

Resistance and Order in Early Modern France

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Roughly a quarter century ago, two books destined to redraw the map of early modern French historiography came out within months of each other, one with Oxford, the other with Cambridge. They were, of course, Sharon Kettering's *Patrons, Brokers and Clients* and Bill Beik's *Absolutism and Society*.¹ Over the last decade, I've often had to listen to people talk about the unholy trinity of Beik, Collins, and Mettam,² the dreaded "revisionists": that formulation has always seemed to me to represent a complete misunderstanding of what happened between the appearance of the books of Bill and Sharon and, say, the mid 1990s. Bill and Roger Mettam are really very far apart on "absolutism": lumping them together shows a complete lack of understanding of their work.³ In a review essay published in 1989, Peter Burke rightly noted of Mettam's book that it largely addressed issues current when Roger finished his thesis, in 1973, but did not take into account the great changes of the mid 1980s, not simply the books of Sharon and Bill (the former part of the review essay), but even of Goubert and Roche's *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime* (1984).⁴ Burke was a bit unfair – Mettam specifically referred

¹ S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); the book came out early that year. W. Beik, *Absolutism and society in Seventeenth-century France. State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

² R. Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), as well as several articles; J. Collins, *The State in early modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; second edition, drastically revised, 2009).

³ Bill Beik set out clearly his differences with Mettam in his splendid review essay, "The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration," *Past & Present* 188 (2005): 195-224.

⁴ P. Burke, "National and Provincial: French History, 1450-1815," *The Historical Journal* 32: 2 (1989): 395-99. P. Goubert and D. Roche, *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1984), 2 vols. This work reprised much of Goubert's 1969 book, *L'Ancien Régime*; Roche did the second volume, which segued from social into

readers to Beik's introduction for a summary of the historiography on "absolutism" – but Mettam's great contribution was to take up the rejectionist position – that no such thing as absolutism had existed.

No, the real pairing is Bill and Sharon: they marked the break. I'll say a few words first about why I believe so in general and then focus on the specific problem of resistance and order. In turning to that topic, let me remind those not familiar with their earliest work that both Sharon and Bill broke into print with work on urban revolts: moreover, Bill's first footnote in his first article cites Sharon's 1969 Stanford Ph.D. dissertation.⁵

Each of the books represented both the culmination of a long historiographical tradition and a jumping-off point for a dramatically different scholarship. Bill came from the Marxist intellectual tradition, with its emphasis on social history. That tradition had non-Marxist strains, above all the *Annales* School. In his introduction, Bill specifically cites the three traditions – Marxist, *Annaliste*, and institutional – that he wanted to synthesize. Not surprisingly, Bill has recently published a synthesis on French social history, *A Social and Cultural History of early modern France* (Cambridge, 2010) trying to bring young historians back into touch with authors like Goubert, Baehrel, Saint Jacob, and the Le Roy Ladurie of *Les Paysans de Languedoc*.⁶ Kettering, it might be pointed out, cited Goubert and Baehrel in *Patrons*; she was no stranger to *Annales* social history.

As it happens, I was one of the press readers for Cambridge, so I had occasion to correspond with Bill about the *Social and Cultural History* book as it took shape. Beik's book, as its chapter titles suggest (see below), focuses on power, domination, and conflict. Sharon's 2001 *French Society, 1580-1715*, in the Longman Social History of Europe series, has no index entries for "revolt," "riot," "unrest" or even for terms like *Nu-Pieds* or *Croquants*, although it does mention (p. 153) that Roland Mousnier's students have written about 'revolts,' among other topics. Her Introduction bears the title "Social Solidarities" and the conclusion ties "solidarities" to "Social Change." In contrast, Bill has a chapter on "Social bonds and social unrest."

**Beik, *Social and Cultural History*
chapter titles**

**Kettering, *French Society*
chapter titles**

cultural history. Mettam made a fundamental contribution to the debate by means of key articles; his book solidified that contribution, but came out, in essence, at a point at which Mettam's key argument had already been integrated into the historiography. That integration did not necessarily mean direct citation of Mettam: neither Beik nor Kettering cited any of his articles in the two books discussed here. A long discussion of the books that transformed these debates would be tedious, but I would be remiss if I did not mention one classic book I think has not gotten the recognition it deserves, Al Hamscher's *The Parlement of Paris after the Fronde, 1653-1673* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976). Beik could write succinctly of the Parlement of Toulouse that Louis had assigned them "a legitimate and satisfying role to play in the managing of the province" (309) and then simply cite Hamscher's book, which made "a similar argument" for the Parlement of Paris.

⁵ W. Beik, "Magistrates and Popular Uprisings in France before the Fronde: the Case of Toulouse," *Journal of Modern History* 46 (1974): 585-608. Beik defended his Harvard Ph.D. thesis in 1969, too.

⁶ P. Goubert, *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1960), 2 vols.; R. Baehrel, *Une Croissance: La Basse-Provence rurale* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1961); E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1966), 2 vols.; P. de Saint Jacob, *Les paysans de la Bourgogne du Nord au dernier siècle de l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1960).

France and its Population	Introduction: Social Solidarities
Rural communities and seigneurial power	Families and Households
Peasant life, agriculture and social distribution	Women and Men
Domination by the nobility	Plague and Peasants
City life and city people	Cities and Change
Monarchy and New Nobility	Nobility
Ecclesiastical Power and religious life	The early modern State
Warfare and society	The Church
Social bonds and social protest	The Margins of Society
Traditional attitudes and identities	Conclusion: Solidarities and social change
Emerging identities : education and the new elite	
Monarchs and courtly society	
Aristocracy's last bloom and the forces of change	

For *Absolutism and Society*, starting from an *Annaliste* perspective, Bill looked at Languedocian society from the local perspective, relying heavily on archives in places like Toulouse, rather than on the traditional Parisian source base of the previous historiography. Bill's many Anglophone inspirations included people like Bob Forster, for his work on Toulouse, Eugene Asher, for his wonderful little *Persistence of Feudalism*, and, of course, his own father, Paul Beik, who worked on the Revolution.⁷

Let me quote briefly from Bill's introduction:

The second question concerns the relationship between state and society or, more precisely, the meaning of absolutism as a stage in the evolution of French society from feudalism to capitalism. ... In this scenario, France and England are treated as directly comparable ... This orthodoxy continues to be repeated despite the findings of a generation of social historians that French society was structurally very different from English society.

Bill then quickly turns to Roland Mousnier, whose work "threatens to distort the whole study of French social relations," thence to a dissection of the theoretical roots of Mousnier in European and, above all, American sociology. Beik specifically rejects as well the *Annaliste* position on politics and the unwillingness of both Marxists and *Annalistes* to look at state structures: the footnotes to the rest of the introduction show Bill knew the literature on state institutions inside and out, from Doucet to Marion, as it were.⁸

⁷ R. Forster, *The Nobility of Toulouse in the eighteenth century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1960); E. Asher, *The Resistance to the Maritime Classes: Survival of Feudalism in the France of Louis XIV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), a book oddly missing from Kettering's bibliography; P. Beik, perhaps best known for *The French Revolution seen from the Right* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956).

⁸ R. Doucet, *Les institutions de la France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Picard, 1948), 2 vols.; M. Marion, *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Picard, 1923); Beik cites eleven separate titles by Mousnier, as well as the books by his major students (see below). In Beik's 1974 *JMH* article, the second footnote cites Mousnier, Porshnev, and Robert Mandrou, a leading Marxist historian of early modern France. Mandrou clearly had an important influence on Beik, both in his book on class struggle, *Classes et luttes de classes en France au début du XVIIe siècle* (Messina: G. d'Anna, 1965), and in his brilliant *Introduction à la France moderne. Essai de psychologie historique* (Paris: A. Michel, 1961), available in English translation. Kettering does not cite Mandrou.

Sharon had already done a 1978 local study, in her case of the Byzantine politics of Provence with its peculiar institutional arrangements.⁹ Sharon's work obviously came from a different perspective, one typically followed by Rightist historians in France. Her French inspiration came from Mousnier and his crowd, rather than from the *Annalistes*: in her short biography of Mousnier for *French Historians 1900-2000*, edited by Phil Whalen and Philip Daileader, she called him "one of the most original, prolific, and influential French historians of the late twentieth century."¹⁰ The first French historians cited in her notes are Mousnier's students, René Pillorget and Yves-Marie Bercé.¹¹ Mousnier's *fidelité* theory is the central theme of chapter one: anyone who read pages 18 to 22, "Fidelity relationships," understood exactly what was wrong with Mousnier's argument. Sharon sent Mousnier's "two-dimensional" (Mettam's apt phrase) model off to the dustbin of historiography where it belonged. In the Anglophone world, of course, she took inspiration from Orest Ranum's pathbreaking *Richelieu and the Councilors of Louis XIII* (Oxford, 1963): she and Orest maintained a remarkable lifelong intellectual friendship, which he recounted in moving detail at Sharon's memorial ceremony in September 2010.

Having dispatched Mousnier's *fidelité* argument, however, Sharon then took other elements of his work, and that of his students, to craft a more solid version of the role of clientage systems in early modern France. As Jon Dewald put it, in his review of *Patrons* for the *Journal of Modern History*, "No study of Old Regime patronage has dealt with a comparable collection of materials, and none has looked with such care at the complex emotions and interests that made up the patronage bond."¹² Jon concluded, "Kettering has given us the most complete and most insightful reconstitution that we have had of how patronage worked in early modern France."

Her *French Society* book has a nice summary of how she thinks Mousnier was basically right about orders rather than classes, so it's not surprising that the book's theme was solidarities.¹³ Sharon would later take Mousnier to task precisely on his inability to explain conflict resolution and his failure to understand how the different "societies" interacted. Beik, of course, holds out for classes. Both of them reviewed Guy Rowlands' book on the army,¹⁴ and emphasized how important a work it is, but Sharon focused on Rowlands' rejection of classes as telling us anything about early modern France (to be fair to Guy, that's not a big part of his

⁹ *Judicial Politics and Urban Revolt: The Parlement of Aix, 1629-1659* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

¹⁰ S. Kettering, "Roland Mousnier," in *French Historians 1900-200: New Historical Writing in Twentieth-Century France*, P. Whalen and P. Daileader, eds. (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 437-442.

¹¹ Y.-M. Bercé, *Histoire des Croquants* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), 2 vols.; R. Pillorget, *Les Mouvements Insurrectionnels en Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris: Pedon, 1975).

¹² *The Journal of Modern History* 61, n. 1 (1989): 164-166.

¹³ I would emphasize that she did NOT accept his "society of orders" model as a theory of social stratification: in her short biography of Mousnier, she refers to his ideas on social stratification as "dated, if not moribund." That said, she did not want us to ignore the importance of a social model built on the sociolegal category of "orders"; she firmly rejected the idea that class analysis would lead to the best understanding of early modern France.

¹⁴ G. Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Sharon in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, n. 3 (Winter, 2004): 459-461; Beik in *The American Historical Review* 109, n. 1 (February 2004): 262

book – he has other fish to fry), while Bill wanted to know the relationship between what Guy found at the top of the French army and what was going on at the bottom. He situated Rowlands within the debate started by Lynn and Rowlands' mentor, David Parrott.¹⁵

Sharon and Bill thus replicated the existing French ideological paradigm: the Right did the State, its institutions, and elites; the Left did social history, starting from the bottom up. As Sharon rightly noted in *French Society*, the two French schools – the Mousnier crowd and the *Annalistes* – shared far more than is typically believed, and outstanding historians can be found on both sides. The great theses on social revolts, for example, do not come from the *Annalistes*, looking from the ground up, but from Mousnier's students, like Bercé, Pillorget, Foisil, and, with respect to the nobility, Arlette Jouanna.¹⁶ What made Sharon and Bill special was that they replicated this split in intellectual, not ideological, terms. Not for them the simple ideological paradigms that drove someone like Mousnier, with his society of orders, or Porshnev,¹⁷ with a society of classes: in *Les Français et l'Ancien Régime*, Goubert fittingly called those paradigms the twin Scholasticisms of early modern French historiography. It's hard to imagine either Bill or Sharon as a Scholastic monk or nun, scribbling away in a monastic cell, surviving on bread and water: Sharon loved life and its pleasures far too much for that.

Quite aside from that issue, let us remember that Sharon, coming from the Right, shattered the Rightist ideological paradigm, associated most strongly with Mousnier's society of orders and a historiography of the state and its institutions, and Bill, coming from the Left, shattered the Leftist ideological paradigm, tied so tightly to Porshnev's class analysis.¹⁸ All of us working on seventeenth-century France owe our intellectual liberation to them. As Jon Dewald said in his review of Beik's *Absolutism and Society*, "Beik seeks to understand the social foundations of 17th-

¹⁵ J. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle. The French Army 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); D. Parrott, *Richelieu's Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁶ A. Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte* (Paris : Fayard, 1989), and many other works; M. Foisil, *La révolte des Nu-Pieds* (Paris: PUF, 1970). Mousnier summarized the works of Bercé, Foisil, *et alia* for his dreadful 1967 synthesis, *Fureurs Paysannes: les paysans dans les révoltes du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1967) which compares France, Muscovy-Russia, and China.

¹⁷ B. Porshnev, *Les Soulèvements Populaires en France de 1623 à 1648* (Paris : SEVPEN, 1963). Porshnev (to use the English spelling of his name) initially published in Russian in 1948 and in a German translation in 1954; Mousnier read the German translation and was probably the first French historian aware of Porshnev's work. Sharon cited Porshnev extensively; she was also one of the first Western historians to cite the work of Alexandra Lublinskaya [note: the Library of Congress uses the modern spelling of Aleksandra Liublinskaia]. Sharon used a collection of documents (letters sent to chancellor Séguier in the 1630s and 1640s) published by Lublinskaya in 1966 for the introduction to her *Judicial Politics* book. Orest Ranum has published a translation of Andrew Lossky's wonderful 1981 obituary of Lublinskaya at: http://ranumspanat.com/lublinskaya_obit.htm. The English translation of Lublinskaya's *French Absolutism: The Crucial Phase, 1620-1629*, trans. B. Pearce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) also provided an important sounding board for both Sharon and Bill. Lublinskaya's first volume on Richelieu, *Frantsiia v nachale XVII veka (1610-1622 gg.)* (Leningrad, 1959) unfortunately did not get published in English or French.

¹⁸ Jon Dewald's review of *Absolutism and Society* in *The English Historical Review* 103, n. 408 (1988): 21. 680-682, discusses the role of class in Beik's work. For Dewald, Beik's class analysis of absolutism offered "a series of arresting hypotheses, rather than established conclusions." Note that Dewald's review of Beik and Greengrass's review of Kettering appeared in the same issue. Porshnev's class analysis may seem a bit crude to our eyes, but it's easy to forget he published in Russia in 1948 and showed remarkable courage and innovation for his own time.

century French absolutism ... and to understand its government as a system ... [this book] ... redefines the terms in which seventeenth-century politics need to be understood." Just as Bill brought social history to politics, Sharon brought politics to social history.¹⁹

For those of you who haven't read much of the *Annalistes*, I'll mention here their famous tripartite division of history: *histoire événementielle; conjoncture; longue durée*. In the 1950s and 1960s, some of them expressed contempt for this first element, which, in their view, had long dominated historical writing.²⁰ The dreary listing of political facts was bad, but the belief that high politics drove history was even worse. A quick look at Braudel and his *longue durée*, or at the broader brush strokes of a Le Roy Ladurie in *Les Paysans*, makes clear the distinctions. Most of them ignored politics. Goubert was a bit of an exception, not so much in his *thèse* or in his spin-offs from it, as in his lifelong interest in political life and political figures, which led to his biography of Mazarin.²¹

Bill wanted to bring social history to politics: *cui bono*, he might ask? His book gave us some of the answers and forced historians to rethink actions like the Edict of Fontainebleau. His *Urban Protest* book, published in 1996, took us one step further in bringing the social to the political.²² We now saw how crowds had agendas not necessarily derived from a simple class grievance, but rather from a sense of justice: something similar to, but yet distinct from, E. P. Thompson's moral economy paradigm.²³ Bill and I have often laughed about the fact that I was simultaneously coming to the same conclusion looking at Breton unrest and revolts. Given that we were completely unaware of each other's work on the subject, it's amazing how closely our conclusions paralleled one another.²⁴

Like Bill, in his wonderful introduction to *Absolutism and Society*, Sharon, in her remarkable opening section of *Patrons*, introduced theoretical paradigms from outside our discipline; in her

¹⁹ See, for example, David Parker's perceptive remarks about Sharon's first book, *Judicial Politics*, in his review in *Social History* 5, n. 3 (1980): 464-66. Despite their differences on the social foundations of the French monarchy, Sharon cited Parker's work. They found similar empirical realities out in the field, even if they interpreted that reality in different ways. Parker loomed large in Bill's work, perhaps most of all for his path-breaking article, "The Social Foundation of French Absolutism," *Past and Present* 53 (1971): 67-89.

²⁰ "For our purposes, the most striking feature of the 'Annales' picture is the relative absence of a political dimension." (Beik, *Absolutism*, 19).

²¹ P. Goubert, *Mazarin* (Paris, 1990). Goubert published his *Parcours d'un historien* in 1995. For my take on that journey see, "Pierre Goubert," in *French Historians, 1900-2000*, 317-327.

²² W. Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²³ Mack Holt pointed out this connection and the ties to Natalie Zemon Davis' seminal article on "Rites of Violence" (from her 1975 *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, published by Stanford) in his review for *The Journal of Modern History* 72, n. 1 (2000), consulted on JSTOR. For Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963) and many other works.

²⁴ See the conclusion of my *Classes, Estates and Order in early modern Brittany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), which came out too late for Beik to have read it before finishing *Urban Protest*.

case, they came from sociological studies of how networks function.²⁵ Richelieu and his *créatures* were a fine case study, but they were at the epicenter of power, which did not take us far from the old political history. Mousnier's *fidelité* model reeked of nostalgic mythologizing. We might think of Russell Major's fantastic "Bastard Feudalism and the Kiss" article, which came out at almost the same time as Bill's and Sharon's books.²⁶ Russell took apart the simplistic Mousnier approach, much the way Sharon did.²⁷ Yet both of them had enough sense not to throw out the baby with the bath water: the Mousnier school had a lot to teach us, not simply in empirical terms, but in terms of thinking about French society.

Sharon wanted to know: how did politics work? That's always a socio-economic, as well as a political question. I think it's fair to say she thought of culture in the anthropological sense of collective practice, not so much culture in the sense of art or literature: her many insights about art patronage came from that perspective. She looked to contemporary sociology, and to theoretical analyses of power by political scientists, for answers. *Patrons* begins with a footnote to Lawrence Stone, to Alex Weingrod (in a book edited by Ernest Gellner), and to a Robert Dahl article published in *Behavioral Science*. She next turns to Carl Landé, a political scientist who works on the contemporary Philippines, to James Scott, thence to Eric Wolf. Scott was more than a decade away from his *Seeing Like a State*, and Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* had just come out (Sharon does not cite it).²⁸ Authors like Scott and Wolf would not raise an eyebrow in opening footnotes in 2011, but we need to recognize Sharon for the pioneer she was in taking such steps. Little wonder that she thanked Chuck Tilly in her preface.

Following Bill and looking at politics from a social dimension, and following Sharon and looking at social life from a political dimension, how can we understand resistance and order in early modern France? Having analyzed revolts such as the 1630 events in Aix-en-Provence or the tumults of the Fronde in both Aix and Marseilles, Sharon understood that one could not make sense of events simply in vague social terms – the intense personal enmity of the Forbin and Valbelle clientage networks insinuated itself at every turn. Yet she also understood that reducing the Provençal events to a petty quarrel between two local factions misrepresented its place in the larger processes taking place in early modern France. She asserted, "The Bourbon monarchy used the nobility of France, great and small, sword and robe, in constructing the early modern state, which rested on a broader base of noble support than has generally been recognized." (*Patrons*, 236)

She then argued, rightly in my view, "Historians in recent years have emphasized the conflict in 17th-century French society, focusing in particular upon the role of alienated elite groups in the

²⁵ The review in *Contemporary Sociology* 17, n. 5 (1988), 605-06, by Steven Turner, praised *Patrons* as an "extremely useful text for sociologists interested in the problems of patron-client relations and in problems of personal relations and social structure generally." Turner suggested that "Richelieu is the hero of this story."

²⁶ J. R. Major, "'Bastard Feudalism' and the Kiss: Changing Social Mores in Late Medieval and Early Modern France," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, n. 3 (Winter, 1987): 509-535.

²⁷ We might also recall that Kristen Neuschel's *Word of Honor. Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), came out in 1989; Sharon and Kristen disagreed sharply about some aspects of patronage and culture, but they both rejected the nostalgic, emotionally driven model favored by Mousnier.

²⁸ J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); E. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

popular revolts leading to the civil war of the Fronde. The number of such studies has perhaps given the impression there was greater discord in French society than there actually was.” Where she and I would differ, of course, is in what comes next: “ ... what is more important is that the Bourbon monarchy survived this crisis to create Louis XIV’s absolute state.” To go back to Jon Dewald’s review of *Patrons*, that difference derives, in part, from what Jon called Sharon’s “intellectual contexts.”

Kettering has set her empirical findings within the familiar view of the seventeenth- century state as a triumph of centralizing rationality over aristocratic and provincial resistance; her borrowings from political science reinforce this emphasis on the rational and systematic nature of the choices that the state’s leading architects made. These approaches deserve critical scrutiny.

What about Bill Beik? Let him answer his own question, “What sort of absolutism is suggested by these findings?”

Absolutism was the political manifestation of a system of domination protecting the interests of a privileged class of officers and landed lords. Strong bonds linked the provincial nobility, the episcopacy, the various corps of royal officers, and the town oligarchies to the crown and to each other. These bonds were more important than the many conflicts which divided corps from corps or king from province. ... two great changes had been effected. First was the unification of the client network at both ends. (*Absolutism and Society*, p. 335)

Beik wants us to remember that the “modernity” of early modern kings and their ministers has been “overemphasized by historians.” Sharon shared that view, as Mark Greengrass pointed out in his review of *Patrons*: “They [the ministers] were thus able to contribute to the slow political integration of France, but within a structure which, as Kettering shows, was anything but modern.”²⁹ They both recognized the continuities with traditional practices and the persistent power of traditional elites (points they shared with Mettam), but we might tie Bill to people like Al Hamscher in seeing how institutions like the Parlements adapted to new roles, and how they shared power in new ways, whereas Sharon (or Mousnier) would emphasize the centrality of initiatives generated by people like Richelieu, Colbert, or Louvois. That fundamental difference sprang from their different theoretical underpinnings.

Interestingly enough, Beik’s book came out just as Sharon finished. Her last footnote goes to *Absolutism and Society*. I’ll give her the final word: “I share the view that the success of absolutism was directly related to the monarchy’s ability to secure elite collaboration, but I differ from Beik on how this was achieved and on its broad theoretical implications.”

²⁹ *The English Historical Review* 103, n. 408 (1988): 680-682.