Habsburgs against French hegemony.
67 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 24 April 1683, Fs. 358r-358v.
From Amelot’s arrival in the republic and throughout 1683 Venice began to mobilize military and naval forces. The ambassador reported to the king that the senate debated extraordinary measures to raise funds. Among the proposals were the augmentation of the nobility and the recall for payment of banished subjects. The government considered levying sums owing to the state too from religious houses throughout the republic. The monies the senate raised, according to Amelot, paid for an extraordinary mobilization that the republic could still scant afford. Among the preparations in early 1683 were the construction of six galleys and three other vessels in the arsenal and a search for prisoners to man them. The republic sent thirty thousand ducats to Amsterdam to purchase iron cannons for galleys. By the end of the year the senate augmented preparations in the arsenal to construct thirty more vessels and fortify twenty eight existing ships. Venice also hoped to rent existing ships from neighboring states such as Genoa. Amelot’s skillful reportage incensed the Venetian government, and it began to consider how to stop information leaks to France.

Detailed reports of the senate’s financial and military preparations still provided no clear indication of where Venice meant to direct its resources. The republic’s uneasy peace with the Ottomans became increasingly fractured through the weakness and poor negotiations of Donà.

68 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 13 June 1683, F. 29r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 11 July 1682, F. 51v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, Trouppes de la Republique de Venise, mémoire sent in dispatch of 18 Nov. 1682, Fs. 193r-196r. Here Amelot reported the republic had only 7,022 infantry and 704 cavalry at its disposal, but the senate was working to increase these forces.
69 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 2 Jan. 1683, F. 228v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 9 Jan. 1683, 234r
70 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 30 Jan. 1683, F. 270r.
72 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 May 1683, F. 394v.
74 Guido Candiani, I vascelli della Serenissima, 173.
75 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 14 March 1682; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 20 Nov. 1682.
The Bailo made unauthorized promises that Venice would pay large sums to maintain a distinctly disadvantageous peace that permitted the Turks to edge closer to Venice’s Dalmatian dominions. Ultimately, the recall and subsequent imprisonment of Donà in May 1683 saw the collapse of Venetian-Ottoman diplomacy for the rest of the seventeenth century.

The senate now seemed paralyzed in deliberation, and, aware that Amelot was feeding Louis XIV news of its talks with imperial envoys, it hesitated to engage overtly with the Habsburgs. The siege of Vienna from July to mid-September intensified the senate’s fear of Mehmet IV, and pressed the republic to send more troops and materiel to its Friulian borders. The King’s refusal to aid the emperor during the siege infuriated many in the republic and throughout Northern Italy where he was reputedly known as the “Most Christian Turk.”

Louis disbelieved Venice would declare war on the Ottomans in concert with the emperor. The king was certain of Leopold’s unwillingness to fight a two-front war. Should Venice declare openly an alliance, he wrote Amelot, the republic would be left alone to fight the Turk if Leopold refused to accept further French acquisition of territories in the empire pursuant to the negotiations at the Diet of Ratisbonne. The king pressed Amelot to court the senate away from the emperor, but the pervasive anti-French sentiment that Amelot described in Venice

77 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 May 1683, F. 386r; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 256-257, 258-259.
78 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 July 1683; ASV-IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 11 Aug. 1683.
79 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 July 1683.
indicated that the government and its subjects were indeed favorable to a Habsburg alliance. The king’s augmentation in September of twenty six thousand infantry and fourteen thousand cavalry in his Italian enclaves pushed the republic closer to the Habsburgs. Venice shared the threat of the Turk with Leopold I, and the senate and people of Venice now distrusted Louis XIV completely.

Visits from imperial emissaries with the senate increased after the league formed between Leopold I and the Polish king. With the Ottoman siege of Vienna, the pope too pressed the republic to join its forces to the league. In the closing months of 1683 the senate was, according to Amelot, now fully in favor of allying with the emperor, the Polish king, and the pope. He remarked that many principal noble families expected that an alliance against the Ottomans would allow them to regain a Mediterranean empire and enrich themselves as many of them had done in the Candian War. Entreaties from Jan III Sobieski and subsidies from Innocent XI in December emboldened the senate further to consider the league. The death of Doge Alvise Contarini in January 1684 provided the opportunity the senate needed to make a final decision. The traditionally pro-French Contarini and his faction in the senate were the voices calling for prudence and impeding the league. Amelot reported that within days of

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84 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 10 Sept. 1683, ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 21 Sept. 1683.
85 Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 266.
88 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Amelot to Louis XIV, 4 Dec., 1683, Fs. 606r, 607r.
Contarini’s death the senate passed the measure spearheaded by Francesco Morosini to join the league with sixty three votes for and thirty against.\textsuperscript{90}

Soon after the election of Doge Marc-Antonio Giustinian, Venetian plenipotentiaries departed to join imperial and Polish diplomats at Lindz, and the senate dispatched a delegation to Rome.\textsuperscript{91} Amelot reported the official announcement of the Holy League in Venice on 12 March.\textsuperscript{92} Venice’s government had cast its lot with Leopold, and the alliance was to have profound effects for Franco-Venetian diplomacy later in the century.\textsuperscript{93} The provisions of the treaty stipulated that each party pledged perpetual membership in the defense of the others and at least six years offensive membership in the league. Each party was to eschew unilateral peace with the Turk and come to the others’ aid in any future war with the Ottomans. The members were allowed to attack Mehmet IV’s forces wherever each found the most advantage and pledging to cede ecclesiastical dominions to the pope.\textsuperscript{94} Venice enlisted a rehabilitated Francesco Morosini, the hero-cum-scapegoat of the Candian war, to lead its forces as captain-general in the coming conflict.\textsuperscript{95} By June, Venice, in conjunction with Innocent XI and the allied forces of a number of German princes, most notably the Duke of Brunswick-Luneburg who supplied Venice infantry in three regiments, was ready to proceed.\textsuperscript{96} With auxiliaries from German princes, the

\textsuperscript{91} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Feb. 1684, Fs. 57r-57v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 15 March 1684, F. 63r.
\textsuperscript{92} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 18 March 1684, F. 78r-78v. The league was signed into reality at Lindz on 5 March. Setton, \textit{Venice, Austria, and the Turks}, 271.
\textsuperscript{93} Peter Topping, “Venice’s Last Imperial Venture,” \textit{Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society} 120, no. 3 (1976), 159.
\textsuperscript{94} Amelot outlined the articles of the treaty in the following dispatch: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 25 March 1684, Fs. 89r-90v.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 74n1; Setton, 292-293.
Grand Duke of Tuscany, the pope, and the Knights of Malta the republic assembled a flotilla of seventy three vessels and twelve thousand men for Morosini to lead.\footnote{Saint Hilaire, \textit{Mémoires}, 31, 34. The Comte de Laborde provides a detailed transcription of the stipulations and expectations the senate negotiated with Prince Ernst-Augustus. Laborde, 74-78, 81; Setton, 273, 292-293.}

Louis XIV was certain that the senate made a mistake joining the league.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 10 April 1684, F. 94r.} Leopold I refused to accept French suzerainty of lands wrested through the \textit{réunions}, and there seemed no alternative to a war with the emperor on the Rhine. In this event, Venice, he warned would suffer the brunt of Turkish wrath. The king instructed Amelot to urge the senate to influence the emperor to concede at Ratisbonne.\footnote{Ibid.} Leopold opted throughout 1684 to let Spain counter Louis XIV. The latter declared war on France in December 1683 in response to French depredations in the Low Countries.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 1 Jan. 1684, 3r, 4v.} The Venetians feared that Spain’s war and Leopold’s interventions in the east would bring French ire definitively down upon Italy, and the vicious French bombardment of Spain’s ally, Genoa, in May 1684 lent credence to the republic’s fears as it did to all Italian states.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 20 May 1684, Fs. 148r-148v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 July 1684, F. 232v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, 27 May 1684, F. 157r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 3 June 1684, F. 164r-164v; Cibo to Angelo Ranuzzi, 24 May 1683, in \textit{Correspondance du Nonce en France, Angelo Ranuzzi, 1683-1689}, tome I, ed. Bruno Neveu (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1973), 379-380.} The king, however, seemed more concerned with the ratification of the treaty of Ratisbonne; the humiliation of the Republic of Genoa was meant to warn Spain to sue for peace with France more than signal a French offensive into Italy.\footnote{Manuel Herrero-Sánchez, “Republican diplomacy and the power balance in Europe,” in \textit{War, Trade and Neutrality: Europe and the Mediterranean in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries}, ed. Antonella Alimento (Milan: FrancoAngeli Storia, 2011), 34, 40.} Amelot was to reassure the Venetians that his attack on Genoa should not concern them, and he sent his formal, although
sarcastic, congratulations upon the formation of the league.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 14 June 1684, F. 159r-159v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Senate, 10 June 1684, F. 173r-173v.} The ambassador was to specify that the king wished the republic every success in taking back the three kingdoms the Turk had stripped them of in the last three centuries.\footnote{Ibid.}

Venice’s war began in earnest in early July as Morosini moved against the Ottomans at Santa Maura.\footnote{Ibid.; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 290, 295-296.} The republic was greeted with an early victory strengthening its resolve, and the general crisis in the Ottoman government weakened the Turks in the face of the league’s offensives.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 July 1684, F. 220v-221r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 15 July 1684, F. 228r.} Leopold I’s armies under Charles V, Duke of Lorraine, routed the Turks near Pest as Morosini advanced against Santa Maura.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 26  July 1684, F. 224v.} Invested in the treaty with the League, the emperor could not continue to resist the French on the Rhine.\footnote{Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 274.} On 15 August he accepted the twenty- year peace laid out at Ratisbonne.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 26  July 1684, F. 224v.} The treaty allowed Leopold to maintain nominal lordship of lands taken by France before 1679. Louis XIV kept Strasbourg, and he demanded Luxembourg from Spain. The treaty seemed to promise a period of stability along the Rhine while the Holy League advanced. Europe waited to see if Louis XIV’s ambitions subsided after the truce.\footnote{Ibid., 274.} Meanwhile, with almost lightning speed, Morosini reclaimed Venice’s lost

\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Louis XIV to Amelot, 14 June 1684, F. 159r-159v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Senate, 10 June 1684, F. 173r-173v.}
Dalmatian dominions adding much of the Morea early in the war portending the reestablishment of a Venetian Mediterranean empire.  

**Amelot and the Protection of French Commercial Interests in the Mediterranean Sea**

Amelot’s portrayal of Venetian foreign policy suggested that Venice’s government believed the French king posed the greatest threat to its Mediterranean trade and dominions in the 1680s. Only the Turk frightened Venice more. The king’s commercial relations with the Ottomans made Louis XIV as much of a menace on the sea as his armies made him on European soil. Venice, as we have seen, was uncompromising in regards to its traditional claims of lordship over the Adriatic Gulf. The government sought to press its dominance in the gulf and to counter Louis XIV’s pretensions pursuant to the 1673 capitulations with Mehmet IV as war seemed imminent in 1683-1684.

The king was adamant that the republic’s claims over the Adriatic were no longer valid, and he warned that its alliances against the Turk must in no way damage French commerce. Amelot and the king agreed that the Venetian Bailo, Donà, sought from 1682-1683 to hinder the Count de Guilleragues’s efforts in Constantinople. He defended the imperial ambassador’s precedence above the count as the “affair of the sofa” unfolded, and he allegedly impeded the

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113 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 6 Nov. 1683, Fs. 579r; 580r.

expedition of Guilleragues’s dispatches to Amelot hampering communications with the king. These were attempts to destabilize French authority in the eastern sea. Meanwhile, in the west, Livorno’s importance as a duty free port and Marseille’s vessels and aggressive merchants amplified the threat to Venice’s income as a port city.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 22 July 1682, F. 49r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 26 Aug. 1682, F. 86v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 13 March 1683, F. 313r; ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Foscarini to Inquisitors of State, 31 March 1683. For a full analysis of the “Affair of the Sofa” and how it literally elevated Louis XIV’s ambassador above those of other European states at the Ottoman court see, Géraud Poumerède, “La Quérelle du Sofa. Étude sur les Rapports entre Gloire et Diplomatie,” Histoire, Économie et Société 20, no. 2, La Gloire à L’Époque Moderne (2001). 185-197.}

At the death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert the 6 September 1683 the French navy and merchant marine had grown from the insignificant number of fifty six vessels in 1661 to two hundred seventy six ships either in the water or under construction.\footnote{Clément, Histoire de la vie et de l’administration de Colbert, 378-379.} Departing from Marseille and Toulon French ships traversed the Mediterranean elevating the French commercial and military presence in the sea as never before in spite of the fierce competition that characterized maritime commerce on the sea.\footnote{Inalcik & Quataert, An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 522.} Amelot was the first of Louis XIV’s ambassadors in Venice to undertake outright mediation for French commerce in Venetian waters, and the king lauded his initiative.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 April 1684, F. 121v; Inalcik & Quataert, An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 521-522.} Furthermore, he undertook commercial negotiations seemingly with no prompts from Louis XIV or the Marquis de Seignelay who succeeded his father, Colbert, as secretary of the marine. Mention of Venice’s pretensions to dominance in the Adriatic can be found in the dispatches of previous ambassadors, but Amelot was the first ambassador in Venice to see commercial mediation there as related to foreign policy.

Whereas under ambassadors like Bonsy and Estrades French commerce in the sea had not yet achieved a sufficient foothold to require negotiation in Venice, the situation was different in
the 1680s. Amelot’s successful interventions on behalf of the commercial fleet ranged from demanding the return of sequestered cargos to negotiating the end of a moratorium on vessels coming from Toulon when the senate alleged that some ships from the port carried plague - a charge Louis XIV denied saying he would know better than anyone if there was plague in Toulon. As in foreign policy, the senate could not control French policies outright, but it tried to slow them down in its traditional spheres of authority.

Amelot protested against the molestation of French vessels, merchants, and cargo as consuls from the Levant reported incidents to him as the war of the Holy League began. The exchange between French consuls and Amelot corresponded to Colbert’s regulation of consuls and their responsibilities in *l’Ordonnance de la marine du mois d’aout, 1681*. Again, under previous ambassadors in Venice, consuls did not petition them for assistance in commercial affairs. The *ordonnance* stipulated that consuls were to petition the highest French minister near them for assistance, and thus, the role of ambassadors in Constantinople and Venice took on another facet. The return of war to the Mediterranean in 1684 saw an increase in consuls’ correspondence with Amelot in matters related to French merchants living in Venice’s *stato da mar* during the conflict. The ambassador complained to the senate when its officials abroad

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123 Inalcik & Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 522.
intentionally demonstrated prejudice against the business of French captains and merchants.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplement, Amelot to Senate, 18 Feb. 1684, F. 204r.}

The senate promised to maintain “the most cordial negotiations with the French…” in these instances.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplement, Senate to Amelot, 19 Feb. 1684, F. 205r.} As chapter five will show, French maritime complaints against the Venetians only increased as Francesco Morosini led allied forces in reclaiming Venice’s Mediterranean territories. The Venetian senate became less accommodating as the war progressed.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108, supplement, Senate to Amelot, received in dispatch of 15 Dec. 1684, F. 264 r.}

**The Ambassador and the Venetian Public’s “Blind Rage Against the French”:**\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Amelot to Louis XIV, 14 June 1684, F. 185r.}

Venice sought to regain its dominions through the Holy League. The republic rallied regardless of the image of the weak state Amelot depicted. The *Serenissima* was highly capable of wielding influence, and the senate attracted cooperation from formidable international allies still in the late seventeenth century. Through the Treaty of Lindz, the republic pledged to assist in crushing Turkish power in Eastern Europe and the Western Mediterranean.\footnote{Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 271-272.} Despite the financial turmoil Venice suffered in the decade following the loss of Crete, it rearmed in response to the threat of Ottoman and French encroachments in the early 1680s.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 14 Nov. 1682, F. 172v.} Ultimately, the question of French aims in Italy was left open-ended, but Amelot’s reports could veil neither Venice’s readiness when war came nor the antipathy of Venetians for Louis XIV.

In Venice’s public spaces, according to Amelot and the inquisitors’ *confidente*, Badoer, many in the republic demonstrated hatred for the French.\footnote{ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 10 Sept. 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 18 Sept. 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 21 Sept. 1683; Preto, *I Servizi Segreti di Venezia*, 191.} The ambassador informed the king of the depths to which the people’s sentiments towards France plummeted. The Venetian populace’s anger coincided with details of the insults and accusations the republic’s government
leveled at the ambassador. Amelot indicated that Venetian inquisitors sought to curb discourse in public spaces as the international situation deteriorated to protect state secrets and quieten tensions in the city. While the senate deliberated whether the state should counter French intentions in Northern Italy or against Mehmet IV in an alliance with Leopold I, the inquisitors forbade ice cream shops from staying open throughout the night to inhibit “young nobles and foreigners” from engaging in political discourse.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 May 1683, F. 395r;} Some months later the senate passed legislation prohibiting banks, apothecaries, and fresh water vendors from keeping or displaying inflammatory pamphlets and gazettes in their establishments enjoining captains of the \textit{sestieri} to arrest anyone speaking insolently of “crowned heads.”\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 1 July 1684, F. 211r. De Vivo specified the years 1683-1684 as a particular moment in which the inquisitors sent \textit{confidenti} to infiltrate the mixed social groups meeting and exchanging political views in pharmacies. Filippo De Vivo, “Pharmacies as centres of communication in early modern Venice,” \textit{Renaissance Studies} 21, no. 4, \textit{Spaces, Objects and Identities in Early Modern Italian Medicine} (2007), 512.} 

Despite such measures Venice’s populace continued to make its anger toward Louis XIV known. Venetian ire stemmed from alleged French involvement in Count Tekely’s revolt in Hungary and the French alliance with the Ottomans.\footnote{ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 18 Sept. 1683.} The growing presence of French troops and arms in Northern Italy too terrified and incensed the populace.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 27 June 1682, F. 41v.} Nobles in the Piazza San Marco were heard to shout “twenty one Frenchmen are twenty one devils,” and in February 1683 Amelot reported to the king that:

“...such discourse is in the mouth of the people as well as the nobles... . In a word, the French embassy, which has always been here, and which should be of the highest luster everywhere, is falling into the greatest disdain.... The evil, Sire, is greater than I can describe.... One speaks currently in such an outrageous manner one to another that I feel exposed to a thousand affronts everyday.”\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 5 Feb. 1683, Fs. 279v-280r.}
The ambassador was not alone in reporting Venetians’ prejudice. Badoer sent a copy of a widespread broadsheet to the inquisitors in which the traditional *Te Deum* was reimagined likening Louis XIV to Satan. The screed claimed that “The heavens and earth are full of your awful heresies,” and it called upon the judgment of God against the king and those who allied with him.\(^{136}\) The king’s refusal to assist Leopold I during the siege of Vienna drew the greatest outcry from Venetians.\(^{137}\) The siege coincided with the death of Queen Marie Thérèse, and some reportedly claimed that his queen’s death was the first divine scourge unleashed upon the king for his crimes.\(^{138}\) Some members of Venice's government refused to go into official mourning in protest drawing fulminations from Louis XIV.\(^{139}\)

The king’s alliance with the Mehmet IV infuriated many in the republic.\(^{140}\) After the siege of Vienna was lifted in September Venetians were heard cursing the Turk and Louis XIV during the city’s rejoicing.\(^{141}\) Popular anger followed the suite of Venice’s new ambassador, Girolamo Venier, to Paris in December 1684. On 8 March Venier wrote to the state inquisitors that one of his lackeys, in a moment of drunkenness, boasted that he would assassinate Louis XIV for “one hundred or even for twenty five dobles.”\(^{142}\) Croissy summoned the ambassador to ask that he deliver the Italian into French custody. To preserve Venice’s “reputation and the immunity and decorum of its public grandeur,” Venier complied publicly divesting the lackey of

\(^{136}\) ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, *Il Te Deum, Sopra il Re di Francia, 1683*, included in an *avviso* from Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 25 Aug. 1683. See **Appendix III** for a complete transcription of the colorful indictment of the king.

\(^{137}\) ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 10 Sept. 1683.


\(^{140}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 8 April 1684, Fs. 103r-103v.


\(^{142}\) ASV, DAF, Busta 438, Venier to Inquisitors of State, 8 March 1684.
livery and remanding him to French justice.\textsuperscript{143} The inquisitors approved Venier's response to his servant's "diabolical utterances," believing the servant merited his subsequent incarceration in the Bastille.\textsuperscript{144} The republic could not afford controversy as the recent alliance with Leopold I and Spain's declaration of war against France left Venice vulnerable to possible French retaliation.

The French bombardment of Genoa in May increased popular outrage almost to the breaking point.\textsuperscript{145} Amelot believed that his reputation and that of the king were completely compromised in the republic. By October he pleaded with Louis XIV to recall him to France.\textsuperscript{146} The king did not seem particularly concerned with either Venetian popular discontent or Amelot's fears; he seemed pleased rather to allow the ambassador to undergo a series of accusations and trials against this volatile backdrop. Amelot described the republic as having a violent atmosphere where rumor and the protection of kinship and honor fueled murder and violence on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{147} He feared for his reputation, his life, and the well being of his household. The allegations brought against him personally and those serving him occurred in the dangerous context of Venetians' visceral anti-French sentiments.

The Formation of an Ambassador: Domestic Arrangements, Two Murders, and a Contraband Ring

The controversies unfolding around Amelot and his retinue in Venice's reputedly violent climate demonstrated the Venetian government's response to the information networks

\textsuperscript{143} ASV, DAF, Busta 438, Venier to Inquisitors of State, 8 March 1684.
\textsuperscript{144} ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Venier, 1 April 1684; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Venier, 22 July 1684.
\textsuperscript{145} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 27 May 1684, F. 157r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 3 June 1684, Fs. 164r-164v.
\textsuperscript{146} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 14 Oct. 1684, F. 327r.
informing Amelot. Ultimately, his experience in the republic highlighted too the brutal resolve of Venice’s counterintelligence system as the senate prepared for war. The republic’s heightened security and measures to increase revenues to fund the war effort provoked attempts to stop the sale of contraband.⁴⁸ Ambassadors in the city complained that the senate seemed to want to restrict their privilege to acquire wine, flour, and bread without paying duties as the clandestine sale of these items hindered Venice’s economic stability.⁴⁹

Amelot noted the presence of Venetian spies observing ambassadors and the goods they ordered.⁵⁰ He indicated that he believed the French embassy was under closer surveillance than any other. The state inquisitors were investigating the ambassador’s household and how he utilized diplomatic privilege. Amelot worded his complaints to the king regarding the republic’s hostility toward his immunities to depict a republic in open defiance of French might, but the story that emerged in the riferte of the inquisitors’ spy, Badoer, and the ambassadors in Paris proved that the inexperienced ambassador had not yet learned to cover his informants’ tracks. The broader story can emerge, however, only after examining Amelot’s perspective.

A document from 1664, “concerning rights and useful prerogatives,” described French ambassadors’ rights in Venice to import wine and flour into the embassy and its environs without paying duties.⁵¹ These were commodities that could not be sold freely in the republic, and so, ambassadors’ passports were required to accompany the products’ transport to the lista dei francesi. Ambassadors were allowed sparingly to sell a measure of these goods in this space. The diplomat’s protection was extended to anyone carrying his passports or lettres de familiarités –

⁵⁰ AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 25 July 1682, F. 71r.
letters of recognition – and, theoretically, these documents conferred the same rights the ambassador held to the individual possessing them.\textsuperscript{152}

Amelot was first charged with abusing his immunities while \textit{incognito} in March 1682. Customs officials refused to recognize passports he provided gondoliers to transport wood and wine from Vicenza because he had not yet performed the \textit{entrée} legitimizing his role as ambassador.\textsuperscript{153} He wrote to the king of the incident after complaining to the senate.\textsuperscript{154} Venice’s then ambassador in Paris, Sebastiano Foscarini, supplied reports from his government’s investigation of Amelot’s mistake to Croissy and the King. A letter sent from Louis XIV to the Venetian senate seemed to remedy the matter. He pledged the ambassador would regulate his domestic arrangements better and acquaint himself with Venetian protocol.\textsuperscript{155} Amelot apparently prejudiced his reputation early on in the republic through the arrogant language and “insults” he employed to negotiate the incident.\textsuperscript{156}

A second, and more violent, altercation occurred in November with Amelot present. The king and Croissy angrily demanded an explanation from the representative.\textsuperscript{157} Amelot explained that he returned from a hunting trip in the country when Venetian inspectors approached his retinue demanding to search the gondolas for contraband. The Italians allegedly attacked when the ambassador and his lackeys refused. Amelot remarked that since he believed the senate

\textsuperscript{154} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 20 July 1682, F. 62v, 63r-63v.
\textsuperscript{156} ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 20 Nov. 1682; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 19 Dec. 1683.
\textsuperscript{157} This dispatch was from the king with marginal notes from Croissy. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 13 Jan. 1683, F. 220r.
would not protect his immunities he “decided to exact justice himself.”\textsuperscript{158} He ordered his servants to fire warning shots, but a mêlée ensued in which a Venetian was stabbed to death.\textsuperscript{159} Foscarini reported the matter to Colbert de Croissy and Louis XIV first.\textsuperscript{160} Amelot initially chose not to speak of the affair to the king alleging that he had handled himself properly.\textsuperscript{161} Louis XIV was furious at the ambassador's presumption and the unseemly violence.\textsuperscript{162} He and Croissy upbraided Amelot for the effrontery of thinking that he, as a mere royal representative, was an arbiter of justice.\textsuperscript{163} The diplomat added insult to injury daring not to inform the king of the incident immediately. Louis XIV was humiliated. He commanded the minister to govern himself and his household and to make restitution to the dead man’s family.\textsuperscript{164} A chastened Amelot claimed his best intentions in the matter audaciously reprimanding the king and Croissy for not defending his actions to Foscarini and the republic: the king had sent him there, and he should support his decisions.\textsuperscript{165}

The ambassador’s alleged controversial behavior from 1682-1683 drew a series of exchanges between the state inquisitors and Foscarini in Paris. Amelot posed a double threat to the republic in relation to Versailles as Venice determined whether or not to ally with Leopold I: he presented Venice as a state hostile to French foreign policy, and he acquired dangerously

\textsuperscript{158} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Dec. 1682, F. 214v.

\textsuperscript{159} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplément, Office passé le 22 Dec. 1682, F. 103v


\textsuperscript{161} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 26 Dec. 1682, F. 215r, 217r-217v.

\textsuperscript{162} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 13 Janv. 1683, F. 221r; ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Foscarini to Inquisitors of State, 17 Feb. 1683.

\textsuperscript{163} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 13 Janv. 1683, F. 221r.

\textsuperscript{164} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Louis XIV to Amelot, 13 Janv. 1683, F. 222r.

\textsuperscript{165} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Croissy, 7 Nov. 1682, F. 168v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 5 Feb. 1683, F. 280r.
sensitive information for Louis XIV regarding its pro-Habsburg policies and its military and naval preparations. The republic’s government resolved upon a two-pronged strategy couched in both diplomatic immunities and the red herring of the senate’s sensitivity to contraband. Foscarini was to downplay Amelot’s depiction of anti-French sentiment in Venice at the French court, but behind the scenes, he was to persuade Amelot’s connections at court to intervene. It was hoped the young minister would fear enough for his reputation and career that his alleged anti-Venetian zeal could be reformed before he turned the king against the republic. Foscarini met clandestinely with Amelot’s mother asking her to warn her son of the danger in his attitude toward his hosts. The Venetian ambassador met too with the Marshal de la Feuillade - one of the few individuals who could actually claim friendship with Louis XIV - to assure the monarch of Venice’s enduring amity despite the ongoing crises with Amelot.

The investigation continued in Venice. The state inquisitors targeted the ambassadress and Amelot’s secretary, Roger de Piles, as links contributing to the ambassador’s anti-Venetian reportage. For the sake of diplomacy, Foscarini was to lay the blame almost entirely on the secretary. Amelot’s father employed de Piles in 1662 to oversee Michel’s education, and he

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166 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 14 March 1682; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 2 May 1682; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 20 Nov. 1682.
168 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 20 Nov. 1682; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 2 Jan. 1683.
169 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 6 March 1683.
172 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 4 March 1684.
173 ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 30 Jan, 1683; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 3 April 1683.
became an accomplished art historian before his service in Venice.\textsuperscript{175} De Piles received much of the inquisitors’ venom as Badoer reported that he facilitated the exchange of information for the ambassador through a network of spies under his oversight.\textsuperscript{176} Worse still, Badoer relayed that the ambassadress collaborated in espionage employing a teacher of the organ who doubled as one of her husband’s spies.\textsuperscript{177}

While in France Foscarini aimed to discredit Amelot, but the state inquisitors undertook more visceral measures to silence the sources feeding Amelot with state secrets. In the previous chapter I have shown that ambassadors in Venice “inherited” informants loyal to the French faction. Amelot reported to Louis XIV that he received news of the senate’s debates and decisions from senators themselves and from members of their families or households.\textsuperscript{178} The ambassador maintained a close rapport too with previous ambassadors’ agents like the Cavaliere Beaziano and also the family of Marchese Benedetto Giuliani who supplied the French embassy with news during the embassy of the Abbé d’Estrades.\textsuperscript{179}

The marchese was instrumental in negotiations for Casale, and the republic’s menaces forced Giuliani to accompany Estrades to Turin where he remained while Amelot was in Venice.\textsuperscript{180} Giuliani’s family continued to work for the French. His sons nurtured a close relationship with Michel Amelot providing sensitive information from within the Venetian

\textsuperscript{175} Among other works, Roger de Piles had published his \textit{Conversations sur la connoissance de la peinture et sur le jugement qu’on doit faire des Tableaux} in 1677. Moreri, \textit{Le Grand dictionnaire historique}, vol. VII, 357.
\textsuperscript{177} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 21 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 31 March 1683; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Foscarini, 3 April 1683;
\textsuperscript{178} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 13 March 1683, Fs. 316r-316v.
\textsuperscript{179} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 July 1683; Lonardi, “Informazione, spionaggio, e segreto di stato,” 148.
government and continuing a communication link with the Duke of Mantua.\textsuperscript{181} Benedetto’s son, Paolo, critically relayed information regarding imperial agents working in Northern Italy to form a league of Italian princes against Louis XIV.\textsuperscript{182} During Carnaval 1683 a group of maskers attacked and beat Paolo Giuliani in Piazza San Marco.\textsuperscript{183} By July of 1683 a number of reports arrived to the state inquisitors that Paolo was filtering news of Venice’s negotiations with the emperor’s envoy to the Italian princes, the Count Martinitz, who was then in Venice, and the imperial ambassador to the republic, the Count della Torre.\textsuperscript{184} Finally, he was summoned before the inquisitors on 6 July, but he refused to attend.\textsuperscript{185} The young man was a threat to Venetian state security.

Amelot wrote to the king an outraged addendum to a dispatch of 10 July 1683 that Paolo was murdered that morning.\textsuperscript{186} He was assassinated in the Piazza of San Francesco della Vigna; a square where the ambassador himself often promenaded.\textsuperscript{187} Amelot accused the state inquisitors of having Paolo shot because of his friendship with him, and he pleaded with the king to intervene with the Venetian ambassador and to grant a royal gratification to the family.\textsuperscript{188} The confidente, Badoer, sent a riferta to the state inquisitors recounting the details of the assassination and of the rumor already circulating that it was at the Ten’s command.\textsuperscript{189} Louis

\textsuperscript{181} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 July 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 June 1683.
\textsuperscript{182} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 3 July 1683, F. 431r-431v;
\textsuperscript{183} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 27 March 1683, F. 331v-332r.
\textsuperscript{184} ASV, IS-CA, Busta 915, Stefano Christiani to Provveditore Morosini, 7 July 1683; ASV, IS-CA, Busta 915, Secretary Angelus Nicolosi, copia, 1683 9 luglio in collegio; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 10 July 1683, F. 437r-437v.
\textsuperscript{185} ASV, IS-CA, Busta 915, avviso, informant uncertain, 6 July 1683.
\textsuperscript{186} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 10 July 1683, Fs. 440v, 441r-441v.
\textsuperscript{187} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 20 Feb. 1683, Fs. 287r-287v.
\textsuperscript{188} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 10 July 1683, Fs. 441r-441v.
\textsuperscript{189} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 10 July 1683.
XIV agreed with Amelot that the Venetian government ordered the murder, but he believed it necessary to let events take their course with no official remonstrance from him.\textsuperscript{190}

In the months preceding the murder, Badoer informed the state inquisitors of Giuliani’s role as “secret correspondent” to Amelot and the friendship of his family with the ambassador.\textsuperscript{191} He detailed the tearful visit Amelot paid the victim’s household after the crime and the ambassador’s promises of revenge.\textsuperscript{192} In Paris the event apparently caused enough scandal that Foscarini was obliged to visit with Croissy to promise that the republic would investigate the crime and execute justice.\textsuperscript{193} Ultimately, no sources detail how the case ended. Amelot’s successor, Denis II de la Haye-Vantalet, remarked in 1688 that the murder, while unresolved, was still attributed to the Ten.\textsuperscript{194} Although no direct proof exists that the Council of Ten ordered the murder, the flurry of reports to the Ten regarding Giuliani in the days just prior to his death and his failure to appear before the inquisitors’ tribunal suggest the council believed him too dangerous to ignore.

In his seminal work on the Venetian secret service, Paolo Preto used Giuliani’s assassination as an example of how the Ten dealt with Venetian traitors.\textsuperscript{195} The murder served also as a demonstration of the controversial authority the Ten held over Venetian society prompting debates about the nature of the council’s continued role in the republic’s justice system.\textsuperscript{196} The dangers associated with state secrets in the Venetian crucible taught Amelot

\textsuperscript{190} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Louis XIV to Amelot, 29 July 1683, F. 446v.
\textsuperscript{191} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 16 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 20 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 21 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, 5 April 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 June 1683.
\textsuperscript{192} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 10 July 1683.
\textsuperscript{193} Mémoranda des audiences accordées aux ambassadeurs et ministres étrangers: Notes du Ministre le Marquis de Croissy (Avril 1680-Juillet 1696), July 1683, [F. 5v], in Le Blanc, 184.
\textsuperscript{194} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 8 May 1688, Fs. 120v-121r.
\textsuperscript{195} Preto, I Servizi Segreti di Venezia, 337.
\textsuperscript{196} Cozzi, Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani, 210-211, 212-213.
valuable lessons in espionage, but the situation in Venice alarmed the French court. Foscarini reported to the state inquisitors as early as January 1683 that Louis XIV considered reposting the novice ambassador to Portugal.\textsuperscript{197} It appeared, however, that the king opted to test Amelot in the pressure of the Venetian vise. He was after all relaying information sensitive and veridical enough to elicit vehement reaction from the republic.

Sebastiano Foscarini departed Paris for Madrid in September 1683 sending his \textit{relazione} to the \textit{collegio} on 22 March 1684. The ambassador remarked that Amelot “destroyed in every ordinary dispatch the profit and repose that (ambassadors’) negotiations (in France) worked to bring to the \textit{patria}.”\textsuperscript{198} Amelot’s reports of Venice’s philo-Habsburg politics were a threat. Foscarini noted the care he had taken “to nullify the false and poisonous seeds” Amelot was spreading, adding “that without pulling the plant out by the roots...every initiative would have been in vain.”\textsuperscript{199} Foscarini “applied ingenuity...persuading the king” to promise Amelot’s recall from Venice.\textsuperscript{200} Although Foscarini was confident in Louis XIV’s remarks, Amelot remained in the republic for another year.

Girolamo Venier replaced Foscarini in Paris in December 1683 by which time the inquisitors reported to him the discovery of Amelot’s network of informants and the means through which he paid them.\textsuperscript{201} Badoer pieced together that, with Amelot’s knowledge, Roger de Piles used official passports to collect and arrange stockpiles of contraband commodities that were then used to pay agents for information.\textsuperscript{202} French spies allegedly infiltrated the highest

\textsuperscript{197} ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Foscarini to Inquisitors of State, 27 Jan. 1683.
\textsuperscript{198} Foscarini, \textit{Relazione di Francia, 1684}, 486-487.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 487.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Venier, 24 March 1685.
\textsuperscript{202} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 16 March 168; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 20 March 1683; ASV, IS-AF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Venier, 24 March 1685.
levels of government through access to secretaries and notaries of the *pregadi* and the *quarantia*. The spy ring stretched from Venice as far afield as Vicenza, Mantua, and Rome through informants like Paolo Giuliani whose connections in these cities supplied Amelot with knowledge. Additional informants included pro-French noblemen in the Valier, Bernardo, Grimani, and Duodo clans who relayed news from within the senate. The ambassadress’s music teacher infiltrated other aristocratic homes while spies of less exalted social rank connected these households to de Piles who arranged contraband commodities to facilitate the exchange of information. According to the *avvisi* of Badoer, the houses of French merchants and tailors in residence in Venice served as spaces to store contraband and to exchange news. Locations like the brothel of the whore, Pasqueta, and the church of the Madonna dell’Orto, just yards from the French embassy, served as points of exchange and as scenes of violent encounters with Venetian officials. The nuns of the convent of Sant’Alvise allegedly acted too as informants for the French. The *lista dei francesi* became a collecting space for the seepage of state secrets through the sieve that was the Venetian government, and Amelot poured the news into his dispatches.

Venier added in his reports that Amelot supplied the French foreign ministry with much information regarding Venice’s negotiations to ally with Leopold I and the Poles. To incite

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203 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 6 Dec. 1683.
204 Ibid.; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 14 May 1683.
205 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 16 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 5 April 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 24 June 1683.
206 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 21 March 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 31 March 1683.
207 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 108 supplément, Copy of an anonymous *avviso* sent to the Doge, included in a dossier of documents sent to France regarding the initial contraband investigation, [Day unspecified] Nov. 1682, F. 103r; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 16 Nov. 1683;
208 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 31 Aug. 1683; ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 14 Dec. 1683.
209 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State 22 June 1683.
further turmoil through the revelation of the contraband ring could damage the Franco-Venetian rapport beyond remedy. Venier learned that Amelot remained in favor with the king at court through the protection of the Grand Chancellor, Michel Le Tellier, the marquis de Barbézieux, despite the calumnies he and Foscarini reported and Amelot’s vehement denial of charges of malfeasance. Venier counseled the government to relax its approach to Amelot and curb anti-French sentiment in Venice suggesting to suppress the damming evidence of Amelot’s illegal activities. Venier’s lackey’s embarrassing threat in March 1684 to assassinate Louis XIV added weight to his counsel. Undoubtedly too the bombardment of Genoa in May halted further Venetian action.

The episode opening this chapter illustrates, however, that Amelot’s position in Venice did not become much easier in 1684. The imprisonment of his gondoliers and the French tailor implicated in the contraband ring after allegedly instigating a brawl when Venetians mocked their nationality and their subsequent interrogation before the Ten highlighted the republic’s ongoing efforts to intimidate Amelot. Venetian officials stopped Amelot’s gondoliers on one further occasion in 1684 before the ambassador again begged to leave Venice. By October the king announced the decision to post Amelot in Lisbon, but he allowed the ambassador to come back to France in February 1685 for a respite.

\[^{210}\text{ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 437, Coppia di Capitolo contenuto in lettera dell’Amb. Venier in Francia in data di 9 Feb. 1684.}\]


\[^{212}\text{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 110, Amelot to Louis XIV, 22 July 1684, F. 234v.}\]


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Venier observed Amelot and his family upon his return to gauge if they would slander the republic. He reported that Amelot seemed chastened. The king’s elevation of his lands to a marquisate in May indicated royal approval of his service. It demonstrated the success that robe functionaries could achieve through loyalty and service to the crown. Croissy’s new ambassador plied the foreign ministry with critical information at a time when it needed assurance that Leopold I was preoccupied in Hungary with the Turk and the Hungarian revolt. The ambassador's reports informed the king of the Habsburg’s interactions with Venice. Amelot supplied the information Louis XIV and Croissy required while the republic tried to keep the roots of an alliance with Leopold I secret in order to avoid bringing the French war machine into Italy and to buy time to raise a fighting force.

Louis XIV miscalculated Venice’s willingness and readiness to commit to another Mediterranean war, but Amelot layed open the republic’s deliberations in the build-up to the Treaty of Lindz. The king was pleased with the ambassador’s ability to acquire information and the lessons in diplomatic maneuvering that he learned. He left Amelot to languish in the republic buying time to pressure Leopold I at Ratisbonne. In the meantime, events in the east evolved to the point that the emperor conceded to French demands and turned his forces against the Ottomans. Through the Holy League Venice began the reacquisition of its Mediterranean empire. Amelot’s breach of the republic’s foreign relations system revealed its rehabilitation as a player in Mediterranean diplomacy and exposed Louis XIV's inability to command the Serenissima’s foreign policy outright.

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215 ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 438, Venier to Inquisitors of State, 11 April 1685; ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 438, Venier to Inquisitors of State, 18 April 1685.
Chapter Five

Fig. 10

Noble Venitien
Denis II de la Haye, Sieur de Vantelet (1685-1701):
Looking Back at Ludovician Politics from Venice and the Mediterranean in 1688

Wreckage from an abandoned French tartane washed ashore in the port of San Nicola on Cerigo during winter storms at the close of 1687.¹ The new Venetian provveditore da mar in the Morea, Giacomo Corner, sequestered the flotsam. Captain Foucas of Toulon, the tartane’s owner, and his crew deserted the vessel after corsairs allegedly overtook and stripped it in Venetian waters. Learning that the incident occurred in territory under Venice’s jurisdiction acquired in the War of the Holy League, Foucas appealed to Louis XIV’s secretary of the marine, the Marquis de Seignelay.² The captain sought to recover the price of his ship and to have restitution from the republic for the purloined cargo of wheat and the ship’s sails and anchors.³

Foucas’s appeal to Seignelay set in motion the machinery of Ludovician centralization governing French interests in the Mediterranean Sea by the late 1680s. Concerned for the Crown’s reputation as a major competitor in Mediterranean commercial and political affairs, Seignelay entrusted the matter to the French ambassador in Venice, Denis II de la Haye, Sieur de Vantelet (1685-1701), and the French consul, Jean-Guillaume Le Blond (1679-1718).⁴ The secretary expected la Haye to compel the republic to explain its failure to protect a French vessel

¹ AN, MA, B², 59, Seignelay to la Haye, 18 Dec. 1687, F. 272; Giovanni Battista Moro and Vincenzo Coronelli, Memorie Istoriographiche della Morea Reacquistata dall’Armi Venete (Venice: Giuseppe Maria Ruinetti, 1687), 63-64. Tenenti defines a tartane as a ship with “…three or more small sails and a single deck.” He notes they were especially common among Provençal sailors. Alberto Tenenti, Piracy and the Decline of Venice 1580-1615 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 156.
in its waters and Le Blond to use his networks in Venice and across the Adriatic and Ionian Seas in the investigation.

The level of cooperation between the ambassador and consul in cases not linked to the ministry of foreign affairs *per se* - such as Captain Foucas’s plight - illustrate the extent to which new legislation regulating the marine’s consuls elevated the ministry and its agents. These links evolved between marine jurisdiction and the ministry of foreign affairs after the death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1683.\(^5\) Communication between the ministers in Venice and Seignelay in the late 1680s demonstrated the growth of the administrative system that bound Louis XIV’s government to the contested spaces of Mediterranean commerce.

La Haye’s predecessor, Amelot, was the first ambassador in Venice during Louis XIV’s rule to report frequently about French commercial interests in political negotiations. By 1688 the correspondence between la Haye and Seignelay became a consistent thread in Franco-Venetian diplomacy indicating the concern which Louis XIV’s administration held for commerce and the king’s prestige in Mediterranean affairs as the First Morean War (1684-1699) repulsed Ottoman authority in the sea. The collaboration between the ambassador and the consul in Venice served as evidence not only of the importance of France’s economic interests to its international engagements, but it highlighted the vital need for Ottoman slaves to man French galleys in the Mediterranean fleet. As French relations with Leopold I and Innocent XI moldered in the face of the French king’s expansionism the procurement of slaves required the increased attention of Le

\(^5\) Drévillon, *Les Rois Absolus*, 271, 273. In his study of the Ponchartrains, Charles Frostin suggested that ambassadors to Venice and Constantinople received two sets of instructions upon their nomination: those from the ministry of foreign affairs and also commercial instructions from the ministry of the marine. Frostin seemed to indicate that this had always been the practice for ministers going to Venice. I have found no such specific commercial “*mémoire’ annexe*” until the embassy of Pomponne to Venice in 1704. Frostin also argued that ambassadors in Venice had always had the role of supervising French consuls. Again, as I argue in this chapter, tight surveillance and collaboration between ambassadors and consuls in Venice really only emerges in the sources from 1687. See Frostin, *Les Ponchartrains, ministres de Louis XIV*, 13-14.
Blond after 1686, and Seignelay expected la Haye to assist the consul as international affairs tensed.\(^6\)

This chapter first explores the grim situation facing Louis XIV and his dynastic policies to understand the relevance of incidents in the Mediterranean like that of Captain Foucas and the French administrative machinery deployed in broader international politics. La Haye’s embassy in Venice endured the close of the seventeenth century and the years in which Louis XIV’s ascendance over European politics declined.\(^7\) 1688 proved to be climacteric in European foreign relations writ large, and, although la Haye represented the French king in Venice for seventeen years, a sharp focus on 1688 indicates the direction that the king expected relations with Venice to take as his dynasticism encountered substantive threats. In that year Franco-papal relations reached their lowest point.\(^8\) The long feud between Innocent XI and Louis XIV saw the humiliation of a new French ambassador in Rome pursuant to breaches of the 1664 Treaty of Pisa. The embarrassment menaced another French invasion of Italy as the king’s authority among German princes too diminished.\(^9\) Italian states experienced the king’s efforts to maintain control of foreign politics, and la Haye used the Venetian senate's troubled rapport with the pope to resolve France’s impending crisis along the Rhine.\(^{10}\)

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\(^6\) Paul M. Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons: The Mediterranean Galleys of France in the Age of Louis XIV* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1973), 142, 144, 167. Bamford noted, correctly, that Seignelay corresponded with la Haye in 1686 regarding the purchase of slaves from Venice, but their correspondence, as I argue and as the marine record indicates, became consistent only at the end of 1687 and from 1688 onward.


French relations with Rome grew septic as the pope refused to invest the king’s candidate, Wilhelm Egon, Cardinal von Furstenberg, to the archbishopric of Cologne. French princes aligned as never before with Leopold I in war against the Ottoman Empire and against Louis XIV’s incursions along Leopold’s western borders. The arch-episcopal-electorate represented one of the few remaining bastions of French authority in the German principalities. Tensions mounted as the pope reclaimed Castro and Ronciglione from the Duke of Parma providing the king further leverage to use in the quarrel over Furstenberg’s election. French pressure to install Furstenberg as archbishop-elector has been cast as mere vainglory, but events surrounding the election and the king’s menaces of an invasion of Italy in defense of the Farnese must be seen in context as urgent correlatives.

The most brutal French incursions into German territories began in September 1688. French tactics provoked the struggle between Versailles and the recently formed League of Augsburg and its powerful allies that would last until 1697. As events led to this eventuality, la Haye inflamed Venice’s senate against Leopold I. The king wanted to weaken the emperor’s position in the east protracting the war with the Turk to facilitate the concretization of French

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11 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 Jan. 1688, F. 8v; Marie-Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne, Comtesse de La Fayette, Mémoires de la cour de France pour les années 1688 et 1689 (Amsterdam: Chez Jean-Frédéric Bernard, 1731), 12, 13-14; Neveu, “Introduction,” 137-138.
12 Vierhaus, Germany in the Age of Absolutism, 122.
15 Black, European International Relations, 97; Condren, 195-196; Venier, Relazione di Francia, 1688, in Barozzi & Berchet, 472.
17 Condren, 203.
18 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 17 March 1688, F. 60r.
authority along the Rhine and in Northern Italy as war loomed. If properly maneuvered, a disillusioned Venice represented another dart to hurl at the emperor’s eastern flank.

The republic experienced a potential shift in its power structure in 1688 when Captain-General Francesco Morosini ascended to the ducal throne while fighting in the Levant. Morosini’s war machine successfully regained Venetian dominions adding most of the Morea in 1687. Morosini’s forces became locked in the battle for distant Negroponte in 1688 interrupting communications between the senate and their Captain-General-Doge for months. Venetians and foreign emissaries alike awaited news from the Levant to anticipate evolving geopolitics should Morosini succeed. La Haye alleged that the republic’s political system approached a possible turning point as the doge’s fleet gobbled up territories. It was unclear if Morosini would challenge the nature of Venice’s republican governance through the “full power” he wielded at the head of a vanquishing military force. Venice’s allies in the league winced as the republic’s confidence in Italian politics reemerged in its brief defense of French policies.

As Morosini capitalized on Ottoman weaknesses in the Mediterranean, continued respect for French commercial and maritime interests became critical to Louis XIV’s foreign policies and, by extension, to the secretary of the marine, Seignelay. La Haye’s interactions in Venice

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20 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Gravel, 26 March 1688, F. 82r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 3 April 1688, F. 91r.
21 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 July 1688, F. 185v; Venier, Relazione di Francia, 1688, 486; Topping, “Venice’s Last Imperial Venture,” 160.
22 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 27 Nov. 1688, F. 310v.
23 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 1 May 1688, F. 111v.
24 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 1 May 1688, F. 112r. Louis XIV was curious to know how Morosini would use his “full power” as Captain-General-Doge. The king opined that Venice could capitalize on its victories if Morosini circumvented the senate’s authority to make decisions on the spot because “awaiting the senate’s orders from so far away rendered them useless by the time they arrived.” AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 2 June 1688, 134v.
25 Seignelay insisted the republic should in no way disadvantage French vessels in the Mediterranean in favor of other European states through tariffs or disregard for French standards. He signalled to la Haye that nothing was
in 1688 highlight the position that the French foreign ministry - and the ministry of the marine - believed the republic held in its policies towards Innocent XI, Leopold I, and France’s privileges with the Ottomans. As la Haye maneuvered in Venice, the evolving institutional structures of *louisquatorzien* bureaucracy came more clearly into focus.

The role of the ambassador extended now not only to traditional high politics. La Haye assumed the task of safeguarding French maritime and commercial interests in Venice as never before while Louis XIV edged toward a new European-wide war requiring resources from and leverage on the sea.²⁶ France’s predominance in European affairs depended too upon events in the Mediterranean. Commerce in goods and slaves became high politics. The pleas of Captain Foucas and the collaboration of the ambassador and the consul were not mere maritime wrangling. The ministers’ interactions in Venice represented the measure and reach of the French administration as Louis XIV struggled to control international affairs. Ultimately, they served as one institutional model of commercial arbitrage in the Mediterranean Sea for the later eighteenth century French “commercial boom.”²⁷

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A Seasoned Ambassador in Venice: Emphasizing the Serenissima’s Importance to French Foreign Policy in the Late Seventeenth Century

Denis II de la Haye, Sieur de Vantelet (1633-1722) succeeded Michel Amelot as ambassador in Venice. The fifty-two year old diplomat arrived there 9 February 1685 and made the entrée on 8 July.\(^{28}\) The disastrous relationship of Amelot with the Venetian government eased with the arrival of la Haye who informed Louis XIV that he would not have the same “patience” with the senate as had his predecessor.\(^{29}\) The ambassador’s confidence came from years of diplomatic experience. He had held no office other than ambassador. In April 1688 la Haye became the longest serving French diplomat, proudly reminding the king of this fact upon the Marquis de Feuquières’s death in Madrid making him “the doyen of Your Majesty’s ambassadors.”\(^{30}\)

Denis was the son of Jean III de la Haye, Sieur de Vantelet and Marguerite de Polluau. His parents were both of robe origin from Champagne. Jean began his career as an lawyer in the parlement of Paris as did his wife’s father.\(^{31}\) Jean’s diplomatic career began in 1639 in Constantinople, where he served Louis XIV until 1661, and Denis grew up at the foreign and often-hostile Ottoman court.\(^{32}\) Denis’s career began in Constantinople where he served from 1665 to 1670.\(^{33}\) Louis XIV sent him to the Bavarian court at Munich as resident ambassador

\(^{28}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, 14 July 1685, F. 130.
\(^{30}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 April 1688, F. 94v.
\(^{33}\) Saint Priest, 221, 227. La Haye’s imprisonment between 1669-1670 in the final phases of the Candian War nearly brought France into war with Mehmet IV. The outcome of this tense moment led to the successful renewal of the
from 1675 until 1680.\textsuperscript{34} He received instructions from Croissy to travel to Venice in August 1684.

La Haye’s first wife, Louise, followed her husband to Venice.\textsuperscript{35} She was the daughter of Guy-François de Montholon, Seigneur de Vivier and d’Aubervilliers, lawyer in the parlement of Paris and a conseiller d’état. Her mother was Marie Lasnier, daughter too of a conseiller d’état.\textsuperscript{36} Louise allegedly loathed Venice. The inquisitor’s spy, Badoer, reported that the ambassadress claimed she “...absolutely did not want to remain in this despised capital.”\textsuperscript{37} She died in 1690 prompting la Haye to petition Louis XIV to allow him to remarry the widow of a long-time French spy from Vicenza, Cavaliere Giulio Cesare Beaziano.\textsuperscript{38}

Amelot had successfully relayed information from the republic to the court to formulate policies with Leopold I, but he had not dissuaded the Venetian senate from allying with Leopold. The continuation of the war in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean became critical to the longevity of French policies against its enemies and to the concretization of French territories in commercial capitulations of 1673. Colbert to Louis XIV, 21 Sept. 1669, in Lettres, Instructions et Mémoires de Colbert, Tome II, ed. Pierre Clement, 491; Takeda, Between Crown and Commerce, 40-41.

\textsuperscript{34} “Liste: Des Ambassadeurs, envoyés, ministres et autres agents politiques de la cour de France pres les puissances étrangères,” in Annaire historique de la Société de l’histoire de France pour l’année 1848, (Paris), 160.

\textsuperscript{35} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, 28 April 1685, Fs. 55v-56r

\textsuperscript{36} Chesnaye-DesBois, 735; Le Mercure Galant, February 1690 (Paris: Galerie-Neuve du Palais), 238-239.

\textsuperscript{37} ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Badoer to Inquisitors of State, 2 Sept. 1685.

\textsuperscript{38} The Mercure Galant reported Louise’s death. She was apparently well-known in court circles. Le Mercure Galant, February 1690, 232-233. La Haye married Louise in 1657. Their only male child died in Constantinople much earlier. More than likely Louise’s death and the couple’s lack of a male heir spurred the aging ambassador to remarry. Curiously, la Haye chose Catarina Groppo, widow of the Cavaliere Beaziano (or Beatiano), a nobleman of Vicenza known for his scholarship on Venice’s nobility and as a long-time spy for French ambassadors in Venice. Beaziano was already a knight of Saint-Michel and a favorite informant of Michel Amelot before la Haye’s arrival. Amelot served as godfather to his son, and the ambassador had petitioned the king to give the boy his name. Louis refused politely, but this marriage between la Haye and Beaziano’s widow highlights again the tight links that emerged between French emissaries in the republic and the families of the informants plying them with information. Catarina deserves mention here too as she was fifty-four years old in 1693 when she bore Marc, their first child - a seventeenth century biological feat. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107 bis, Amelot to Louis XIV, 10 July 1683, F. 440r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107bis, Louis XIV to Amelot, 29 July 1683, F. 447r; Lonardi, “Informazione, spionaggio e segreto di stato,” 148; Marc-Joseph Souchon, ed., Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieurs a 1790, Tome V, Aisne (Laon: Imprimerie du Journal de l’Aisne, 1906), 177.
the Rhineland. The Franco-Ottoman alliance too was central to French Mediterranean commercial, military, and maritime prowess. La Haye was well acquainted with Ottoman and imperial politics. He was a logical choice to facilitate policies in Venice as the republic regained dominions and menaced the position of France’s Ottoman ally.

The anti-French sentiment in Venice from 1682 to 1685 precluded the dominance of French influence among Venetian politicians. The senate avoided negotiations with Amelot, but this would not be the case with la Haye. He demanded invitations to state functions complaining in 1685 that respect for Louis XIV required representation. He described his participation in many state functions over the years alongside four doges with whom he alleged frequent personal conversations. The improvement in Franco-Venetian relations through la Haye’s experience can also be seen as the reports of the confidente, Badoer, to the inquisitors of state focusing on the French slackened after 1685.

La Haye’s long correspondence from Venice reveals his exactitude in communicating news to the court. Likewise, the twenty one volumes of his dispatches reinforce the previous chapters’ assertions about systemic trends that Croissy, and after 1696, Croissy’s son, the Marquis de Torcy, introduced into the foreign ministry. La Haye’s dispatches contained almost no personal letters, and they were addressed with relatively few exceptions to Louis XIV alone.

The greatest innovation in Venice was the ambassador’s correspondence and collaboration with

41 The following dispatch was one instance where Amelot wrote to Louis XIV that the king would have to write a letter to the senate himself to force a Venetian secretary to come to the embassy as the senate refused to communicate with him: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, Amelot to Louis XIV, 5 Feb. 1683, F. 280r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 111, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 March 1685, Fs. 20v-21r.
43 La Haye’s embassy in Venice coincided with the dogeships of Marc-Antonio Giustiniani (1683-1688), Francesco Morosini (1688-1694), Silvestro Valiero (1694-1700), and Alvise II Mocenigo (1700-1709).
the secretary of the marine and the French consul. This communication reveals the emergence of another administrative tether binding the ambassador to bureaucratic developments at Versailles. La Haye’s communication with the foreign ministry in conjunction with that of the ambassador and Seignelay contradict historians’ assertions that the level of information flowing to the French court diminished after the death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert.\textsuperscript{44} Information increased from Venice feeding two ministries. Contextualizing la Haye as correspondent to both ministries serves as evidence that the role of French ambassadors became increasingly bureaucratic and functionalized.

**France and Venice Counter Innocent XI**

In 1688 French authority stretched beyond the limits that European rulers would allow. At William of Orange’s urging in 1686 the League of Augsburg had formed to countermand further French expansion into the Spanish Netherlands, the Empire, and Northern Italy.\textsuperscript{45} Leopold I’s struggle to contain and overthrow imperial opposition in Hungary expanded his authority there to its greatest extent.\textsuperscript{46} Imperial forces under the Duke of Lorraine dominated the Hungarian nobility and pushed the weakened offensive armies of the Ottomans to Belgrade.\textsuperscript{47} Consequently, Louis XIV feared the emperor’s strong position in the east would prompt Leopold to sue for peace with the Ottomans freeing the imperial army to counter French acquisitions along the Rhine.\textsuperscript{48} The gains of the réunions and the terms of the Truce of Ratisbonne tenuously left territories, most notably Strasbourg and Luxembourg, in French hands.\textsuperscript{49} Louis pressed to

\textsuperscript{44} Soll, *The Information Master*, 154.
\textsuperscript{46} Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria*, 136.
\textsuperscript{47} Wolf, 89, 100.
\textsuperscript{48} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 9 June 1688, 129v; Wolf, 96, 100.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 84-85.
make the truce binding as a treaty to assure these dynastic holdings, but the emperor stalled in this as he had formally to join the League of Augsburg.\(^{50}\)

It seemed increasingly likely that Leopold would turn his armies westward.\(^{51}\) French subsidies and pressure upon German princelings lost much of their allure by 1687 as Leopold I’s advances against the Turk elevated the emperor’s political caché in the Empire.\(^{52}\) France’s hold over German rulers dwindled to two principals. Louis XIV’s cousin, the Wittelsbach Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian II Emanuel, and Maximilian’s cousin, the Archbishop of Cologne, Maximilian-Henry, remained critical. The Elector of Bavaria vacillated in his loyalties to see where his house could achieve the most gain. His 1685 marriage to a daughter of Leopold I, Maria Antonia, and his military leadership against the Ottomans indicated Habsburg loyalties.\(^{53}\) Ultimately, the Archbishopric of Cologne in the Rhineland-Palatinate was paramount for Louis XIV’s authority in imperial politics. Maximilian-Henry, however, despite years of French allegiance, impeded the elevation of the pro-French Cardinal von Furstenberg to the succession of the electorate.\(^{54}\)

The death of Maximilian-Henry in June 1688 left a political vacuum that discomfited Louis XIV. Louis pressed for the elevation of Furstenburg to the archepiscopacy.\(^{55}\) Leopold I accused the pro-French Furstenberg and his family of treason blocking the election.\(^{56}\) The greatest challenge to Furstenberg, however, was Innocent XI who preferred Clement-Joseph, 

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\(^{50}\) Croissy, *Mémoire pour servir d'instruction au Sieur de la Haye*, 105; Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria*, 142-143.


\(^{52}\) Spielman, 124-125.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 125-126. The Elector of Bavaria’s marriage to Maria Antonia resulted in the birth of Joseph Ferdinand who became one of the three leading claimants to the throne of Spain in 1698-1699. Wolf, 125, 130-131.


\(^{56}\) Gérin, *Innocent XI et l’Élection de Cologne 1688*, 9, 11.
brother of Maximilian Emanuel. The pope believed conferring the title upon Furstenberg would signal a breach of canon law in the empire, and Innocent was weary of Louis XIV’s defiant policies vis-a-vis the debates over the régale.\(^{57}\) Additionally, the Holy League’s successes against the Ottomans disinclined Innocent to irritate Leopold I through the installation of a candidate that could weaken conditions in the western empire undercutting Christian advances in the east. Innocent posited himself in 1687 and 1688 not only as a barrier to Gallicanism but also as a challenge to Bourbon dynastic politics along the Rhine and in Northern Italy.\(^{58}\)

The stipulations of the 1664 Treaty of Pisa seemed distant by the 1680s. The pope had reincamerated Castro and Ronciglione from the Duke of Parma again upon the duke’s failure to pay the indemnities outlined in the treaty. Similarly, in 1687 Innocent also revoked the treaty’s guarantee of ambassadors’ extraterritorial rights in their Roman quartiers.\(^{59}\) The pope’s refusal to honor Alexander VII’s treaty provided Louis with leverage in Italy and over papal enclaves in France to force the election of Furstenberg.\(^{60}\) The prospect of a defensive war to protect France’s borders was something to which Louis XIV was unaccustomed. Threatening an invasion of Northern Italy, Rome, Avignon, and the Comtat Venaissin represented the lengths to which Louis would go to force Furstenberg’s election and protect dynastic territorial gains.

In November 1687 Louis XIV dispatched Henry-Charles de Beaumanoir, Marquis de Lavardin to Rome as extraordinary ambassador escorted by an entourage of one hundred officers from Seignelay’s marines.\(^{61}\) The unusual martial display was to inspire acquiescence in the pope

\(^{57}\) Gérin, L’Ambassade de Lavardin, 1; Bergin, The Politics of Religion in Early Modern France, 217.


\(^{60}\) Saint-Hilaire, Mémoires, 56-57.

\(^{61}\) Gérin, L’Ambassade de Lavardin, 10, 11-12; Bojani, 25.
toward the king’s demands regarding the *quartiers* and on behalf of the Duke of Parma and Furstenberg. Lavardin’s controversial and flamboyant entrée into Rome only strengthened Innocent’s resolve.\(^\text{62}\) He refused to acknowledge Lavardin as official ambassador forbidding the Sacred College and the chefs of religious orders from engaging with the envoy.\(^\text{63}\) The pope went further. In December he excommunicated the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome where French ambassadors traditionally attended mass.\(^\text{64}\) As a counter measure to papal intransigence, the king ordered a contingent of thirty-six French galleys prepared to cruise near the Italian coast, and troops mobilized to descend into the peninsula and papal enclaves in France.\(^\text{65}\)

As in the Corsican guard crises of 1662-1663, the Venetian senate interposed its ambassadors in Paris and Rome as mediators between the French king and the pope.\(^\text{66}\) The senate’s primary concern was the successful prosecution of the war against the Turk; its members feared the threat of French invasions along the Rhine and in Italy would constrain Leopold I to withdraw from the east.\(^\text{67}\) La Haye’s correspondence with Louis XIV from Venice in the early months of 1688 dealt primarily with the debacle in Rome and Venetian diplomats’ role in its resolution. The king instructed la Haye to reassure the senate that he had no intention of invading

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\(^{64}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 Jan. 1688, F. 9r; Bojani, 25.
\(^{66}\) Ranuzzi to Cibo, 12 Jan. 1688, in Neveu, Tome II, 223-224;
along the Rhine.\textsuperscript{68} These measures were to facilitate continued Venetian support at the Roman court and to show French solidarity with the senate in its quarrels with Innocent.

Although Innocent XI provided Venice with sizeable contingents of troops, ships, and money for the ongoing war with the Turk, the senate tangled with the pope over ecclesiastical appointments.\textsuperscript{69} As promised in his 1676 election, Innocent proved to be an almost-incorruptible protector of the church’s privilege to nominate or approve candidates to vacant sees across Europe. He hindered the Venetian senate’s nominations to the bishopric of Cremona and Spalatro during Amelot’s embassy, and Venice’s government continued to spar with Innocent in 1688 for control over the loyalty of its clergy.\textsuperscript{70} Venice too had quarreled in 1678 over the quartiers of its former ambassador to Rome, Girolamo Zeno. Consequently, the senate, in high dudgeon, recalled Zeno leaving its Roman embassy vacant. The formation of the Holy League renewed Venice’s diplomatic relations with Rome, and in 1683 the republic elected Girolamo Lando as envoy to the papal court.\textsuperscript{71}

Venetian successes in the Mediterranean from 1684 to 1687 tempered its government’s interactions with Rome further, and the Venetian ambassador in Paris, Girolamo Venier negotiated along with the papal nuncio, Angelo Ranuzzi, to halt French merchant vessels covertly providing military equipment and provisions to the Turks - actions that had enraged the republic and Innocent.\textsuperscript{72} La Haye indicated that the pope’s patience with Venetian ecclesiastical

\textsuperscript{68} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 3 March 1688, Fs. 48r-48v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 20 March 1688, F.75v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 22 March 1688, F.85v.

\textsuperscript{69} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 17 July 1688, F. 190v.

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{72} The following letters from Ranuzzi in Paris to the papal secretary of state, Alderano Cibo, attest to the common phlegm of the Venetian senate and the papal court to news that as many as twelve French vessels supplied men and materiel to the Ottomans against the Holy League in the Levant: Ranuzzi to Cibo, 9 June 1687, in Neveu, Tome II,
policies, however, thinned again by 1688 especially as the republic’s ambassador in Rome, Lando, refused to ostracize the Marquis de Lavardin and purportedly upheld French demands at the papal court.  

Giralomo Venier reported that, in spite of the pope's warnings, Lavardin bribed and threatened cardinals to counter Innocent XI’s opposition to Furstenberg’s election. Louis XIV expected Lando to follow Lavardin’s example pressuring the pope to relinquish Castro and Ronciglione to the Duke of Parma and to vet Furstenberg. La Haye praised the senate for upholding French interests in Rome and Northern Italy, and the king lauded the republic’s equally stubborn refusal to allow Innocent XI to dictate ecclesiastical nominations in its states. Louis cast himself as an admirer of the senate’s devotion to its temporal sovereignty, and he cast Innocent XI as their common adversary in domestic matters of state. La Haye, however, was to use this commonality to pressure the Venetian senate as the king claimed that its members would share the blame if he brought war into Italy.

Venier and Lando allegedly continued to negotiate an accord between the king and the pope throughout 1688, and as Morosini’s forces besieged Ottoman Negroponte in July la Haye reported that Innocent XI and Leopold I complained that their Venetian allies became arrogant in Italian affairs. The ambassador reported the pope was certain to disregard the senate’s injunctions against investiture of non-Venetians in vacant dioceses in its territories, and he

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105-106; Cibo to Ranuzzi, 1 July 1687, in Neveu, Tome II, 114; Ranuzzi to Cibo, 14 July 1687, in Neveu, Tome II, 120; Cibo to Ranuzzi, 29 July 1687, in Neveu, Tome II, 129.

73 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 17 Jan. 1688, F. 14r.

74 ASV, IS-DAF, Busta 438, Venier to Inquisitors of State, 17 March 1688.

75 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 22 March 1688, F. 86r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 22 April 1688, F. 92v.


77 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 22 April 1688, F. 92v.

78 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 July 1688, F. 185v.
remarked that the senate’s sympathy for Louis XIV’s policies regarding the pope grew. The republic’s government saw Innocent’s refusal to nominate Furstenberg as further proof that he ignored states’ temporal interests, and its members believed the pope’s suppression of Furstenberg’s election signaled a dangerous resurgence of papal power in matters of state.

Venice’s domestic dual with the pope escalated in August when a fight among parochial curés and monks over disputed burial plots in the city pitted the republic against Rome for control over jurisdiction of Venetian ecclesiastical properties in the capital city itself. The Venetian pregadi sided with the curés, and, as la Haye predicted to Louis XIV, Innocent XI defended the monks. The rapport between Venice and Rome at the end of 1688 was as tense as was that of France, but the senate, still dependent upon Innocent’s support in the Mediterranean conflict, could not afford to repulse the pope as fully as could the French king. The senate’s support of French policy in Rome was little more than an irritant to Innocent as long as it depended upon papal subsidies in the war.

The senate’s quarrel with Rome remained open-ended in September 1688 when the Grand Dauphin and Sébastien Le Prestre, Seigneur de Vauban led French troops into the Palatinate. In that same month French forces descended into Avignon and the Comtat Venaisin, and the king ordered the sequestration of Ranuzzi in Paris. Innocent XI’s intransigence contributed to forcing Louis XIV’s panicked policies as Venier opined the circumstances relating

79 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 July 1688, F. 185v.
80 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 21 Aug. 1688, F. 221r-221v.
83 Lando claimed that the Roman court believed Venice friendly only when it needed papal funds. Giralomo Lando, Relazione di Roma, 1691, in Barozzi & Berchet, vol. 8, 419.
84 Gérin, L’Ambassade de Lavardin, 32-33.
to Cologne “...could be said to be the first causes of the present universal conflagration.”

Ultimately, Innocent XI died on 12 August 1689 less than a year after the outbreak of the War of the League of Augsburg. In October the Venetian Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni became Alexander VIII through the machinations of the new French ambassador to Rome, the Duke de Chaulnes, and Lando in conjunction with French and Venetian cardinals. His election briefly resolved Venetian and French relations with Rome. It came too late, however, to halt the advent of war.

**France, Venice, and the Direction of Turn-of-the-Century International Affairs**

Louis XIV was unwell in 1687 and 1688. Historians agree that a number of health problems afflicted the king, and, as Giralomo Venier reported, a miasma of depression followed the fifty-year-old monarch. Undoubtedly, the increasing hostility of European states against the king’s dynastic policies exacerbated his illnesses as much as they contributed to the controversial decisions the king made just prior to the War of the League of Augsburg. The most pressing concern for French foreign policy in 1687 and 1688 was shoring up the uncertain security of France’s Alsatian possessions that the Truce of Ratisbonne only temporarily buttressed.

Louis awaited Leopold I’s reply to his requests that the truce be cemented into a treaty. Leopold’s avoidance of the question and the pressure of waiting unnerved the French king. The suspended climate forced Louis to fight Innocent XI for Furstenberg’s election in Cologne. Moreover, Leopold’s uncertain intentions contributed to Louis’s fears that the emperor might

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89 Ibid.,101.
settle with the Ottomans. If this occurred before the truce solidified, Bourbon dynastic gains along the Rhine, in the Spanish Netherlands, and in Northern Italy could be lost. News that Carlos II’s government pressured Ferdinando-Carlo, Duke of Mantua to accept Spanish troops into Guastalla threatened France’s grasp on the duke’s loyalty. Safeguarding the boundaries of the kingdom and hegemonic interests in Italy seemed to hinge upon events in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean Sea.

Since the beginning of the War of the Holy League Venetian forces under Morosini claimed more territories in the Mediterranean than they had held in previous centuries. The captain-general’s conquests by 1687 counted the Morea – as Venetians called the Peloponnese; in December Morosini quartered in Athens planning to continue eastward in spring 1688. War and an outbreak of plague diminished his forces, but the senate promised infusions of manpower, ships, and munitions in the coming months. Extraordinary levies, assistance from German princes, Swiss mercenaries, and Innocent XI provided these.

La Haye reported that the pope regarded the senate’s renewed belligerent defense of the Venetian clergy a result of Morosini’s wins, and Leopold viewed the republic’s support of Louis XIV’s policies in Cologne and the claims of the Duke of Parma as a betrayal of the senate’s

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90 Faroqhi, “Part II: Crisis and Change, 1590-1699,” 428; Wolf, Toward a European Balance of Power, 97-98.
92 Anna Akerhjelm, Journal, published in de Laborde, Athènes aux XVe, XVIe, et XVIIe siècles, Tome II (Paris: Jules Rénouard, 1854), 307, 309, 317. Anna Akerhjelm was lady-in-waiting to the Swedish Countess of Köningsmarck. The Count of Köningsmarck was a chief volunteering officer in Morosini’s army. Akerhjelm’s journal provides an invaluable and almost-daily account of Morosini’s army and its advances in the Mediterranean from 1686-1688.
alliance with him and Habsburg interests in Italy. The king simultaneously encouraged the senate to press on in the war, and, pursuant to la Haye’s reportage of the friction among the members of the Holy League, he conspired to drive a wedge between Venice and Leopold. Imperial armies besieged the Turks at Belgrade, and Leopold I controlled much of the Balkans. The Venetian senate feared he would press for peace with the Ottomans as much as did Louis XIV. The continuation of the war for Venice depended upon Leopold, and the French king hoped to poison the rapport between the republic and the emperor in an effort to shake Leopold’s confidence.

The king craftily relayed rumors to la Haye in February that Leopold accepted forty thousand écus from the Republic of Ragusa for the investitures of Herzegovina and Bosnia. The king instructed la Haye to inform Doge Giustinianì personally of this news at the next possible public ceremony. He was curious to know if this were true and what the Venetian senate’s response would be in this event. Venice had promoted its claims to Herzegovina and Bosnia in Vienna since 1684 as imperial forces pushed further into Hungary. The Republic of Saint Mark believed Ragusa and its Dalmatian territories should be fully under its authority rather than a rival in Mediterranean commerce. The governments of the two republics had been rivals for centuries, but traditionally the Ottomans or the Holy Roman Emperors asserted themselves as the protectors of Ragusa to Venetian chagrin.

94 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 10 July 1688 Fs. 185v-186r.
95 Spielman, Leopold I of Austria, 136-137.
96 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 15 May 1688, Fs. 126v, 127r-127v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 22 May 1688, Fs. 132r-132v.
99 Ibid., 103.
Ragusa had become increasingly weak since a devastating earthquake in 1667, and Dubrovnic’s senate petitioned Louis XIV and other European monarchs for protection as it recovered. Venice’s government watched with hungry eyes for an opportunity possibly to annex the republic, and news that Leopold empowered its small adversary as he overran the Turk in the Balkans annoyed Venice’s senate against him. La Haye investigated to learn if this morsel was true, and, ultimately, it appeared that Leopold did receive money from Ragusa for the investitures. Venice’s senate threatened to invade Ragusa in this eventuality. To preserve the alliance with Venice the emperor did not concede the investitures, but he renewed the pledge to protect Ragusa against future Venetian predations.

Aggravating Veneto-Habsburg relations prevented the Venetian senate from cooperating with other Italian princes against French interests in the peninsula. Members of the League of Augsburg petitioned Italian sovereigns to commit to an anti-French coalition, and a number of Italian heads of state had met German princes in Venice during the carnival season in 1687 to discuss the proposition. The senate, although aware that the princes convened in the city, was unwilling to risk any action that would prompt French invasive action along the Rhine or in Italy that could cause Leopold to withdraw from the war in the east or to send imperial troops into Italy. The senate warned la Haye of the interviews the princes held in 1687, and the ambassador kept Louis informed of rumors that the princes were to meet again in Venice in

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103 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 24 July 1688, Fs. 198v-199r; Radonić, 107.
Ultimately, most Italian princes avoided allying outright against Louis XIV or the emperor.

The Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs sought to augment their authority in Northern Italy as war approached. The Duke of Mantua entertained Austrian and Spanish entreaties to accept Habsburg troops into his remaining lands to counter the French. News arrived in May that the duke accepted infusions of money from Leopold I and that he negotiated with Spain for the installation of troops in Guastalla. To balance Louis XIV’s authority in Casale and Pignerol and his relative, although diminishing, influence over the Dukes of Parma, Modena, and Savoy, the Spanish government conspired to add Guastalla to its Italian territories. Louis XIV expressed his confidence in the Duke of Mantua’s French loyalties, but the possible entry of Spanish troops into Italy concerned the Venetian senate believing Spanish actions indicated a French attack along the Rhine or an invasion of Italy imminent. The senate, however, refused Leopold I’s request to allow imperial troops to pass through the terraferma to supplant the French in any event. The emperor’s protection of Ragusa in conjunction with the build-up of Habsburg forces in Italy forced the senate to defy Habsburg interests to upset Leopold’s certainty in the advantages he now held in the Balkans and those of Spain in the peninsula. This action

105 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 19 June 1688, F. 154r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 8 July 1688, F. 169r.
107 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 26 June 1688, F. 173v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 14 July 1688, Fs. 175r-175v.
would have continued consequences for Franco-Venetian relations a decade later when Venice
could no longer afford to jilt the emperor as the War for the Spanish throne began.

Doge Marc-Antonio Giustiniani died in March 1688, and Captain-General Francesco
Morosini was elected in April.\textsuperscript{111} La Haye noted that Morosini’s election came with almost no
opposition but that his command of the republic’s armies gave him an almost absolute power
over the government.\textsuperscript{112} Venice’s power structure, according to the French ambassador, allegedly
came under threat as Morosini controlled news arriving from the Levant and, hence, the senate’s
decisions as the war continued.\textsuperscript{113} La Haye believed Morosini was jealous of his power and that
he might prolong the war to augment his authority.\textsuperscript{114} The Captain-General-Doge’s siege of
Negroponte began 23 July, but the paucity of information from the east left the senate in an
uncertain position as much as was Louis XIV regarding Leopold I’s irenic overtures to the
Ottomans.\textsuperscript{115} In much the same way that relations with Innocent XI and Leopold prompted
developments in French foreign policy, so too, the Venetian senate juggled its own politics along
with that of its European neighbors awaiting dispatches from Morosini’s distant progress. The
senate’s initial elation at Morosini’s election to the dogeship soon soured, and the loss of

\textsuperscript{111} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 26 March 1688, F. 82r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, 3 April
Serenissimo Francesco Morosini eletto Doge di Venezia Capitano Generale da Mare and Copie des 41 Electeurs du
Doge}, copies sent by Le Blond, 10 April 1688, Fs. 42-43r.
\textsuperscript{112} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 24 April 1688, F. 106r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye
to Louis XIV, 1 May 1688, Fs. 111v, 112r-112v.
\textsuperscript{113} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, Louis XIV to la Haye, 2 June 1688, F. 134r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to
Louis XIV, 21 Aug. 1688, F. 220r.
\textsuperscript{114} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 1 May 1688, F. 112r.
\textsuperscript{115} Akerhjelm, \textit{Journal}, in De Laborde, 317; AAE, CP, Venise, vol.113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 18 Aug. 1688, F.
185v.
Negroponte 20 October meant that many in the government gnashed their teeth at the doge concluding that Venice too should consider peace with the Ottomans. The static atmosphere in the autumn of 1688 resulting from the uncertain relations among the members of the Holy League and the prosecution of the war with the Turk contributed to Louis XIV’s decision to send a French army to besiege Philippsbourg in September 1688. The king awaited the turn of events as long as he could when Belgrade finally fell to imperial troops 6 September. Louis used the rights of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth-Charlotte, Duchess of Orléans's hereditary claims to the Palatinate as his ostensible reasons for the invasion.

Throughout the year the king denied any intent to move along the Rhine to the Venetian senate. The uncertain news from the war theaters of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Sea in conjunction with Habsburg maneuvers in Northern Italy in concert with Innocent XI supported French fears that the members of the Holy League neared a peace with the Ottomans and that Spain readied for war.

International events in 1688 forced Louis XIV’s hand as never before. The loss of Cologne and that of England as an ally through the imminent accession of William III and Mary II to the throne further compromised French dynastic policies in Western Europe. France’s invasion of the Palatinate in September and declaration of war against the United Provinces in November, in part, resulted from Louis’s inability to foresee events in the east and the

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118 The capture of Belgrade was confirmed in Venice on 18 September, and Te Deums were ordered sung. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 18 Sept. 1688, F. 244r; Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 389.
119 La Haye reassured the senate that Louis XIV had no intentions of invading Italy unless other Italian princes sided with Innocent XI against French interests in Italy and Cologne. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Senate, copy sent in dispatch of 25 Sept. 1688, Fs. 253v-254v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, la Haye to Louis XIV, 16 Oct. 1688, F. 271v; Setton, 390-391.
Mediterranean. The collusion of the members of the Grand Alliance as war began foreshadowed the anti-French balance of power that would determine coalitions in the later War of the Spanish Succession.121

Venice’s traditional position as a neutral counterpoise to dynastic politics in Northern Italy shifted in favor of Leopold I with the Treaty of Lindz in 1684. Venice needed Leopold in its war through which it still hoped Morosini could regain Crete and Cyprus, and the senate’s formal alliance with the emperor continued until the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz.122 It can be argued, however, that the republic’s rhetorical politics of neutrality only reemerged in 1688. Venice was forced to devote its political authority among European states once again to the preservation of Italian stability as the peninsula became a central battleground in Bourbon-Habsburg dynastic warfare.123 Neutrality was, however, to be a fiction from the French vantage.

**La Haye and Jean-Guillaume Le Blond: Administrative Collaboration or Competition among the Colbert Clan’s Agents in Venice?**

Louis XIV had warned the Venetian senate in 1684 that the Holy League’s war against the Turk should in no way damage French commerce.124 After the capitulations of 5 June 1673 between France and Mehmet IV, Louis XIV imposed the privileges of the Franco-Ottoman alliance in the sea upon other states - especially the Venetians, Dutch, and English and others trafficking in the Mediterranean.125 The *Serenissima*, however, boasted a much longer tradition of Mediterranean commercial and political involvement; Morosini’s successes revivified the senate’s assertions vis-a-vis its time-honored position as “mistress of the [Adriatic] gulf” and

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121 Wolf, *Toward a European Balance of Power*, 121.
123 Sella, 15, 18
now the Ionian seas. Morosini compromised the already moribund Ottoman maritime presence in the Levant. Captain Foucas’s misfortune highlights that the king expected la Haye and Jean-Guillaume Le Blond to ensure the liberty and status of French vessels as Mediterranean boundaries shifted.

Arbitrage of French commerce in Venice’s expanding empire became more frequent before the senate requiring investigation and negotiation from the French consul and ambassador. La Haye’s rapport with Le Blond could be described as that of a supervisor, but it can be argued that the duties required of these ministers in Venice reflected the shift in the role of the ambassador from that of a sacral representative of royal majesty to that of a professional functionary. Prior to the 1680s, French ambassadors in Venice dealt tangentially with the consul. Consuls in the republic worked as lesser extensions of the foreign ministry. La Haye’s predecessors looked to consuls for information regarding ceremonial protocol and for news received in Venice that might affect the negotiation of foreign policy.

In the Venetian context there existed no equal interaction between ambassadors and consuls in Crown affairs. Ambassadors corresponded with Louis XIV and the secretaries of foreign affairs and occasionally with Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Extant letters from consuls Paul Vedoa, father and son, in Venice before 1679 were most often requests for wages sent to Colbert via diplomats’ dispatches or news reports sent from Venice to the secretary of foreign affairs

128 Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 247.
129 For an example see the following dispatch from the Bishop of Beziers and his relationship with Consul Paul Vedoa: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 82, Beziers to Lionne, 21 Oct. 1662, F. 124v;
when no ambassador was in residence. Ambassadors documented hardly any representation before the Venetian senate in matters relating to French commerce or seafaring, and the Vedoa functioned as obvious subordinates to the ambassador in service to the ministry of foreign affairs.

The nature of the professional rapport between French diplomats in Venice and the consul changed after Colbert issued the *Ordonnance de la Marine du mois d’août 1681*. The *Ordonnance* outlined and defined the jurisdiction and limits of the marine and its officials within the boundaries of the kingdom and beyond. In Title IX of Book One, Colbert delineated the expectations of “the consuls of the French nation abroad.” The articles stated the qualifications for consuls and the extent of their authority. They were to be educated in maritime law, and they were to serve as arbiters in French affairs in the environs of their posts. Additionally, the *Ordonnance* reaffirmed the responsibility of consuls as purveyors of information. They were to provide the secretary of the marine with a “faithful memoir of important affairs from their consulate…” The consul was officially to fulfill the same task of information gathering for Secretary Seignelay as the ambassador fulfilled for that of foreign affairs.

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130 See the following examples from the embassy of Beziers and Vedoa’s consulship: BNF, MC, vol. 119, Beziers to Colbert, 23 Feb. 1664, F. 480r; BNF, MC, vol. 125, Vedoa to Colbert, 1 Nov. 1664, F. 50r.
132 Ibid., 71, 77.
133 Ibid., 75.
As French legislation elevated consular service it streamlined that of the ambassador. Colbert’s *Ordonnance* legitimated the role of consul beyond that of a minor functionary in foreign affairs to that of a critical link in the navy, and the Crown’s, chain of command. The consul became another instrument supplying Colbert and the ministries he and his clan dominated with the information feeding what Jacob Soll has called a “secret state intelligence system.” Michel Amelot was the first ambassador in Venice to claim the French consul as part of his household, but Amelot made no mention of collaborative negotiations with Jean-Guillaume Le Blond and no correspondence with the secretary of the marine such as that la Haye described.

By 1688 the Marquis de Croissy was secretary of state of foreign affairs, and Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s son, Seignelay, had taken up command of the ministry of the marine as secretary. It made sense then that the direction of both ministries collaborate in more tangible ways after Colbert’s death in 1683 under the direction of the Colberts in opposition to the powerful Le Tellier clan. However, Croissy and Seignelay competed in their respective ministries for the reception and use of the knowledge they received from abroad. La Haye and Le Blond found themselves caught up in a family feud over information benefitting French international relations and commercial representation. Another factor effecting family dynamics was the reality that Seignelay did not yet sit on the *conseil d’en haut* as a minister of state. His

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134 Aglietti, “The consular institution between war and commerce, state and nation,” 54.
135 In the following mémoire Amelot outlined how he doled out goods he was allowed in Venice to members of his household. He included Le Blond in this company. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 107, *Memoire servant seulement pour eclaircir quelques dates et details dont Mons. Foscarini n’a pas este bien instruit*, sent in Amelot’s dispatch to Louis XIV, 26 Jan. 1683, F. 262v.
elevation depended, as with others in Louis’s government, on the benefits he procured for his master.

The Venetian context demonstrates that the push to acquire knowledge affected the working relationship of the ministers serving Croissy and Seignelay outside the kingdom. That the ambassador corresponded with the secretary of the marine and the consul as well as communicated with the minister of foreign affairs, Croissy, indicated the triangular bonds connecting the two ministries. It would not be until the late 1680s, however, at least in the Venetian context, that the close connection of the two ministries’ interests merged in actual documented practice. It would be incorrect, however, to say that the Colberts’ competition manifested itself in the collaboration of the ambassador and the consul.

There was a brief comment in 1687 from Seignelay’s envoy to Italian states, Paul de Louvigny d’Orgement, that indicated la Haye feigned his loyalty to Seignelay. Louvigny claimed the ambassador withheld information from Seignelay while appearing “all heart and affection” in his letters. This seems to have been corrected as there is no later documented evidence that la Haye failed to please Seignelay in his duties, and there are no extant letters to la Haye from Croissy that might indicate the foreign minister resented the ambassador’s work with Seignelay. On the contrary, the exchanges between la Haye and Le Blond evolved into a system that emerged after 1685, and, by the beginning of 1688, became fixed and, according to la Haye, almost daily. Louvigny testified to la Haye’s supervision of Le Blond, and, in a letter from Seignelay to la Haye of 15 January 1688, the secretary informed the ambassador that he was to make careful reports of the consul’s service. The correspondence from la Haye and Le Blond

139 Ibid., F. 53v.
140 Ibid., F. 52v; AN, MA, B7, 212, Louvigny to Seignelay, 4 Oct. 1687, F. 57r.
141 AN, MA, B7, 61, Seignelay to la Haye, 15 Jan. 1688, F. 6.
to Seignelay testified to the newly regularized nature of their interactions. A brief examination of their collaboration provides a more detailed picture of the two ministers’ working relationship and the ways in which they served the secretary of the marine.  

**Protecting French Mediterranean Commerce in Venice:**

Wartime reacquisition of territories bolstered Venice’s claims to dominance in the Adriatic and the Ionian Seas. Corsairs allegedly overtook Captain Foucas’s tartane in the waters of the Ionian. It then came into the hands of the newly appointed *provveditore da mar* of the Morea, Corner. Such incidents were common in the insecure maritime atmosphere of the Mediterranean. How these cases were dealt with in Venice underwent a change by 1688 especially as Louis XIV could now hold the Venetian senate responsible for infractions occurring in waters it claimed from the Turk.

In 1688 la Haye and Le Blond worked to resolve five ongoing cases related to the attack or detainment of French vessels in Venice’s maritime territories. Foucas’s case provides an example of how these incidents were resolved. In the months following Seignelay’s initial letter to la Haye regarding the French tartane, the ambassador and the consul investigated the circumstances. As ambassador, la Haye petitioned the Venetian senate insisting that it recognize the injury such incidents caused to Louis XIV’s reputation in Mediterranean commerce and requesting its intervention. La Haye first bent the ear of Doge Giustiniani personally on Foucas’s behalf during a ceremony on 1 February, and he subsequently sent an official written report to

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142 AN, MA, B7, 61, la Haye to Seignelay, 3 July 1688, F. 80v.
143 Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 300-301; AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, *mémoire* from Amelot de Gournay sent in a dispatch from la Haye to Seignelay, 11 Sept. 1688, F. 90r.,
the senate on the matter. According to the senate’s response to la Haye the consul Le Blond provided them details of consular agents’ investigation of the crime.

Over the next months the Venetian government opened an inquiry, and drew upon information from the Levant received from its by then Captain-General-Doge, Morosini. By 15 April, after conferring with provveditore Corner, Morosini responded that Foucas’s tartane was first attacked outside the frontiers of Venetian protection and that winds blew the ship to Cerigo. In its concluding report of 5 May, the senate remarked that it was not, lamentably, responsible for Foucas’s loss, but it would continue to do all it could to accommodate Louis XIV in commercial affairs whenever possible. The senate’s judgment in the matter was in response to la Haye’s and Le Blond’s shared investigation in conjunction with its own sources. Although the republic decided it was not at fault in the incident, the case documented that the ambassador and the consul worked in tandem to resolve cases related to French maritime interests in the shifting boundaries of Venetian waters. The senate’s responses in these cases denoted Venetian confidence in negotiations with Louis XIV regarding commercial issues attributable to Morosini’s conquests.

The Venetian senate’s measures to augment finances for the war also affected French commerce. Seignelay wrote to la Haye on 5 June 1688 that the king was surprised to learn that the senate imposed a twenty percent duty on vessels docking in ports throughout its dominions. The secretary asserted that this levy was a novelty, and he wondered if the senate enacted it to

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146 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 31 Jan. 1688, F. 13r. The ambassador informed Seignelay of the ceremony he would attend the next day and of his appeal to the senate.
147 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Venetian Senate to la Haye, [day omitted] May 1688, F. 58r.
148 Ibid. The senate reported that it had only finally received word from Morosini regarding the tartane although his letter to the body was dated 15 April.
149 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, Senate to la Haye, [day omitted] May 1688, F. 58r.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
pay for war costs. He enjoined the ambassador to investigate upon what authority the republic could enforce the tariff upon French merchant vessels given the privileged status Louis XIV believed his ships held.\textsuperscript{152} Seignelay requested a copy of the letters patent legitimating the levy.\textsuperscript{153} La Haye found that the republic had, since the time of Amelot, claimed the right to impose new tariffs at will upon ships in its jurisdiction as it was “mistress of the [Adriatic] gulf.” While there were no letters patent, la Haye sent to Seignelay the memo on tariffs that Amelot had left in the embassy archives.\textsuperscript{154} Short of complaints to the senate, la Haye was unable to challenge the republic’s policy, and Seignelay made no further protests.

Venice controlled commerce in the maritime territories under its jurisdiction, and it experienced stable commercial success until the end of the century in spite of the war.\textsuperscript{155} In the cases where the republic’s government believed it was within its sovereign rights, it did not hesitate to uphold its decisions in the face of foreign pressure. The senate did, however, accommodate Louis XIV in cases where French vessels or subjects were slighted unjustly reminding the ambassador that it wished to maintain good relations with his master.\textsuperscript{156} La Haye and Le Blond alike received instructions from Seignelay to insure French commercial interests. It fell to la Haye to represent French interests before the senate while Le Blond interacted with

\textsuperscript{152} AN, MA, B\textsuperscript{7}, 61, Seignelay to la Haye, 5 June 1688, F. 54.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 11 Sept. 1688, F. 89v; AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Mémoire of Amelot found in embassy archive sent in dispatch of 11 Sept. 1688, Fs. 90r-90v. In the following response to Amelot the senate upheld its time-honored laws to charge duties in its territories. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Copie d’une parti del senato a Mr. Amelot, trouve dans les papiers qu’il a laisse a Venise, le 13 Dec. 1683, sent in la Haye’s dispatch of 11 Sept. 1688, F. 90r. Seignelay was most concerned to know if Venice might be raising “new” tariffs only on French merchandise or if it raised tariffs equally on merchants from other European states as well. La Haye informed him on 11 Sept. that the senate raised tariffs on all merchants in its waters. AN, MA, B\textsuperscript{7}, 61, Seignelay to la Haye, 9 Aug. 1688, F. 85.
\textsuperscript{156} The senate reassured la Haye it would do all it could to accommodate safe French commerce. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 113, response of senate of 16 May 1688 to la Haye’s complaints against a corsair near the port of Durazzo, sent in dispatch of la Haye to Louis XIV, 22 May 1688, F. 133r.
other French consuls and French merchants trading in the Mediterranean to facilitate commerce in conjunction with Venetian law. Le Blond reported the findings of his inquiries or news from French consuls to the ambassador who used them to formulate his interactions with the Venetian government. Both ministers provided Seignelay accounts of the progress of commercial cases.\footnote{Another example of their collaboration can be found in the documents related to the case of a French merchant from Tunis, the Sieur Guirant, who owed the Crown a sizeable amount of money lent to him for trade in olive oil. He absconded into the Adriatic aboard his ship to avoid repayment. Seignelay expected la Haye and Le Blond to collaborate in finding and apprehending him. See AN, MA, B\textsuperscript{7}, 61, Seignelay to la Haye, 4 Nov. 1688, F. 115. La Haye wrote that he would prompt Le Blond to use the consular network and his agents to find the merchant. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 20 Nov. 1688, Fs. 99r-99v. The consul wrote that he received documents from the ambassador concerning the case of Guirant, and he would inform Seignelay once Guirant was found. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 20 Nov. 1688, F. 101v. La Haye later reported to Seignelay that Guirant was dead, and that Le Blond had orders to seize his ships and property. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 1 Jan. 1689, Fs. 107r-107v.}

**The Ambassador and the Consul Trade in Slaves**

The atmosphere of the Mediterranean was volatile in 1688. The successful military campaigns of Leopold I’s armies against the Turk in Hungary combined with Venice’s victories at sea left many Ottomans prisoners and slaves providing what Bamford called “‘windfall’ shipments” to interested parties.\footnote{Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria*, 136, 137-138; Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons*, 144.} The slave market swelled in the lands imperial forces overran, but there was fierce competition for slave labor as belligerent states like Venice, the papacy, and the empire needed manpower to serve their military needs.\footnote{AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 7 Feb. 1688, F. 21r.} The feud between Louis XIV and Pope Innocent XI regarding the election of the archbishop of Cologne pushed the king to order thirty six galleys readied in the port of Marseille to intimidate the pope.\footnote{Angelo Ranuzzi to Secretary Casoni, 12 April 1688, in Neveu, 282-283; Levillain, *Vaincre Louis XIV*, 355.} The galleys required many men to propel them, and the secretary of the marine was expected to obey the needs of French foreign policy requiring naval intervention.\footnote{Wolf, *Toward a European Balance of Power*, 100.}
The search for slaves to man the entire French fleet of forty galleys preoccupied Seignelay in this turbulent international atmosphere. The secretary first wrote to Le Blond of the necessity to find slaves on 16 December 1686 reiterating to the consul the primacy of the demand for Turks in January and April 1687.\textsuperscript{162} By extension, it became a second shared task for la Haye and Le Blond throughout 1688 when the secretary ordered la Haye’s oversight of Le Blond.\textsuperscript{163} They used their location in Venice to attempt to fill a ministerial order for three hundred suitable slaves in the competitive market.\textsuperscript{164} The brunt of the charge fell to Le Blond, and his letters to the secretary outline the complex channels of finance, transport, and information the consul relied upon.

Writing to Seignelay of the subject on 3 January, la Haye assured the secretary that he would oversee Le Blond in his efforts to find and purchase slaves.\textsuperscript{165} Attempts to strengthen Louis XIV’s military and naval apparatus were not well received in the late 1680s as French might in Europe and on the seas portended war in Europe. French use of Ottoman slaves was also in contravention of the 1673 capitulations with La Porte, and broadcasting the search for slaves was impolitic. The consul, therefore, worked under the strictest secrecy to obtain slaves for French vessels.\textsuperscript{166} Beyond the political and financial difficulties entangling the purchase of

\textsuperscript{162} Seignelay to Le Blond, 16 Dec. 1686, in \textit{Les correspondances administratives sous le règne de Louis XIV}, vol. 2, ed. Depping, 950; Seignelay to Le Blond, 27 Jan. 1687, in, Depping, 951; Seignelay to Le Blond, 16 April 1687, in Depping, 951; Bamford, 167.

\textsuperscript{163} Barbiche, \textit{Les Institutions de la monarchie française à l'époque moderne}, 210-211; AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 3 Jan. 1688, F. 2v; AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 3 Jan. 1688, 4v.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{165} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 3 Jan. 1688, F. 2v.

\textsuperscript{166} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 7 Feb. 1688, F. 22r; Bamford, \textit{Fighting Ships and Prisons}, 167.
manpower to serve the marine’s needs, the slaves themselves were often too young or sick.\textsuperscript{167}

Others maimed themselves fearing the horrors of the galleys.\textsuperscript{168}

The dispatches from la Haye and Le Blond to Seignelay illuminate the financial apparatus the ministry of the marine used in Venice to achieve its needs and the roles of the ambassador and the consul when using ministry funds. Seignelay sent bills of credit to la Haye in Venice.\textsuperscript{169} Seignelay ordered the ambassador to follow the exchange of money and the ways in which Le Blond utilized it.\textsuperscript{170} The secretary required the consul to account to la Haye and to him for every expense incurred once the Venetian banker, Piatti, delivered the funds.\textsuperscript{171} Le Blond carefully noted the exact amounts he provided to his agents, to the ships he rented and their crews, and the sums left at his disposal.\textsuperscript{172} Monies unused were again changed and returned to France; the consul noted exactly the exchange rates and each transaction in his reports. La Haye consistently checked the consul’s accounts commending his performance.\textsuperscript{173}

The sums sent to Le Blond were to expedite the process of finding slaves and paying for their upkeep and transport back to Marseille. He utilized a network of informants ostensibly sworn to secrecy stretching from Buccari in Imperial Istria, all along the Dalmatian coast, and as

\textsuperscript{167} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 21 Feb. 1688, F. 24v; AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 10 April 1688, F. 40r.

\textsuperscript{168} An example was a slave from Zara who, after his purchase, cut off three fingers of his right hand to escape galley service. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, Le Blond to Seignelay, 26 June 1688, F. 77r.

\textsuperscript{169} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 31 Jan. 1688, F. 12r. The ambassador received bills of credit from Seignelay in the amount of 21,200 \textit{livres} that he exchanged for 12,201 Venetian ducats delivered to Le Blond by Signor Giovanni Piatti, a Venetian banker who had worked with the French since the 1660s. AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 7 Feb. 1688, F. 22r; Ibid., Le Blond to Seignelay, 1 May 1688, 45r-45v.

\textsuperscript{170} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 12 June 1688, 73r-73v, 74r-74v.

\textsuperscript{171} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 28 Aug. 1688, 86r-86v.

\textsuperscript{172} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 1 May 1688, 45r-45v; AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 28 Aug. 1688, F. 86r-86v.

\textsuperscript{173} AN, AE, B\textsuperscript{1}, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 12 June 1688, 73r-73v.
far north as Vienna. These men were to locate healthy specimens, and they were provided funds to buy and ship the slaves to two French and two rented English ships anchored at Pirani for transport. The ships’ écrivains communicated with Le Blond to ensure that they were paid and that the ships were stocked and victualled to furnish the crews and to receive slaves as they trickled in over the months. La Haye monitored Le Blond’s search for slaves during the year. Ultimately, small groups of slaves arrived as the months passed, but in November the consul still dealt with obstacles in filling Seignelay’s demands. La Haye and the consul maintained a detailed correspondence with Seignelay throughout the process, and their letters indicated that the collaboration functioned under Seignelay’s supervision with no sense of ministerial competition among the two ministers in Venice.

Conclusion

The military and political circumstances that made the search for slave labor difficult attested to the violent and urgent attempts of European states to dominate the sea’s access to commercial and strategic resources in the midst of the War of the Holy League. In 1688 alone no less than five European states - France, Venice, England, the Dutch Republic, and the Empire - competed with one another or against the faltering Ottoman Empire for dominance in the

174 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 10 April 1688, 40v; AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 1 May 1688, Fs. 45r-46r. In this dispatch Le Blond noted the monies he sent to his various agents to facilitate the purchase of slaves; Bamford, Fighting Ships and Prisons, 168
175 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, Le Blond to Seignelay, 3 Jan. 1688, Fs. 4r-4v.
177 AN, AE, B1, 1159, Venise, vol. II, la Haye to Seignelay, 15 May 1688, 57r
179 In an intriguing side note, the fifteen-year-old son of Jean-Guillaume Le Blond, Charles-Gaëtan-Marie, died in 1740, and he was buried in the parish church of Saint-Martin de Charly where Denis de la Haye, his second wife, Catarina Groppo, and their family were also entered. Souchon, Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales anterieurs a 1790, Tome V, Aisne, 178-179.
Mediterranean Sea.\textsuperscript{180} Others, like Malta and the Republic of Ragusa, fought to maintain a share of the sea’s bounty amid the conflicts of the great powers. As the seventeenth century closed this competition only increased.

The evolution of Louis XIV’s government responded to the now global race to dominate the Mediterranean. French ministers outside the kingdom worked to ensure safety on the seas and access to a thriving and rich eastern trade as well as maintain the reputation of the king as the reputedly senior European competitor in the sea. To facilitate these ends, new legislation from the early 1680s highlighted and informed expectations for French consuls abroad like the ambassador and the consul that concretized into documented practice later in the decade. The consul was no longer a minor functionary in the ministry of foreign affairs but a link between ministries. Additionally, the secretary of the marine expected ambassadors like la Haye to promote, supervise, and collaborate in business related to French commerce in the Mediterranean and the operations required for the French navy as geopolitical circumstances required.

Although Louis XIV’s government could not control the reactions of states like Venice to its demands, it guaranteed that even subjects like Captain Foucas of Toulon could appeal to the state and its apparati for redress in a global maëlstrom. The European geopolitical tide turned against Louis’s dynastic policies, and as the War of the League of Augsburg began in 1688 the example of the French ambassador and consul in Venice demonstrated the methods of control the \textit{louisquatorzien} machine could impose upon its personnel outside of the kingdom in an effort to facilitate French interests. The rapport between la Haye and Le Blond illustrates too the development of Louis XIV’s administration in which ministries composing the French bureaucracy, while in competition at Versailles, compelled cooperation among ministers abroad in response to an anti-Ludovician European international landscape as the seventeenth century.

waned. The emerging conflict for the throne of Spain revealed a French government willing to menace Venetian interests in the sea. Diplomacy would not stop French ships’ efforts even to control Venetian ports as the eighteenth century dawned.
PART III:

Venice Impotent Before Louis XIV, 1700-1702
Chapter Six

Fig. 11
César, Cardinal d’Estrées (1701-1702) ambassadeur extraordinaire:  
The Expansion of French Authority in the Mediterranean and Venetian Neutrality Debunked

Venice’s inquisitors of state ordered strangled two thieves in the prisons of the ducal palace at midnight 12 June 1702. The bodies of brothers Gian-Paolo and Gian-Battista Rizzati were then immediately hung between the two pillars of the piazzetta near San Marco for all to see at sunrise. The captain of the sbirri searched for the Rizzati for months, and the inquisitors purportedly ordered their capture and execution for crimes as blockade runners for the Duke of Mantua. The deaths of the bandits would have been irrelevant to the world stage had they not possessed letters patent from the new French ordinary ambassador in Venice, Joseph-Antoine Hennequin de Charmont (1702-1704), and passeports from René de Froulay, Comte de Tessé, one of the chefs of French military forces in Northern Italy. The Rizzati brothers were under the extraterritorial protection of Louis XIV, and the broader implications of their executions effectively rendered fruitless Franco-Venetian diplomacy in the eighteenth century.

The executions of the Rizzati coincided with the tenure of Cardinal César d’Estrées as extraordinary ambassador to Venice from 1701-1702. The cardinal capitalized upon the diplomatic implications of the smugglers’ deaths to facilitate French interests in Northern Italy and the Adriatic Sea after a year and a half of indecisive negotiations with the Venetian senate. Estrées arrived in Venice 22 January 1701 to negotiate the descent of French troops into the

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1 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 12 June 1702, F. 184v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 135, Charmont to Louis XIV, 12 June 1702, Fs. 150v-151r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 136 supplément, Estrées to [destinataire unknown], 10 June 1702, Fs. 166v-167r, 167v. Paolo Preto stated that the captain, Giorgio Aliprandi, ordered Gian-Paolo Rizzati poisoned in a brothel in April 1702. The fuller treatment of the brothers that emerge in the dispatches of Estrées and Charmont, however, indicate that they were captured and died together in June. Preto seemed to be unaware of the French sources. See Preto, I Servizi Segreti di Venezia, 345.

Additionally, he solicited the Venetian government’s cooperation in countering the armies of Leopold I in Northern Italy and the Adriatic despite the republic’s ostensible neutrality. The senate, however, as had happened since the 1680s, proved evasive toward French interests vis-a-vis the emperor. The deaths of the Rizzati occurred only months before Estrées departed the city to serve in Madrid, and the episode threatened to bring Louis XIV’s vengeance down on the republic as the senate’s affinity for Leopold I belied neutrality to be a geopolitical ruse.

Estrées’s manipulation of the deaths of two Italian miscreants in 1702 highlights three arguments connecting the chapters of this dissertation. First, the years of Estrées’s embassy were decisive for the history of Venice and the stalling of Franco-Venetian relations in the broader discursive context of a Venetian “decline.” Scholars comment on the “beginning of the end” for the Republic of Venice with no clear consensus. I have suggested through an examination of Franco-Venetian relations, rather, that in the context of the final decades of the seventeenth century, Venice remained vital and active among European states. There was no clear-cut discussion of a moribund republic that neighboring polities discounted or ignored.

Europe’s late-seventeenth-century monarchs courted the republic as a useful ally in European and Mediterranean political and commercial endeavors; Venice’s political apparati and its military-naval forces proved resilient and capable of withstanding and standing with the great dynastic monarchies albeit increasingly requiring financial subsidies from its neighbors. Venice’s successes against the Ottomans in the Morean War reinforced that the republic continued to wield diplomatic and maritime authority. Its most recent alliances after the 1684 Treaty of Lindz affected international realignments that had, by the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz, reasserted Venetian authority as far afield as Southern Greece and islands of the Ionian Sea.
The build-up to and the advent of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701-1702, however, created a context in which Venetian resources and political rhetoric faltered in terms of one diplomatic relationship. The republic’s government could not sustain its pretensions to neutrality towards the Bourbons and the Habsburgs while trying to defend its authority in the Mediterranean and Italian theaters. Through the negotiations and observations of Cardinal d’Estrées, I highlight that the pressures of the war revealed the over extension and limits of the Venetian government to the French. Venice’s senate struggled to protect its sovereignty in the terraferma and Mediterranean territories against impinging French and imperial armies while protecting and re-acculturating its newly reacquired spheres of authority in the eastern sea. The small republic could not be neutral in the power politics of the great dynastic states as they again brought war into Northern Italy and the Adriatic.

The discourse surrounding the Rizzati affair and the republic’s unwillingness to disavow strategic ties with Leopold I illustrated that Venice’s government ceased to be a beneficial diplomatic and tactical partner for Louis XIV. And in this context, the diplomatic relationships between Venice and France destabilized. Venetian international involvements decayed in specific rapports. By 1702 diplomatic relations with the republic ceased to provide France with reciprocal benefits; one might claim the photodegradation of Venetian relations with Louis XIV. Reference to the dissolution of Franco-Venetian relations in 1702 also underscores the further enervation of Louis XIV’s influence in Italian affairs suffered in the war for the Spanish throne. Already curbed at the end of the Nine Years War, French authority diminished further in the Italian peninsula as war progressed with the ultimate installation of Austrian dominance there.

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through the 1714 Peace of Rastatt. As Estrées’s embassy revealed, however, French maritime and commercial authority in the eighteenth century Mediterranean Sea rose also at Venetian expense.

This brings me to the second theme of this chapter. Cardinal d’Estrées’s embassy was ineffective in persuading the Venetian senate to ally outright with France against the replenishment of Prince Eugène’s forces in the terraferma. Venetian vessels in the Adriatic allegedly sustained Eugene, the imperial generalissimo in Italy, through replenishments coming into the lands of the republic and the Duke of Modena from the sea. Venice’s maritime officials protected ships and ports in the same endeavor. Estrées pressured the Venetian senate: it could either chase imperial contingents from its lands; assist French naval forces in securing the Adriatic against the passage of imperial troops and material to Italy; or recognize the end of its time-honored sovereignty over the sea.

Venice’s government continued to maintain a fighting naval presence in the Mediterranean until 1718. The republic’s attempts to deny French ships from passing into the Adriatic in 1701-1702 with no defensive naval contingents to reinforce its complaints against them, however, demonstrated that its maritime authority in the Adriatic was severely impaired if not finished. Ultimately, Venetian protestations against the attacks of the Chevalier de Forbin’s squadrons underscored that Venice could no longer claim to be “Mistress of the Adriatic;” the

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5 Horn indicated that from 1701 French commerce benefited and steadily grew even stronger in the Mediterranean, Jeff Horn, “Lessons of the Levant,” 80, 87, 92.


7 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Louis XIV to Estrées, 6 March 1702, Fs. 7r-7v.


10 Whaley, 136; Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 442-443.
senate nearly cancelled the ceremonial sensa – marriage of the sea – as a result of its impotence before Forbin. By August 1702 the chevalier’s vessels even came within sight of the bell tower of San Marco to destroy an armed English vessel.\textsuperscript{11} Forbin bragged this action left him “master of the Gulf.”\textsuperscript{12}

Finally, it was through the initiatives of the seventy-four-year-old Cardinal d’Estrées that these extractive shifts in Venice’s international utility for France emerged. Estrées’s series of private conferences with Venice’s savvio del consiglio, Benedetto Capello, demonstrated the cardinal’s difficulty at holding the Venetian government’s proverbial feet to the fire to make good on its claims of neutrality early in the conflict. The republic’s senate stopped neither Franco-Spanish nor imperial armies from passing through the terraferma. As a gesture of goodwill Louis XIV removed his troops in the winter of 1701, whereas Prince Eugène prolonged his withdrawal.\textsuperscript{13} Estrées’s repeated complaints that Venice made no move to ally with France in response to Eugène’s belligerence served as the first evidence to the French of compliance with Leopold I.

As the struggle for Spanish dominions increased and saw the Bourbons and Habsburgs sparring across Venetian lands, the republic’s government could not eschew Leopold I completely as the threat of Ottoman resurgence in the east made Venetian reliance on the emperor non-negotiable.\textsuperscript{14} The republic’s refusal to aid in the blockage and destruction of the vessels assisting Prince Eugène from the Adriatic served as added evidence of the senate’s

\textsuperscript{11} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 10 Aug. 1702, F. 312r.
\textsuperscript{12} Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 113.
\textsuperscript{13} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 19 Nov. 1701, F. 341v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 3 Dec. 1701, Fs. 358r-358v.
\textsuperscript{14} Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 51.
alleged partisanship if not of its outright participation in the emperor's aims. The frustration emerging from Estrées’s correspondence showed that, by late 1702, the French government prepared either to force Venetian compliance both on land and sea; to humiliate the republic outright; or at least to have the Venetians think it would do so.

The Venetian inquisitors of state condemned the Rizzati brothers amid this turbulence. This diplomatic windfall provided Estrées an excuse to challenge Venice. He used the affair to avenge Venetian unwillingness to damage imperial advances laying bare the inconsistencies in Venice’s neutrality and the secret institutions of its polity. Heretofore Louis XIV and his ambassadors respected the autonomy of the Venetian government as a sovereign equal. French ambassadors observed the strains that (shadow) councils like the Ten and the state inquisitors, who arguably controlled the Venetian state behind the republican façade, placed upon Venetian foreign and domestic political culture, but they made no attempts to undermine the republic’s polity. Thanks to Estrées, the Rizzati affair brought these abstuse ministers headlong into a contest with Louis XIV threatening to subvert the inquisitors’ power publicly.

The affair afforded the king an opportunity to menace the republic with harsh retribution if it refused to punish the inquisitors. At this point in its history, Venice would have had no leverage to stem an all-out French onslaught, and the senate and people of Venice came to fear a French naval bombardment. A reading of Estrées’s correspondence with Louis XIV provides a diplomatic lesson. The affair revealed the long years of experience of Louis XIV and the cardinal

15 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, notes from Conférence avec M. Capello, sent in dispatch of 8 Oct. 1701, Estrées to Louis XIV, F. 272r.
as these aged statesmen manipulated an event that would have been of “least importance” to the almost utter submission of the republic before the king.\textsuperscript{18}

The republic avoided the king’s ire in diplomatic altercations since the 1660s while observing from afar Louis XIV’s penchant for humiliating and humbling diplomatic enemies like the papacy and the Republic of Genoa. The senate could either submit to the authority of Louis XIV or suffer the consequences. As will be argued further along, the ambassador’s manipulations in the affair and the humiliating outcome for Venetian government prepared the ground for Venetian submission before Louis XIV signalling the the disintegration of Franco-Venetian relations and diminishing the maritime authority of one French competitor in the Mediterranean.

\textbf{France and Venice after the Treaties of Ryswick (1697) and Carlowitz (1699): Toward the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713)}

Since 1688 Louis XIV’s dominance in Europe slackened. The Nine Years War pitted the Grand Alliance against the French, and by the time negotiations concluded at Ryswick in 1697 it was clear that French dominance in Europe was recognized but contained.\textsuperscript{19} Among the stipulations set out in the treaty, France maintained Alsace and Strasbourg, and Louis withdrew his support of Cardinal von Furstenberg for the Electorate of Cologne. The king relinquished territory in the Spanish Netherlands and the French Palatinate duly recognizing too William III as king of England.\textsuperscript{20}

It was in Italy where the Nine Years War cost Louis XIV the loss of all small but potent territorial gains with their access to authority over Italian princes. As the Nine Years War neared its end, Louis and his ambassadors enticed the Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, to abandon the

\textsuperscript{19} Whaley, \textit{Germany and the Holy Roman Empire}, 52.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 50-51; Condren, \textit{Louis XIV et ‘le repos d l’Italie’}, 224.
alliance against France. Leopold I’s 1695 plan to attack and wrest Casale from the French unsettled the duke, and he softened toward French advances rather than risk a full Habsburg presence in the peninsula. Louis empowered the Comte de Tessé to treat secretly with the duke in 1695-1696. The resulting 1696 Treaty of Vigevano, a measure to avert the descent of war into the Milanese, compelled the king in its measures to relinquish Casale back to the Duke of Mantua after demolishing its fortress; the Abbé d’Estrades’s 1677 initiative was undone. French gains in Italy were lost in the final negotiations with the Savoyard court through the 1696 Treaty of Turin. Louis ceded the fortress of Pignerol to the duke. To finalize the Franco-Savoyard alliance, the king agreed to the marriage of the duke’s daughter, Marie-Adélaïde, to his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy. These losses curtailed Louis XIV’s grasp over Italian politics, and Northern Italy represented again territories over which the Bourbon and Habsburgs would contend in the eventuality of Carlos II’s death.

The 1697 Treaty of Ryswick could be interpreted as evidence that Leopold I and his government were still more concerned with the establishment of imperial rule in Hungary and the Ottoman threat to the east than with Louis XIV. The Grand Alliance and the impositions of the treaty underscored that Louis could be quelled in the west through a coalition of European princes. The menace of Hungarian malcontents and the Turk to imperial gains and borders in

25 Mauvillon, 76-77; Handon, 255.
26 Ibid., 257.
27 Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 51.
Hungary and the Balkans, however, remained very real in Vienna. The war that raged in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean since 1684 finally came to a conclusion with the 1699 Treaty of Carlowitz. The treaty ostensibly confirmed Leopold’s dominance over Hungary, and the proximity of Sultan Mustafa II's forces to major urban centers within the empire was temporarily repulsed. It was uncertain, however, if the Ottoman court would try to reclaim its losses, and so, imperial attention and resources turned to fortify and protect the installation of Habsburg authority in the east. The question of the Hungarians and the Ottomans continued to plague the government of Leopold I, but the Ottomans terrified the Venetians.

Venice’s senate concluded its second seventeenth-century war with the Turk at Carlowitz bringing its formal alliance with Leopold I and the papacy to an end. After a series of financially crushing campaigns, the republic regained sovereignty of almost all of its former Mediterranean territories through Francesco Morosini’s successes in 1687-1688, but the republic’s monetary and naval resources were exhausted; the public debt soared as the century closed. To bring its Mediterranean acquisitions under control, Venice’s senate left the majority of its naval fleet in the east to safeguard against an Ottoman resurgence and to fortify the installation of Venetian reggimenti. Expenditures for building and maintaining a redoubtable naval force in the years of war, as we have seen, obliged the Venetian state to borrow funds from the papacy, to enforce new taxes within the republic, to raise tariffs on foreign merchants and their goods, to debase the ducat, and to promote the sale and expansion of its nobility. Historians have shown that as the

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28 Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*, 51
29 Ibid.
30 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 21 May 1701, 103v, 104r-104v, Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 412, 414-415, 416.
32 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 21 May 1701, 103v, 104r-104v; Setton, 398-399; Benjamin Arbel, “Venice’s Maritime Empire in the Early Modern Period,” in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 146-147.
33 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 132, Estrées to Louis XIV, 9 June 1702, F. 267v.; Lane, 430
eighteenth century opened Venice’s commercial economy continued to adapt and to thrive, but its state coffers depleted eventually seeing the debt accrue to fifty million ducats by 1714.  

The unstable empire of Mustafa II, therefore, remained a potential danger to both Leopold I and the Venetian republic after Carlowitz. The emperor’s accord with the Grand Seigneur, however, promised an ostensible twenty-year truce, whereas, the peace signed between him and Venice's senate did not. A seriously impaired state treasury combined with an uncertain peace and expanded maritime borders left Venice’s government unable to alienate Leopold. The alliance between Leopold and the republic grew tense though as imperial authority in the Adriatic threatened Venetian claims to the sea. Leopold bullied Venice’s Dalmatian rival, the Republic of Ragusa, after Carlowitz pressing the republic for assistance against France in 1701-1702. He trumpeted his lordship of the port of Trieste becoming another adversary for Adriatic trade. Still, the senate understood that it needed the emperor in the event of another war with the Ottomans, and, ultimately, he too depended upon the Venetian navy to counter Mustafa in the Mediterranean.

Not long after peace between Mustafa II and members of the 1684 Treaty of Lindz, Louis XIV accepted King Carlos II’s will. Carlos’s death 1 November 1700 tentatively elevated a Bourbon to the Spanish throne, but Leopold I refused to accept the alienation of Spain and its vast global patrimony from the Habsburgs. War seemed inevitable. The governments at Versailles and Vienna almost immediately hastened military forces into Northern Italy to seize

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35 Whaley, 51.
36 Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 412.
38 Capello complained to Estrées of Ragusa’s irksome links to the emperor, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, *Réponse de Mr. Capello*, sent in dispatch from Estrées to Louis XIV, 9 Nov. 1701, F. 334r.
39 Whaley, 136.
Spanish possessions. The Republic of Venice and its *terraferma* formed a corridor through which imperial armies needed to pass en route to Milan and in which Franco-Spanish forces could impede their progress. The belligerents hastened to gain the cooperation of Venice’s senate. The republic’s own difficult international affairs, however, meant that French ambassadors in Venice would be hard pressed to persuade Venice’s government to ally against Leopold. The Venetian senate had no recourse than to hide officially behind the rhetoric of neutrality.

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Fig. 12

**Cardinal d’Estrées incognito: Elderly Representative of Louisquatorzien Diplomatic Praxis in Venice**

Cesar, Cardinal d’Estrées’s arrival in Venice emphasized the crucial role that the republic’s government still represented as hostilities related to the Spanish succession began. The elderly ambassador arrived in the republic from Rome 22 January 1701 foregoing the ceremonials.

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43 Ibid., 294.
The cardinal elected to remain *incognito* throughout his tenure in the republic avoiding time-consuming ceremonial and protocol requirements that he believed would hinder his tasks.\(^{45}\) Estrées believed too that the foreign policy demands that he was to make in Venice would be compromised if they were not undertaken in the strictest possible secrecy. To aid in these considerations, Estrées accepted the invitation of his long-time acquaintance, Vincenzo Coronelli, the then Reverend-Father General of the Franciscan Order, to lodge in his apartments in the Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.\(^{46}\) Centrally located in the city, the Frari afforded quicker access to government messengers than the embassy in Cannaregio, and

\(^{44}\) Luca Carlevaris’s 1701 “veduta” painting, *The Reception of Cardinal d’Estrées*, should not be conflated with the Cardinal’s arrival in Venice as an ambassador. Estrées remained *incognito* while in Venice, and so, a ceremonial entrée did not occur for him as an official ambassador. As a high-ranking French cardinal he was, however, suitably welcomed to the city. La Haye announced Estrées’s arrival to the king confirming he was *incognito* and that he would lodge at the Frari. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 22 Jan. 1701, F. 27v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Torcy, 15 July 1702, 255r.

lodging there instead of the embassy distanced Estrées from the appearance of official diplomatic service.

Estrées’s recondite embassy was unique among French diplomats in Venice. First, he was the highest-ranking ambassador sent to Venice in Louis XIV’s “personal rule.” Secondly, at no other point in the “personal rule” had an extraordinary ambassador been sent to the republic, and finally, at no other moment did two ambassadors overlap there. Estrées’s tenure coincided with the last months of Denis II de la Haye’s long service in late 1701 and the incognito arrival of his replacement Joseph-Antoine Hennequin, Seigneur de Charmont, Baron de Chasenay in September. Both of these ministers had orders from Louis XIV to defer to Estrées while he negotiated in Venice. Their interactions with the senate were to follow Estrées’s lead, and the cardinal made it clear that he was jealous of his primacy.47

Details of the long life and career of Estrées (1628-1714) are much better known than those of Louis XIV’s other ambassadors to Venice and need not be recounted fully.48 Suffice it to say Estrées’s family was of the highest nobility. The Estrées were of Picard origin; César’s father, François-Annibale I, Marshal-Duke d’Estrées, was the brother of Gabrielle d’Estrées, mistress of Henry IV. His mother, Marie, was a member of the Bethune-Sully clan.49 César and his two brothers served Louis XIV faithfully: the middle brother, Jean II, was an accomplished

47 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, Louis XIV to la Haye, 19 Jan. 1701, Fs. 14r-14v. La Haye agreed not to act without Estrées’s orders, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 8 Jan. 1701, F. 19r. La Haye protested to Louis XIV in February at a rebuke from Estrées. He exclaimed that while “…this mighty cardinal is all fire and heart for Your Majesty,” that he too had spent a lifetime in service to the king. He reminded the king that he had already served in Venice for sixteen years. Both ministers were septuagenarians, but La Haye was Estrées’s junior by only two years. The relationship between these two ministers deserves fuller treatment elsewhere. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, F. 57r; Colbert de Torcy, Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur de Charmont Conseiller du Roy en son Conseil d’Estat, Secrétaire de Son Cabinet, allant à Venise en qualité d’ambassadeur ordinaire de S. M., 20 July 1701, in du Parc, 121-122; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, Louis XIV to Charmont, 6 Oct. 1701, 161v-162r.
49 Ibid., 350-351; Pelletier, “Scientific Connections,” 155.
naval officer. The eldest, François-Annibale II, Duke d’Estrées, served as French ambassador to Rome from 1672 to 1679. In turn, César, the youngest, rose through the ranks of the church receiving the beretta in 1671. He acted as a second French ambassador at the Papal See assisting his brother and informing the court and French ambassadors (as we saw the Abbé d’Estrades regarded Estrées as a patron) for over thirty years of news from the curia.\textsuperscript{50} His imperious manner and the pride he demonstrated in his rank made him detestable to Popes Clement X and Innocent XI at whose courts he upheld the Gallican pretensions of Louis XIV during the crises of the 1670s and 1680s, and he was instrumental at the conclave following the death of Innocent XII that elected the pro-French Clement XI.\textsuperscript{51}

Estrées’s practices as an ambassador conformed to Colbert de Torcy’s “world of paper,” while hearkening back to diplomatic correspondence from earlier in the reign of the king. The three principal volumes of the cardinal’s numerous dispatches from Venice serve as additional evidence that there was no shortage of information flooding into the foreign ministry after the death of Jean-Baptiste Colbert eighteen years earlier or under former foreign ministers. Estrées’s packets included letters to Torcy and, despite gout crippling his hands, many hand-written copies of letters \textit{inter alia} to the Cardinal Forbin-Janson in Rome and to the Comte de Tessé.\textsuperscript{52} As we have seen, the inclusion of such letters had been curtailed in the official packets of French ambassadors to Venice since Colbert de Croissy’s nomination as secretary of state in 1679. Although it could be argued that the circumstances of Estrées’s embassy to Venice required the inclusion of this information in his packets to the court.


\textsuperscript{51} Saint-Simon, \textit{Mémoires}, Tome XI, 357.

\textsuperscript{52} Estrées lamented of the gout plaguing his right hand. See AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 25 March 1702, F. 36r; Torcy expressed his concern for Estrées’s health, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Torcy to Estrées, 10 April 1702, 43v.
Documentational novelties appeared in the packets of the new ambassador, Charmont, such as printed passports instead of the hand-written ones issued in previous decades.\textsuperscript{53} Such items reinforced the move to the professionalization of diplomacy under Torcy whereas Estrées’s correspondence adhered to earlier forms. Cardinals Estrées and Forbin-Janson were among the last four high-ranking ecclesiastics the French foreign ministry utilized on relevant foreign missions in the ancien régime. Two more cardinals would serve as ambassadors in the eighteenth century, Cardinal de Rohan to Vienna and Cardinal de Bernis to Rome; both were sent as courtesies to honor the prestige of the Austrian and papal courts.\textsuperscript{54}

Estrées used a \textit{nom de guerre} while negotiating. He met on a regular basis with the \textit{savvio del consiglio}, Benedetto Capello, under the pseudonym of the “Abbé de Rivalta.” From the moment of their first interview, Estrées insisted that his diplomatic presence in Venice be denied; he was not there personally as an ambassador but as a visitor maintaining cordial relations with Franco-Spanish allies like the republic.\textsuperscript{55} In the secret conferences with Capello, however, he was the “Abbé de Rivalta,” a liaison, speaking on behalf of the Cardinal d’Estrées who in turn the kings of France and Spain empowered to observe from Rome and Venice on their behalf.\textsuperscript{56} For his part, Capello, made it clear that he really could only “listen and relay” for and to the

\textsuperscript{53} As one example see: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 135, Printed Passport issued on order of the Sieur de Charmont from Venice, F. 314r.


\textsuperscript{55} La Haye mentioned that the cardinal gave lavish meals to the Spanish ambassador and Venetian senators. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 9 April 1701, F. 79v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to louis XIV, 9 July 1702, F. 239v.

\textsuperscript{56} AAE, MD, Venise, vol. 15, in \textit{Relation des conférences diplomatiques entre le Cardinal d’Estrées pour Louis XIV et le Cardinal de Lembergh pour l’Empereur Léopold I}, vol. I, Fs. 5v, 6r-6v, 7r, 9r; Maréchaux, “L’Impossible Alliance,” 296.
“Estrées reported on their first meeting 5 February 1701 with Vincenzo Coronelli making the introductions.”

“You judge correctly that the resolution of the pope and of the Republic of Venice will determine those of the Princes of Italy.”

The Myopia of Cardinal d’Estrées

The French foreign ministry believed the Republic of Venice and Pope Clement XI could sway the princes of Northern Italy against Leopold I. Cardinal d’Estrées travelled to Venice to impress upon the senate the need for an outright alliance with France or at least an alliance of neutrality between the senate and the pope. The importance of this policy increased as the situation in Italy became more volatile throughout 1701. First, Estrées was to insist that the republic prohibit the emperor from sending troops across the Tyrol through Venetian lands toward Milan. Leopold’s war council elected Francois-Eugène, Prince of Savoy to lead thirty thousand imperial troops into Italy that massed just across the Venetian border. The French army would soon comprise about thirty thousand men entering Italy piecemeal beginning in January. They joined with Spanish troops already in the Milanais and those that Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy pledged. The duke was elected generalissimo of the allied troops with inter alia Marshals Catinat and Villeroy and the Comte de Tessé under his command. Estrées pre-empted the passage of imperial troops arriving in Venice three months before Eugène’s army descended.

58 Ibid., Fs. 6v, 22v.
61 Le Roy au Cardinal d’Estrées, 16 Dec. 1700, in Beaucaire, 351. The king explained the task of Estrées to la Haye, see AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, Louis XIV to la Haye, 19 Jan. 1701, Fs. 14r-14v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, Louis XIV to la Haye, 10 Feb. 1701, F. 29v; Whaley, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, 110.
63 Mauvillon, 104
Estrées worked to secure Venetian permission for French troops to cross from the Milanese into the *terraferma* to oppose Eugène’s entry. Reluctantly the republic acquiesced to the passage but not to an alliance with France.

From January to May French leadership in Northern Italy negotiated with Clement XI, the Venetian senate, the Dukes of Mantua, Parma, and Modena, and lesser potentates to establish a defensive arc stretching from the Alpine border of the Milanese to the Adriatic coast. The firmly pro-imperial Duke of Modena denied his assistance to Franco-Spanish armies early on. After decades of playing the puppet to Louis XIV’s Italian policies, the Duke of Parma was hardly pro-French, but Louis XIV promised major financial and military assistance against the emperor for his complicity. Through the reluctant cooperation of the Duke of Mantua, Franco-Spanish forces stationed in his lands promising to do as little damage possible to the states of the princes of the Paduan planes. The duke feared the possibility of losing his capital and Casale to Leopold, and Tessé established a close link with the duke positioning the soldiers under his command in the duke’s lands and residing variously in the ducal palace. The duke’s agents in Venice served too as spies and blockade runners for Tessé which, as will be seen, included the Rizzati brothers.

It remained to be seen if Venice would follow the example of the dukes of Mantua and Parma formally impeding Eugène’s progress. Throughout the early spring Capello insisted to Estrées that the senate was resolute that Leopold’s forces should not enter its state; Venice

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64 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 132, Estrées to Louis XIV, 6 June 1701, F. 258r.
68 SHAT, GR, A1, vol. 1509, *Copie d’une lettre de M. le Duc de Mantoue a M. le Comte de Tessé*, sent in dispatch of Tesse to Louis XIV, 27 March 1701, Fs. 84r-84v; Mauvillon, 104-105.
vaunted its neutrality. Tessé alleged that the senate expressed tacit permission for Leopold’s troops to cross the Alps through their inaction, but Prince Eugène indicated that he led his army into Italy in early May flaunting the warnings of Venetian provveditori in the Terra Ferma who reminded him of Venice’s “pretence of neutrality.” Estrées could only express extreme chagrin at what he believed was the senate’s ultimate betrayal of its promises to him that imperial troops would not cross its frontiers when Eugène’s forces descended in late May soon encountering and then overcoming those of Marshal Catinat at Carpi on 10 July and on 31 August at Chiari. The remainder of the campaign season witnessed a number of skirmishes bleeding across the plains and rivers of North-Central Italy to the advantage of Eugène. As the autumn approached the patience of Louis XIV and Estrées with the senate’s allegedly neutral vacillations faltered, but their attention had already shifted from the moot point of impeding Eugène’s forces in the Veneto to pressing for an outright alliance between the Venetian senate and Pope Clement XI to guard against the entry of more imperial troops and any attempt to march south toward the Kingdom of Naples.

Clement XI Albani became pope in 1700 only weeks after the death of Carlos II. The pope immediately angered Leopold I upholding Louis XIV’s acceptance of the defunct king’s

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70 In fact Tessé was certain as early as March 1701 that Venice favored Leopold I remarking that the senate made no real effort to impede the imperial army. Tessé suggested to Estrées that promising the senate a well-disciplined French army in the Terra Ferma would be one way of convincing the republic to ally with France and Spain. See SHAT, GR, A1, Copie du memoire de M. le Comte de Tessé laisse a Mr. le Card. d’Estrées concernant la neutralite avec les venitiens, envoye au Roy par mondit S. le Comte de T. avec sa lettre cy dessus, 27 March 1701, Fs. 82r-82v, 83r-83v; Mauvillon, The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy, Book II, 112.
72 Mauvillon, 118-119.
73 Vico, Coniuratio Principum Neapolitanorum, MDCCI, 37
will, and he leant his support to repulse imperial troops. Louis XIV believed that an alliance between the pope and the Venetians could possibly galvanize the other princes of Northern Italy to league en masse against Leopold I, and the French agreed not to move any troops into the papal states in exchange for Clement’s backing. Initially Estrées feared that if Venice allied with Clement XI the senate’s own seeming affinity for the emperor could turn the pope against Franco-Spanish interests. After the sound defeat of the French at Carpi and Chiari, however, Clement XI appeared more vigorously than ever to oppose the emperor’s advances into the peninsula especially as the revolt of the Prince of Macchia in Naples threatened traditional papal overlordship in the south as much as it did that of Philip V. Protecting Naples against imperial machinations to inspire further anti-Bourbon turbulence in the kingdom became critical as the year passed, and Estrées seemed sure that Eugene's plans were to filter troops and, ultimately, march himself to Naples. Adding to the case against Venice, from Rome the Venetian Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani assisted the Neapolitan conspirators in favor of Leopold I.

Estrées continued to add his counsels for an alliance between Clement and the republic in his meetings with Capello. Through his correspondence with the papal nuncio in Venice and the French ambassador, the Cardinal Forbin-Janson, in Rome, he reported that the Venetian ambassadors at the papal court, Nicolò Erizzo and his successor there, Francesco Morosini, had

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77 Vico, Coniuratio Principum Neapolitanorum, MDCCI, 81, 89; Gatti, II P. Vincenzo Coronelli, 690, 698-699, 700.
79 Vico, 53.
80 La Haye noted the cardinal spoke to him of the promising talks with Capello regarding the alliance, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, la Haye to Louis XIV, 19 July 1701, 132v-133r.
instructions from the senate to cement a formal treaty for the “common security of Italy.” By December a treaty was negotiated in which both Venice and Clement pledged at least to remain neutral in the conflict. Estrées appeared enthusiastic about the potential effects of the treaty, but as 1701 drew to a close the cardinal’s distrust for Venetian neutrality grew as the republic continued to provide quarters, victuals, and forage to Eugène’s men and horses despite the French troops’ withdrawal into the lands of the dukes of Mantua and Parma. As will be seen, the Chevalier de Forbin’s alarming reports from the Adriatic Sea of blatant Venetian maritime aid to imperial forces strengthened Estrées's belated incredulity. Louis XIV’s commanders in Italy assured him that Milan was well-defended under the governor there, the elder Prince de Vaudémont, and the attention of the French military command in early 1702 turned to Eugène’s blockade of the city of Mantua and the march of imperial troops south to Naples.

The King had desired that Venice ally outright with France and Spain, but the events of the campaign season and winter of 1701 proved that the senate was either incapable of adding any military assistance against Eugène’s troops or that it willingly allowed the prince to profit from its lands. By late 1701 the correspondence between the cardinal and the king indicated that they began to believe that Venice was anything but neutral. Estrées received instructions to insist that Venice’s government demand the same behavior from the German troops in the terraferma as they had from the French. The senate uneasily complied with French interests throughout the campaign allowing Franco-Spanish troops into the terraferma to counter Eugène,

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84 Marshal de Villeroy to Louis XIV, 8 Jan. 1702, in Pelet, 147-148, 152; Duke de Vendôme to Louis XIV, 4 March 1702, in Pelet, 182.
85 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Conférence avec Mr. Capello, notes sent in dispatch of Estrées to Louis XIV, 8 Oct. 1701, 269r-269v.
86 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Louis XIV to Estrées, 20 Oct. 1701, Fs. 266r-266v.
and the senate reluctantly permitted the forces of Catinat and Tessé to forage as they had done for those of the prince. Estrées and Tessé labored to assure the obedience and decency of the French army among Venetian subjects, and with few official complaints from Venetian officials it appeared that they succeeded.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Senate to Estrées, 29 Oct. 1701, F. 299r. French commanders explained that the troops were generally well-disciplined, but they cannot have been as behaved as Estrées and officers portrayed them as venereal disease was rampant. SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1}, vol. 1509, Catinat to Louis XIV, 18 May 1701. Apparently nuns in rural Italian convents “did anything imaginable” to copulate with French soldiers which undoubtedly became a problem more for the allegedly lusty nuns than the troops. SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1}, vol. 1509, Catinat to Louis XIV, 18 May 1701; SHAT, GR, A\textsuperscript{1}, Vol. 1509, Désgrigny to Chamillart, 22 May 1701.}

This had not been the case with German troops under Eugène. Still, the senate did not ally with France to eject the Germans, and as the prince delayed the departure of his troops from Venetian lands into Mantua until 21 November 1701, Estrées and the king became more suspicious toward the senate’s tolerance for imperial forces.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 19 Nov. 1701, F. 341v; Mauvillon, The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy, Book II, 117-118.} For the French, Venetian inaction belied the rhetoric of neutrality; as the new year approached, the senate’s unwillingness to block ships in the Adriatic Sea victualing and arming Eugène’s troops who entered and blockaded Mantua heightened the king’s anger destroying the senate’s credibility and poisoning Louis XIV’s ostensible good will.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Louis XIV to Estrées, 19 Dec. 1701, F. 368r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Louis XIV to Estrées, 30 Dec. 1701, F. 381r; Maréchaux, “L’Impossible alliance,” 298-299.} It seemed Estrées's ministrations and patience with the republic regarding the French presence in the \textit{terraferma} and the treaty with Clement XI left the cardinal unaware of the extent to which the Venetians were assisting Leopold I's war effort in the waters of the Adriatic. It took the persistence of the Chevalier de Forbin to “open the eyes” of the cardinal and inspire him and the king to search for more effective measures to weaken Venetian resolve.\footnote{Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 77, 79,}
The Chevalier de Forbin and French Dominance over Venetian Adriatic Sovereignty

Louis XIV understood from the beginning of the conflict that Venice might be reluctant to forego the strategic advantages of ties with Leopold I after the recent war with the Ottomans. The king empowered Cardinal d’Estrées, therefore, to assure the senate that if it allied with France and Spain that it could expect French assistance and influence in the event that Mustafa II should attack Venice’s territories in the Mediterranean or disturb its commercial interests.91 Louis had promised the Venetians aid against the Ottomans in the past with no real benefit to them, and, as Capello opined to the collegio, the French always reminded them of their earlier assistance when they needed something in return.92 For Venice the loss of Crete was still very raw; Louis XIV did not appreciate the residue of Venetian resentment that ineffectual French assistance from thirty three years earlier inspired in Venetian attitudes toward him. Energized through the growth of its states after Carlowitz, Venice was in no hurry to upset Leopold I who had helped acquire them.

The senate made no move to accept Louis’s offer to manage the Turks in 1701, and throughout the year the question of Venetian sovereignty in the Adriatic became an increasing matter of doubt and then derision for Estrées.93 Estrées believed there was no evidence in the first six months of 1701 that the emperor planned to move troops, provisions, or arms through the Adriatic to Italy despite rumors of an alliance between Leopold and Ragusa to that effect.94 The Venetians tried to use the evidence of this treaty to solicit the bombardment of its Dalmatian rival. Venice's rancor against Ragusa and its call for a French naval bombardment was soon to

93 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, copy of a letter from Estrées to Cardinal Forbin-Janson, received in dispatch of Estrées to Louis XIV, 3 Dec. 1701, F. 364v-365r.
come back to haunt it. Venice’s senate reassured Estrées that it would brook no such actions in the sea contrary to its neutrality. In his memoirs, however, the Chevalier de Forbin contradicted this information depicting an Adriatic teeming with Venetian agents and merchant ships stockpiling and transporting provisions, men, and arms from Trieste in imperial Dalmatia to ports along the eastern coast of Italy. Forbin alleged that the Venetians lied to Estrées throughout 1701 and early 1702, and he claimed that Louis XIV's eagerness to placate the "delicacy" of the republic to secure French strategy in Northern Italy blinded Estrées to Venetian duplicity on the sea.

Forbin went to the Adriatic with orders only to guard against the eventuality of imperial movements in the sea. As the months of 1701 passed, the chevalier increased attacks against Venetian vessels threatening Estrées's sense of control in diplomatic relations with the republic as he negotiated the alliance between the senate and Clement XI. The cardinal accepted Capello’s assurances on behalf of the senate that it was unaware of these actions. He rebuked Forbin for an impetuosity he believed endangered French manipulations of the Venetians in regards to the logistical requirements of the French army and the possible alliance with the pope. Forbin received orders from the court and from his uncle in Rome, the Cardinal de Forbin-Janson, however, that he should continue locating and destroying any vessels in the sea supplying imperial forces. The chevalier patrolled the sea searching scores of suspicious

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95 Voïnovitch, La Monarchie Française dans L'Adriatique, 92-93, 94.
96 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 5 Nov. 1701, F. 318r.
97 Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 48, 56.
98 Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 47.
99 Ibid., 62-63, 74
100 Ibid., 62-63.
101 Ibid., 64-65, 77.
vessels of Venetian, Ragusan, and imperial origin burning those on which war material and
supplies of grain were found.  

As the Venetian senate’s complaints grew against his attacks, Forbin suggested to Estrées
and the new French ordinary ambassador, Charmont, that the senate require all of its vessels to
carry patents to prove they were not dealing in imperial munitions. The senate raged that the
French could not make such demands on its sovereignty, and it tried to tighten its control of the
sea further against the French closing all its Dalmatian and Italian ports to Forbin. These
actions compounded the evidence that Venice was covertly assisting imperial policies. In May
1702 Forbin sailed unmolested into the Venetian port of Chioggia up to the mouth of the Po.

Some in the senate argued this action signalled they had already lost overlordship of the sea since
they could not repel him. A senator of the Erizzo clan lamented that the republic should cancel
the sensa as it would be ridiculous to make the ceremonial claim of maritime dominance when
foreign ships beset Venice’s ports. For some weeks the senate entertained the notion that it
would have to cancel the centuries-old nuptial ceremony, but Estrées assured the senate he would
protect against Forbin if it would give some sign of curtailing Prince Eugène. The ceremony
went ahead, but it was clear that Venice no longer had means at hand to defend its traditional
claims to the Adriatic. The majority of its navy remained in the distant Mediterranean, and the

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102 Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 56, 73. The French consul in Ragusa, Freschi, informed Forbin and
Pontchartrain of the reports he received that ships were under construction in the Venetian arsenal meant to help
transport thirty thousand Craote soldiers to Naples in the service of Leopold I. See, AN, CCR, B1, vol. 947, Freschi
to Pontchartrain, 2 May 1702, F. 7r.
103 Ibid., Tome II, 68.
104 Ibid., 65, 69.
105 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 6 May 1702, 111r-111v; Gazette de Lyon, De Venize le 29.
Juillet 1702, in Recueil des Gazette, 135; Gatti, Il P. Vincenzo Coronelli, 691.
106 Ibid.
107 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 13 May 1702, Fs. 128r-128v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134,
Estrées to Louis XIV, 20 May 1702, Fs. 139r-139v; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 27 May
1702, F. 145v, 146v.
ships it could muster in the Adriatic would scarcely be able to fend off French squadrons in its major ports should Forbin attack them.\textsuperscript{108}

The circumstance that finally persuaded Cardinal d’Estrées of the extent to which Forbin was correct in his assertions of Venetian cooperation with the emperor was the news that an English vessel, the \textit{Bonaventure}, was outfitted with fifty cannons and soldiers at Trieste in the summer of 1702 and that upon its departure it saluted a Venetian admiral who returned the salute.\textsuperscript{109} The vessel was armed to escort and protect smaller convoys carrying supplies to Eugène on the mainland against Forbin’s squadrons. News arrived that the English ship aided convoys sent with cargoes of grain from the Venetian port at Malamocco that were then stockpiled in ports and fortresses belonging to the Duke of Modena.\textsuperscript{110} Forbin’s focus in 1702 became the destruction of this vessel.

The chevalier’s reports persuaded Estrées that the time for dealing softly with Venice was over. For its part, the senate fulminated especially as Forbin bombarded Trieste and cannonaded the armed English vessel at night within eyesight of San Marco in August 1702.\textsuperscript{111} The explosion of its powder was so great that many in the city believed they were under attack.\textsuperscript{112} The chevalier remarked that he had become infamous among the Venetians. They feared he could launch a

\textsuperscript{108} Estrées reported that Venice intended to recall much of its navy from the Morea, but this did not take place. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 16 July 1701, F. 34r. Estrées alleged that Venice had no land or sea power capable of fending off French attacks. AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, \textit{Réflexions de M. le Card. d’Estrées sur le mémoire du Chevalier de Lilliers}, sent in dispatch of Estrées to Torcy, 10 April 1702, F. 47r.


\textsuperscript{110} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 8 April 1702, Fs. 66v-67r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 20 May 1702, F. 140r.


bombardment on the city at any time; undoubtedly, the Venetians remembered the brutal French bombardment of Genoa is 1684 in retribution for Genoese support of the king of Spain. Louis XIV began to utilize Venetian fear and uncertainty asserting that it was time for the senate finally to demonstrate that it was sovereign of the gulf and stop facilitating Prince Eugène’s success or renounce its nominal lordship of the sea.

Augmentation of French naval squadrons sailing to reinforce Forbin’s actions and Philip V’s arrival in Italy to secure his possessions provided Franco-Spanish forces briefly with the upper hand in the peninsula against Eugène’s increasingly depleted forces. By late-1702 news that imperial reinforcements would not come to Eugène’s aid in the near future coupled with the fear of the Venetian senate and populace that the French could bombard the city provided Estrées with leverage in negotiations giving the senate pause as to what the French might do as evidence of Venetian deference to Leopold mounted. In his important survey, Frederic Lane concurred that the republic’s inability to repulse the entry of French vessels into the Adriatic and the senate’s compulsion to assist the emperor and his allies in the Grand Alliance on the sea in 1701-1702 “signalled the end” of significant Venetian maritime sovereignty.

The Circumstances of the Rizzati Affair

Franco-Spanish forces temporarily dominated in Northern Italy and the Adriatic Sea by June 1702. Milan and Naples remained secure from imperial armies for the time being. In part,

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113 Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 123, 125.
116 Estrées noted that Capello expressed the senate’s concern about French retaliation at events in the Adriatic. Capello relayed that the Doge, Alvise II Mocenigo, wanted the Rizzati affair settled before events got worse. See: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 8 Sept. 1702, Fs. 391r-391v, 392r-392v.
117 Lane, Venice: A Maritime Republic, 417.
118 Marshal de Villeroy to Louis XIV, 8 Jan. 1702, in Pelet, 142-143.
this success resulted from the diminished numbers of Eugène’s troops and finances.\textsuperscript{119} Another contributing factor was the aggressive campaigns of Forbin in the Adriatic interrupting imperial replenishments. Undoubtedly, French commanders, Villeroy, Tessé, and Catinat waged an effective defense against the westward and southward deployment of imperial troops either into the Milanese or to Naples. This defense had not come without numerous losses including the embarrassing capture of Marshal de Villeroy.\textsuperscript{120}

In November 1701 Prince Eugène’s troops at last retreated from the Venetian terraferma obtruding on the lands of the Dukes of Parma and Mantua; these princes pleaded for French succor.\textsuperscript{121} The Duke of Parma’s state was “reduced to the extreme,” and soon too Eugène blockaded Mantua.\textsuperscript{122} During the “blocus” the Comte de Tessé was shut up in the city with the ducal court and French troops. Forbin impaired the arrival of supplies to Eugène from the sea, and the prince’s much reduced fighting force surrounded the city impeding the entry of provisions swallowing up the meagre foodstuffs available in the countryside for his men and animals.\textsuperscript{123} To prohibit further the victualing of the city, Eugène issued a command that those of any nationality smuggling goods into or out of Mantua should be hanged.\textsuperscript{124} The situation was dire as the blockade endured six months. Supplies became scarce for the Germans and the French, and subjects and soldiers within the city depended on blockade runners for supplies, money, and correspondence. Charmont wrote about gangs of bandits employed by the Duke of Mantua, and he encouraged the French to use them to cause “much annoyance” to Eugène’s

\textsuperscript{119} Mauvillon, The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy, Book III, 148.
\textsuperscript{121} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 133, Estrées to Louis XIV, 26 Nov. 1701, F. 351r; Marshal de Villeroy to Louis XIV, 12 Jan. 1702, in Pelet, 134; Mauvillon, 117-118.
\textsuperscript{122} AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 11 March 1702, Fs. 16v-17r; Mauvillon, Book III, 117-118.
\textsuperscript{123} Mauvillon, 134.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 130-131. Tessé’s memoirs record that Eugène had many hanged or killed for attempting to penetrate the blockade. Mémoires et Lettres du Maréchal de Tessé, Tome I (Paris: Treuttel et Wurtz, 1806), 290, 298,
forces. The duke and the Comte de Tessé depended in particular on scouts coming from Venice.

With the arrival of French reinforcements into Italy under the Duke de Vendôme by 1 June 1702 Eugène’s blockade of Mantua ended. Eleven days later Cardinal d’Estrées wrote the dispatch to Louis XIV detailing the executions of the Rizzati brothers. From the sources little can be known about the background of the Rizzati or about the full scope of their involvement. What is clear is that they were executed for smuggling goods and information for the Duke of Mantua. Three points about the Rizzati and their executions can reasonably be concluded.

First, by April 1702, the inquisitors of state knew the brothers to be malefactors in the employ of the duke. Estrées reported that they made themselves more odious to the inquisitors by taking up residence in the duke’s palace in Venice during carnevale flaunting their attachments to the Duke of Mantua flamboyantly appearing masked and in ducal livery during the festivities despite the knowledge that they were being hunted.

Secondly, the brothers possessed letters patent from the French ordinary ambassador in Venice, Charmont, and passeports the Comte de Tessé provided them in which he claimed the brothers as soldiers in the French army. Given the evidence that the Duke of Mantua and Tessé relied upon blockade runners especially from Venice to carry official correspondence, news, currency, and goods it is likely that these documents were given to the brothers to facilitate

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125 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 130, copy of a memo from Charmont to ambassadour d’Audiffret in Mantua included in dispatch to Louis XIV, 1 Oct. 1701, Fs. 182r-182v, 183r.
126 Marshal de Villeroy to Louis XIV, 8 Jan. 1702, in Pelet, 145; Mauvillon, 134.
127 Ibid., 139.
128 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 12 June 1702, Fs. 184r, 185r; Preto, I servizi segreti di Venezia, 345
129 Ibid., 139.
the passage of information and lend official protection to them in case of their capture. Finally, the inquisitors’ search for the brothers throughout the spring and their ultimate capture and execution occurred during the final weeks of the blockade of Mantua. They were apprehended finally on 10 June and imprisoned. The execution of the Rizzati two days later could indicate Venetian deference to the requirements of Prince Eugène: their strangulation and the subsequent hanging of their corpses, while not uncommon in Venice’s prisons, mirrored Eugène’s field order that blockade runners be hanged.

The Rizzati Affair and Cardinal d’Estrées: The Strategic and International Implications

In any case, the Rizzatis’ executions set off a diplomatic furor that the French utilized against the senate. It was Cardinal d’Estrées that Louis XIV pressed to use the Rizzati affair to full effect. Estrées echoed strong royal complaints in his discussions with Capello throughout the last three months of his tenure in Venice. The evidence of Venice’s “insidious conduct” toward the French to the benefit of Leopold I became undeniable in the eyes of Louis XIV, the cardinal, and the French military and naval leadership. Through the added weight of the Rizzati affair the king and Estrées demanded that the republic add action to its rhetoric of neutrality either joining the Franco-Spanish cause outright to push imperial troops to the coast of the Adriatic and out of Italy and again take up true sovereignty of the Adriatic or risk the consequences.

131 Preto’s brief mention of Gian-Paolo Rizzati suggests that in April 1702 the inquisitors were already seeking to dispatch the brothers. Preto, I Servizi Segreti di Venezia, 345.
132 The cardinal first mentioned the capture of the Rizzati 10 June, AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 136 supplément, Estrées to [destinataire unknown], 10 June 1702, Fs. 166v-167r, 167v.
135 In a mémoire to the king, the Marquis de Chamlay urged lifting the blockade of Mantua and pushing the imperials back through Venetian lands toward the coast by winter as requisite strategy for the 1702 campaign season. Mémoire de M. de Chamlay, Février 1702, in Pelet, 709.
Louis XIV demanded that the senate send an express courier to France to explain the affair. The senate duly sent messengers to the French court and to Charmont claiming they had no knowledge that the Rizzati were under French protection. Capello visited Estrées for the first time after the executions only on 24 June claiming too the ignorance of the inquisitors. Estrées wrote the king that, given the particular moment in which French forces found themselves in control of Northern Italy and the Adriatic, that the affair provided an opportunity to frighten the senate into compliance with French war aims, and so, “without pressing this affair more than Your Majesty judges [beneficial] it is necessary still to keep it alive until the moment arrives...when one can put it to rest according to the resolutions Your Majesty would like to take.”

Louis XIV agreed seeing that this affair provided him with an added means to intimidate the senate: “for my service it is [good] to make the Venetians fear my resentment, but it is not necessary to reduce them to despair for an affair that is in itself of least importance.”

The king decided that the Rizzati affair should be used to unsettle the Venetians throughout the rest of the campaign season 1702 making the senate believe that royal retribution could come at any moment.

For their part the Venetian senate delayed response to angry French demands for redress. They defended their neutrality and issued complaints that they had been very patient with French armies’ usage of resources in the terraferma since 1701. They reiterated their outrage at

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138 Ibid., F. 212v.
139 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 1 July 1702, Fs. 224v-225r.
142 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, copy of response from Senate to Estrées, 10 Aug. 1702, Fs. 319r-319v. Despite reports that French troops were disciplined, it appears they pillaged private residences. In one instance eighteen troops were arrested for such abuses and six executed. SHAT, GR, A1, vol. 1509, Catinat to Louis XIV, 12 May 1701, F.
Forbin’s attacks in their waters, and as the chevalier bombarded Trieste and burned the armed
*Bonaventure* within sight of the city in August.\(^\text{143}\) The senate now accused Forbin of destroying
Venetian merchant vessels and interrupting its commerce.\(^\text{144}\) Estrées, remarked that the king had
already forebore with the senate, and its refusal to rectify the Rizzati affair only heightened the
danger it faced from superior French military and naval forces. He pointed out to Capello that in
addition to the evidence that the senate favored the emperor over the past months that the
imperial ambassador in Venice maintained an armed escort contravening Venetian law with
impunity, and Venetian bankers exchanged bills of credit for Eugène.\(^\text{145}\)

French pressure through the affair began to have its intended effect. By late August, the
Venetians permitted French troops back into the Veronese sending orders to the *provveditori* to
provide them with whatever resources they could reasonably afford.\(^\text{146}\) The king increased
Forbin’s naval forces just in case, and permission was given for the chevalier to continue raids
on Venetian commercial vessels.\(^\text{147}\) The senate learned that the French allowed Forbin to attack
Ottoman ships taking prisoners and cargo in Venetian waters for which the Turk could demand
redress from the senate.\(^\text{148}\) These actions combined with news from Constantinople that the
French sought to ally with the Turks to mount an offensive against the Venetians and Leopold I

\(^{143}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, copy of a memoir of complaints from the senate, sent in dispatch from Estrées to
1702, F. 320r.

qui defendent les plaintes que la Rep. forme contre M. le Chev. de Forbin*, sent in dispatch from Estrées to Louis XIV,
19 Aug. 1702, Fs. 347r-348v.

\(^{145}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 27 May 1702, F. 150r; AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to
Louis XIV, 1 July 1702, 225r.

\(^{146}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 1 July 1702, 225r.

\(^{147}\) AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Louis XIV to Estrées, 21 June 1702, 200r-200v.

\(^{148}\) ASV, IS, *Avvisi* Parigi 1625-1793, Istanze fatte dell’Ambasciatore in Francia Pisani di 22 Settembre 1702, and
an addendum to the same, “In decreto dell’Ecc. Senato si 6 Ottobre 1702 all’ambasciatore di Francia, ceteris
omnissis”; ASV, IS, *Avvisi* Parigi 1625-1793, “In risposta all’ambasciatore Pisani al di di 15 Dicembre 1702,
ceteris omnissis”; ASV, IS-LAF, ASV, IS-LAF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Pisani, 21 Oct. 1702; Sella, *Italy
in the Seventeenth Century*, 11-12.
brought Venice to heel.\textsuperscript{149} By August 1702 the senate was ready and willing to placate the king in regards to the Rizzati. The affair benefitted the French for four months. The measures the senate at last agreed upon signalled the extent to which French threats intimidated and brought them to submission before Louis XIV.

**The Rizzati Affair and Diplomatic Implications: The Dissolution of Franco-Venetian Relations in the Eighteenth-Century**

The executions compelled the Venetian government to make strategic concessions to the French. It became clear that Louis XIV intended to humble the Republic of Venice for its associations with Leopold I. It is through the discourse Estrées used in his discussions with Capello regarding the affair that we glimpse how well European states in the early-modern period saw through the *Serenissima’s* mythologized political stability recognizing an allegedly tyrannical oligarchy that its own patricians loathed.\textsuperscript{150} A brief analysis of the discursive strategy the king and the cardinal employed in manipulating the affair reveals that the king wanted to humiliate the Venetians.

Previous French ambassadors described the closeted authority of the state inquisitors to Louis XIV. The senate tried to “correct” the growing power of the Council of Ten and the inquisitors of state in 1677-1678 while the Abbé d’Estrades was in Venice.\textsuperscript{151} These ministers’ authority angered the patricians over whom they held seemingly absolute power.\textsuperscript{152} Estrades took notice of the internal politics as they might affect French interests, but the turbulent internal tumults wracking the republic were then of little consequence to French foreign policy as Louis XIV’s authority increased relatively unimpeded during the Dutch War.

\textsuperscript{149} Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks*, 413, 415, 424.
\textsuperscript{150} Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 403-404.
\textsuperscript{151} Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e Stati Italiani*, 187-188, 205.
\textsuperscript{152} Saint-Didier, *La Ville et la République de Venise au XVIIe Siècle*, 182, 185-186; Claudio Povolo, “Liturgies of Violence: Social Control and Power Relationships in the Republic of Venice between the 16th and 18th Centuries,” in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 531, 538,
It was, as will be remembered, during the tenure of the Sieur d’Amelot, that the French ambassador almost clashed with the inquisitors as they allegedly ordered the murder of Amelot’s associate and informant, Paolo Giuliani. The French foreign ministry expressed outrage at the murder, but it was contrary to French strategy toward the Venetian government in 1684 to indict the inquisitors’ truculence. The Rizzati Affair, however, interposed the authority of the three inquisitors between the needs of Europe’s greatest monarchs in a heated diplomatic and military context in which the services of agents like the Rizzati facilitated the movement of information while the kingdom of Spain was en jeu. The affair occurred when Louis XIV needed to frighten the Venetian government enough to make it remember its own tenuous defense against the French in the Adriatic Sea and Northern Italy.

From the perspective of the king the Venetian government at last rose above its station in European affairs, and the inquisitors, heretofore left to direct the arcana of Venice’s polity from the shadows, dared to oppose high French foreign policy.153 The king demanded the Venetian government make an example of the three state inquisitors responsible for the executions of two men in his service and defend against ministers who, it could be said, contradicted Venice’s conciliar sovereignty and international reputation.154 Cardinal d’Estrées unleashed diatribes against the inquisitors’ authority and the international implications for the republic’s government. In the initial meeting 24 June after the executions Estrées remarked to Capello:

It would be too difficult [for the Venetians] to try and justify how the the sovereign power of the Great Council, that is the general assembly of all the nobles, could be transferred to the inquisitors of state to delimit; that this pretended sovereignty might have control over private subjects of whatever rank they might be, but that the laws from within the boundaries of their city and their states should have absolutely no effect on the necessities of Foreign Princes especially the First Two Crowns of Europe. Moreover, it

would be strange that one would make three subjects of the Republic arbiters to decide whether to respect or not any person Kings would honor with similar dignity [that is royal protection], and, moreover, even the collegio which represents the sovereignty of the Republic even had no right to involve itself in such a case, but it seemed to suffice, however, to be an inquisitor of state to ignore without punishment this respect…. I upheld that in the present circumstances the actions of the inquisitors of state was inexcusable…. After such a precipitous action, the senate was now placed in a very embarrassing situation as to what is might do: [Estrees’ suggested] they [the senate] should forbid them [the current inquisitors] in perpetuity from holding a charge that they had abused with impudence.155

On 1 July, Estrées “repeated and even exaggerated all of the circumstances that rendered that action most offensive and which should oblige the Republic to repair it through all of the satisfactions [sic] Your Majesty might demand.”156 The savvio, Estrées alleged, became very agitated begging the French not to blame the entire Venetian “publico” for the conduct of “three inquisitors over whom neither the collegio nor the senate had any authority and who acted with a sovereign and absolute power in these types of cases.”157 Estrées rejoined:

I believed that I had to ridicule what he said by remarking that I did not know that there was any other sovereign power in Venice other than the bodies of the Republic, and that he was teaching me something new that I had never understood [about the Republic] like so many other things; that if the fault lay with the three inquisitors and if they should be considered the sovereigns over which the Republic had no authority, it should be, therefore, these three sovereigns who should be held to account for their actions before Your Majesty, and You would be forced into combat if they did not do so seeing that it [the Republic] had already declared in so many ways against You and against the Spanish Crown, for which it did not appear in the least embarrassed. I continued saying that the Republic could clearly expect the power of these inquisitors to hold sway over merchants, artisans, and the inhabitants of Venice, but to pretend that such [a system of] laws permitted them to disrespect the just regard owed to Crowns and to such a great King, that it would be too great a wrong toward the Republic to believe it capable of such a thing….158

He added the republic could publicly demonstrate that this was not the case “…as they [the inquisitors] merited to be deprived forever of the titles which they had abused to the degree of

156 AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 1 July 1702, Fs. 226r-226v.
158 Ibid., Fs. 227r-227v.
bringing the Republic into conflict with Your Majesty, and if the Republic facilitated their
capricious acts it would find itself engaged justly to render the satisfaction Your Majesty
deserved.”\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 1 July 1702, F. 228r.}

Throughout July the senate avoided formal diplomatic satisfaction to the king. Estrées
explained that the nature of the Venetian system meant that the three sitting inquisitors would
finish the six months of their appointments by the end of August; the senate intentionally delayed
responding to the king’s demands until this time.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 2 Sept. 1702, Fs. 373r-373v.} The senate had no intention of publicly
admitting the contradictions in its polity. The city was alarmed at the thought of French reprisals
stationing available warships at its ports, reinforcing the earthworks of the Lido, and building up
“batteries” in the case of a bombardment.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Louis XIV, 15 July 1702, F. 264r; Mémoires du Comte de Forbin, Tome II, 123.} News that the king increased his troops in Northern
Italy and that Philip V arrived in the peninsula to take up command of Franco-Spanish forces
heightened the panic.\footnote{AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 134, Estrées to Torcy, 22 July 1702, F. 269r.} Imperial reinforcements were not set to arrive for some time still, and, at
this time, Forbin was attacking Venetian merchant vessels. Ultimately, the added horror that the
Ottomans considered renewed conflict in the Mediterranean at French urging pressed the senate
to satisfy Louis XIV in regards to the Rizzati.\footnote{ASV, IS-LAF, Busta 153, Inquisitors of State to Pisani, 21 Oct. 1702; Setton, Venice, Austria, and the Turks, 413, 415.}

By August it had been decided that Estrées would leave Venice and join Philip V as
French ambassador to his court. The cardinal, however, took special care to finalize the Rizzati
Affair before his departure demanding resolution. Undoubtedly the months in which Capello and
the senate duped Estrées through the politics of neutrality compelled the cardinal to end his
embassy with some successful negotiation. The senate first suggested to Estrées in late August
“the idea of a letter” in which the republic expressed in submissive terms its apologies to the king. Estrées informed Capello that a letter was still only rhetoric, and that the king expected decisive action on the part of the republic. A second suggestion was punishing the captain of the sbirri, Giorgio Aliprandi, blaming him for not reporting the letters to the inquisitors. Neither of these acts sufficed for the king who found especially risible the idea of a “simple letter.”

Louis XIV asked the cardinal what measures he believed would embarrass the senate the most. Estrées believed nothing less than a command extraordinary embassy led by two high-ranking patricians would humiliate the republic demonstrating the extent of its submission. At last on 30 September, the senate decided upon a two-fold act of obedience: it would send the letter of apology to Louis XIV in the hands of an extraordinary ambassador, and it would send a copy of the letter to Pope Clement XI with a request that the pontiff notarize, publish, and send official copies of it to all of the courts of Europe “in such a manner that the whole world would be convinced of the high respect and sincerity of their sentiments.” Estrées departed from Venice in late September to join Philip V. Before his departure he helped Capello edit the letter of submission. The senate elected Lorenzo Tiepolo extraordinary ambassador to deliver and to read the letter to the king. Tiepolo presented the letter on 1 January 1703 ending the Rizzati Affair. With the permission of Louis XIV and the senate, Tiepolo’s title then changed to

165 Ibid., 357r.
171 Ibid., 354r.
172 For a full text of the letter see: AAE, CP, Venise, vol. 135, copy of the senate’s letter asking pardon, 1702: 23 Settembre in Pregadi, Alla Maestà del Re Christianissimo, Fs. 336r-338r.
ordinary ambassador to France. He replaced Alvise Pisani remaining at the French court until 1708.173

The time-tested ludovician politics of subjugation through diplomatic bullying finally reached Venice. Its submission was not as spectacular as the bombardment and subsequent ceremonial humiliation of the Republic of Genoa in 1684-1685. Unlike the senate of its sister republic, the Venetian senate chose prostration before French demands rather than risk the possible further destruction of its war-weakened state and the inevitable humiliation that would have followed. Tiepolo’s extraordinary embassy signalled that Venice recognized Louis XIV’s international superiority. The republic feared armed retaliation in the terrafirma or in the Mediterranean Sea either through Forbin’s squadrons or diplomatic machinations with the Ottomans. Louis XIV could not force Venice to abandon its attachments to Leopold I; the king seemed satisfied, however, that the republic recognize his authority and that it could no longer pretend to see France as a diplomatic equal in the future.174 The Venetian government’s affinity for the emperor in 1701-1702 neutralized eighteenth-century Franco-Venetian diplomatic relations; the Rizzati Affair was the instrument with which the Cardinal d’Estrées rendered the Republic of Venice impotent before louisquatorzien might.

Conclusions

Believing Venice respected the benefits he offered, Louis XIV sent Estrées to the republic to persuade it to ally with France and Spain against Leopold I. The king initially underestimated the extent to which the Venetians favored Leopold in their Mediterranean policies and engagements since the Morean War. Venetian distrust for the king since the loss of

Crete in 1669 and the subsequent growth of his authority in Europe and the Mediterranean pushed the republic closer to the emperor. Leopold provided the republic with tangible diplomatic and strategic benefits over the course of their war with the Ottomans in the last two decades of the seventeenth century; it was presumed he could continue to do so.

Belligerents for the Spanish Crown poured into Northern Italy in 1701-1702, and Venice’s senate presented itself to the French as a neutral state to forestall a French onslaught. Eager to cement an alliance between Venice and Pope Clement XI, Estrees initially accepted the senate’s neutrality at face value. Forbin’s reports combined with mounting evidence of Venice’s regard for Leopold I’s military needs in the terraferma signalled that neutrality was a mask to dupe Louis XIV. The senate bought time providing resources for the augmentation of imperial authority in Italian lands belonging to the Spanish Crown. Venice’s reliance upon the emperor in the event of a future conflict with the Ottomans compelled the republic to favor Leopold’s dominance in Italy. Events and evidence forced Estrées to recognize his miscalculation. As French armies experienced temporary dominance in Italy in mid-1702, the Rizzati Affair presented the cardinal with an opportunity to correct his error.

Cardinal d’Estrées’s manipulation of the Rizzati Affair confirmed three points. First, the republic’s financial and naval resources were too over-extended in its recent Mediterranean acquisitions to disavow Leopold or to maintain its traditional sovereignty in the Adriatic against French squadrons. Secondly, the republic’s financial and naval distress left it incapable of forcing Franco-Spanish troops out of its terraferma states; the senate tolerated the French while continually favoring Eugène’s armies with provisions on land and sea. Finally, the affair demonstrated the republic preferred humiliation before Louis XIV rather than face a potential bombardment and jeopardize hard-won gains in the distant Mediterranean. For modern scholars
the Rizzati Affair indicates that the republic’s international and diplomatic “decline” was not a
totalizing process. Students of Venetian history should reconsider individual cases of withered
diplomatic relations between Venice and neighboring states in the early-modern period; each
deserves separate analysis to draw accurate conclusions.

The kings of France maintained ordinary ambassadors in Venice until the revolution, but
the post was important more as an entrepot for the collection and passage of information from
and with the distant Mediterranean and Italy. The relazioni of two Venetian ambassadors to
the court of France in the first decades of the eighteenth century, Lorenzo Tiepolo and Nicolo
Foscarini, confirmed the cause of Venice’s diminished relations with France after 1702. Tiepolo
wrote in 1708:

Thus I cannot conceal the continuous laments coming from that court against the alleged
partiality demonstrated for the Germans. The repeated, rather the never-ending, reports
that officials and generals sent to the court, produced such a disadvantageous effect...that
even the most distinguished persons, the ministers and princes, showed themselves
persuaded...that if the Eccellentissimo Senato had wanted it so, Lombardy would not
have suffered war, and the States of the King of Spain would still be under his
dominion….

In a later dual relazione of 1723 Tiepolo and Foscarini again echoed these sentiments:

But the profound subtlety and penetration of that court seems to consider with little favor
the present direction and aims of the eccellentissimo Senato. It is well known, that the
distraction of Ottoman power and the always stronger links that have formed between
Caesar and the Republic, against this power, created the results even for Italy of the
recent treaty (Treaty of Passarowitz 1718)... There is the inherent notion that Vostre
Eccellenze will never enter into hazardous negotiations that would displease
Caesar....The Court of France, having by custom to treat with a distinct superiority,
betimes exceeds the limits towards those from whom it cannot hope to profit sometimes
maybe to its own detriment.

France came to disregard the Serenissima as a viable partner after 1702. The advent of the War
of the Spanish Succession debunked Venetian neutrality from the French vantage confirming the

175 Frostin, Les Pontchartrain, Ministres de Louis XIV, 141-142.
176 Lorenzo Tiepolo, Relazione, 14 June 1708, in Berchet and Barozzi, vol. , 656.
177 Nicolò Foscarini and Lorenzo Tiepolo, Relazione, 13 April 1723, in Berchet and Barozzi, 685-686.
republic’s allegiance to the Emperor. For the French, like its famed political stability, Venetian claims of neutrality were a myth. With no irony, it would be the French to demand the final sacrifice of the *Serenissima* to their war aims against the Habsburgs ninety-five years later through the Treaty of Campo Formio.\(^\text{178}\)

\(^{178}\) Condren, *Louis XIV et 'le repos de l'Italie'* , 225-226.
Conclusion

One generally regards an embassy to Venice as an unimportant commission; this is why courts have for some time stopped sending capable ministers to this post. It is correct that it does not seem necessary given the little influence that the Republic of Venice has in European affairs. However, I do not know of a better school for the formation of ambassadors…. No ambassador before me sent detailed mémoires about every part of the Venetian government; I fulfilled my service there then with the most ample attention, and I dare say that my mémoires revealed the inner workings of the Republic of Venice more than anyone before me who had written about that celebrated and singular government…and I examined all of the dispatches of the king’s ambassadors to Venice from the last fifty years.¹

The Abbé de Bernis served as resident ambassador to the Republic of Venice from 1752 to 1754. Bernis’s later critiques serve as fitting prompts to draw conclusions about Franco-Venetian diplomatic relations in the late seventeenth century and the careers of the five ambassadors examined in my work. If one takes him at his word, Bernis prepared for his role as envoy to Venice by reading the fifty years of correspondence of former French ambassadors preceding his departure for the republic – roughly that would have been dispatches written from Venice since 1702. Based on his research, Bernis concluded that French relations with the Serenissima – indeed with all European courts – were of little international importance by the mid-eighteenth century. I have agreed with Bernis on this point regarding the rapport between France and Venice, but I contend that the abbé would not have made the same observations of Franco-Venetian relations before 1702.

I have used three principle arguments in my dissertation: First, the dynastic imperative to expand the boundaries of France undergirded Louis XIV’s diplomatic relations with the Republic of Venice, and the same imperative informed the personal motivations that led the five ambassadors I have examined. Secondly, I argued that a mutual though antagonistic interest in the commercial and political dynamics of the Mediterranean Sea connected the French and the Venetians. Finally, I have claimed that the personal choices and preoccupations of the individual

ambassadors that Louis XIV and his ministers chose to serve in diplomatic posts effected the development of subsequent French domestic and international policies. Louis XIV was forced to react to their decisions rather than being the sole author of them. Framing these claims has been the contention that the government of Venice remained a vital diplomatic factor in Louis XIV’s international and hegemonic strategies.

Contrary to the Abbé de Bernis’s blanket allegation that previous ambassadors reported little useful information in their dispatches from Venice prior to 1752, the ministers that I have introduced here demonstrated a punctilious and thorough attention to detailing the domestic and international affairs of the republic. Their correspondence contained ample evidence that the French ministries of foreign affairs and the marine interacted vigorously with the Venetian government to further specific French policies in the Mediterranean Sea, the Italian peninsula, and in Western Europe. French dynastic politics relative to the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs, the papacy, and the Ottoman Empire in the forty years from 1662 to 1702 benefitted from the rapport with the Venetians.

Ambassadors’ desire for personal advancement required that they satisfy the king. I have investigated ambassadors from two different social orders: three were drawn from the clergy and two from the noblesse de robe. In both cases, the ministers went to Venice with the understanding that their role afforded opportunities to promote their interests. Even Cardinal d’Estrées, who arguably had achieved the highest rank possible (save the papacy) in his career, expected that his service in Venice could promote the advancement of his nephew, the Abbé d’Estrées. The cardinal had vetted the abbé’s nomination as a future ambassador to Spain while serving in Venice. Ambassadors in my work operated within the constraints of the centralizing louisquatorzien monarchy. The results of their performance while in the Venetian republic have

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been sketched looking then through the dual lenses of personal and royal interests. This has been the dynamic of *louisquatorzien* monarchy that I have described at work between Louis XIV, his government, and ministers working in that government who were sent abroad to represent him.

Of the five ambassadors I investigated four went on to hold other diplomatic or ministerial posts. The Bishop of Beziérs served in Poland until 1668 returning then to France to succeed in higher ecclesiastical positions including the cardinalate in 1672. The Abbé d’Estrades was ambassador in Turin until 1685. After returning from Venice in 1685 Louis XIV elevated the Sieur d’Amelot’s lands to a marquisate. The Marquis Amelot de Gournay then served the king as envoy in Portugal and Switzerland. Later he became a counselor in the royal *conseil de commerce* before serving again as envoy in Spain and Rome.\(^3\) Denis de la Haye-Vantelet had passed his long life in diplomatic service to Louis XIV, and at the end of his tenure in Venice the king allowed the aged la Haye and his family to retire to his lands in France where he died later in his ninety-sixth year.\(^4\) Finally, Cardinal César d’Estrées continued to serve the king as the second ambassador to Felipe V of Spain.\(^5\) The Venetian embassies of these men, in spite of the challenges each faced in the republic, secured their personal advancement or that of their families in the French government and aristocracy.

Describing the forty years during which these ministers served in Venice and through their correspondence under succeeding French secretaries of state for foreign affairs I have also wanted to provide evidence of bureaucratic developments occurring within the *louisquatorzien* foreign ministry. The directives ambassadors received and with which they complied during the ministries of Colbert de Croissy after 1679 and Croissy’s son, Torcy, after 1696 provided further

\(^3\) Duparc, *Recueil des Instructions*, 39, 73, 95.

\(^4\) La Haye’s son, Marc, was created marquis later in the early-eighteenth century. Chesnay De Bois, *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*, Tome X, 465-466.

\(^5\) Beaucaire, *Le recueil des instructions*, vol. XII, Espagne, 55.
evidence of the “management of information...of a ‘brain trust’ of diplomatic personnel” under the Colberts’ leadership. Ambassadors in Venice, most notably Michel d’Amelot, received direct instructions of how to write diplomatic correspondence and the types of information that the ministry believed appropriate for official dispatches as the foreign ministry coalesced under the Colberts’ leadership. The correspondence of Amelot’s successor, Denis de la Haye followed the same guidelines, and the work of both ministers was markedly different in style and content than those of the Bishop of Beziers and the Abbé d’Estrades prior to 1679. I would argue that the long experience and the nature of Cardinal d’Estrées mission exempted him to some degree from following the same guidelines as his predecessors in Venice who were both of less exalted rank and whose diplomatic tasks did not exhibit the same immediacy as that of Estrées who sought with all haste to impede the troops of Leopold I entering the Venetian terraferma.

Moreover, I would argue that the turbulent experiences of the Abbé d’Estrades and Michel d’Amelot were exactly the types of scenarios that Colbert de Torcy had in mind when he began to formalize and then institute a curriculum for and training of ambassadors and embassy secretaries through the formation of the académie politique in 1710. Estrades’s mismanagement of information related to the composer Alessandro Stradella and the secret negotiations for Casale undertaken without royal command resulted from a lack of experience – although the abbé was able to defend and then remedy his errors. The distasteful and embarrassing domestic controversies that plagued Michel d’Amelot and his secretary, Rogers de Piles, likewise, provided an example of the awkward position of ambassadorial secretaries in the

6 Rule and Trotter, A World of Paper, 467.
7 Amelot seemed to have trouble throughout his career composing consistently satisfactory dispatches. The king rebuked him in 1683, and later in 1705, when in Spain, Torcy again upbraided the ambassador for his communication style and content. Ibid., 363-364.
seventeenth century. Piles was loyal to his master and not to the Crown *per se*. His plodding oversight of a contraband ring to pay spies for information for his employer ended in scandal and repeated royal and ministerial rebukes to the ambassador. Torcy’s objective in developing the *académie politique*, although it did not survive long after the death of Louis XIV, was to train ambassadors but especially to train competent secretaries loyal to the Crown with an understanding of the requirements of their role. The ambassadors I have discussed and their embassy staffs served in Venice before the appearance of “diplomatic” treatises in France; they received on-the-job training along with its pitfalls and humiliations.

These ambassadors’ experiences in Venice do more than demonstrate the precariousness of the life of diplomats in the Venetian republic and the ways in which service there shaped their subsequent personal careers in their socio-cultural context. Louis XIV sought to present his domestic and international authority as an all-encompassing emanation of royal will. This was far from the reality that diplomatic correspondence revealed. During the decades of the king’s personal rule, the relationship of ambassadors in the republic with the Venetian government and its spies and with ministers at the French court highlighted that royal policy emerged sometimes piecemeal after ambassadors’ decisions had been made far from the king’s gaze.

The example of the Franco-Venetian rapport demonstrates that the French Crown’s foreign policies were often reactions to circumstances that emerged on a quotidian basis. *Louisquatorzien* foreign policy was often dependent upon diplomats’ abilities to mitigate extensive webs of intelligence, political institutions, and the personal interests that motivated the

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10 Ibid., 579, 587-588.
individual actors composing these same webs and institutions. French envoys’ frequent
dispatches from the republic relayed the intelligence details required to fulfill the prompts of the
king and the secretaries of foreign affairs – and after 1687-1688 the secretary of the marine – in
regards to the official direction of foreign policy. The vignettes that opened five chapters of this
dissertation, however, illustrated the varied and sometimes tense circumstances that arose in an
ambassador’s day-to-day tenure in Venice that could alter Crown policy and either threaten or
promote a diplomat’s career. Ambassadors received instructions only to include details relevant
to the construction of foreign policy in relation to the Venetian government. In light of such
direct commands to relate relevant information the facets surrounding these extraordinary events
stood in contrast to the other many pages in dispatches that recounted the minutiae of
international politics. Upon investigation and reconstruction it became apparent that ambassadors
included these experiences because they believed them pertinent to the development of French
relations with the republic and to their individual performance as the king’s creatures.

Viewed from this perspective two points emerge. First, ambassadors became the author’s
of foreign policy as much as they were the mouthpieces of the official royal will. I argue that the
received narratives of early modern European international and diplomatic history – those of
late-seventeenth century France in this case – resulted as much or more from the efforts and
failures of ambassadors like those I have examined as they did from the commands of the
governments that sent them. These narratives can be understood and appreciated more fully only
after scholarly reappraisals present the fraught circumstances diplomats underwent in the
process. In this way I have drawn attention to the personal nature of what Sharp called the
diplomat’s predicament.
Second, scholars agree that Louis XIV sought to consolidate or centralize his authority through robust chains of command at the ministerial level that required the final decision of the monarch in council. Paradoxically, for the Crown’s authority to coalesce in what has come to be understood as absolute rule, royal authority had to accommodate – adapt to – the demands and assumptions of individuals like ambassadors and institutions – be they domestic or foreign – such as the government of Venice. The politics of accommodation between the French Crown and its ministers and with the Venetian government that I have described are further indications that a putatively absolute authority was ultimately dependent upon a series of institutional accommodations that would characterize the French monarchy until the end of the ancien régime contributing to its ultimate dissolution.

Additionally, I have suggested that relationships between larger states such as Louis XIV’s France with smaller polities like Venice in the early modern period deserve further scholarly attention. One could argue that Louis XIV’s willingness to tolerate and accommodate the often vexatious foreign policies and diplomatic strategies of the diminutive republic were unusual when compared to the king’s bullying approach to states like Genoa. It could be argued that the king, although disdainful of republics in general, maintained Cardinal Mazarin’s respect for the venerable Republic of Saint Mark. I contend, however, that although Mazarin may have inculcated a level of respect for Venice in the monarch, it was the state’s proximity and long experience in Mediterranean and Italian affairs that tempered the king in his policies with the republic for forty years.

Venice’s government and geographic situation represented a strategic relationship that, as I have shown, Louis believed could be manipulated to counter Habsburg and papal foreign policies on the Italian peninsula and in Western Europe. Throughout the early decades of his
personal rule, the king and his foreign secretaries pressed Venice to comply with Bourbon
hegemonic aims while leaving the republic’s government to believe that it could benefit from
French military and monetary support during its struggle for Crete. Venetian interests in the
Mediterranean Sea left the republic vulnerable to Louis’s Ottoman allies, and the king attempted
to use this threat to inspire Venetian compliance. From the 1680s, however, the republic’s
tolerance of the French king’s territorial expansionism and authority in Italy and the
Mediterranean weakened and Venice turned instead to Leopold I as an ally. Louis had
underestimated the republic and its unwillingness to be easily controlled. The Franco-Venetian
rapport finally diminished when the king realized he could not use diplomacy to dissuade the
republic from its ties with the emperor as the War of the Spanish Succession began. Moreover, I
believe that I have argued persuasively that discussions of Venice’s diminishment in European
and Mediterranean politics should be reexamined through the breakdown of individual
diplomatic rapports such as I have described to understand better the nuanced circumstances that
result in a state’s international “decline.”

For as much as the small Venetian republic’s relevance faded in the context of its
relations with Louis XIV so too did the king’s aspirations to command the politics of Italian
states. The momentary French dominance in Northern Italy that existed after Cardinal d’Estrées
departed Venice in 1702 did not survive the long years of the War for the Spanish throne. The
1713 Peace of Utrecht laid the foundation for almost thirty years of diplomatic and military
tensions in Italy between the Austrian Habsburgs and the Spanish Bourbons.12 Any aspirations
that Louis XIV maintained to expand French authority into the peninsula had vanished by 1697.
The king’s efforts to cement Spanish rule on behalf of his grandson in Northern Italy dissolved

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too after his death when Felipe V faced diplomatic pressure from European states, including his native France, to maintain Spanish states in the peninsula.\textsuperscript{13}

The Venetians again lost the preponderance of their Mediterranean gains since 1699 through the Second Morean War (1714-1718), and its government and merchants fought thereafter to remain a vital and relevant Mediterranean port city as the great dynastic states encircling it forced the Venetians into a position of a truly neutral and secondary importance – a \textit{medio stato} as the eighteenth century theorist, Vattel, posited – in international and Mediterranean affairs.\textsuperscript{14} The Republic of Venice, although independent, grudgingly accepted Austrian dynastic pretensions over those of France and Spain in Italy until after 1748 when the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties at last released Italy from their territorial ambitions for a short period of peace until the advent of Napoleonic armies.\textsuperscript{15}

The Abbé de Bernis observed that Venice had relinquished the elements of its former international relevance in European affairs when he arrived there in 1752, but a relative domestic stability, a level of commercial prosperity, and the cultural renown of the republic continued until its dissolution in 1797.\textsuperscript{16} Post-revolutionary European historians, especially in France, would be left to initiate “modern” interpretations of Venice’s history and the mythologies – myth and antitymth – associated with its government and society.\textsuperscript{17} The correspondence of the ambassadors I have examined contained no discussion of any Venetian myth as an interpretive model through which to understand the social and political dynamics of the state in which they

\textsuperscript{13} Symcox, “The political world of the absolute state,” 117.
served. They did not refer to the “Myth of Venice.” They functioned, rather, as envoys of Louis XIV in a vigorous republic undergoing the continued evolution in institutions that contributed to later articulations of a myth.

The envoys investigated here often described the contradictions of the republic’s famed stability and liberty. Their clashes with the recondite Venetian government and its allegedly repressive instruments like the Council of Ten and the state inquisitors provided additional evidence no doubt for later nineteenth century French scholars’ who sometimes villainized Venice’s government and society for alleged brutality and suppression. In their service to Louis XIV ambassadors sought royal favor, but Pierre Daru described the Venetian polity on its own terms in his controversial analysis as, “…a shadowy government that placed among the number of its maxims the careful humbling of the pride or the glory of those who elevated themselves through brilliant (notable) services.” Perhaps French ambassadors’ unflattering descriptions of Venice can be partially explained through such republican maxims or at least through later commentators’ creation of them. Ambassadors in the last half of the seventeenth century had judged Venice while seeking to justify their actions for personal advancement and for the dynastic aims of Louis le Grand at the expense of the republic.

Appendices
Appendix I:

Chronologies of Pertinent Political Figures

Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs during the personal rule of Louis XIV

Henri-Auguste Lomenie, Seigneur de Brienne (1643-1663) [Hugues de Lionne served along with the elderly Brienne in the early 1660s]

Hugues de Lionne, Marquis de Fresnes (1663-1671)
Simon-Arnauld de Pomponne (1671-1679)
Charles Colbert, Marquis de Croissy (1680-1696)
Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy (1696-1715)

Doges of Venice during the personal rule of Louis XIV

Domenico II Contarini (1659-1674)
Nicolo Sagredo (1674-1676)
Alvise Contarini (1676-1683)
Marc-Antonio Giustiniani (1684-1688)
Francesco Morosini (1688-1694)
Silvestro Valiero (1694-1700)
Alvise II Mocenigo (1700-1709)
Giovanni II Cornaro (1709-1722)
Venetian ambassadors to France during the personal rule of Louis XIV:

- Alvise Grimani (1660-1664)
- Alvise Sagredo (1663-1665)
- Marc-Antonio Giustiniani (1665-1668)
  - Giovanni Morosini (1668-1671)
  - Francesco Michiel (1670-1674)
  - Ascanio II Giustinian (1673-1676)
- Domenico Contarini (1676-1686)
- Sebastiano Foscarini (1678-1683)
- Girolamo Venier (1682-1688)
- Pietro Venier (1688-1695)
  - Nicolò Erizzo (1695-1699)
- Alvise Pisani (1699-1702)
- Lorenzo Tiepolo (1702-1707)
  - Alvise Mocenigo (1707-1721)

Popes during the Personal Rule of Louis XIV:

- Alexander VII [Chigi] (1655-1667)
- Clement IX [Rospigliosi] (1667-1669)
- Clement X [Altieri] (1670-1676)
- Innocent XI [Odescalchi] (1676-1689)
- Alexander VIII [Ottoboni] (1689-1691)
- Innocent XII [Pignatelli] (1691-1700)
- Clement XI [Albani] (1700-1721)

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20 N.B. Ambassadors mentioned in the preceding chapters are bolded. The presence of three overlapping Venetian ambassadors in the late 1670s and early 1680s will be noted. I believe this demonstrated further evidence of Venetian anxiety towards Louis XIV’s growing authority in European affairs. This anxiety also explained the reason for which the sieur d’Amelot faced the difficulties described in Chapter Four above.
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<td>Mehmet IV</td>
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<td>Ahmed II</td>
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<td>Mustafa II</td>
<td>(1695-1703)</td>
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<td>Ahmed III</td>
<td>(1703-1730)</td>
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Appendix II:

“Des Droits et prérogatives utiles,” 1664¹

F. 180r/ La principale des prérogatives des ambassadeurs, et celle du droit de Franchise dans un certain district marqué par la République autour du Palais qu’ils occupent, et c’est pour cela qu’ils ne logent jamais aûpres de la Place S’t Marc.

Ces franchises consistent en ce que

Il ne peut etre fait aucun acte de justice, soit pour enlever des gens et les mettre en prison, soit pour y donner des assignations, sans la permission expresse de l’Ambassadeur. Il est seul le maître de permettre qu’on y vende de la viande, du pain, et du vin seules marchandises dont le commerce n’est pas libre à Venise. Cette permission se donne rarement a cause de l’inconvenient des contrebandes.

Toutes les Gondoles des Ambassadeurs conduites par sa livrée sont exemptes de toutes visites tant dedans qu’en dehors de Venize et si par hazard les Sbirres en arrêtent quelques unes l’ambassadeur s’en plaint au Senat qui lui fait rendre ce qu’ils pourroient y avoir pris.

L’Ambassadeur a droit en tout temps de faire venir à Venize pour sa personne ou sa Maison, et sous son adresse, ou avec son passeport, tel ballot que bon lui semble, sans qu’il puisse être visité, ni sujet à payer aucune Douane. Nota. Il y a [ ] souvent des difficultés pour la visite.

L’Ambassadeur a droit de faire porter des armes, même à feu, à toute sa Maison. Tout ceux qui la composent ne peuvent être arrêtés ni insultés dans Venize, et si cela arrivoit on lui en feroit justice.

L’Ambassadeur a droit de donner ce qu’on appelle des lettres de familiarité; ceux qui les ont jouissent de tous les droits des gens de l’Ambassadeur; comme pour d’armes, droit de ne pouvoir être arrêtés ni insultés. Mais ces lettres ne s’accordent que rarement et avec une grande connaissance de la personne a cause des inconvenientes.

Les Ambassadeurs ont de droit des Loges dans tous les Théâtres, quand ils en demandent. Le Doge les leur fait donner pour un prix réglé tres anciennement, et pour éviter les disputes entre les Ambassadeurs des differents Couronnes le Doge lui meme les tires au sort pour eux; il leur en envoie les clefs, et les Ambassadeurs gardent ces loges s’ils veulent tout le temps de leur ambassade

¹ The above document outlined the privileges or franchises French ambassadors claimed in Venice in 1664 and thereafter. This piece can be found in the following: AAE, MD, France, vol. 45, 1664, Des Droits et prérogatives utiles, Fs 180r-180v.
Appendix III:

Il Te Deum, Sopra il Re di Francia, 1683

Te Deum Laudamus Gallicum
Te Ludovicum Damnamus
Te Hereticum Confitemur
Te errorium Patrem omnis ecclesia detestatur
Tibi omnes Angelli et Laici, incessabili voce proclamunt
   Satthan, Satan, Satan; Rebelis Pape, et Deo Sabaot.
Pleni sunt cæli, et Terra horrende Heresis tue.
Te Luxuoriosis Apostatorum chorus,
Te Hypocritum damnabilis numerus,
Te Fornicatorum maculatus Laudat exercitus;
Te per Orbera Terrarum Sancta Anathemizat Ecclesia;
   Patrem immense pravitatis:
Venenum Docinatum, et iniqui Consili,
Falsum quoque per tuum decipientur spiritum,
Tu Rex impie scite;
Tu Patris Diaboli exocrinandus es Filius;
Tu, ad perdendus Fideles Homines, non horruisti excutere Pape jugum;
Tu, abiecto Veritatis fundamento aperuisti tibi portas Inferorum;
Tu, ad Dexteram Luciferi Sedes,
Judicandus crederis in Eternum Arsurus:
Te, ergo quæsumus tuis Gallis subveni, quos pernicioso sanguine perdedisti;
Eternum fac eos in repribis flammis cruciari.
Salvum fac Populum tuum Ludovice, et maledic impietatis;
Revocas eos, et non conculies eos in Eternum.
Per singulos dies maledicimus Te,
Et damnamus Heresia Tuam in sæculum sæculi.
   Dignare Ludovice, quam primum, a peccato tuo resilire:
   Miserere tui Ludovice, miserere tui.
Sic fiat Justitia Dei super Te et tuos quemadmodum speraverunt in Te.
   In Ludovico Sperantes confundantur in Eternum

1 ASV, IS-RC, Busta 547, Enclosed in an avviso from Badoer to the inquisitors of state, 25 Aug. 1683. The Te Deum reflects the venom hurled at Louis XIV and the French in Venice during the early 1680s.
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Vita

Name: Sherrod Brandon Marshall

Date of Birth: October 17, 1976

Baccalaureate Degree:
Bachelor of Arts
Majors: History and Humanities
Minors: Theology and French
Harding University
Searcy, Arkansas

Date Graduated: December, 1999

Other Degrees:
Master of Arts – History
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Date Graduated: May, 2006

Master of Science in Education
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York

Date Graduated: August, 2011

Master of Philosophy – History
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York

Date Graduated: December, 2011