

**Institutional Imperatives: Control and Change in the École Royale Militaire, 1750-1788**

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to treat several developments concerning the *École royale militaire* in Paris in an institutional context, specifically from the perspective of the men who established it and administered it. By considering the ideas which influenced it, which reached back centuries but were more directly articulated in the period following the creation of the girls' school at Saint-Cyr in 1686, aspects of its debts to previous institutions and state projects are elucidated. The process which led to its creation, near demise, numerous reforms, and ultimate failure are chronicled. The purpose of its systems of proofs of nobility, poverty, and military filiation for prospective candidates are explained and placed in the context of debates on professionalisation and the nobility's role. The concept of *émulation* and its place in the thought of the *École militaire*'s founders is explained. The evolution of noble educational practice in the nearly two centuries which preceded its establishment is analysed, emphasising the continuities and breaks with established practice as found in religious *collèges*, riding academies, and princely education. Next, the implementation of and modifications undergone by specific elements of the curriculum are presented, closing with an overview of the final model adopted in the school as a result of various reforms. The study concludes with an overview of the range of charitable acts that the *École militaire* engaged in, which were considerably diverse and went much further than the aid it was specifically set up to give to its needy students.

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### **Note on Language**

All quotations taken from primary sources have been changed to modern French. The only exception is the titles of published works, in which the original spelling has been kept (for instance, in the case of the *Recueil d'Édits* of 1762 and the *Recueil des Édits* of 1782). Names and titles have also been modernised (for instance, Pâris-Duverney instead of the original Paris Duverney or its variants); titles capitalised in the eighteenth-century are here given in lower-case (i.e. duc instead of Duc). All undifferentiated references to 'd'Argenson' refer to the Minister of War, the comte d'Argenson. His brother is always referred to by his title, 'marquis d'Argenson'. The term '7' always refers to d'Alembert and Diderot's *Encyclopédie* unless otherwise indicated. For all monetary sums, sous and deniers are not counted, numbers instead being rounded to the nearest livre. Dates are always given in English. All translations of French, unless they are a direct quote of another author, are my own. When italicised, the term '*École militaire*' refers to the school and institution; when not italicised, 'École militaire' refers to the buildings, which remain a landmark in Paris today.

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For their aid in conducting my research, I would like to thank Claire Bond of CECS, the staff and personnel of the J.B. Morrell Library at the University of York and the British Library branch at Boston Spa; the Service Historique de la Défense at Vincennes; the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Archives Nationales, the Bibliothèque Publique d'Information, the Bibliothèque Forney, the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, and the Bibliothèque Cujas in Paris; the Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit-Lettres in Poitiers; the Southern Research Library Facility and the Charles E. Young Research Library at the University of California Los Angeles, the Ayala Science Library at the University of California Irvine, the Geisel Library at the University of California San Diego, and the library of



the Westminster Seminary California. My research would not have been possible without their help.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents Harold and Debbie Guízar; for supporting my dreams from the start, providing every kind of help imaginable, and never tiring of my obsession with history. Without them, none of what I have achieved would have been more than a distant dream. I dedicate this work to them with all of my heart.

*S.D.G.*

### **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Haroldo A. Guízar, declare that this thesis is entirely my own, original work. It has not been previously submitted in part or whole for an award at this or any other university. All sources are acknowledged as appropriate.

## Thesis Introduction

“... il faut envoyer dans les guerres étrangères la jeune noblesse. Ceux-là suffisent pour entretenir toute la nation dans une émulation de gloire, dans l’amour des armes, dans le mépris des fatigues et de la mort même, enfin dans l’expérience de l’art militaire”.

- François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Télémaque*, Liv. XII, 171.

Volume VI of the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot contains a purportedly anonymous poem by a Danish visitor (in fact King Christian VII of Denmark) presenting his impressions of the sights he had taken in during his *séjour* in Paris. Some stanzas were dedicated to the *École militaire*, then still under construction:

J’ai vu l’école où la noble jeunesse  
Est instruite à briller dans les champs de l’honneur:  
Auguste lieu, temple de la valeur,  
Digne de Rome ou de la Grèce.  
Mais pour mieux faire souvenir  
Les défenseurs de la patrie  
Comment l’État prend soin de les nourrir,  
De tous leurs bâtiments la sage symétrie  
A tous les yeux semble n’offrir  
Que des bureaux de loterie,  
Et des cartes<sup>1</sup> que l’industrie  
En châteaux a su soutenir<sup>2</sup>.

Christian VII, who visited Paris in 1768<sup>3</sup>, suffered well-known bouts of severe mental illness; however, his stanzas on the school lucidly draw attention to the incongruence of the state funding the education and striking buildings of the *École militaire* by relying on the public’s taste for gambling. As an institution, the school suffered much worse than jibes or satires concerning its funding mechanisms; however, its financial order in the end proved a perpetual handicap, an ever-ready pretext to reform or abolish it. It is the intention of this thesis, without undertaking a study of the finances proper, to

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<sup>1</sup> Grimm inserted this explanatory footnote in the original text: “L’auteur parle de la loterie de l’École royale Militaire, et de l’impôt qu’on a mis sur les cartes à jouer, pour subvenir aux frais de l’établissement de cette École”.

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Melchior, baron von Grimm and Denis Diderot, *Correspondance Littéraire, Philosophique et Critique... de Grimm & de Diderot*, T. VI (Paris, 1768-1770), 111. The stanza which followed those on the *École militaire* turned to the Champ-de-Mars, and closed: “Ainsi ce champ qu’on a tracé par faste/  
Pour les généraux est trop vaste/ Et trop étroit pour les soldats”.

<sup>3</sup> The marquis de Marigny served as the king’s guide to the royal academies and manufactures, for which he was gifted a portrait of Christian VII by Alexander Roslin. Alden R. Gordon, *The Houses and Collections of the Marquis de Marigny* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), 99.

provide an overview of the main institutional developments of the school, its place in eighteenth century debates on nobility and education, and its curricular evolution, and finally to show how it functioned as a charitable institution in a remit beyond that of simply providing the education that served as its primary *raison d'être*.

#### Part I: An overview of work on *ancien régime* French military education

The works concerned with the *École militaire* are numerous, while the regular and recent production of scholarly work on it attest to its status as a subject of perennial interest. Although the main historian of the school, the prolific Robert Lulan, was active from 1929 to 1974<sup>4</sup>, more recent work includes articles published in 2008 and 2014 in France<sup>5</sup>. Anglophone historians have paid a good deal of attention to the school, principally analysing it from the perspective of military and noble reform, although only a single monograph dating to 1970 dedicated primarily to institutional military education exists<sup>6</sup>. The works dealing with French military education in the eighteenth century are too numerous to list. Although some institutions such as the *collège royal de La Flèche* after 1764 have not enjoyed the level of attention they should (Charles R. Bailey, in his study of French *collèges* after the expulsion of the Jesuits, wrote with respect to La Flèche and its administration that, “both... became so special that for the most part they henceforth lie outside the scope of this study”)<sup>7</sup>, in general the field continues to attract regular contributions<sup>8</sup>. Thus, the 12 provincial *écoles royales*

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<sup>4</sup> His major contributions include a monograph on the construction of the school, *L'École militaire de Paris: Le Monument, 1751-1788* (A. & J. Picard & Cie., Paris 1950) and articles such as “Pourquoi et comment on entrain à l'École royale militaire de Paris”, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 4 (1957), 141-150, and “La fondation de l'École militaire et Madame de Pompadour”, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 21 (1974), 284-299. He also wrote about daily life in the school, its religious organisation, discipline, instruction, and finances, and more.

<sup>5</sup> These articles are by Marie Jacob, “L'École royale militaire - un modèle selon l'Encyclopédie?”, *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 43 (2008): 105-125, and Emmanuelle Chapron, “Des livres ‘pour l'usage de l'École royale militaire’: choix pédagogiques et stratégies éditoriales (1751-1788)”, *Histoire, économie & société*, 33 (2014): 3-16.

<sup>6</sup> The sole English-language work dealing with the *École militaire* at length is Ralph F. Croal's thesis, “The Idea of the *École Spéciale Militaire* and the Founding of Saint-Cyr”, PhD diss. University of Arizona, 1970. It remains ignored by both Anglo- and Francophone scholars of the school. David Bien discussed several aspects relating to the *École militaire* in various articles, while Jay Smith and Rafe Blaufarb each dedicate several pages to it in *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) and *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) respectively.

<sup>7</sup> In the sparse mentions he does make of La Flèche, moreover, it is entirely in the period before Saint-Germain's reform; he never considers its status after 1778. Charles R. Bailey, “French Secondary Education, 1763-1790: The Secularization of Ex-Jesuit Collèges”, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 68/6 (1978), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Founded by Henry IV in 1604 and led by the Jesuits until 1762, it became a preparatory *école royale militaire* for the *École militaire* in Paris from 1764 until 1776. Thereafter it reverted to its status as a

*militaires* created by the Minister of War the comte de Saint-Germain in 1776 have been the subject of two French theses and a book chapter since 2003<sup>9</sup>. The most recent works in the field are an article by Dominique Julia, “Le prestige de l’École royale militaire de Tournon à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle” of February 2015 and my article “Entering the *École militaire*: Proofs of nobility and the example of the girls’ school at Saint-Cyr” of June 2015<sup>10</sup>. Ongoing research on literary education in the *École militaire* is being done by Gemma Tidman for a chapter of her forthcoming doctoral thesis ‘Debating, teaching, and politicising literature in France, 1751-1792’, due to be completed in 2017.

Despite the numerous studies that discuss it, there is no single, overarching presentation of its origin, development, and end which achieves a synthesis of its architectural, financial, administrative, pedagogical, and other facets. The works which consider the school from its origin in 1750 until its end in 1788 are Laulan’s architectural monograph, Léon Hennet’s study of 1889, and Gaëtan d’Aviau de Ternay’s two biographical dictionaries<sup>11</sup>. In particular, there is no comprehensive

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*collège* for the preparation of magistrates and ecclesiastics. Most scholarly studies deal with aspects of its existence under the Jesuits, for instance F. de Dainville, “L’enseignement des mathématiques dans les collèges jésuites de France du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Revue d’histoire des sciences et de leurs applications*, 7 (1954): 6-21. A major contribution to studies of Le Flèche is the publication of the transactions of a colloquium on La Flèche in 2004, with chapters on “L’éducation militaire en France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles” by Jean-Pierre Bois, 61-78, “L’échec du collège de La Flèche comme École préparatoire à l’École militaire de Paris, à travers le Journal de Stanislas Dupont de La Motte (1771-1776)” by Didier Boisson, 143-160, and “Le recrutement nobiliaire au collège de La Flèche, École militaire préparatoire (1764-1776)” by Laurent Bourquin, 163-175, in *La Flèche, Quatre siècles d’éducation sous le regard de l’État: Actes du colloque universitaire organisé les vendredi 2 et samedi 3 avril 2004 à La Flèche* (La Flèche: Prytanée national militaire et l’Université du Maine, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> These were established in *collèges* in Auxerre, Beaumont-en-Auge, Brienne-le-Château, Dole, Effiat, Pont-Mousson, Pontlevoy, Rebais, Sorèze, Tiron, Tournon, and Vendôme. The theses are by Jean-Christophe Blanchard, “Le Collège et École Militaire d’Auxerre”, mémoire de maîtrise d’histoire, Université de Bourgogne, 2003 and Daniel Porquet, “L’École royale militaire de Pontlevoy: Bénédictins de Saint-Maur et boursiers du roi, 1776-1793”, thèse de doctorat d’histoire moderne, Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2011. Olivier Paradis has written a book based on his 1998 thesis on Effiat; a more recent contribution is his chapter “Les aspects militaires dans la formation des élèves de l’École royale militaire d’Effiat”, in *La Construction du Militaire: Savoirs et Savoir-Faire Militaires à l’Époque Moderne*, 1, dir. Benjamin Deruelle & Bernard Gainot (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013), 171-194.

<sup>10</sup> Dominique Julia, “Le prestige de l’École royale militaire de Tournon à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Mémoire d’Ardèche et Temps Présent n° 125 Tournon-sur-Rhône, Ville d’Histoire et de Culture* (15 February 2015), 27-38; Harold Guízar, “Entering the *École militaire*: Proofs of nobility and the example of the girls’ school at Saint-Cyr”, *Ex Historia* Vol. 7 (2015), 37-60. <http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/research/exhistoria/>

<sup>11</sup> Léon Hennet, *Les Compagnies de Cadets-Gentilshommes et les Écoles militaires* (Paris: 1889). Hennet’s work is hamstrung by the fact that he provides no references for the developments he cites. Gaëtan d’Aviau de Ternay, *Les gentilshommes élèves de l’École royale militaire de Louis XV (1753-1775) Dictionnaire Biographique* (Paris: P. Du Puy 2010) and *Les cadets gentilshommes de l’École royale militaire de Louis XVI (1778-1787) Dictionnaire Biographique* (Paris: P. Du Puy 2008). See also Dominique Schalck-Pommellet, “L’École Royale Militaire de Paris et la Révolution du comte de Saint-Germain, 1751-1776-1793”, thèse pour le doctorat d’état, Université de Paris 1968. Despite his

exploration of the *École militaire*'s finances, a difficult task which would entail not only an exposition of its income and expenses each year until 1793, when its endowment (the *fondation*) was liquidated, but also analysing the bodies which administered the tax on playing cards 1751-1778, the lottery 1757-1776, and the *Bâtiments du roi* which undertook the construction of its buildings until 1764. Though the lack of an overarching approach may be explained by the breadth of the topic, it also explains persistent *lacunae* in the historiography of the *École militaire*, not to mention blatant disagreements on both basic facts of chronology as well as broader evaluations of the roles different figures played in the school.

There are three principal historiographical categories which the study of the *École militaire* and military education during the period belong to. The first, fairly common in both Anglo- and Francophone studies, is concerned with the development of technical education. The second consists of studies of the nobility, its evolution, social structures, education, and role in society and politics. The final approach deals with military reform and all of the attendant struggles which such efforts in the period entailed<sup>12</sup>. These categories evidently overlap with each other to different degrees, according to the approach and the handling of the material individual scholars adopt: for instance, the three approaches may be tied together by an analysis which posits efforts to improve technical capabilities as part of a broader movement to ameliorate the situation of poor nobles as well as to professionalise the officer corps. Treatises on the progress of military technical education are numerous and form an erudite body of scholarship, unsurprisingly considering the mathematical and scientific achievements of the men who taught in the *École militaire*, such as Pierre Simon Laplace and Gaspard Monge, or who studied at schools such as the *École Royale de Génie* at Mézières<sup>13</sup>. Studies of the nobility, particularly of noble education and socialisation in their youth, also enjoys a strong tradition of scholarship, whether its focus is on the nobles themselves or practices commonly associated with the nobility, such as *manège*

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dates, there is little discussion of the school prior to 1760; Croal's timeline for its part is too broad, with dedicated chapters on Louvois's cadets, the Revolution, as well as Napoleon's military schools.

<sup>12</sup> Other categories include general studies of education, comparative military history, political biography, and architectural studies.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of work on technical concerns include Liliane Alfonsi's "L'enseignement scientifique et technique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les écoles des Gardes de la Marine: le rôle essentiel d'Étienne Bézout (1730-1783)" *III<sup>e</sup> congrès de la SFHST* (Paris, 2008), 1-12; Roger Chartier's "Un recrutement scolaire au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: l'École royale du Génie de Mézières", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 3 (1973): 353-375; and Eduard Glas's "On the Dynamics of Mathematical Change in the Case of Monge and the French Revolution" *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 17 (1986): 249-268.

equitation<sup>14</sup>. As for military reform, recent analyses encompass everything from studies on military literature to evaluations of the role of psychology on the motivation and effectiveness of the troops<sup>15</sup>.

A fourth type of analysis, the dedicated institutional study, naturally lends itself to studies of schools. Works in this category may assimilate any one of the approaches outlined above, or they may provide an analysis of an institute's evolution. For instance, Richelieu's *académie* in his ducal city in Touraine is the subject of a thesis currently in progress<sup>16</sup>, while the theses on provincial *écoles militaires* have already been mentioned. Studies such as these present detailed accounts of the school's chronological development, administration, buildings, finances, living conditions, and intellectual life. Blanchard, for instance, compares the architectural style common to La Flèche and Auxerre, considering how their differences in scale and situation impacted on life and study at the second school. Porquet's thesis includes a prosopographical study, listing the students who matriculated at Pontlevoy and providing biographical information including study dates at the school, sisters at Saint-Cyr, family members in another *école militaire*, a summary of their military service, the details of three generations of their ancestors, and their proofs of nobility. Alongside these individual works may be placed collective works such as *Saumur, l'École de cavalerie* which analyses the equine vocation as it relates to a site and said fact's implications for local and regional development on the one hand and the reciprocal influence of the local setting on national equine practices<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Though focussing on only one cross-section of the nobility, works such as Mark Motley's *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), Jonathan Dewald's *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), or Pascale Mormiche's *Devenir Prince: L'école du pouvoir en France, XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2009) provide an indispensable view into the mind-set and worldview which shaped noble ambition from the earliest youth through to adulthood. On *manège* equitation and the shifts in noble self-identity during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Treva J. Tucker, "From *Destrier* to *Danseur*: The Role of the Horse in Early Modern French Noble Identity", PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles (2007).

<sup>15</sup> Sandra L. Powers "Studying the Art of War – Military Books Known to American Officers and their French Counterparts During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century", *The Journal of Military History*, 70 (2006): 781-814 addresses the first topic; Christy Pichichero "Le Soldat Sensible: Military Psychology and Social Egalitarianism in the Enlightenment French Army", *French Historical Studies*, 31 (2008): 553-580 the second.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Gaborit "Idéologies et politiques de la formation à l'époque de Richelieu" (forthcoming) in *Richelieu à Richelieu – Architecture et Décors d'un Château Disparu*, dir. Dario Cimorelli (Silvana Editoriale Spa Cinisello Balsamo, Milano 2011), 'Le territoire richelais du cardinal duc' by Christian Jouhaud, 27.

<sup>17</sup> *Saumur, l'École de cavalerie: Histoire architecturale d'une cité du cheval militaire*, dir. Pierre Garrigou Grandchamp (Paris: Éditions du patrimoine 2005).

Of these four principal categories of analysis, a common approach in studies of the *École militaire* is that which measures its worth by the quality of its technical education. In this view, it existed primarily an institute for technical education, conceived and operated for that purpose above any other, and measured as a failure or success by its achievements in that respect<sup>18</sup>. Though this approach risks lessening the importance attributed to its charitable status and institutional development, and skews any evaluation of its total contributions through the lens of technical progress, it is not these imbalances which prove its weakness. Neither does the fact that it has reduced the central place of moral concepts such as *émulation* in the founders' minds, masked areas of similarity and continuity with well-established pedagogic practice in France prior to its founding, or obscured its functioning as a royal institution. Rather, it is simply the misleading notion that as an eighteenth-century military institute it was *ipso facto* focused on technical concerns in its pedagogy; such a view impedes a more accurate assessment of its purpose<sup>19</sup>.

The role of technical concerns in military education in the period is open to debate. Mathematics was clearly important for its application to fortification, cartography, geography, and sometimes drawing as well for non-technical officers. It was the basis of the whole programme of instruction for artillery, naval, and engineering officers, who continually studied it in garrison<sup>20</sup>. Without unduly digressing on the issue of scientific epistemologies, Ken Alder's warning against imposing teleological visions of technological progress on historic developments should be born in mind, as well as

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<sup>18</sup> The most notable piece of contrary opinion is by David D. Bien, who delivered a conference paper subsequently published under the title "Military Education in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France: Technical and Non-Technical Determinants" in *Science, Technology, and Warfare*, ed. Monte D. Wright and Lawrence J. Paszek, 1969, 51-59; Ken Alder, in turn states that, "Bien expresses a certain agnosticism about the practical uses of mathematics, even for the technical officers". Ken Alder, *Engineering the Revolution: Arms and Enlightenment in France, 1763-1815* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1997), 367. Roger Hahn describes Laulan's work as the best study of the school, "quoique Laulan ne s'intéresse pas spécialement à l'enseignement scientifique". Hahn, "L'Enseignement scientifique aux écoles militaires et d'artillerie" in *Écoles techniques et militaires au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Roger Hahn and René Taton (Paris: Hermann, 1986), 523.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Artz, for instances, states with regard to the school's ultimate failure: "dans leur gestion le gouvernement s'était efforcé de concilier deux fins incompatibles, celle d'instruire un grand nombre de jeunes nobles pauvres et celle de favoriser l'enseignement technique". A view which did not see the *École militaire* primarily as a technical institute would erase the dichotomy presented by this opinion, thus rejecting the idea that its 'failure' as a technical institute was a result of such a dichotomy. Artz, "L'éducation technique en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1700-1789)", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 13 (1938), 392.

<sup>20</sup> On the *salles de conférences*, the lessons on theory for artillery officers instituted after 1756, see Frédéric Naulet, "Les Ecoles d'artillerie au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle", thèse de maîtrise, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1990, 81-83.



Janis Langins reminder that Vauban himself never posited any “kind of ‘scientific’ key to fortification based on mathematics”<sup>21</sup>. In the event, as John Childs points out, “weapons were simple and straightforward; drill and tactics were elementary, and evolved but slowly” meaning “there was no real need to waste an eighteenth-century gentleman’s time in the classroom”<sup>22</sup>. More nuanced is the view that “centres for military education were not as regulated in that period as they are now, and thus the role mathematics played in the curriculum varied substantially”<sup>23</sup>. Reformers, meanwhile, did not always invoke technical considerations in their discourse; for instance, the marquis de Voyer, commenting on the need for an *Académie de la science de la guerre* during the Seven Years’ War, stated:

il faut espérer qu’on profitera de la paix pour nous dresser des chefs et des généraux. Je n’y vois de difficultés que de trouver les dresseurs car l’intention de notre ministre est, dit-on, de s’occuper sérieusement du militaire; malheureusement, Maurice est mort, et le maréchal de Noailles est bien vieux. Je vous avoue que l’idée m’afflige parce que je ne vois pas où on trouvera le

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<sup>21</sup> Alder states “one cannot say that the sole knowledge of principles is sufficient to bring the [mechanical] arts to perfection. One must apply them, and this application always reveals the resistance and obstinacy ... of matter. A thousand obstacles arise, obstacles ... overcome only with the help of practice and experience”, later noting “In this period, ballistics theory... was nominally derived from the mechanics of moving bodies as laid out by Galileo. Experienced men, however, knew perfectly well that the trajectory of a cannonball could not be predicted by this sort of theory, and on the battlefield they continued to ply their trade as a craft, a skilled ‘art’ which resembled the kind of rule-based knowledge used by artisans”. Alder, *op. cit.*, 13, 31.

Janis Langins, *Conserving the Enlightenment: French Military Engineering from Vauban to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004), 62.

On ballistics in this period, see also Brett D. Steel, “Muskets and Pendulums: Benjamin Robins, Leonhard Euler, and the Ballistics Revolution”, in *Technology and Culture*, 35 (1994): 348-382.

<sup>22</sup> He also comments that “officers did not have to learn leadership, as they were members of the aristocracy, replete with every social advantage and thoroughly acquainted with the business of command”. Though perhaps applicable to a favoured element of the officer corps, it was a much different scenario for the majority who filled the subaltern ranks. John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648-1789* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 97.

<sup>23</sup> Juan Navarro Loidi, “Las Matemáticas en la Escuela Militar de Ávila (1774)”, in *La Gaceta de la RSME*, 14 (2011): 309; Loidi goes on to analyse mathematical instruction in the *Escuela militar de Ávila*, founded to improve the mathematical ability of officers of the line regiments in the Spanish army. The principal basis for their instruction was the book *Euclidis Elementorum libri etc.*, translated from Latin by Robert Simson (professor of mathematics at the University of Glasgow), and which Loidi presents as an adequate presentation of Euclid’s principles, but not the best introduction to mathematical concepts for its intended audience; in the event, the mathematical instruction there was soon simplified. The school itself shut some short years later due to the opposition it encountered and its founder Alejandro O’Reilly’s fall from favour in court after the failure of his expedition against Algerian pirates; 330, 318.

professeur. Ni, en supposant qu'on le trouve, les ressources qu'il aura dans ses élèves<sup>24</sup>.

The son of the Minister of War who helped found the *École militaire* was not alone in calling for improved military education. As another commentator noted in 1777 after Saint-Germain's reforms: "il y a des écoles pour l'artillerie, des études à faire pour le génie; (mais) la classe des officier à commander des corps particuliers... des armées est la seule absolument négligée"<sup>25</sup>.

In the *École militaire*, the most that can be said is that its technical vocation was equally as important as its other principal functions, but not more, and certainly not its unique guiding principle. Even if it is accepted that mathematics was the most important subject taught at the school, that sole fact would not suffice to describe the *École militaire* as a technical institution. There were numerous specialist schools solely dedicated to the producing of technically proficient officers for the navy, artillery, and *génie*, and although the *École militaire* did not neglect the importance of the technical qualities, it was neither conceived nor administered primarily as a feeder school to the specialist branches<sup>26</sup>. Instead, the debate and justification for its existence was framed in terms of royal charity, the reform of the military and the nobility, and a contribution to both the glory of the king and the state through the reinforcement of the concepts of royal power and national prestige which were the hallmarks of *louisquatorzien* state-backed public enterprises.

## Part II: Historiographical debates, Historical precedents

This thesis is not, in the event, a traditional institutional study. Instead, it analyses several aspects of the way the school functioned as an institution, that is, one which places its evolution into an institutional context. The problems inherent in approaching the vast amount of material on a school as relatively short-lived as the

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<sup>24</sup> Voyer was the only son of Marc-Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy, comte d'Argenson and Minister of War 1743-1757. Voyer's comments are from a letter to the baron de Prades. Bibliothèque Universitaire de Poitiers, Fonds d'Argenson, P 173, Letter of 11 October 1763 in Nicole de Blomac, *Voyer d'Argenson et le cheval des Lumières* (Paris: Belin, 2004), 59-60.

<sup>25</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 147, Projet d'Etablissement d'études de géométrie, dessein, fortifications, artillerie, et tactique pour le militaire, Vienne, 10 August 1777, 1. Despite its title, the author's stance was that "Cet abrégé que l'on apprendrait à un enfant de six ans aussi aisément que son ABC, remis dans les mains de chaque officier serait suffisant pour l'instruction que l'on exigerait de lui en général...", so that even "l'officier le moins pénétrant, pouvait avec de la mémoire, se procurer a lui-même par la simple lecture". 4-5.

<sup>26</sup> It was described as a feeder, or "*pépinière*", much like some corps of the *Maison du Roi* were, but for the military as a whole, not for any particular branch or branches.

*École militaire* is exemplified by, but goes beyond, the occasional error of fact in accounts of the school<sup>27</sup>, or the incongruent divisions of its chronology<sup>28</sup>. These have contributed to differing views on its development, with some authors such as de Ternay seeing its two principal stages 1751-1776 and 1778-1788 as the creation of two different schools, while others such as Schalck-Pommellet see it merely as a reform of the same school without an elementary change in its character<sup>29</sup>. Factual contradictions in turn influence interpretations, for instance in Schalck-Pommellet's claim that d'Argenson's role in the school's establishment was nil, while Yves Combeau considers d'Argenson its veritable founder<sup>30</sup>. Though the truth of the matter regarding that issue lies somewhere between those poles, the lack of a consideration of the institutional qualities in such a visible school stands out more than any other debate on the school's nature.

Another instance of disagreement over the facts and dates concerning the *École militaire*'s origins are the varying accounts of the unsuccessful attempt by a member of the Pâris family to establish a military school in 1725. The Pâris clan consisted of four brothers, Antoine Pâris, Claude Pâris La Montagne, Joseph Pâris-Duverney, and Jean Pâris de Montmartel, who made their fortune as munitioners for the army and later became considerable figures in the world of high finance<sup>31</sup>. In 1725, Antoine Pâris

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<sup>27</sup> See for instance Yves Combeau's claim in his entry on 'Marc-Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy, Comte d'Argenson, 1743-1757' in *Les Ministres de la Guerre: 1570-1792: Histoire et Dictionnaire Biographique*, dir. Thierry Sarmant (Paris, 2007), 379 that Pâris-Duverney resigned as Intendant of the *École militaire* due to conflicts with the entity directing construction, the *Bâtiments du Roi*. The resignation was rejected and he remained as Intendant until his death in 1770.

<sup>28</sup> Various authors have framed their presentations of the school's development with slightly different dates; Artz's are 1751 to 1776 for its first stage, and the 'final decade' 1777-1787, *art.cit.*, 389-393; de Ternay's dates are 1753 to 1775, and 1778-1787; Croal's delineations are 1751-1776 and 1777-1788, Croal, *op. cit.*; Schalck-Pommellet's are 1751 to 1776 to 1793.

<sup>29</sup> De Ternay, commenting on two memorialists' opinions on the quality of life in the *École militaire*, one before and one after Saint-Germain's reform, writes: "les deux auteurs n'évoquent pas la même école". De Ternay, *Les gentilshommes élèves de l'École royale militaire...*, 9. Schalck-Pommellet instead emphasizes institutional unity: "Sa durée d'existence fut également un record. L'École de Paris vécut trente-cinq ans et fut supprimée en 1787". *Op. cit.*, 462.

<sup>30</sup> "L'influence du ministre d'Argenson fut nulle et on ne peut noter aucune intervention de sa part pour contribuer à la réussite de l'entreprise". Schalck-Pommellet, *op. cit.*, 13. "En revanche, c'est bien le comte d'Argenson qui créa l'école militaire en elle-même". Combeau, *Le comte d'Argenson, 1696-1764: Ministre de Louis XV* (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 1999), 379.

<sup>31</sup> Colin Jones outlines the business and familial ties linking the Pâris brothers and the Poisson family in the first chapter of his book on the Madame de Pompadour. Colin Jones, *Madame de Pompadour: Images of a Mistress* (London: National Gallery, 2002), 18-20, 31. The most thorough account of Duverney's financial, business, and political dealings is by Marc Cheynet de Beaupré in *Joseph Pâris-Duverney, Financier d'État (1684-1770): Les sentiers du pouvoir (1684-1720)* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2012), based on Beaupré's doctoral thesis on Duverney.

Duverney was dubbed the "général des farines" by the maréchal de Noailles. Léon Mention, *Le Comte de Saint-Germain et ses réformes, 1775-1777, d'après les Archives du Dépôt de la Guerre* (Paris: 1884), 55. The marquis d'Argenson, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the comte d'Argenson's older brother,

presented a project for a military school to the duc de Bourbon, then principal minister, but it was not adopted<sup>32</sup>. However, Croal describes the event as taking place in 1724, and has Pâris present it to the then-Minister of War, the marquis de Breteuil; Jacob thinks it was Montmartel's project, Jean Chagniot describes it as La Montagne's, while Yves Combeau has Duverney presenting a first *mémoire* on the matter in 1725<sup>33</sup>. A related event nonetheless took place in 1725, when 60,000 militiamen were raised on Duverney's suggestion, according to Henet; then, on 16 December 1726, six companies of *cadets-gentilshommes* were established to train officer cadres for the militia, and Henet suggests that the initiative for the raising of the cadets may also have been Duverney's initiative<sup>34</sup>. These cadets were disbanded in 1733. Fifteen years later, in 1748, Madame de Pompadour sent a letter to the comte d'Argenson, the then Minister of War<sup>35</sup>. She wrote, "On m'a présenté un mémoire pour l'établissement d'une école militaire, et je vous l'envoie, parce que c'est une affaire de votre département. Ce n'est pas, comme le disait le Cardinal Dubois des projets de l'Abbé de St. Pierre, *le rêve d'un bon citoyen*: mais il me semble que ce serait une institution très praticable et très-utile"<sup>36</sup>. Though she does not mention that *mémoire*'s author (the subsequent *mémoires* of 1750 are all unsigned, giving them a veneer of anonymity), it was in fact drafted by Duverney, who sought support for the execution of his late brother's project<sup>37</sup>.

This study's focus will be on the administration of the school rather than its members' experiences of it. A holistic approach is sought here, one which always bears in mind the matrix of complex pressures and interactions that the institution was subject to as well as the attempts made to navigate it. In the case of the *École militaire*, this means considering how its administration dealt with vertical pressure (royal directives and ministerial correspondence from above, student issues from below), internal matters (staffing, obedience and dissent, regulation of daily life), and a wide array of external

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was more bitter: "les financiers triomphant de tout et faisant revivre le règne des Juifs". 3 September 1751, *Journal et Mémoires du marquis d'Argenson...* éd. Rathery, Tome VI (Paris, 1864), 464. For an analysis of how Pâris-Duverney helped stave off revolution several decades before 1789, see François R. Velde, "French Public Finance Between 1683 and 1726" in *Government Debts and Financial Markets in Europe*, Fausto Piola Caselli ed. (London, 2008), 135-166.

<sup>32</sup> AN MM 656, Mémoires sur l'établissement de l'École 1750-1751.

<sup>33</sup> Croal, *op. cit.*, 106; Jacob, *art. cit.*, 108; Jean Chagniot, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris –Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Diffusion Hachette, 1988), 493; Combeau, *Le comte d'Argenson, 1696-1764...*, 329.

<sup>34</sup> Henet, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Combeau, *Le comte d'Argenson, 1696-1764*, 132. He was also the *surintendant général des postes*, but not yet head of the department of Paris, a post he would acquire in April 1749. *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>36</sup> *Lettres de Madame la Marquise de Pompadour. Depuis 1746 jusqu'à 1752*, T. 1 (Paris, 1774), 77.

<sup>37</sup> On the 1725 project, see also the *mémoire* held in AN K 149 n° 4.

relations which may be termed lateral pressure (dealings with students' families, regiments' colonels, and all sorts of requests for compensation). Particularly notable in this context is its status as a charitable institution, which though occasionally noted in passing, has escaped serious consideration. Just as important were the attempts to assure the institution's viability, vitality, and ultimate survival, negotiated through the numerous reforms it underwent in its nearly 40 years of existence. This is all without an in-depth consideration of its finances, always a foremost concern of the *Conseil*.

The relative lack of military institutional precedents is easily surmised from an overview of the many and repeated failures in that sense prior to the *École militaire*'s establishment. Calls for state-backed educational institutions began in the late sixteenth century with François de La Noue's *Discours politiques et militaires*, who proposed the creation of a number of royal academies throughout France. Though not executed, his ideas nonetheless proved influential for well over a century. A subsequent proposal was made at the Estates-General of 1614 by nobles requesting that the state establish free schools for their sons to relieve their impoverished parents of the burden<sup>38</sup>. A similar request was made by the Assembly of Notables in 1627, calling for the subsidised education of nobles' sons, presumably along the lines of the fee-charging academies which provided, alongside the *collèges*, the main source of available formal education. Such pleas reveal the perceived need and desire for an educational horizon which was both broader and of better quality than anything available to the bulk of the provincial nobility, despite the undoubted persistence of anti-intellectual attitudes among the second estate<sup>39</sup>. A more specialised project to improve the functioning of the infantry is known about. It is described in John Lynn's *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715*, though it is unclear whether it was actually established or simply proclaimed. The *Gazette de Renaudot* in 1639 declared the royal intention to establish an *Académie royale des exercices de guerre* for infantry regiments' new recruits "to be instructed there in the manual of arms and in what these drills depend, without being obliged to pay anything for this instruction". Lynn explains the effort as an example of "the French willingness to innovate and adapt in drill and training"<sup>40</sup> in the context of

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<sup>38</sup> Both events are mentioned in *Culture of Merit*, but not in relation to the requests made to the monarch.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 19-20.

<sup>40</sup> *Gazette de Renaudot*, 31 December 1639, 852, in Jules Caillet, *De l'administration en France sous le ministre du Cardinal de Richelieu* (Paris: 1857), 376-77, in John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 517-525.

the keen interest showed by both Louis XIII and Louis XIV for drilling their troops and improving their discipline. While this is undoubtedly so, it is also easy to see it as a rudimentary effort at centralisation, professionalisation, and imposed uniformity which would instead be thwarted and postponed due to circumstances beyond royal control.

There were additionally several other non-military institutions which aimed to provide some relief for those impecunious nobles unable to educate their children. These include the scholarships for twelve nobles created by the duchesse de Guise in 1686, the bequest by the duchesse de Ventadour for the education of ten noble daughters that same year, and the marquis d'Effiat's college which provided free education to six gentlemen in 1714<sup>41</sup>. Richelieu and Mazarin's efforts at establishing quasi-military academies also had a charitable bent, Richelieu's being unable to survive him and Mazarin's quickly losing any military character. Louvois's companies of *cadets-gentilshommes* for their part were probably more notable for the controversy they engendered than their contribution to educational progress or institutional development. Finally, some minor attempts at creating military schools took place in the years leading up to and indeed beyond 1751. These included an *École de Mars* created by the military engineer the chevalier de Lussan in 1736 at the Hôtel d'Entraques in Paris<sup>42</sup>, a school set up by Baroggio in 1737<sup>43</sup>, and a company of *cadet-dauphins* at the Fort Dauphin, on the Île des Cygnes run 1744-1745 by the *Ingénieur-géographe* Jean-Baptiste Berthier<sup>44</sup>. In the end, these all foundered thanks to financial weakness, limited resources, and a lack of official sanction and patronage. These same pressures would in turn be faced and overcome by the nascent *École militaire*. These failures however did not deter other efforts to set up military schools for nobles in the provinces, an example which coincided nearly exactly with the establishment of the *École militaire* being the *Académie militaire* created by Augustin de Mailly d'Haucourt in Roussillon after his

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<sup>41</sup> The sources for information on these initiatives are AN K 543 (I), "Testament Olographe de Mademoiselle de Guise," 6 February 1686, 14-15; Marie Madeleine Compère and Dominique Julia, *Les collèges français*, vol. I, 270; and Labatut, *Les ducs et pairs*, 317 in Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 112. Another institution Motley mentions is Madame de Maintenon's establishment of Saint-Cyr in 1686, which I discuss in Chapter 2.

<sup>42</sup> SHD 1 M 1781 Mémoires Écoles Militaires, 1736-1784, Établissement d'une École de Mars à Paris pour l'Instruction de la Noblesse à l'hôtel d'Entraques rue de Tournon près le Luxembourg.

<sup>43</sup> Chagniot, *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Croal, *op. cit.* 106-107, and Marcel Marion, *Dictionnaire des institutions de la France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles*, Paris, 1923, 21. The Île de Cygnes would later be joined to the bank of the Seine and become part of the Champs de Mars.

appointment as governor of that province in 1749<sup>45</sup>. Apart from the “school of the regiment” however, the only military pedagogical initiative which spanned the period 1660-1750 (and beyond) without interruption were the lessons given in various corps of the *Maison du Roi* as well as the *École des pages*. Their development and how they compared with the *École militaire* forms part of Chapter 3.

### Part III: Archival Sources

This thesis, then, aims to present an informed overview of the institutional developments in the *École militaire* from 1750 until 1788; Chapter 1 begins with a synoptic comparison of its architectural, financial, and administrative foundations. Chapter 2 explains the justifications for the school as an institution to aid the impoverished nobility, Chapters 3 and 4 revise those views which see it as a technical institution by a selective analysis of its curricular development, and Chapter 5 presents the charitable work it undertook. But first, a presentation of the sources used will be given.

From its earliest conception, it was envisaged that the *École militaire* would collect and maintain its own archives, this task to be carried out by its Secretary-archivist, who would record the *Conseil*'s “ordonnances, les délibérations, les règlements” and store them in the school's archives, along with selected ministerial correspondence; the proofs of nobility submitted were also to be kept by it<sup>46</sup>, Duverney's intention being to make the *École militaire* a repository and archive for the titles of nobility<sup>47</sup> (it also served as a repository of the brevets of those students commissioned in the army<sup>48</sup>). In 1762, the *Conseil de police* supervised the compiling and printing of the collection of legal documents concerning the school up to 1761, the *Recueil d'Édits, Déclarations et Arrêts du Conseil, Règlements et Ordonnances du Roy concernant L'École Royale Militaire*<sup>49</sup>, which would in turn form the basis for the two-volume *Recueil des Édits* collection of 1782<sup>50</sup>, today kept in the Bibliothèque nationale

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<sup>45</sup> Blomac, *op. cit.*, 83. De Mailly also “s'occupe d'y créer une Université et finance de ses deniers ‘...plusieurs hôpitaux et manufactures’”.

<sup>46</sup> AN K 149 n°. 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire ‘Collège académique’ 22 April 1750.

<sup>47</sup> Réponse de M. Duverney, 5 December 1753 in *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bernis...* T. I (London: 1790), 85.

<sup>48</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre de Belle-Isle à Croismare commandant de l'hôtel, 8 March 1758, 116.

<sup>49</sup> AN MM 666, 28 October 1762, 201; *Recueil d'Édits, Déclarations, Arrêts du Conseil, Règlements et Ordonnances du Roi, Concernant l'Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire* (Paris, 1762).

<sup>50</sup> The ministerial order to begin reviewing all the ordinances and regulations concerning the school was sent in late 1781. AN MM 675, Lettre de Ségur au Conseil de l'hôtel, Versailles, 8 October 1781, 141.

de France (BnF). Unfortunately, as de Ternay points out in his comments on the proofs of nobility, “Les certificats sans preuves remis à Pâris-Duverney ont disparu, comme les archives de l’École”<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, other information of great interest has been lost, and with it any knowledge of certain aspects of the school’s development. For instance, “rien des papiers personnels de Gabriel n’est parvenu jusqu’à nous”<sup>52</sup>, and the process which led to Angès-Jacques Gabriel’s appointment as the school’s architect remains unknown. Similarly, although it is known that Jean-Baptiste Pâris de Meyzieu (one of La Montagne’s sons) helped recruit Douchet, who in turn recruited Beuzée (both of them professors at the *École militaire*) as a contributor to Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, “it is not clear who recruited... Paris de Meyzieu (*sic*)”<sup>53</sup>.

A great amount of relevant archival material nonetheless survives; the documents which form the basis of de Ternay’s prosopographies are held in the “Département des manuscrits de la BnF sous la côte ‘fr 14264’” as an *État général des élèves*<sup>54</sup>. The five cartons Y<sup>a</sup> 145 through Y<sup>a</sup> 149 at the archives of the Service Historique de la Défense (SHD) in the château de Vincennes are composed of thousands of documents such as the legal material found in the *Recueils*, drafts of those measures, financial accounts, *États*, deliberations, letters, and more. Some of these are labelled as “collationné à l’original déposé aux archives de l’hotel”<sup>55</sup> or “vous jugerés convenable de faire déposer aux archives... un double de l’État”<sup>56</sup>, measures which undoubtedly helped ensure the preservation of many documents<sup>57</sup>. These archives then are those documents related to the *École militaire* produced by or sent to the *bureaux* of the Ministry of War which thus survived there. The bulk of the *École militaire*’s documentation however is found in the Archives Nationales in Paris. The three main holdings are those in *séries* K, M/MM and O<sup>1</sup>; the first deals principally with its

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<sup>51</sup> De Ternay, *Les gentilshommes élèves de l’École royale militaire ...*, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Laulan, *Le Monument*, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Frank A. Kafker, *The Encyclopedists as a Group: A Collective Biography of the authors of the Encyclopédie* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1996), 47; 26.

Julia implies Diderot directly recruited him: “Dès 1755, Diderot confie à Pâris de Meyzieu... un article *École militaire*”. D. Julia, “Une réforme impossible: le changement de cursus dans la France du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 47-48 (June, 1983): 65.

<sup>54</sup> De Ternay, *Les gentilshommes élèves de l’École royale militaire de Louis XV (1753-1775)*, 25. His studies, although immensely helpful to researchers, only provide information on students’ origins and careers, not on their time in the school itself.

<sup>55</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Extrait d’une lettre écrite par M. le M<sup>is</sup>. de Paulmy à Duverney le 6 août 1757 et qui se trouve rappelée dans un Règlement arrêté par M. le M[arqui]s. de Monteynard le 7 décembre 1773.

<sup>56</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Letter by Timbrune to Saint-Germain, 10 May 1776.

<sup>57</sup> Those interested in the provincial *écoles militaires* should also consult *series* Y<sup>a</sup> 157-163.



establishment 1750-1751, the second with the whole of its internal administration 1750-1792, and the third with the buildings and their financing. The “État général des fonds” of each *série* describes how it was compiled: *série* K keeps “non pas des fonds d’archives, mais des collections de documents formées pendant la Révolution”. K 149 and 150, which deal with the *École militaire*, are part of the set denominated ‘Cartons des Rois’, although only K 149 provides any relevant information<sup>58</sup>. *Séries* M and MM are composed of documents belonging to “institutions n’entrant dans aucune catégorie juridique simple, telles... les établissements d’enseignement”. Physically, *série* M is made up of *cartons* and *série* MM of “registres ou rouleaux en grand format”, the latter holding transcriptions of the deliberations, related measures, and correspondence of the *Conseils* or its members with the Minister of War and occasional third parties<sup>59</sup>.

Due to the breadth and depth of these series, any exploitation their contents is necessarily selective; M 251 to 257<sup>A</sup> only being “consultable par extrait”, they have not been used in this study, but their contents are listed in Appendix A. *Séries* MM numbers 27 *registres*, catalogued from MM 656 through 683, although their contents are not always in consecutive, chronological order; 21 of these have been consulted in part or whole, selected to provide comprehensive chronological coverage of the school’s development. Finally, *série* O<sup>1</sup> is composed of the private archives of the crown, namely the *Maison du Roi*; documents on the *École militaire* are held there by dint of the involvement of the *Bâtiments du roi* in its construction, and number 60 *côtes*, from O<sup>1</sup> 1602 to 1662, with additional material available in O<sup>1</sup> 1069, all these being held in cartons. Here, documents were selected for the information provided on the early years of the school’s development.

The BnF is the richest depository of literary material concerning the *École militaire*, along with the *mémoires* of the Archives de la Guerre held in Vincennes<sup>60</sup>. In addition to the *Recueils*, its series of correspondence and pamphlets make its holdings indispensable for anyone evaluating contemporaries’ opinions on the *École militaire*. Outside Paris, the most important archival resource is that legated by the d’Argenson family to the Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit-lettres in Poitiers, here used for the first

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<sup>58</sup> AN K 150 contains a few architectural diagrams. K 151-152 are “côtes vacantes”.

<sup>59</sup> The *État* describes it as a highly complex *série*, with *série* M “encore, théoriquement, la seule série ‘ouverte’ de la Section ancienne” of the entire Archives Nationales.

The original documents in the school’s archives were held in boxes, for instance the “carton des lettres et décisions des ministres”. AN MM 669, Conseil d’administration, 25 September 1772, 61.

<sup>60</sup> This is the *sous-série* 1M ‘Mémoires et reconnaissances’.

time in a study dedicated solely to the *École militaire*. A final note may be added on additional material which, though of potential interest, has not been consulted. No textbooks or students' workbooks have been consulted; neither has any work by the professors, either for the *École militaire* or external to it, the analysis of curricular change being principally concerned with the programme's conceptualisation and general evolution rather than with students' work and progress in class. No list of all the professors ever employed by the school exists, and future studies on its pedagogy ought consider attempting to fill that gap as a point of departure<sup>61</sup>; a prosopographic analysis of the student body being beyond the scope of this thesis, it ought all the same be pointed out that the "archives départementales, qui contiennent des informations sur les candidats refusés comme sur ceux qui ont été acceptés, sont particulièrement précieuses: les archives de Tours (AD Indre-et-Loire, C 47) ont une collection complète de dossiers"<sup>62</sup>. There is no doubt much more rich material to be found in other regional archives. Scholars studying La Flèche would be well-advised to consult not only the library of the Prytanée nationale militaire (which holds the correspondence of the Minister of War and the *collège's* principal) and the AD de la Sarthe, but also the Archives de la Sorbonne, which contain some inspection reports for the *collège*<sup>63</sup>.

This thesis presents the widest range of contemporary literary sources assembled to date which discuss the *École militaire*, be they archival or non-archival, published or unpublished. This being the first full-length monograph dealing solely with the *École militaire* in English, it is to be hoped that it will prove a useful introduction to those, whether scholars or not, who have an interest in the school. It is a fascinating institution, the study of which rewards not only those drawn to some of the larger-than-life figures associated with it, but also anyone wishing to better understand the mentality and lives of a broad section of *ancien régime* France.

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<sup>61</sup> An early *État* of "les élèves, officiers, professeurs et autres qui composent l'établissement provisoire" dated April 1755 may be found in the BnF Arsenal under the *côte* Ms-2577.

<sup>62</sup> David D. Bien and Nina Godneff, "Les offices, les corps et le credit d'état: l'utilisation des privilèges sous l'Ancien Régime", *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 43 (1988), 404.

<sup>63</sup> Didier Boisson, "L'échec du collège de La Flèche comme École préparatoire à l'École militaire de Paris, à travers le Journal de Stanislas Dupont de La Motte (1771-1776)" in *La Flèche, Quatre siècles d'éducation sous le regard de l'État: Actes du colloque universitaire organisé les vendredi 2 et samedi 3 avril 2004 à La Flèche* (La Flèche: Prytanée national militaire et l'Université du Maine, 2004), 151. AN K 148 also holds some documents on the "établissement du collège militaire de La Flèche".

## Chapter 1: The Origin, Administrative Evolution and Demise of the *École Militaire*, 1750-1793

“Tout semble se réunir pour détruire dans sa naissance un établissement auquel nos voisins seuls pouvaient porter quelque envie”.

- Duverney to Pompadour, 24 March 1752, BUP FA P 40

The sequence of events leading up to the edict of 22 January 1751 which established the *École militaire* was analysed by Robert Laulan in his final published article. His concern, beyond ascribing the credit for the creation of the school, was to describe how the obstacles and objections faced by Duverney were surmounted in his drive to accomplish his goal of succouring the nobility and honouring the king by means of a military school, as well as examining the changes undergone in the various drafts of the edict before it was issued. The first part of this chapter builds on his work by showing how these initial dispositions influenced the school’s development while additionally detailing the original financing mechanism in the form of the *droit sur les cartes*. These developments are presented alongside the first, or political, phase of its construction up to 1764. It is dubbed the ‘political phase’ due to the conflicts of authority and over financing which resulted from the creation of the twin administrative structures of the Ministry of War and the *Bâtiments du Roi* prior to royal intervention in 1764, which ended those disputes and permitted the conclusion of the principal building works. Part II deals with the first solutions applied to the early problems in the period 1757-1775, and Part III with the reforms of 1776 and their aftermath.

### Part I: Creating, Financing, and Building the *École militaire*, 1750-1757

Over the course of a year, from 11 January 1750 to 21 January 1751, Duverney drafted some 21 *mémoires* for a ‘Collège royal académique’. Following his first *mémoire*, the king ordered Duverney “de lui porter un plan... de l’Etablissement”<sup>64</sup>. The marquise de Pompadour wrote Duverney on 4 April that “le roi a très grande envie d’effectuer le projet. Il veut auparavant savoir ce qu’il faut de fond (sic) pour cette maison,... et S.M. ne veut pas de fonds extraordinaires pour le bâtiment”<sup>65</sup>. Duverney replied that the royal desire to “éviter d’avoir recours de fonds extraord[inair]es pour les

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<sup>64</sup> AN MM 656, Mémoires sur l’établissement de l’École 1750-1751, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Robert Laulan, “La fondation de l’École militaire et Madame de Pompadour”, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 21 (1974): 290.

bâtiments”<sup>66</sup> would be heeded. April was a busy month for Duverney, with eight *mémoires* and several letters drafted. “Duverney ne fut pas instruit d’abord de l’effet qu’avoient produit ses ... mémoires, mais il crut les choses assez avancés pour travailler à un projet d’Édit”<sup>67</sup>. In early May, he discussed his project with the maréchal de Saxe at Chambord: “le désir ardent du maréchal sur l’exécution de ce projet, ne fit qu’accroître le zèle”<sup>68</sup> with which he laboured. The *Projet d’Édit* was drafted by 12 May<sup>69</sup>, and a copy sent to Pompadour and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the marquis de Puysieux, on 14 May<sup>70</sup>. On 18 May, he visited Versailles and had a private audience with the king, who made some observations; Duverney then worked on the text with the comte d’Argenson<sup>71</sup>, who suggested some changes and thus seemed to be making his first direct intervention in the matter of setting up the school<sup>72</sup>. Though no *mémoire* was addressed directly to him, d’Argenson was nevertheless perfectly informed of all developments, and his opinion was that as the new school was a royal project, he was merely the king’s *premier commis*, not his minister, in all that concerned the new establishment<sup>73</sup>.

Regarding its financial foundation, Duverney suggested endowing the *École militaire* with a *dotation* funded with the revenues from the tax (or *droit*) on playing cards<sup>74</sup>. In his letter of 14 May, he informed Puysieux that he had prepared a short *mémoire* on the *ferme des cartes*<sup>75</sup>. Though one objection to his proposed funding scheme was that it was an undignified manner for sustaining a royal initiative<sup>76</sup>, a more serious argument concerned the funds themselves. It had been insinuated to the king that the *ferme des cartes* could produce “de 8 à 900 mille livres par année, et que cela était trop considérable pour en dépouiller les finances [royales;] que l’on pourrait

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<sup>66</sup> AN K 149 n° 3 dossier III, Lettre de Duverney à Pompadour relative au projet de la fondation de l’École militaire, 5 April 1750. He added: “L’idée que je me suis faite... d’un aussi grand monument pour la gloire du roi et des avantages qui en résulteraient, excite en moi le plus vif désir de les voir accomplis”.

<sup>67</sup> AN MM 656, 3. See also, AN K 149 n° 12, Lettre écrite de Plaisance par Duverney à Pompadour, 14 May 1750, and AN K 149 n° 13, Lettre écrite à M. le marquis de Puysieux, 14 May 1750.

<sup>68</sup> AN MM 656, 2.

<sup>69</sup> AN K 149 n° 11, Projet d’Édit ‘Collège royal académique’, 12 May 1750.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., n° 12, Lettre par Duverney à Pompadour, 14 May 1750; AN K 149 n° 13, Lettre écrite à Puysieux.

<sup>71</sup> AN MM 656, 3.

<sup>72</sup> AN K 149 n° 14, Lettre écrite le 26 May 1750 par Duverney à Pompadour, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>74</sup> He borrowed the idea for the tax on cards and *économats* from Antoine Pâris’s project. AN K 149 n° 1, Mémoire sur l’utilité de l’établissement d’un Collège académique ... 11 January 1750, 9.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., n° 13, Lettre à Puysieux, 14 May 1750. By 26 May he was already researching the best paper to prevent fraud through an agent of his in Rouen; n° 14, Lettre écrite de Plaisance le 26 May 1750, 2.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire ‘Collège académique’, 22 April 1750; AN MM 656, 5.

assigner à l'établissement 400 mille livres par année sur cette ferme"<sup>77</sup>. Duverney argued on 6 July that such an allegation was baseless, as the *produit du droit* had never exceeded 200,000 livres per annum<sup>78</sup>. Furthermore, "on n'a jamais fait d'établissement de la nature de celui ... sans en asseoir les fondements sur une dotation ... détachée des revenus de Sa Majesté"<sup>79</sup>. However, the product of the *droit* was not meant to stand alone; additional means were envisaged as "il faudroit employer des ressources plus abondantes et plus promptes" for the construction, specifically, a loan for 2 million livres<sup>80</sup>. The summer months resulted in a pause to the work on the project for the school<sup>81</sup>. A series of meetings in November and December 1750 were then used to edit several drafts of the edict to establish the *École militaire*, a process which resulted in the edict of 22 January.

Duverney visited the court at Fontainebleau on 8 November, where he met all the ministers concerned and had an audience with the king<sup>82</sup>. It was here that the matter was finally decided. The Contrôleur-Général Machault thought to assign "400,000 livres par an à l'École militaire sur la ferme des cartes et subsidiairement sur d'autres revenus", but not as a *dotation*. Duverney countered that any inconveniences resulting from the granting of the revenues from the *ferme des cartes* in the form of a *dotation* was preferable to the inconveniences which would result from the lack thereof<sup>83</sup>. Moreover, Machault, "proposa de retrancher de l'Édit tout ce qui regardait le droit sur les Cartes"<sup>84</sup>. Duverney explained that though any reference to the tax could be axed from the preamble on stylistic grounds, it was essential that a clause on it be included,

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<sup>77</sup> AN MM 656, 4.

<sup>78</sup> AN K 149 n° 16<sup>1</sup> Mémoire 'Collège académique', 6 July 1750, 2. This was the second of two *mémoires* of that date. He had made the same point in a letter to Pompadour; n° 12, Lettre par Duverney à Pompadour, 14 May 1750.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., n° 16<sup>1</sup> Mémoire 'Collège académique', 6 July 1750, 6. Duverney's model in this regard was the Invalides. His view was that "Une assignation de fonds est toujours subordonnée aux événements", while "Une aliénation ... est affranchie de tous ces inconvénients, de sorte qu'un établissement ... serait plus stable avec une aliénation médiocre qu'avec une assignation considérable". The result would be that "l'établissement et la dotation sont tellement liés qu'on ne peut détruire l'un sans détruire l'autre, et que pour détruire l'un et l'autre il faut avoir recours à l'autorité souveraine".

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., n° 48, Mémoire 'École Royale Militaire', 19 January 1751, 1.

<sup>81</sup> AN MM 656, 4. Duverney retired to his lands on the Mont Saint-Pierre from August to October, from where he carried on corresponding with Pompadour.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 5. Laulan implies that one reason for Machault's reticence was that he was "soucieux de ne pas diminuer les revenus du roi par l'aliénation du droit sur les cartes", to which Duverney's simple solution was "On doublera le droit". Laulan, *art. cit.*, 296. What Duverney in fact wrote was that "Le véritable inconvénient de la dotation était ... dans la mauvaise opinion que l'on a de l'affaire des cartes. On y remédie en doublant le droit". AN K 149, n°. 28, Mémoire sur la forme de la dotation de l'École Royale Militaire, 17 December 1750, 1-2.

<sup>84</sup> AN MM 656, 6.

relying on the precedent of the inclusion of similar measures in the edicts founding the Invalides and Saint-Cyr. He added that the inclusion of the *dotation* in the edict, “fera sentir au public qu’on ne s’en tiendra pas à ce moyen s’il est insuffisant. Ce n’est ... qu’une première dotation”<sup>85</sup>.

The *droit sur les cartes* thus remained in the edict, as Article XI; it provided for the granting of all of that tax’s revenue for the new establishment, so that it should remain completely detached from the royal finances, administered and overseen by the Minister of War. The tax was to “commencer à pourvoir, tant à la dépense de la construction... qu’à celle de la subsistance et de l’entretien des cinq cent jeunes gentilshommes”, its revenues assigned in the form of a *dotation*. It instructed that the *droit* be administered as a *régie*, prohibiting that it be *affermé*, and also forbade the *École militaire* from receiving any gifts for any reason from third-parties<sup>86</sup>; the language of the edict of 13 January 1751 increasing the tax stated that it was intended, “pour subvenir aux frais de l’établissement et de l’entretien” of the school<sup>87</sup>. This was language reflecting Machault’s initiative to ease both measures through the *Parlement* (the edicts of 13 and 22 January were registered on the twenty-second)<sup>88</sup> which however caused d’Argenson “des inquiétudes que l’événement n’a que trop justifiées. On affectait d’y dire que le roi augmentait le droit ..., comme si cet objet seul eût pu y suffire et fournir à la dépense des bâtiments”<sup>89</sup>. The first splits among the parties involved with the creation of the *École militaire* began to show, even as the idea itself finally came to fruition<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> AN K 149, n<sup>o</sup>. 28, Mémoire sur la forme de la dotation de l’École Royale Militaire, 17 December 1750, 2.

<sup>86</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XI, Édit du Roi, 22 January 1751, 7. Eugene White provides the following definition of the terms: “In a *ferme* or tax farm, a syndicate undertook to pay a fixed rent or share of revenue for the *bail* or the lease of the right to collect taxes.... Alternatively, in a *régie*, the members of a syndicate... were paid some fixed compensation or salary for the collection of taxes”. In a footnote he adds: “Typically, the term *régie* is translated as management or administration, but there is no easy English equivalent for wage-compensated administration”. Eugene N. White, “From privatized to government-administered tax collection: tax farming in eighteenth-century France”, *Economic History Review*, 57 (2004), 640.

<sup>87</sup> AN K 149, Déclaration du Roi, portant augmentation du droit rétabli par celle du 16 février 1745, sur les cartes à jouer, pour le produit en être appliqué à l’Hôtel de l’École Royale-militaire, Versailles, 13 January 1751, 2. The tax itself consisted of “un denier par chaque carte”.

<sup>88</sup> AN K 149 n<sup>o</sup> 44, Letter from Pompadour to Pâris-Duverney, 12 January 1751.

<sup>89</sup> AN MM 656, 8.

<sup>90</sup> The greatest split was between Pompadour and d’Argenson: “elle déclare publiquement en janvier qu’elle déteste tout ce qui touche à d’Argenson”. Yves Combeau, *Le comte d’Argenson, 1696-1764: Ministre de Louis XV* (Paris: École Nationale des Chartes, 1999), 161. She also became estranged from her erstwhile benefactor Montmartel at this time, according to the marquis d’Argenson. 29 January 1751, *Journal*, éd. Rathery, T. VI (Paris, 1864), 346.

The administrative structure of the new institution was a clearer and less thorny matter than that of finance. It had from the first been Duverney's intention that the *Surintendant* of the *École militaire* be the Minister of War<sup>91</sup>. However, as the minister would not be able to concern himself with all the details concerning housing, subsistence, and maintenance, a *Directeur particulier* or *Intendant* would be charged with the administration of "tout le temporel" and issuing the relevant orders<sup>92</sup>. It was envisaged that all the military posts of the *École militaire* would be held by high-ranking officers: the Governor was to be a *maréchal de France*, the *Lieutenant de Roi* a lieutenant-general, and so on, but having men of such rank serve in the school turned out to be unrealistic<sup>93</sup>. The post of Treasurer was described as the person who would handle the school's income, and would only be authorised to spend funds on the orders of the *Surintendant* and *Intendant*. The yearly accounts were to be "arrêtés tous les ans à la chambre du Conseil (not further described at that point) du collège", as in the Invalides<sup>94</sup>. The only other administrative post described then was that of the *Secrétaire-Garde des Archives*, a title reflecting two positions and functions. The secretarial work involved taking the *Conseil's* minutes, drafting its ordinances, deliberations, *règlements*, and keeping their record; while the keeping of the school's registers on students reflected an archivist's duties<sup>95</sup>.

The *mémoire* also briefly mentioned *conseils* for discipline and *police* (here described as two separate *conseils*), which would have in their remit not just the maintenance of order, but "tout ce qui pourrait regarder l'éducation". Beyond sketching some ideas on general discipline, however, so that grave faults would be judged by the *Conseil d'administration*, the issue is left to be taken up later. No mention is made of a *conseil d'économie*; the sole mention of "œconomie" is with respect to the future

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Several more measures concerning the tax were issued throughout 1751, two on 23 January "concernant la perception du droit sur les cartes". AN MM 656, 9; *Recueil des Édits, Déclarations, Ordonnances, Arrêts et Règlements concernant l'École-Royale militaire*, T. II (Paris, 1782), 476-479, and another on preventing fraud on 9 November 1751. Laulan, *L'École militaire de Paris: Le Monument, 1751-1788* (Paris: A. & J. Picard & Cie., 1950), 228.

<sup>91</sup> AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, *Mémoire 'Collège académique'*, 22 April 1750.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* The minister's post was originally designated *Administrateur et Directeur général* but was changed to *Surintendant*, following the example of the commanderie de Saint-Louis established by Louis XIII in 1633, an antecedent to the Invalides. AN K 149 n° 20, *Motifs des changements*, 23 November 1750, 1-2; AN K 149, n° 2<sup>7</sup>, *Lettre*, 27 November 1750, 2.

<sup>93</sup> AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, *Mémoire 'Collège académique'* 22 April 1750.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* This *conseil* was to have the days of its meetings ordered as in the Invalides.

students' uniforms<sup>96</sup>. Of these planned dispositions, those dealing with the role of the *Surintendant*, *Intendant*, and treasurer were detailed in the edict of 22 January. Article V described the *Surintendant* as the head of the school in order to maintain discipline, administer its economic affairs, the students' education, and everything to do with its general order. The *Intendant* “rendra compte de tous les détails dudit Hôtel, arrêtera les registres et les états des dépenses journalières et autres”, as well as issuing the orders for payments from the *hôtel*'s treasury<sup>97</sup>. Article VII specifically dealt with the treasurer, who was to handle the *hôtel*'s funds; at the end of each year, an assembly presided by the Minister of War was to examine the *compte-général* of the sums received and spent by the treasurer<sup>98</sup>. When the edict was issued, then, three posts (apart from the *Surintendance*) existed on paper: the *Intendance* for Duverney, the *survivance de l'Intendance* for Pâris de Meyzieu, and that of treasurer for Gaëtan Lambert Du Pont<sup>99</sup>. De Meyzieu's brevet authorised him to “exercer en l'absence et survivance du S. Pâris Duverney... et même conjointement avec lui” the *Intendant*'s functions<sup>100</sup>. Du Pont, a former lawyer in the Paris *Parlement*, had his tasks described largely as they were laid out in the edict of 22 January. There were, however, some important posts which were not under the control of the Minister of War/*Surintendant*. These were those concerned with the construction of the *École militaire*, the *Bâtiments du roi* and its architects. They were the personal fiefdom of C.F.P. Lenormant de Tournehem, Director General of the *Bâtiments du Roi*, wealthy financier, and Pompadour's uncle.

The general appearance of the buildings was intended “de ne faire paraître... que la noble simplicité qui y convient”<sup>101</sup>. In practical terms, its buildings were to host 500 students, the school's staff, 50 officers, 12 to 15 professors and *maîtres*, two *écuyers*, an unspecified number of priests and nuns (the former to impart religious instruction, the

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. For reasons of economy they were not to be brilliant, and for moral reasons they were not to inspire any taste for luxury.

<sup>97</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article V, Édît du Roi, 22 January 1751, 5.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Article VII, 5.

<sup>99</sup> AN MM 656, 9. Duverney's brevet came with *appointements* of 6,000 livres per annum. It was described as his reward for his services as *Administrateur général de la subsistance* during the last two wars. AN K 149 n° 51, Brevet de l'Intendance de l'hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire pour Duverney, 5 February 1751, 1. They were all breveted by d'Argenson.

<sup>100</sup> AN K 149 n° 52, Brevet de l'Intendant en survivance de l'hôtel pour Pâris de Meyzieu, 5 February 1751, 1.

<sup>101</sup> This phrase was excised from the published version of the edict. AN K 149 n° 11, Projet d'Édit, 12 May 1750 'Collège royal académique'. An earlier *mémoire* specified that the chosen plan would be that which “approcherait le plus de la noble simplicité que l'on doit se proposer dans cet établissement”. AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire 'Collège académique' 22 April 1750.



latter to carry out the work in the *infirmerie* and laundry), medical personnel, and other support staff and domestics<sup>102</sup>. Using Duverney's November *mémoire* on the subject, the school's architect, the *Premier Architecte du Roi* Gabriel, drafted a plan for the proposed buildings, to which Duverney reacted in a letter of 29 December 1750 by expressing concern about the likely cost, stressing that it was meant less to glorify the king than serve a charitable purpose<sup>103</sup>; Gabriel and Tournehem's attempt at compromise was a building plan which comprised "la beauté de l'édifice, la belle et solide construction, et l'économie"<sup>104</sup>. Duverney, having begun to prepare his plans for the building in early 1750, wrote to Pompadour on 25 April that if all went well the first stone of the building would be laid by the following spring. He would shortly be meeting Tournehem to discuss the choice of terrain and plans for the building<sup>105</sup>.

In the early stages of the preparation of the construction process, things went relatively smoothly. The *Bâtiments du Roi*, acting according to its interpretation of Article II of the edict of 22 January, directed and carried out the construction of the *École militaire* independently of the administration of the school itself. It installed itself in the château de Grenelle and received payments from the treasury of the *École militaire* for its work on its buildings<sup>106</sup>. This situation lasted until 1764, when the *Bâtiments* was relieved of its role in carrying out the construction. This meant, as Yves Combeau points out, that the new establishment consisted of two distinct, though related, elements: on one hand, the erection of its buildings was autonomously led by the Director General of the *Bâtiments*, and on the other the institution as a school, under the tutelage of the Minister of War, developed practices and methods for instruction, discipline, internal administration, and so on per Article V of the edict of 22 January<sup>107</sup>. Though Duverney later described this structure's purpose as "un ouvrage de conciliation

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<sup>102</sup> AN K 149, n° 2<sup>5</sup>, 'Collège académique bâtiments', November 1750; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-2.

<sup>103</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602, 2 in Laulan, *Le Monument*, 19-20. The *président* Hénaut made some observations in the same vein in his corrections to the draft of the edict. He noted that it seemed that "l'esprit de charité qui anime le roi est trop subordonné aux desseins de grandeur, de gloire et d'utilité". AN K 149 n° 27, 11 November 1750, 6.

<sup>104</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-245, Letter by Gabriel, 9 August 1751.

<sup>105</sup> AN K 149 n° 9, Lettre par Duverney à Pompadour, 25 April 1750.

<sup>106</sup> This arrangement led to accusations that, "les Bâtiments du Roi par le service qui leur est confié... pensent avoir le droit de prononcer sur tout ce...qui peut concerner l'hôtel". AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605-222, *Mémoire* [undated, post 1754].

<sup>107</sup> Combeau, *op. cit.*, 330; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article V, Édît du Roi, 22 January 1751, 5.

entre le Surintendant de l'hôtel et le Directeur des Bâtiments"<sup>108</sup>, it in fact become a source of substantial acrimony, along with the unexpected shortage of funds.

To finance the acquisition of the land and the start to construction, Duverney had proposed a 2 million-livre loan on the *affaire des cartes*, on the understanding that the *Contrôle-générale* would continue to furnish the necessary funds for the continuing works. The king was to be additionally requested to supplement that sum by other means such as the union of abbeys to the chapel of the *École militaire*<sup>109</sup>. Machault had assigned the revenues from the *droit sur les cartes* retroactively from 1 April 1750, and Duverney envisaged that the loan would be repaid by the *droit* in 15 years. During that time the school's income from the tax on cards was to be lower than it would have been otherwise in order to repay the loan, as well as having to face the expenses of furnishing the *hôtel* and procuring supplies, clothes, and arms, and acquiring horses for riding lessons. It was nevertheless considered an indispensable measure to "accélérer l'établissement"<sup>110</sup>; the main buildings of the Invalides, Duverney's principal model, were erected in four years, although work on the chapel's famous dome continued well after Louis XIV's death<sup>111</sup>. The loan was authorised on 20 March 1751 by the *Conseil d'État*<sup>112</sup>, the money advanced by Duverney himself as the *bailleur de fonds*<sup>113</sup>; the loan was specifically for the acquisition of the land where the *hôtel* was to be built, and for payments to the *entrepreneurs* for their work<sup>114</sup>. The loan was disbursed in various stages, first 500,000 livres on 1 May 1751, another 500,000 on 1 August, and 900,000 on 1 January 1752<sup>115</sup>. The land on which the *École militaire* was built was chosen by March 1751<sup>116</sup> and acquired in stages: first, the *maison et ferme de Grenelle* and all

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<sup>108</sup> Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit-lettres, Poitiers, Fonds d'Argenson (subsequently cited as BUP Argenson) P 40, Lettre de Duverney à Pompadour, 24 March 1752.

<sup>109</sup> AN MM 656, 9. The two abbeys eventually *réunis* to its chapel were those of St. Jean de Laon and Liessies en Hainaut.

<sup>110</sup> AN K 149 n° 48, Mémoire Ecole Royale Militaire, 19 January 1751, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Thierry Sarmant, *Les demeures du soleil: Louis XIV, Louvois et la surintendance des bâtiments du roi* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 2003), 297. Sarmant labels the Invalides a "sorte d'Escorial français: un immense couvent laïc".

<sup>112</sup> AN MM 678, Registre du Conseil d'État, 20 March 1751, 49.

<sup>113</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, October 1752, *Journal*, éd. Rathery, T. IV, 110; Combeau, *op. cit.*, 331.

<sup>114</sup> AN MM 678, Plan d'un emprunt à faire par l'hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire pour fournir aux premières dépenses de son établissement, 20 March 1751, 49-50. The loan's interest was 5 per cent, and it was to be repaid at an annual rate of 100,000 livres the first five years and 150,000 the last ten years.

<sup>115</sup> AN MM 658, f°46 v<sup>10</sup>, *Mémoire*, 16 January 1756, 40.

<sup>116</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-4, Letter by Duverney, 25 January 1751; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-91, Mémoire, 1 March 1751. The *mémoire* states, "... on construit dans la plaine de Grenelle un bâtiment pour l'École royale militaire".

lands dependent thereon were bought by d'Argenson for the *hôtel* on 20 June 1751; then the *fief du Grenelle* was acquired from the abbey of Sainte Geneviève in 1753<sup>117</sup>.

Preparations for construction began as early as February 1751, when Tournehem was authorised to open quarries to supplement those of Saint-Marceau and Arcueil<sup>118</sup>, in part by purchasing those of Vaugirard<sup>119</sup>; the *entrepreneurs* were hired and engaged for the work<sup>120</sup>. A change in the design of the foundations, to be made of stone instead of rubble in order to support a vaulted *rez-de-chaussée*, increased the project's cost by a million livres and added a year of construction to the planned works<sup>121</sup>. Although the marquis d'Argenson believed that students would not be recruited for the fledgling establishment until the buildings to house them had been completed, temporary quarters for the *École militaire* at the château de Vincennes had already been suggested and inspected by 12 February<sup>122</sup>. Measures to facilitate the transport of *matériel* by boat on the Seine and supervise the quarries were carried out by the comte d'Argenson in his capacity as Minister for Paris<sup>123</sup>.

The marquis d'Argenson reported that construction work had begun in earnest by 26 June<sup>124</sup>, which was confirmed by Tournehem in a letter to Gabriel of 11 August 1751; the Director-General wished to complete the project speedily and without it becoming a burden to the public purse. Gabriel's plans for the first structures were ready on 4 September<sup>125</sup>. However, disputes arose almost immediately. In October, the first signs of discontent among the *entrepreneurs* arose, and Duverney accused

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<sup>117</sup> SHD 145, Observation sur le Mémoire de M. Brion, [undated, February 1776]. The sum paid for the *maison et ferme* was 277,860 livres, while that for the *fief* was 76,191 livres, for a total of 354,051 livres. The complete records are in O<sup>1</sup> 1617, Acquisitions de terres dans la plaine de Grenelle et à Vaugirard, 1293-1758.

<sup>118</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-49, Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'État, 8 February 1751.

<sup>119</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602, Letter from Marie to Tournehem, 3 February 1751, and Arrêt du Conseil, 8 February 1751. A list of the quarries opened by July is given in the 'État général des journées de carrières, manoeuvres terrassiers et tireurs de pierre de mulière...'. The gritstone quarries listed are Vaugirard, Venvres, Meudon, St. Leu, Trossy, St. Maximin, and Verbery. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602.

<sup>120</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-38–1602-44, 12 February 1751; 1602-48, Lettre du Directeur G[é]n[ér]al à M. Hazon Intend[an]t des bâtim[ents] du roi..., 4 February 1751; the Île des Cygnes was used to establish a port for the unloading of *matériel* for construction. Robert Laulan and Jules Riollot, *Le Champ-de-Mars avant la Révolution: Annales de 1750 à 1790 ornées de 14 gravures* (Paris: Librairie de l'Armée, 1936), 4.

<sup>121</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-6, Mémoire du roi au sujet de l'École royale militaire, 25 January 1751.

<sup>122</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, 24 January 1751, *Journal*, éd. Rathery, T. VI, 343; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1603-64, Versailles, 12 February 1751.

<sup>123</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-89 and 90, letters by d'Argenson to Bernage de Vaux and Bertier de Sauvigny, 30 & 31 May 1751 respectively.

<sup>124</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, 26 June 1751, *Journal*, éd. Rathery, T. VI, 431. The work he described consisted mainly of quarrying rocks and preparing the foundations.

<sup>125</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-234 and -235, Letters by Tournehem to Gabriel and M. Doussin, 11 August 1751; Laulan, *Le Monument*, 33.

Tournehem of irregularities in the *Bâtiments*'s administration and overspending, actions which threatened to “ruiner les entrepreneurs”<sup>126</sup>. Blaming Pompadour's party, Duverney claimed the only reason that he had in any way departed from Louvois's and the Invalides's example was “pour rapporter à vous, à M. de Tournehem, à M. de Vandières l'honneur d'un édifice auquel vous aviez tant de part”<sup>127</sup>. Meanwhile, the comte d'Argenson suggested to Pompadour, who had both envisaged alternative means of financing the school but went along with Duverney's scheme, that they await his death in order to implement alternative measures<sup>128</sup>. Though he would outlive both, it was Tournehem who passed away on 18 November, and was succeeded by Pompadour's younger brother, the marquis de Vandières<sup>129</sup>; overall, the picture for progress towards the school's establishment in 1752 looked rather uncertain.

The marquis d'Argenson continued his dry commentary on developments in early 1752; on 18 January he alleged that the whole issue of the *impôt des cartes* was so badly administered that Duverney denied having conceived it and held the comte d'Argenson as responsible for it<sup>130</sup>. On 11 February, he observed that the horses and carts used to transport stone to the building site at Grenelle were being sold as work ground to a halt due to a dispute between Vandières and Duverney<sup>131</sup>. Though these may have simply been rumours, there was a very real disagreement between Vandières and the comte d'Argenson. On 26 February, d'Argenson obtained the issuing of a declaration on the *impôt*, fixing the mechanism for the transfer of funds for the construction of the *École militaire*'s buildings: the revenue from the tax was primarily destined for the reimbursement of the 2 million livre loan and subsidiarily as payment to the *Bâtiments*<sup>132</sup>. Vandières, claiming the *Bâtiments*' right to be paid first, replied,

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<sup>126</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-340, Letter by Duverney to Tournehem, 15 October 1751. Duverney had hinted at some of these concerns in a missive to Gabriel of 8 October, AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-341.

<sup>127</sup> BUP Argenson P 36, Lettre de Duverney à Pompadour, 9 November 1751.

<sup>128</sup> “Après la mort de Duverney, ... je serais le premier à proposer... de reprendre pour la finance le droit... et de faire par l'école militaire un nouvel arrangement”. He proposed granting the income from the *droit sur les cartes* to the Minister of Finance in exchange for an annual *pension* of 800,000 livres. His views were not based solely on financial considerations, but also on “l'indécence qu'il y aurait que le ministre de la Finance prît les ordres du roi sur la destination des revenus d'une maison” of which he was *Surintendant*. BUP Argenson P 40, Lettre from d'Argenson to Pompadour [undated].

She “voulait absolument qu'on dotât cet établissement avec la manse abbatiale de Saint-Germain”, but the king had refused. Marquis d'Argenson, 18 March 1751, *Journal*, éd. Rathery, T. VI, 375.

<sup>129</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1647 catalogue f3427, minutes of 25 November 1751, 1.

<sup>130</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, 18 January 1752, *Journal et Mémoires...*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 67.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 February 1752, 75. He observed that “on parait abandonner le bâtiment de l'École militaire”.

<sup>132</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1603-199, letter from d'Argenson to Vandières, 26 February 1752.

ni M. de Tournehem ni moi n'avions jamais pu découvrir en vertu de quel titre les deux millions de livres avoient été empruntées... Puisque c'était en vertu d'un arrêt du Conseil rendu sans... jamais avoir été publié, et que j'ai vu pour la première fois le 26 du mois passé... (the date of d'Argenson's letter to him)<sup>133</sup>

The *Bâtiments du Roi* gained the upper hand in that dispute, while *ad hoc* compromises and half-measures were adopted on other matters; this, and the fact that Duverney and d'Argenson's roles apparently were not to begin until the day "le directeur des bâtiments ... remettra à Sa Majesté les clefs de l'hôtel" led the former to resign<sup>134</sup>. Duverney first informed Pompadour on 24 March, who replied "J'ai différé ... à vous répondre pour vous donner le temps de réfléchir ... Ce n'est d'ailleurs pas à moi à recevoir votre démission (si vous persistez à la vouloir donner)"<sup>135</sup>. On 25 May, Duverney again wrote d'Argenson, who replied on 12 June that the king "n'a pas prétendu ... suspendre les fonctions des officiers qu'elle a nommé pour l'administration", rejecting the resignation<sup>136</sup>.

The following week, on 24 June, Duverney was "de nouveau chargé du bâtiment de l'École militaire" (and Vandières granted a 12,000 livre *pension* for supposedly ceding to the Intendant)<sup>137</sup>. This did not however mean progress. Large amounts of *matériaux* were delivered, but the buildings and *ateliers* erected were simply those necessary for the workers to carry out their tasks in preparation for the main buildings. Vandières calculated the total final cost at some 8 million livres<sup>138</sup>. In August, realising that expenses had exceeded the allotted 2 million livres (the acquisition and building costs running 2,355,799 livres<sup>139</sup>), Duverney warned they risked being forced to "choisir entre bâtir et instruire"<sup>140</sup>. He struck a further note of despondency in September: "je vois bien que je ne serai point écouté, ni l'École militaire secourue"<sup>141</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1603-231, Letter from Vandières to d'Argenson, 6 March 1752.

<sup>134</sup> BUP Argenson P 40, Letter from Duverney to Pompadour, 24 March 1752.

<sup>135</sup> BUP Argenson P 40, Letter from Pompadour to Duverney, 4 May 1752. She added "vous savez que je ne me suis mêlée en aucune façon des officiers de cet hôtel, ainsi je ne puis faire ce que vous désirez. Malgré le chagrin affreux et irréparable que cet établissement m'a causé, je n'oublierai jamais, Monsieur, le zèle avec lequel vous vous y êtes porté par amitié pour moi".

<sup>136</sup> BUP Argenson P 40, Lettre de d'Argenson à Duverney, 12 June 1752. The administrative work at the moment consisted of "la régie et la perception des revenus dont elle l'a dotés".

<sup>137</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, 24 June 1752, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 96. The *pension* was also "pour les prétendues dépenses qu'il a faites à son voyage d'Italie".

<sup>138</sup> Laulan, *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 4; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1603-231, letter from Vandières to d'Argenson, 6 March 1752.

<sup>139</sup> AN MM 658 f<sup>o</sup>46 v<sup>o</sup>10, *Mémoire*, 16 January 1756, 40.

<sup>140</sup> BUP Argenson P 40, Mémoire de Duverney, 17 August 1752 in Combeau, *op. cit.*, 332.

<sup>141</sup> BUP Argenson P 36, Lettre de Duverney à d'Argenson, 16 September 1752.

The *gages de bâtiments* alone cost 40,000 livres per annum, and the spiralling costs meant that even external observers knew that the *impôt sur les cartes* was all spent in advance<sup>142</sup>. Duverney admitted this on 10 October, writing “nous manquerons certainement aux engagements ... il ne faut pas se flatter de remplir l’emprunt”, while agonising on 9 November on how to fulfil “les engagements contractés” in the face of “l’extrémité où ces bâtiments se trouvent réduits”<sup>143</sup>. Vandières for his part continued to insist adamantly on his prerogatives, as another of his letters to d’Argenson shows<sup>144</sup>, so that the dispute which had begun in the autumn of 1751 continued with little respite. In terms of personnel appointments, the post of the Governor of the *École militaire* was filled by major general the marquis de Salières in December on *appointements* of 20,000 livres per annum, in preparation for the reception of 40 students at Vincennes the following spring<sup>145</sup>. The only positive news towards the end of 1752 was that the king had informed Vandières of his approval to the temporary housing of the *École militaire* in the château de Vincennes<sup>146</sup>.

1753 saw the beginning of construction on the buildings of the *École militaire* proper at Grenelle, as well as its institution as a school at Vincennes. On 10 January, Gabriel presented a new architectural plan, and the *Bâtiments* henceforth met weekly at the château de Grenelle presided by their Director-General<sup>147</sup>. The buildings to be given priority were those necessary for their future inhabitants’ accommodation<sup>148</sup>. On the seventeenth, Duverney wrote to the abbé de Bernis that “l’établissement provisoire de Vincennes sera enfin exécuté”<sup>149</sup>, with Machault promising 1 million livres; however,

<sup>142</sup> Marquis d’Argenson, October 1752, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 110.

<sup>143</sup> BUP Argenson P 36, letter by Duverney, 10 September 1752; letter by Duverney, 9 November 1752.

<sup>144</sup> “ma sœur... vous sera très obligée de demander aujourd’hui à Sa Majesté l’ordre ... nécessaire pour que le trésorier de l’École emploie les fonds qu’elle lui a fait remettre à payer les ordonnances que j’ai tirées de lui. Le besoin très pressant où se trouvent les ouvriers, et le danger qu’il y aurait de retarder encore ... ce paiement, ont engagé ma sœur à vous faire cette demande”. And “vous lui deviez demander mon ordre pour la distribution de la somme ... entre les mains du trésorier”. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1603-51, Letter from Marigny to d’Argenson, 11 November 1752.

<sup>145</sup> Marquis d’Argenson, December 1752, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 116. Combeau describes Salières’ previous relationship to the Minister of War and Duverney in his study on d’Argenson.

<sup>146</sup> BUP Argenson P 36, Lettre de Vandières à d’Argenson, 21 November 1752. The use of Vincennes, however, was conditional on the *École militaire* carrying out some necessary repairs to its buildings; those costs were included in the statement of the general building costs carried out at Grenelle. AN MM 658 P46 v<sup>10</sup>, *Mémoire*, 16 January 1756, 40.

<sup>147</sup> Laulan, *Le Monument*, 36. The planned buildings for 1753-1754 were the “bâtiments de l’infirmerie et dépendances, réservoirs et branche d’aqueduc de ce côté jusques à la rivière, qu’à la construction du bâtiment de la pompe, réservoir de ce côté, de la buanderie...”. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1648 E 10587, minutes of 30 January 1753.

<sup>148</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1647, catalogue f. 3427, deliberation of 6 February 1753, 33-34.

<sup>149</sup> Réponse de M. Duverney, 3 January 1753 in *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bernis, ministre d’état, avec M. Paris-du-Verney...* (London: 1790), 19-20. Apart from Pompadour’s initial opposition to making

this sum was reduced by half in September, 500,000 being instead re-assigned for use in 1754, which further stretched the *entrepreneurs'* resources<sup>150</sup>. On 25 May several officers were named to serve in the school, the most important being its Major, the chevalier de Bongars<sup>151</sup>. In early June, the number of students and the general organisation of the school were determined in two sessions between d'Argenson and the king<sup>152</sup>. An ordinance of 6 June formally set-up the three *Conseils* which administered the school. The *Conseil d'administration* was to be composed of the *Surintendant*, Governor, and Intendant, with the *Lieutenant de Roi* taking the Governor's place in the latter's absence; it was to meet on a monthly basis. It was charged with the general administration of all affairs concerning the *hôtel*, both temporal and spiritual, and of issues such as its acquisitions, revenues and their use, accounting for the same, the admission and education of students, and the drafting of all internal regulations<sup>153</sup>.

The *Conseil d'économie's* members were the *Surintendant*, Governor, Intendant, and *Lieutenant de Roi* and it was to meet weekly (the *Surintendant* attending when possible). It dealt with all matters of economic order, such as foodstuffs, clothing, armaments, furnishings, supplies and related matters. The *Conseil de police* was composed exactly as that of *économie*, but with the officers of the *État-major* included as well, and was to meet at least three times per week. Its concerns related to matters such as the execution of the *hôtel's* regulations, military discipline, exercises, and the studies and behaviour of students. It was to hear reports of their faults and decide their punishments, following regulations. Grave faults were referred to the *Conseil d'administration*<sup>154</sup>. Finally, important matters heard in the lower two *conseils* were to be reported to the *Conseil d'administration* when the *Surintendant* had not been present in the lower *conseil's* meetings. No decisions were to be taken there in the *Surintendant's* absence, as all provisional decisions were to be reported to the *Conseil*

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use of Vincennes, there were rumours he had “un dessein caché de détruire la grande entreprise, ou au moins d'en ralentir le progrès. Vous savez ... que si j'ai proposé un établissement provisoire, ce n'a jamais été que pour consolider la chose et lui donner un commencement de réalité qui détruit la mauvaise opinion qu'on en a conçue”.

<sup>150</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605-288, Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire [undated, but probably written in late 1755].

<sup>151</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 25 May 1753. Bongars was a *maréchal-des-logis* of the *Chevaux-légers de la garde*; his nomination listed his service record, which dated back to his brevet as *sous-lieutenant* in the infantry regiment Orléans in 1712.

<sup>152</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 25 May and 6 June 1753 in Combeau, *op. cit.*, 334.

<sup>153</sup> Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement pour la tenue des Conseils de l'École Royale Militaire, Article II, 6 June 1753, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 175.

<sup>154</sup> Articles III and IV, *Ibid.* The Treasurer did not form part of this *Conseil* as the post had not been established yet, despite being created for Du Pont.

*d'administration* for approval<sup>155</sup>. Article VII stipulated that all deliberations were to be transcribed and maintained by the Secretary<sup>156</sup>. Though these measures foresaw and emphasised the key role of the Minister of War as *Surintendant* in the administration of the school, the administration was often left to its own devices, a development which is unsurprising when one considers the heavy demands on the minister's time his department imposed<sup>157</sup>, or the changes of ministers which at times saw the *Surintendants* rely on the *Conseil* for guidance on the management of the school's internal affairs<sup>158</sup>. When the minister absented himself for lengthy periods, he administered the school through correspondence with the *Conseil*<sup>159</sup>.

In practice, this meant that the effective administrative body of the school was the *conseil de police*. Its decisions were confirmed or annulled as deemed fit by the *Surintendant* in sessions when he visited the school. The mutability of the administration (despite the different statutory composition of the two *Conseils*) is demonstrated by one example: a sitting of the *Conseil d'administration*, attended by the *Surintendant* became a sitting of the *Conseil de police* on his departure part of the way through the meeting ("Crémilles parti on a tenu un conseil de police"). His visit in that instance was principally taken up with signing and approving the deliberations of previous sittings of the *Conseil de police*, accepting the proposed reception of students, and hearing a report of the school's finances<sup>160</sup>. In what may have been an attempt to flatter the members of this *Conseil*, who administered the school's quotidian matters but who could not use the term *Conseil d'administration* in the *Surintendant's* absence, the ambiguous but high-sounding term *Conseil de l'hôtel de l'École royale militaire* was used instead<sup>161</sup>. This was a descriptor with no regulated or statutory basis, but one

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<sup>155</sup> Articles V and VI, Ibid. Article V emphasised the *Surintendant's* role by stating "tout se rapporte exactement et dans tous les temps à l'autorité primitive...", 176.

<sup>156</sup> Article VII, Ibid, 176-177.

<sup>157</sup> Ségur wrote the *Conseil* a letter that began, "Si je n'avais... que l'administration de l'École Militaire à conduire, il est probable que vous auriez maintenant connaissance du plan d'après lequel il serait à désirer qu'elle fut dirigée; mais je dois mon temps à beaucoup d'autres objets..." AN MM 675, Lettre de Ségur au Conseil, Versailles, 18 August 1781, 126.

<sup>158</sup> See, for instance, the correspondence of the administration with the short-tenured ministers duc d'Aiguillon and maréchal du Muy throughout 1774-1775. In one letter, d'Aiguillon wrote, "Dès que vous pensez, Messieurs... mon sentiment ne saurait qu'y être conforme". AN MM 681, Lettre de M. le duc d'Aiguillon au Conseil, 4 April 1774, 5.

<sup>159</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de M. Darget à M. de la Posset, Premier Commis de la Guerre, 6 February 1766. In this letter, the secretary states that Choiseul had not visited the *hôtel* since 17 November 1764.

<sup>160</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil d'administration, 3 July 1760, 13-16.

<sup>161</sup> See for instance the letters from Belle-Isle and Choiseul to the *Conseil de l'hôtel* of 29 May 1760 and 4 December 1763, AN MM 679, 3-5, 107. At times it was shortened to '*Conseil de l'École*'.



which was suitable for a school often described by the catch-all term ‘*hôtel*’, a word which referred to the institution as a whole, and not simply its buildings<sup>162</sup>. This unsanctioned but frequently used nomenclature thus reflects the continued improvisation which characterised the school’s development, one of the many ways the measures originally envisaged were modified by force of circumstance. As the *Conseil de l’hôtel* was established as the *de facto* administrative body, even ministers came to regard and describe it as effectively being the school’s statutory administration, as a letter by Choiseul to Croismare demonstrates<sup>163</sup>. Bearing these developments in mind, the term ‘*Conseil*’ as used throughout this study always refers to the *Conseil de l’hôtel* unless otherwise specified.

Meanwhile, although the quarrel between Duverney and Vandières continued, “le second reproche au premier des dissipations de fonds, et l’autre des traits de malhabileté”<sup>164</sup>, progress towards the setting up at the school in Vincennes continued. The first students were nominated in May, to be organised in three companies<sup>165</sup>. 49 *gentilshommes* were admitted as prospective students, although only 20 had furnished proofs of nobility by September<sup>166</sup>. They were only 21 in number when it opened on 1 October<sup>167</sup>. This was also the date from which the *École militaire*’s officers’ functions began<sup>168</sup>, while the last high military post at the school was finally filled, the

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Sometimes the ambiguity remained absolute, as in this instance, “Suivant la décision du Conseil du 2 de ce mois”, which does not specify which *conseil* was being referred to by the record. AN MM 669, 16 March 1774, 125.

<sup>162</sup> Numerous examples exist of the use of the term ‘*hôtel*’ as a shorthand for the institution, as in a description of the *hôtel* as a guarantor of debt (AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 23 June 1760, 9) or of the *hôtel*’s dealings with the *Chevaux-légers de la garde* (AN MM 679, Mémoire, 20 November 1760, 18-19).

<sup>163</sup> Choiseul wrote to ask for clarification on the members that “composent le Conseil de l’École Militaire”, as its correspondence with him included signatures of more parties than the Ordinance of 1753 permitted. Croismare replied with an *État* of those who had been admitted to the *Conseil* by different ministers, including Choiseul. He then declared that the *Conseil*’s membership was to be restricted, but this does not seem to have happened before his replacement by Montbarey. AN MM 680, Lettre écrite à Croismare par Choiseul. Versailles, 2 September 1770, 50; Réponse de Croismare, 6 September 1770, 50; Lettre de Choiseul à Croismare, Versailles, 24 September 1770, 53.

<sup>164</sup> Marquis d’Argenson, 28 June 1753, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 144. The marquis also notes that Vandières risked losing his position if the king grew tired of Pompadour, which however did not happen.

<sup>165</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, lettre de d’Argenson à Salières, 8 May 1754. The school’s guard consisted of a company of *bas-officiers Invalides*, created 3 July. *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 701.

<sup>166</sup> Réponse de Duverney, 7 September 1753 in *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bernis...* (London: 1790), 65. He added: “Je n’ai jamais rien vu de si lent: il faut espérer cependant que nous en viendrons à bout”.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, Réponse de Duverney, 14 October 1753 70.

<sup>168</sup> Léon Hennet, *Les Compagnies de Cadets-Gentilshommes et les Écoles militaires* (Paris: 1889), 54; the officers were de Lorry l’aîné as Premier aide-major and the chevalier de Lorry as aide-major; de Nort and de la Noüe as captains; and Lange, the chevalier de Champignol, de Rozières, and d’Autrechès as lieutenants of the student companies. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 1 October 1753.

Lieutenance de Roi being given to the maréchal de camp Jacques-René, chevalier de Croismare<sup>169</sup>. To conclude the year, Gabriel outlined his plans on 29 December for the work to be done during 1754 in preparation for the students' arrival in 1755<sup>170</sup>.

The year 1754 saw few notable developments for the *École militaire*, positive or negative; though the king desired that the buildings be ready to receive the students by May 1755<sup>171</sup>, work on the buildings at Grenelle continuing at a sluggish pace due to the lack of funds. Gabriel envisaged finishing work on the utilitarian buildings to house the students and personnel, this stage being dependent on receiving one million livres from the treasury. However, only 400,000 livres were disbursed, so that the work of 1754 consisted mainly of finishing masonry, consolidating foundations, and related work<sup>172</sup>. By early July, the students at Vincennes numbered 60, the theoretical maximum which could be accommodated at that point, but an increase in the student body by 20 was proposed, which the king approved<sup>173</sup>; The 80 students were subsequently organised in four companies<sup>174</sup>. On 10 June, the *Lieutenant de Roi* was made a full member of the *Conseil d'administration*<sup>175</sup>, and a new post, the Director-General of Studies, was created, on 30 June, which was filled by de Meyzieu<sup>176</sup>. Another post, that of Governor, lapsed upon Salières' resignation on 9 September. His duties were subsequently fulfilled by the *Lieutenant de Roi*, but without the title or wages of the Governor<sup>177</sup>. Although the king ordered that the post of Governor not be filled until after Duverney's death, that did not stop him from proposing, unsuccessfully, the comte de Saint-

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<sup>169</sup> *Dictionnaire Historique et Biographique des Généraux Français, depuis le onzième siècle jusqu'en 1822*, T. V<sup>e</sup>, s.v. 'De Croismare (Jacques-René, chevalier)'; Duverney thought very highly of him, writing "Il est doux et aimable à ce qu'il m'a paru. On aime toujours à s'associer à des hommes de ce caractère-là". Réponse de Duverney, 14 October 1753 in *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bernis...* (London: 1790), 70-72.

<sup>170</sup> Laulan, *Le Monument*, 36.

<sup>171</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605-288, Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire [undated].

<sup>172</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1604-277 Ecole Royale Militaire, fol. 5. Even with this reduced amount, it was thought possible to have enough buildings to lodge 200 students by September 1755, which turned out to be an over-optimistic prediction.

AN O<sup>1</sup> 1604-361 Ecole Royale Militaire Mémoire by Gabriel, Versailles, 1 December 1754; Laulan, *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 6.

<sup>173</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire, 2 July 1754, 27; in fact, Duverney and d'Argenson thought up to 120 could be accommodated there if the need arose. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1604-63, 4 February 1752.

<sup>174</sup> AN MM 658, P<sup>o</sup>16 v<sup>o</sup>, 12 July 1754, 15.

<sup>175</sup> Lettre écrite par M. le comte d'Argenson à Salières, Gouverneur de l'École royale militaire, 10 June 1754, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 177-178.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., Composition des Conseils (undated, summer 1754), 181; de Meyzieu, *Encyclopédie*, T. V, s.v. "École Militaire".

<sup>177</sup> BUP, Argenson P 96, billet de Louis XV à d'Argenson [undated] in Combeau, *op. cit.*, 333. Salières received an 8,000 livre pension, and passed away on 29 February 1756; Lettre de Crémilles à Croismare, 13 July 1759, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 180.

Germain for that post to the maréchal de Belle-Isle in March 1760, during the latter's ministry<sup>178</sup>. The slow pace of construction meanwhile meant that the transfer of the *École militaire* to its new buildings were postponed until Easter 1756<sup>179</sup>. The continued precariousness of its existence was summed up by the marquis d'Argenson, who, commenting on a bout of illness which struck Duverney late in the year, wrote "s'il meurt, adieu l'École militaire"<sup>180</sup>.

By 3 March 1755, its population at Vincennes totalled 200 souls, of whom 111 were staff and personnel<sup>181</sup>. Also in March, Gabriel outlined his concerns on funding for his work as he calculated the minimum outlay for continuing construction at 618,764 livres. This was needed to complete the buildings necessary to receive 200 students the following Easter. Expecting to receive only 500,000 livres, there was a shortfall of 118,764 livres<sup>182</sup>. Although he would ideally have liked to have a million livres, especially as most *entrepreneurs* could no longer furnish advances, he approached Duverney in April to request that the school's founder provide more stop-gap funding; the Intendant replied he could give no more than 30,000 livres<sup>183</sup>. This was accepted by Marigny (Vandières' new title after 14 September 1754<sup>184</sup>), with 10,000 livres being paid in July, August, and October<sup>185</sup>; Duverney in turn approached Pompadour. She replied on 15 August, "Non assurément, mon cher nigaud, je ne laisserai pas périr au port un établissement qui doit immortaliser le roi, rendre heureuse sa noblesse et faire

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<sup>178</sup> Duverney au maréchal de Belle-Isle, 13-14 March 1760 in *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney...* T. 1 (London, 1789), 115-116. The proposal foundered on Saint-Germain's desire for remuneration equivalent to that of the governor of Flanders, 50,000 francs per annum. The *École militaire* was evidently in no position to offer such compensation. Ibid., Duverney au comte de Saint-Germain, 13 March 1760, 106.

<sup>179</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1604-360 Au travail du roi [undated].

<sup>180</sup> Marquis d'Argenson, 1 December 1754, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 198.

<sup>181</sup> AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 90 r<sup>10</sup>, 3 March 1755, 77; Gaëtan d'Aviau de Ternay, *Les gentilshommes élèves de l'École royale militaire de Louis XV, 1753-1775: Dictionnaire Biographique* (Paris: P. Du Puy, 2010), 7.

<sup>182</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069, Délibération, 3 March 1755, 115. This total did not include the 45-50,000 livres needed for the *manège* and stables. 618,764 livres was the sum owed for the construction material, with proposed *acomptes* (partial payments for debt, mainly to *entrepreneurs*) totalling 424,847. An income of 500,000 livres to cover the *acomptes* left 75,153 for wages, administrative costs, and other expenses. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069, Tableau pour les fonds des ouvrages à faire pendant la campagne 1755. The buildings which were planned included the *bâtiments de l'infirmerie des convalescents*, the *buanderie*, the *galeries de communication à l'église*, and others, at a cost of 268,633 livres. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1648, Délibération, 3 March 1753, 115.

<sup>183</sup> Laulan, *Le Monument*, 38; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069, Délibération, 28 April 1755, 127.

<sup>184</sup> Alden R. Gordon, *The Houses and Collections of the Marquis de Marigny* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), 39. Marigny inherited his father's estates on his death in 1754, and the seigneurie of Marigny was raised to a marquisate by the king on that date.

<sup>185</sup> AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 32 r<sup>10</sup>, 12 July 1755, 30. The funds were transferred by the treasurer of the *hôtel* to one of the treasurers of the *Bâtiments du Roi*.

connaître à la postérité mon attachement pour l'État... je risquerai avec grande satisfaction cent mille livres pour le bonheur de ces pauvres enfants"<sup>186</sup>. In fact, she lent 120,000 livres, Marigny borrowing an additional 100,000 livres, and only these expedients allowed construction to continue<sup>187</sup>. One of the benefited children, de la Teyssonnière, was the first student to receive a commission: being 18 years of age, he was named a *lieutenant réformé* without *appointements* in the regiment of Royal-Dragoons. The comte d'Argenson informed him that he was however to finish his studies at the school before joining his regiment<sup>188</sup>.

A week before Duverney and Pompadour's commitments, on 20 April, another source of funding had been obtained, more permanent but more narrowly construed than their contributions. This was the income from the abbey of Saint-Jean de Laon, destined for the construction and upkeep of the *École militaire*'s chapel and related expenses, termed the "réunion de la manse abbatiale à la chapelle" of the school<sup>189</sup>. The annual income from this source was between 12,000 and 15,000 livres<sup>190</sup>. That summer the first annual account of the school's balance sheet was presented for the period from 1 July 1755 until 30 June 1756, and showed that the year's income was 1,054,655 livres, and its expenses 1,478,911 livres, leaving a deficit of 424,266 livres<sup>191</sup>. The fact that no annual statements had been issued during the first four years of the school's existence was a breach of Article VII of the edict of 22 January, resulting from the fact that the

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<sup>186</sup> The rest of her message states, "J'ai dit à Gabriel aujourd'hui de s'arranger pour remettre à Grenelle les ouvriers nécessaires pour finir la besogne. Mon revenu de cette année ne m'est pas encore rentré, je l'emploierai en entier pour payer les quinzaines des journaliers". Letter from Pompadour to Duverney, 15 August 1755, in *Correspondance de M<sup>me</sup> de Pompadour avec son père, M. Poisson et son frère, M. de Vandières... à Paris Duverney, au duc d'Aiguillon, etc.,...* (Paris, 1878).

Gabriel's planned buildings for 1756 were not permanent (*bâtiments postiches*), and thus were not included in that year's *État des dépenses* of 618,761 livres. These buildings included a provisional *manège* and stables for 50-60 horses. AN O<sup>1</sup> 1648, Délibération, 3 March 1755, 115; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069, Délibération, 28 April 1755, 126-127.

<sup>187</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605-288, Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire.

<sup>188</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145; AN MM 678, Letter from d'Argenson to de la Teyssonnière, 4 November 1755, 45.

<sup>189</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, du 20 avril 1755, qui ordonne que les revenus de la Manse abbatiale de l'Abbaye de Saint-Jean de Laon, seront remis et acquittés au Trésorier de l'École Royale-militaire, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 574-576. This "réunion" was much more than an administrative formality assigning the abbey's revenues to the *École militaire* while maintaining a detached administration; the *Conseil* was thoroughly involved in the administration of the abbey and its lands, fielding requests as varied as the potential employment of Canadian refugees on the abbey's lands after the Seven Years' War (rejected due to the lack of work available) and the local bishop's request to house the municipal *collège* in the abbey's buildings (granted in order to contribute to the public good). See AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 7 July 1763, 249; AN MM 674, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil, 10 April 1779, 196; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, Pièces Egarées, 10 April 1779; AN MM 660, 5 January 1780, 14.

<sup>190</sup> Laulan, "Aperçu sur les finances de l'École royale militaire, 1751-1788", in *Extrait des actes du 86<sup>e</sup> Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes*, Montpellier (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1962): 231-232.

<sup>191</sup> AN MM 658, 1 July 1755, 42-43.

treasurer had not entered into his functions until two years after the *Conseil* had been formed<sup>192</sup>, and because many of the accounts from those first years were still unreconciled. Du Pont was thus authorised to present the balance sheets from 1751 through 1 January 1755 in a single statement, and was instructed to present annual statements from 1756 onwards<sup>193</sup>.

The straightened financial situation of the school led to additional measures which sought to alleviate the lack of liquidity in 1756. The annual income from the *impôt des cartes*, 500,000 livres, was still insufficient<sup>194</sup>; it was thus resolved to request an extension of the 2 million livre loan by 500,000 livres, to be repaid over the course of 1767-1771<sup>195</sup>. The extension to the loan was authorised on 7 February<sup>196</sup>. This measure was followed by the good news in March that the provisional buildings at Grenelle were ready and that the *École militaire* could be relocated there from Vincennes<sup>197</sup>. Duverney, on viewing the classrooms, considered they were of insufficient size and requested that Gabriel expand them; the stables were to be left uncompleted due to the lack of funds, but “pour faire face aux dépenses de l’augmentation des classes ... j’en emprunterai en mon propre et privé nom pour cet objet”<sup>198</sup>. The old financier once again, and not for the last time, made use of his resources to assure the school’s progress. On 18 July, the students and all other members of the *École militaire* were finally transported from Vincennes to the new buildings<sup>199</sup>. It was probably this occasion which moved Voltaire to praise Duverney in a letter of 26 July: “Vous vous êtes fait une carrière nouvelle de gloire par cette institution qu’on doit à vos soins et qui sera une grande époque dans l’histoire du siècle présent. Votre nom ne sera pas oublié”<sup>200</sup>. The settling of the institution into its dedicated buildings seems to have gone well; on 3 August the king gifted the school 20 fully equipped horses from the *Grande*

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<sup>192</sup> Although Du Pont had been named as the school’s treasurer in 1751, it was only in September 1754 that the charge of treasurer was established. Hennem, *op. cit.*, 49.

<sup>193</sup> AN MM 658, f°43 v<sup>10</sup>, 22 December 1755, 37-38.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, *Mémoire* f°46 v<sup>10</sup>, 16 January 1756, 40-41.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, f°50 v<sup>10</sup>, 20 January 1756, 44.

<sup>196</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d’État du roi, qui permet à l’Hôtel ... de continuer jusqu’à ... cinq cents mille livres, l’emprunt..., 7 February 1756, *Recueil des édits* ... T. II (Paris, 1782), 685-687.

<sup>197</sup> Laulan, *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 7.

<sup>198</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605, 92 in Laulan, *Le Monument*, 40.

<sup>199</sup> AN MM 658, 5 July 1756, 56.

<sup>200</sup> *Œuvres complètes*, T. 36: *Correspondance*, 26 July 1756 (Hachette, 1869) in Laulan, “La fondation de l’École militaire et Madame de Pompadour”, 286.

*écurie*<sup>201</sup>, the Major, Bongars, was admitted to the *Conseil de police* by royal order<sup>202</sup>, and 25 August, the feast day of Saint-Louis, was celebrated with fireworks in what would become an annual tradition<sup>203</sup>. On 30 November, the student body numbered 195, with 26 more proposed to bring the total to 222 in what would be the school's full complement; the number of 500 students stipulated by the edict of 22 January was never reached<sup>204</sup>.

## Part II: The *Loterie* of 1757 and the reforms of 1764-1775

The first significant change the administration's personnel came about early in 1757, when d'Argenson was dismissed from his post as Minister of War on 7 February and was succeeded by his nephew the marquis de Paulmy, who would in turn resign a year later and be replaced by the maréchal de Belle-Isle<sup>205</sup>. Following the *École militaire*'s installation in its new buildings, (which housed 868 souls), most construction practically ground to a halt due to the lack of funds, and remained suspended for a decade<sup>206</sup>. On 30 December, Marigny requested 60,000 livres in order to dismiss three-quarters of the construction workers, and Gabriel's salary was cut from 12,000 to 6,000 livres<sup>207</sup>. The main development however was the establishment of the *École militaire*'s lottery, which eventually provided the school with sorely needed financial stability and become its principal source of income. This is a subject which has received ample treatment by Laulan<sup>208</sup> and by Robert D. Kruckeberg in his PhD thesis on lotteries in eighteenth-century France<sup>209</sup>. Here, some details on how it was set up are given.

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<sup>201</sup> AN MM 658, 3 August 1756, 60.

<sup>202</sup> Ordonnance du roi qui admet dans le Conseil de l'École Royale Militaire, M. le chevalier de Bongars, major dudit Hôtel, 3 August 1756, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 178-180.

<sup>203</sup> AN MM 674, *Mémoire*, 9 August 1778, 159.

<sup>204</sup> AN MM 678, Letter from d'Argenson to Pâris-Duverney, 30 November 1756, 88.

<sup>205</sup> Combeau, *op. cit.*, 16, 165, 200, 309. D'Argenson's arch-rival, Machault, was also dismissed on that date, following Damiens's assassination attempt against the king on 5 January 1757.

<sup>206</sup> AN MM 658, f° 90 r<sup>10</sup> 3 March 1757, 77; Laulan, *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 7-11.

<sup>207</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069-227, 30 December 1757, 1-2; AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069-307, 28 October 1764, 6-7. In this letter, Marigny went further and suggested that Gabriel's salary be entirely suspended until construction recommenced, and opined it would be dangerous "d'y faire actuellement des innovations, qui seraient inutiles et très coûteuses".

<sup>208</sup> Laulan, "La Loterie de l'École Militaire, mère de la Loterie Nationale", *Revue des Travaux de l'Académie des Sciences Morales & Politiques et Comptes Rendus de ses Séances*, 1ère série, 1951, 1er semestre (1951), 29-38; Laulan, "Aperçu", 225-245.

<sup>209</sup> Robert D. Kruckeberg 'Chapter 3: The *Loterie de l'École Royale Militaire*: Making the Lottery Noble, Patriotic, and National', in "The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France – The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics", PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009: 95-147. Kruckeberg discusses not only how it was set up, functioned, its technical elements, and its effectiveness in producing revenue, but also the cultural and intellectual tensions inherent to it, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

The lottery was discussed for the first time on 5 January 1757 (the day of Damiens's assassination attempt) in the *Conseil d'administration*<sup>210</sup>, and though its development is somewhat unclear due to a lack of documentary evidence, it was officially created by a decree of 15 October 1757. Laulan recounts the encounter of Casanova and Duverney at the latter's residence in Plaisance. There Casanova suggested a lottery as the solution to the *École militaire*'s money problems, to which Duverney replied by introducing him to another Italian, Giovanni Antonio Calzabigi, who had also proposed the same expedient<sup>211</sup>. A few days later, at a conference in the *École militaire* "où d'Alembert assistait en sa qualité de 'grand arithméticien'...", [Casanova] réfuta avec la plus grande facilité les objections qui lui étaient présentées", and the decree for the lottery was duly issued<sup>212</sup>. It was a Genoese-style lottery granted to the *École militaire* from November 1757 for thirty years until 1787. Its administration was delegated to the *Conseil d'administration*, to which reports of the lottery's accounts were to be made, with the drawings themselves to be carried out in the buildings of the Arsenal (and later the Hôtel de Ville) in Paris in the *Conseil*'s presence<sup>213</sup>. The *Conseil* in turn set up a *Bureau Général* for the lottery which functioned under its supervision but completely separately and independently of the *École militaire* itself (similarly to the *régie des cartes*<sup>214</sup>) with its own buildings, employees, and effects on the rue Montmartre in Paris (those buildings belonging to Duverney)<sup>215</sup>.

As for the funds to establish the lottery as such, the school had no money, so Duverney stepped forward and capitalised it, furnishing 500,000 livres to cover both its start-up costs and to pay out any winnings<sup>216</sup>. In return, the *Conseil* promised him 5 %

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<sup>210</sup> AN MM 664, 5 January 1757, 22. Although not yet minister, Paulmy presided over this meeting of the *Conseil d'administration*.

<sup>211</sup> Laulan, "La Loterie", 31-32. The principal source on the project's progress is Casanova's memoirs.

<sup>212</sup> Laulan "Aperçu", 234.

<sup>213</sup> AN MM 678, Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'État du roi, 15 October 1757, 110.

<sup>214</sup> AN MM 658, f° 156 r<sup>10</sup>, 19 July 1759, 130-131. This deliberation emphasised the importance "d'établir pour l'administration de la loterie, une forme pareille à celle de la régie des cartes, que l'on peut actuellement regarder comme portée à toute sa perfection".

Correspondence addressed to the *Conseil de l'hôtel* concerning the *régie*'s delegated affairs, such as a request for a *gratification* by M. Thurin for 165 livres 16 sous were forwarded to the *régie*'s administration. AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 14 April 1763, 233.

<sup>215</sup> Pierre Lavedan, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris – Histoire de l'Urbanisme à Paris* (Paris: Association pour la Publication d'une Histoire de Paris, 1975), 27-28. The *régie des cartes* was housed in the hôtel de la Force, purchased by Duverney and d'Argenson in 1754.

The lottery was also administered as a *régie*. AN MM 658, f°113 v<sup>10</sup>, 16 February 1758, 93.

<sup>216</sup> AN MM 682, 11 February 1758.

interest on his loan, to be reimbursed as its funds increased, those repayments taking priority over any winning claimants. It was to be paid by the treasury of the school if the lottery's funds were insufficient<sup>217</sup>. The *Conseil* appointed Calzabigi to head the lottery, a choice it quickly came to regret as it fell out with him and his brother in a long-running dispute over their administration, subsequent dismissal, and compensation. The situation became serious enough to be labelled an *affaire d'état* due to concerns about the potential damage to the lottery's reputation, and thus the *École militaire*'s finances, that the case could cause<sup>218</sup>. In the event, the first national public lottery in France<sup>219</sup> (there were only three other legally established lotteries, which financed private charitable concerns in Paris)<sup>220</sup>, and the largest lottery in the history of Europe up to that point survived early uncertainties over its viability to become the *École militaire*'s financial mainstay<sup>221</sup>. After irregular draws during the lottery's first two years, monthly draws were held from 1760 onward<sup>222</sup>. In fact, its quick success led to proposed schemes for lotteries to finance other projects, such as repairs to the Louvre. This led to a deliberation by the *Conseil de police* to have the new *Intendant-en-Survivance* Antoine Pecquet suggest to the Controller General that such a measure would be “trop vaste pour être raisonnable”<sup>223</sup>. The combined income from the lottery and tax on cards came to average 2.4 million livres per annum<sup>224</sup>, and by 1774, two years before it was suppressed in favour of the new *Loterie Royale*, the lottery provided the school's treasury 2,669,700 livres; the tax followed with 797,037 livres, with all other revenue sources being under 100,000 livres<sup>225</sup>.

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<sup>217</sup> AN MM 658, f° 107 v<sup>10</sup>, 5 November 1757, 89.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, f° 113 v<sup>10</sup>, 16 February 1758, 93; AN MM 682, 13 August 1759. Later that month, royal intervention led to the brothers' expulsion and exile from a 50 *lieu* perimeter around Paris. AN MM 682, 16 August 1759. More details can be found in AN MM 659, 665, 666, 679, and other *côtes*.

<sup>219</sup> AN MM 682, 29 March 1759. It had branches in Toulouse, Lyon, Bordeaux and Strasbourg as well as Paris.

<sup>220</sup> Kruckeberg, ‘Chapter 2: *Les Trois Petites Loteries*: Between Christian Charity and Fiscal Expediency’ in *op. cit.*, 28-86.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 96. The lottery “was an entirely new enterprise and undertaking for which there was no model”; AN MM 678, *Mémoire*, 8 June 1758, 121. The author of this *mémoire* was principally concerned with the illicit competition from foreign lotteries.

<sup>222</sup> Laulan, “La Loterie”, 34.

<sup>223</sup> AN MM 666, *Conseil de Police*, 10 July 1760, 18-19.

<sup>224</sup> Marie Jacob, “L'École royale militaire - un modèle selon l'Encyclopédie?”, *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, no. 43 (Octobre 2008): 110. This average total was of the gross revenue. The average for the net revenue after repayments, fees, and covering other liabilities was 1.7 million livres. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, *État raisonné des revenus de l'Hôtel de l'École royale militaire*, February 1776.

<sup>225</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, *Bordereau des Recettes et Dépenses faites par le Trésorier de l'École R<sup>le</sup>. militaire*, December 1774. In 1775, the last full year the school functioned before Saint-Germain's reforms, the income from the lottery was 2,205,000 livres. Laulan, “Aperçu”, 240.



Despite a lack of major institutional changes at the *École militaire* until 1764, there were some modifications to the *Conseil*, most notably the delegation of the Minister of War's position as the school's head to lieutenant-general Louis-Hyacinthe Boyer de Crémilles. He was breveted Director and Administrator-General of the Invalides as well as *Surintendant* of the *École militaire* along with Belle-Isle on 27 May 1758<sup>226</sup>. The division of responsibilities is sketched out in a letter by Belle-Isle, Crémilles being assigned those affairs to which he could “donner une attention plus suivie que moi”, while the marshal followed those “sur lesquels il est nécessaire que le roi prononce”<sup>227</sup>. He would remain in those posts after the duc de Choiseul succeeded Belle-Isle on 3 February 1761 following the latter's death; the brevets of 30 January 1761 granted him the same authority as the Minister of War to sign and countersign all documents concerning the administration of the two institutions; his signature can be seen on the deliberations of the various *conseils* during his tenure, and the *Conseil* and its members corresponded with him as well as the ministers during that time<sup>228</sup>. He lasted for only a short time in that position, however, resigning all of his posts on 9 April 1762 and ending the only important delegation of the *Surintendant's* powers to a subordinate in the school's existence<sup>229</sup>. Other important changes in the *Conseil's* composition in this period were those relating to de Meyzieu's two positions. He first resigned his commission as *Intendant-en-survivance* in 1759<sup>230</sup>, continuing as the Director-General of Studies, but he then left that post for personal reasons in April 1760, departing with a *pension* for life by royal decision<sup>231</sup>. When Pecquet, his successor to the *survivance* died in November 1762<sup>232</sup>, the post went unfilled until given to du Pont on 23 July 1766<sup>233</sup>. To aid him in his role as director of studies, the post of *Sous-directeur des études* had been created on 25 February 1758 and filled by Louis-Félix Guyenement de Kéralio, translator of the Prussian infantry regulations<sup>234</sup>. On de

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<sup>226</sup> Pinard, *La Suite des Lieutenants généraux des armées du Roi...* (Paris, 1762), 487-488.

<sup>227</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Belle-Isle au Conseil de l'hôtel, 7 June 1760, 6.

<sup>228</sup> See AN MM 658 f<sup>o</sup> 135 v<sup>o</sup>, 24 January 1759, 114 for Crémilles's signature, while AN MM 665 and 666 contain several mentions of this correspondence.

<sup>229</sup> Pinard, *La Suite des Lieutenants généraux ...*, 488-489.

<sup>230</sup> His successor was admitted to the *Conseil de l'hôtel* on 16 June 1759. AN MM 665, Conseil de police, 48.

<sup>231</sup> AN MM 659, 3 April 1760, 17; AN MM 679, Lettre de Belle-Isle à Duverney, 17 May 1760, 2.

<sup>232</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil de Police 18 November 1762, 206.

<sup>233</sup> *Mercure de France, dédié au Roi*, T. II (Paris, 23 October 1766), 203. After du Pont became Intendant in 1770, the post of *Intendant-en-Survivance* went into abeyance.

<sup>234</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre de Paulmy à Croismare, 4 March 1758. One of five brothers, he was the father of the celebrated historian and author Louise de Kéralio. In 1759, he was made an *Aide-major* in the school, and breveted captain in the army. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 28 July 1759.

Meyzieu's departure, his post as Director-General of Studies went to Jean Charles Dufresne d'Aubigny<sup>235</sup>. Meanwhile, du Pont's office of Treasurer-General was admitted to the *Conseil* in 1761, five years before he was given the *survivance* to Duverney<sup>236</sup>.

1764 saw major changes; the former Jesuit college of La Flèche was adjoined to the *École militaire* as a preparatory school by Letters Patent of 7 April, and the independent authority of the *Bâtiments du Roi* to conduct the construction of the *hôtel* was terminated soon afterwards. Gabriel's original plans for the *hôtel* were abandoned, with the division of the *École militaire* in two sections permitting the adoption of a modified project which reduced the envisaged expenditure from 8 million to 800,000 livres<sup>237</sup>. In a letter of 19 August 1764 to Marigny, the king ordered the *Bâtiments du Roi* to evacuate the château de Grenelle and hand it over to the *École militaire*. The *Bâtiments* were furthermore to repay 180,000 livres, the product of the *pension* of the abbey of Liessies, to the school's treasurer<sup>238</sup>. An *Arrêt du Conseil* of 9 November 1764 set up a new administrative structure for future construction work. Tournehem's dispositions, with the architects responding to the *Bâtiments*' hierarchy, independent of any other superior or control, had never been authorised or approved and were henceforth terminated. In the future, the *Bâtiments* former functions were to be fulfilled by the architect of the school (still Gabriel) as *Directeur des bâtiments de l'hôtel*, under the authority of the Minister of War<sup>239</sup>. The new relationship is summarised by Bernard Pâris de Bollardière as "Gabriel, définitivement contrôlé par Duverney"<sup>240</sup>. The new plans were studied and modified over a three-year span before recommencing in 1768, Louis XV laying the first stone of the chapel in 1769. Gabriel's re-worked plan, a majestic corps-de-logis known as the "château" facing the Champ-de-Mars, was largely complete by 1773, although work continued on many other elements until 1787<sup>241</sup>.

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<sup>235</sup> AN MM 665, Conseil de police, 19 May 1760, 273; He was best known as a grand-nephew of the renowned seventeenth-century linguist and philologist Charles du Fresne, sieur Du Cange. See the *Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne...* CA-CH, T. VII (Paris, 1813), 17.

<sup>236</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil d'administration, 20 April 1761, 92.

<sup>237</sup> AN MM 659, deliberation of 25 June 1765, 85.

<sup>238</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil de police, 21 August 1764, 305. The *Bâtiments* was permitted to retain the amount of 2,500 livres from this sum, compensation for having set the foundations of the chapel.

<sup>239</sup> *Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi*, 9 November 1764, *Récueil des Édits...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 48-50.

<sup>240</sup> Bernard Pâris de Bollardière, *Joseph Pâris Duverney et ses frères: Financiers dauphinois à la Cour de Louis XV* (Toulon: Presses du Midi, 2006), 147.

<sup>241</sup> Laulan, *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 11-16; *Le Monument*, 44-55.

After the Jesuits abandoned La Flèche in April 1762, the school became the municipal *collège*<sup>242</sup>. Choiseul had the idea of allying La Flèche to the *École militaire* suggested to him by the *parlementaire* Barthélemy-Gabriel Rolland de Chambaudoïn d’Erceville<sup>243</sup>. By December 1763, drafts of the Letters Patents concerning the union of La Flèche to the *École militaire* were being exchanged by the Ministry of War and the *Conseil de police*<sup>244</sup>. The administration of the *École militaire* made a list of observations concerning this measure, such as requesting that La Flèche keep certain sources of funding (the Papegaux de Bretagne) but rid itself of some lands (the abbey of Asnières), which were seen as a potential drain on the *École militaire*’s finances, possibly due to some of the disputes it encountered in administering the assets of some of its own abbeys’ revenue. It also insisted that the relationship between the two institutions be termed a “relation” and not a “réunion” as in the case of the abbeys, so that there would be “point de mélange de biens”; finally, it preferred to leave matters of teaching and a possible future *pensionnat* in the hands of the *Bureau d’administration* of the *collège*, while its general administration would be handled by the *Conseil de l’hôtel* under the supervision of the *Surintendant*<sup>245</sup>. The Letters Patent of 7 April 1764 in the end mostly ignored the *Conseil*’s wishes: the *rentes sur les Papegaux* were decreed to end on 1 January 1765 while the abbey was to largely continue functioning as before; any shortfalls in its endowment was to be made up from the funds of the *École militaire*<sup>246</sup>. La Flèche was granted all of the exemptions and immunities of its new parent school; and it was now known as both a *collège royal (de pleine exercice)* and an *école militaire*<sup>247</sup>. Articles 8 and 9 described its administration, listing the members of its *Bureau d’administration* and creating the post of Inspector to report on the morals and character of the students<sup>248</sup>. Du Pont’s cousin Stanislas Dupont de la

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<sup>242</sup> Didier Boisson, “Introduction” to Stanislas Dupont de la Motte, *Journal* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires, 2005), 14. They were expelled from the lands under the jurisdiction of the Paris *Parlement* on 6 August.

<sup>243</sup> Barthélemy-Gabriel Rolland de Chambaudoïn d’Erceville, “Compte-rendu aux chambres assemblées concernant le collège que jésuites occupaient à La Fleche”, 5 July 1763, in *Recueil de plusieurs ouvrages de Monsieur Président Rolland...* (Paris, 1783), 546.

<sup>244</sup> See the deliberations under the heading ‘Conseil de police’ of 29 December 1763, 5 January 1765, and 5 April 1764; AN MM 666, fol. 276, 278 and 289-290.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 276, 29 December 1763.

<sup>246</sup> Lettres Patentes du roi, portant confirmation du Collège royal de La Flèche, et qui y établissent un pensionnat de deux cents cinquante Gentilshommes, Articles XXV, XXIX, XXXII and XXXIII, 7 April 1764 in *Recueil des Édits ... T I* (Paris, 1782), 718, 719-720, 720-721. The *École militaire* was also to pay for the furnishing of La Flèche. Article XXXVI, *Ibid.*, 722.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, Article XL, 723.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles VIII and IX, 712-713.

Motte was named Inspector, and he was later admitted to the *Bureau*; though not specified in the Letters Patent, he sent weekly reports to the Intendant of the *École militaire*. Furthermore, he kept a journal from 1771 until 1776, one of the best accounts of life and administration at La Flèche<sup>249</sup>.

As for the students, Choiseul determined that La Flèche would only accept 50 at the beginning, in order to maintain the ordered progress of students by class and age. Older students would be sent directly to the *École militaire* and younger ones to La Flèche, while those students under the age of 11 on 1 October 1763 would be eligible for the following nomination<sup>250</sup>. On 11 August 1764 Choiseul informed the *Conseil* that students who had left the *École militaire* were not to be replaced immediately from those eligible for La Flèche in order to allow it to build up its numbers sufficiently to perform its function as a feeder properly<sup>251</sup>. The Letters Patent specified that it was to provide a free education to 250 *gentilshommes* for the military, the Church or the magistracy, as their talents dictated<sup>252</sup>. Those with a military inclination were to proceed to the *École militaire* and the others remain to complete their studies in the *collège*; additionally, *externes* were admissible alongside the *pensionnaires*<sup>253</sup>. As Didier Boisson has shown, these requirements were all carried out satisfactorily: 51 students were admitted to La Flèche in 1764, the *pensionnaires* numbering 260 in October 1768 and the total student body reaching 344 by 1776, of which 100 were *externes*. Of the 362 students educated during 1764-1769, 317 or 87.5% went on to the *École militaire*. Viewed as a feeder institute, La Flèche thus performed to expectations, even if “la qualité de l’enseignement est difficile à connaître”<sup>254</sup>.

In 1766, the *École militaire* was again given a governor, the king promoting Croismare from *Lieutenant de Roi* and commandant to the new role on 23 July 1766; the *Lieutenance* went to Bongars, and the Majority to lieutenant-colonel Poulain de

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<sup>249</sup> Boisson, *op. cit.*

<sup>250</sup> AN MM 666, fol. 300, Conseil de police, 6 July 1764. Some other points included, “que les élèves qui manquent ou qui manqueront dans l’hôtel seront remplacés directement jusqu’à ce que ceux élevés dans le collège de La Flèche puissent fournir au remplacement de l’hôtel”, and, “l’intention du ministre est de placer les élèves actuellement dans l’hôtel et qui sont en âge d’en sortir”.

<sup>251</sup> AN MM 679, fol. 113, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l’hôtel, Compiègne, 11 August 1764.

<sup>252</sup> Lettres Patentes du Roi, portant confirmation du Collège royal de la Flèche, et qui y établissent un Pensionnat de deux cents cinquante Gentilshommes, 7 April 1764, in *Recueil des Edits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 708-709.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles VII & III, 712, 710-711.

<sup>254</sup> Boisson, *op. cit.*, 17, 19.

Boujou<sup>255</sup>. At this date, then, the *Conseil* was composed of Choiseul as *Surintendant*, Duverney as *Intendant*, Croismare as Governor, Bongars as *Lieutenant de Roi*, Poulain de Boujou as Major, Dufresne d'Aubigny as Director-General of Studies, du Pont as Treasurer and *Intendant-en-Survivance*, and Darget as its Secretary, but without deliberative voice. All except Dufresne d'Aubigny (replaced by the writer Jean-Louis Bizot in 1768) remained members until 1770, following Duverney's death on 17 July<sup>256</sup> and Choiseul's dismissal on 24 December. The first was succeeded by du Pont and the latter was replaced by the marquis de Monteynard. The *Conseil* underwent few further changes in the early years of that decade: on Croismare's death in 1772, the maréchal de camp César-Jean-Baptiste, marquis de Timbrune-Valence was named governor<sup>257</sup>. Monteynard was dismissed on 26 January 1774, his replacement the duc d'Aiguillon in turn being removed following the death of Louis XV on 10 May. Louis XVI appointed the maréchal du Muy as Minister of War, but he lasted little more than a year due to his death on 10 October 1775. Following Bizot's dismissal on 14 December 1773, the comte de Dromgold took his post<sup>258</sup>, but his own tenure, and that of the *Conseil*, was cut short when du Muy's successor, the comte de Saint-Germain, closed the *École militaire*.

### Part III: The administration and end of the *École militaire* 1776-1793

The rationale for, effects, and legacy of Saint-Germain's reforms in matters of military education will not be broached here, as they have been the subject of numerous other detailed studies, both of the reforms in general and of individual schools in particular<sup>259</sup>. Saint-Germain did not work alone, and contemporaries described the comte de Guibert, famous as the author of the seminal *Essai Général de Tactique*, and

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<sup>255</sup> *Mercure de France, dédié au Roi*, T II (Paris, 23 October 1766), 203. Poulain de Boujou had been the commandant of the citadel of Minorca during its occupation during the Seven Years' War.

<sup>256</sup> AN MM 680, fol. 43 V<sup>o</sup>, Discours prononcé le 20 Juillet 1770, par M. l'abbé Bouilleot, Curé de St. Gervais à Paris, en présentant au clergé de l'École R<sup>alé</sup> M<sup>re</sup> le corps de M. Pâris-duVerney...

Dufresne d'Aubigny requested and was granted his resignation in 1765. AN MM 679, Lettre écrite par Choiseul au Conseil de l'hôtel, Versailles, 4 February 1765, 121.

The post of Director of Studies was suppressed in 1765, replaced by that of *Inspecteur des Études* which was filled by Barrett, a former professor of Latin. AN MM 679, Lettre du Conseil de l'hôtel à Choiseul, 15 April 1765, 134.

The post of Director was restored for Bizot, according to the *États militaires* of 1768.

<sup>257</sup> Abbé Jean-Charles Poncelin de la Roche-Tilhac, *État des cours de l'Europe et des Provinces de France pour l'année MDCCLXXXVI* (Paris, 1786), 229.

<sup>258</sup> AN MM 675, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 19 August 1780, 50; AN MM 669, 5 January 1774, 120.

<sup>259</sup> Schalck-Pommellet's thesis is the lengthiest examination of the reforms. The most interesting observation found there is that, "si Duverney avait été en vie, il n'aurait pas laissé bouleverser ... cette école qu'il considérait comme l'œuvre de sa vie". Dominique Schalck-Pommellet, "L'École Royale Militaire de Paris et la Révolution du comte de Saint-Germain, 1751-1776-1793", thèse pour le doctorat d'état (Paris, 1968), 16.

Loménie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, as two key collaborators, whose projects for the reforming minister have unfortunately not survived<sup>260</sup>. Their assistance is a key link in the reform projects of 1775-1777 and those of 1787-1789. Here, the focus of these changes is the reforms to the school's administrative bodies and their implications for the system of military education<sup>261</sup>. It is important to note that La Flèche, despite becoming a civilian *collège* in 1776, remained dependent on the administration of the Paris *École militaire* and the Ministry of War for years after their mutual reform. The implications for this status on those students pursuing careers in the church is briefly considered in chapter 5. But for now, we will limit ourselves to chronicling the changes in the administration of the *École militaire*.

The declaration of 1 February 1776 marked the end of the first incarnation of the *École militaire*. De la Motte wrote on 2 February, “on ne doute plus de la destruction de ce collège [La Flèche]”, adding that two representatives were being sent to Paris, “afin de travailler à conserver quelques débris” of the *collège*<sup>262</sup>. The measure dispersed the students of La Flèche and the *École militaire* to the army or to the 10 *collèges de plein exercice* now denominated *écoles militaires* (they became 12 on 19 October 1776<sup>263</sup>), while confirming the *École militaire*'s financial *fondation* and all of its “donations, dotations, concessions et aliénations”<sup>264</sup>. These were now to be applied for the benefit of 600 students in the provinces and 1,200 cadets-gentilshommes in the regiments<sup>265</sup>. Article V decreed that all the *fondation*'s furnishings, property, funds and revenues would remain affected in perpetuity to their instruction and maintenance. Article VI dealt with the administration of the *fondation*: its goods and revenues were to remain in

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<sup>260</sup> Pierre Christian, baron de Wimpffen, *Commentaires des “Mémoires de Monsieur le comte de Saint-Germain...”* (London, 1780), 75. It was rumoured that Saint-Germain, “renverra à l'archevêque de Toulouse toutes les lettres des corps de La Flèche”. Dupont de la Motte, *Journal*, 29 January 1776, 8<sup>th</sup> cahier, 3 September 1775-25 March 1776.

<sup>261</sup> Although Guibert appears not to have referred directly to the *École militaire* in his work, a reason beyond a desire for reform may have motivated his animosity to the school. In 1773, his father was nominated to the post of Governor following Croismare's death, but some court nobles insinuated he was unsuitable for the post by casting doubt on his quality as a *gentilhomme*. The maréchal de Broglie defended his candidacy and quality in two letters to Louis XV of 27 March and 16 April 1773, but Guibert père was passed over in favour of Timbrune. He would later go on to become Governor of the Invalides. For Broglie's letters, see BnF Ms. français 11310.

<sup>262</sup> De la Motte, *Journal*, 8<sup>th</sup> cahier, 3 September 1775 to 25 March 1776.

<sup>263</sup> Extrait des Registres du Conseil d'État, Fontainebleau, 19 October 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 109-111. The last two *collèges* were Auxerre and Dôle.

<sup>264</sup> Déclaration du roi, portant règlement, non-seulement sur l'éducation que recevront à l'avenir les élèves de l'École royale militaire, mais encore touchant l'administration des biens de cet établissement, Versailles, 1 February 1776, in *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles II and IV, 61-62.

the remit of the Minister of War, who would preside over a *Bureau* to be composed of four administrators chosen from the king's *Conseil* (unspecified, but likely the *Conseil d'État*) or otherwise nominated by the minister. The *Bureau* was authorised to administer the goods and revenues “par baux à ferme générale ou particulière, ou par forme de régie”<sup>266</sup>, abrogating the dispositions of Article XI of the edict of 22 January which prohibited the *droits sur les cartes* from being *affermé*<sup>267</sup>. Article VIII allowed the *Bureau d'administration* to sell or otherwise dispose of the *hôtel* and its lands, buildings, dependencies, and furnishings after these were inventoried<sup>268</sup>. This inventory was authorised by an *Arrêt du Conseil du Roi* of 11 February<sup>269</sup>. The use of the funds raised by these measures was described by Article IX, which stated that they were to be handed to the Treasurer of the *Extraordinaire des Guerres* to settle the debts of the *École militaire*, and subsequently to acquire rents as permitted the “gens de main-morte” by the Edict of August 1749. The same use was to be made of any income from the reimbursement of capital, contracts, or other assets belonging to its *fondation*<sup>270</sup>.

The *École militaire* was thus completely reconfigured, but not utterly destroyed. Its students and revenues continued to be destined for much the same purposes that they had been since La Flèche was set up as an *école militaire* in 1764, though those students of leaving-age now went directly to the army instead of continuing their studies in Paris (unless they pursued a legal or ecclesiastical career). Admittedly, the Parisian premises were now vacant and faced the threat of being sold off piece-meal. Only its financial set-up remained relatively intact, the *fondation* henceforth serving to fund Saint-Germain's project, a far cry from that which had been envisaged by its founders. If it could still be considered the same institution, it was so in only the most general sense of taking children from their families and educating them for the king's service at his expense. The same could not be said for the body administering the institution: although the declaration of 1 February remained silent regarding the *Conseil d'administration* (and the subordinate *conseils*), concerning itself only with describing the new *Bureau*

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., Articles V and VI, 62-63.

<sup>267</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XI, Édît du roi, 22 January 1751, 7.

<sup>268</sup> Déclaration du Roi, portant règlement, non-seulement sur l'éducation que recevront à l'avenir les élèves de l'École royale militaire, mais encore touchant l'administration des biens de cet établissement, Article VIII, Versailles, 1 February 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 63.

<sup>269</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, qui nomme des commissaires pour procéder à l'inventaire des biens et effets de l'École royale militaire, 11 February 1776, in Ibid., 185.

<sup>270</sup> Déclaration du roi, ... touchant l'administration des biens de cet établissement, Article IX, 1 February 1776, in Ibid., 64.

*d'administration*, it was duly suppressed by an *Ordonnance du Roi* of 25 March 1776<sup>271</sup>, the same date that the places for 1,200 *cadets-gentilshommes* were created in the regiments<sup>272</sup>. The ordinance reiterated the provisions of the declaration of 1 February concerning the evacuation of the students from the *École militaire* and La Flèche, adding that the *Conseil*'s functions were to cease on the day that said evacuation was completed. That same day, the administration of their assets was taken over by the *Bureau*<sup>273</sup>.

Only two members continued their functions uninterrupted, the treasurer Biercourt and secretary-archivist Dupré being allowed their usual privileges and wages. The secretary was charged with taking the minutes of the *Bureau*'s meetings and drafting the deliberations which it took. He was also to continue maintaining the register of students and *cadets-gentilshommes* funded by the *fondation*, the titles of the *fondation*'s assets, and the students' proofs of nobility. Article VI declared that the positions of all other employees and officers in the two original *écoles militaires* were suppressed from the same date that the change from the *Conseil* to the *Bureau* took place, their individual compensation to be decided later; only the Principal, Sous-principal and Regents of the *collège* of La Flèche were to remain in their posts. Finally, the ordinance created the posts of *Inspecteur-général* and *Sous-inspecteur-général* for the new, provincial *écoles militaires*, the first position to be held by a general officer and the latter by a colonel or lieutenant-colonel<sup>274</sup>. Within five days, on 30 March, the first post had been filled, the governor of the *hôtel*, Timbrune, being named *Inspecteur-général*<sup>275</sup>, while the post of *Sous-inspecteur* was given to colonel Agathon Guyenne, chevalier de Kéralio in October<sup>276</sup>. Their role *vis-à-vis* the *cadets-gentilshommes* in the regiments was described in Article XVI of the ordinance of 25 March which established them: the two inspectors were to draft reports on the conduct and progress of each cadet, compiled from the notes furnished by regimental commanders, and subsequently they

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<sup>271</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, *Ordonnance du roi, pour la suppression du Conseil actuel de l'École Royale-militaire, celle des officiers et autres personnes employées dans les maisons de Paris et de La Flèche; et pour la création d'un Inspecteur général et d'un Sous-inspecteur des Écoles Royales-militaires*, 25 March 1776.

<sup>272</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, *Ordonnance du roi, portant création des cadets-gentilshommes dans les troupes de Sa Majesté*, 25 March 1776.

<sup>273</sup> *Ordonnance du roi, pour la suppression du Conseil actuel de l'École Royale-militaire...*, Article II, 25 March 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ... T. I* (Paris, 1782), 183. The *Bureau* was to meet in the same room that the *Conseil* had formerly used for its deliberations.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles III, IV, VI, VII and VIII, 183-185.

<sup>275</sup> *Journal Politique ou Gazette des Gazettes*, February 1777.

<sup>276</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, 4 October 1776. The chevalier had previously served in the élite Grenadiers de France.



were to examine the cadets personally on all the objects of their learning, so that none could be promoted without passing that examination<sup>277</sup>. The two inspectors were also to administer the annual *concours* to be held from 1778 at Brienne-le-Château for students seeking promotion to the cadets-gentilshommes<sup>278</sup>, and visit the *écoles militaires* to verify that the règlement of 28 March 1776<sup>279</sup> concerning their organisation, administration, and the education imparted therein was being carried out. Their list of duties was soon expanded, as a letter to the administrators of 26 October 1776 notified them that the inspectors were also entrusted with the details of the admission of students to La Flèche<sup>280</sup>.

The *Bureau*'s four administrators were named by an *Arrêt du Conseil* of 10 May 1776. This *Arrêt* entrusted the *Bureau* with all the power and authority that the *Conseil* had been endowed with by all previous edicts and regulations<sup>281</sup>. The *Conseil* was to hand over to these new administrators all titles, papers, contracts, active effects, *deniers* and other goods listed by the *états* and inventories relating to the school, the process to be done in the presence of the Intendant and *Contrôleur* of the *hôtel*. The school's revenues were to continue being received by its treasurer, to be employed as dictated by the *Bureau*, to which the treasurer was to submit an annual statement in accordance with Article VII of the edict of 22 January. The *Bureau* was to meet every fifteen days, or more often if necessary; the treasurer was to attend its meetings, but without having a deliberative voice, while the Secretary-archivist was to record the meetings<sup>282</sup>. On 30 June, the lottery was suppressed and replaced by an annual payment of 2 million livres to the *fondation*, drawn from the revenue of the *Loterie Royale* until 1787, the original term of the lottery<sup>283</sup>.

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<sup>277</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du roi, portant création des cadets-gentilshommes ... Article XVI, 25 March 1776, 11-12.

<sup>278</sup> Règlement en six titres sur la répartition des élèves des nouvelles écoles militaires dans diverses maisons religieuses, Titre IV, Articles IV, V, VII, IX, & XXII, Versailles, 28 March 1776, in *Recueil Général des Anciennes Loix Françaises...* (Paris, undated), 514.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, Titre VI, Article V, 520.

<sup>280</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, 26 October 1776.

<sup>281</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, qui nomme les administrateurs de la fondation de l'École Royale-militaire; et qui règle les fonctions de cette administration, Article I, 10 May 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 186. The administrators were the *maître des requêtes* de Cotte, the *maître des comptes* Valleteau de la Fosse, *Parlement* lawyer d'Outremont, and a former notary Marchand.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles II, III and IV, 186-187.

<sup>283</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, du 30 Juin 1776, qui fixe à deux millions de livres par an l'indemnité due à l'École Royale-militaire, à cause de la suppression de sa loterie, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 571-572.

The functions of the administration of the school ceased on 4 July<sup>284</sup>, and the *hôtel* ceased hosting the *École militaire* on 1 August, the date when its professors' functions ended<sup>285</sup>. Very soon thereafter, however, a stipulation of the declaration of 1 February 1776 was reversed: on 10 August, Letters Patent were issued re-establishing the post of treasurer of the *École militaire*, who was to receive the funds destined for the treasurer of the *Extraordinaire des Guerres* per Article IX of the declaration of 1 February. This was in order to avoid what the Letters Patent described as a “double comptabilité”. The treasurer of the *École militaire* was to present his accounts to the *Bureau* as per Article VII of the edict of 22 January<sup>286</sup>. Although a seemingly minor reversal on Saint-Germain's part, this change was in fact symptomatic of the greater changes in store for the school, which would lead to its re-establishment.

De la Motte reported that the conversion of the buildings of the *École militaire* into a barracks for the *Gardes du corps* of the *Maison du Roi* was being mooted as early as 26 February 1776<sup>287</sup>. Joly de Fleury pointed out on 6 March that this project could only be carried out in accordance with the dispositions of the declaration of 1 February by compensating the *fondation* of the *École militaire* by a contract of sale or lease. His opinion was that, given the intended use of the buildings, such a transaction could be fixed at a low price, but the initiative fell through<sup>288</sup>. Alternatively, “Saint-Germain ne songe, paraît-il, à y former les aumôniers des corps de troupe”<sup>289</sup>, while Laulan describes “l'aliénation des bâtiments” as “une opération désastreuse”<sup>290</sup>. The buildings remaining empty and with no apparent purpose, the first rumours concerning the re-establishing of the *École militaire* began to circulate in September 1776<sup>291</sup>. A first,

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<sup>284</sup> Hennet, *op. cit.*, 74; De la Motte reported the *pensions* awarded the former members of the *Conseil*: Dupont received 12,000 livres and Timbrune 20,000. De la Motte, Friday 21 June 1776, *Journal*, 9<sup>th</sup> cahier, 26 March 1776 to 30 September 1776. Among the critics of Saint-Germain's measures was the marquis de Poyanne, commander of the élite Carabiniers. In a visit to La Flèche, “il a parlé avec bien de l'éloge de l'administration de M. Dupont et blâmé la destruction de ce collège”. 19 August 1776, *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau d'administration à St. Germain, 10 February 1777, 38.

<sup>286</sup> Lettres Patentes du roi, pour le rétablissement du trésorier de l'École Royale-militaire, Versailles, 10 August 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 697-698.

<sup>287</sup> De la Motte, Monday 21 June 1776, *Journal*, 8<sup>th</sup> cahier, 3 September 1775 to 25 March 1776.

<sup>288</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Notes relatives au travail concernant l'École militaire, 6 March 1776; de la Motte noted “que l'hôtel de l'École militaire ne sera pas vendu, qu'elle servira à loger les administrateurs, le trésorier, etc. de la nouvelle forme”. Tuesday 19 March 1776, *Journal*, 8<sup>th</sup> cahier.

<sup>289</sup> Jean Chagniot, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris –Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1988), 495.

<sup>290</sup> Laulan, “Pourquoi et comment on entrât à l'École royale militaire de Paris”, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 4 (1957): 149.

<sup>291</sup> De la Motte reported “qu'il est question de rétablir l'École militaire en Académie militaire” and “on parle de recréer l'École militaire”. 26 and 27 September 1776, *Journal*, 9<sup>th</sup> cahier, 26 March 1776 to 30 September 1776.

tentative step hinting at ministerial intentions in that sense can be read into the provisions of an *Arrêt du Conseil* of 31 December 1776 which revoked the measure of 10 May concerning the *Bureau d'administration*. The new *Arrêt* thanked the four administrators for their work, nearly complete, and added that “les nouvelles vues que Sa Majesté se propose d'exécuter” demanded a continuity of care and fixed residence in the *hôtel* incompatible with all other callings; to that effect, it dictated that the members of the *Bureau* hand over to Timbrune and the chevalier de Kéralio all titles, papers, registers, and other documents concerning the *École militaire*, to be entrusted to the care of the secretary Dupré-Laoürens; that act would simultaneously be the last discharged by those administrators, with further dispositions concerning the administration of the *École militaire* to follow<sup>292</sup>.

The new measures came swiftly, being set out in the Ordonnance du Roi of 4 January 1777, which gave a new form to the *Bureau d'administration*. While the minister remained its president in his capacity as *Surintendant*, the four former administrators places' were now taken by the *Inspecteur-général*, *Sous-inspecteur*, the *Supérieur-général des Aumôniers militaires* (Joseph-Charles Jolly<sup>293</sup>), and a new functionary, the *Directeur-général des affaires*. These were all to be resident in the *hôtel*, and the *Bureau* was to meet once a week; its deliberations, recorded by the Secretary-archivist, were to be expedited to the Ministry of War each week for approval, without which they would be entirely provisional in nature. The treasurer was only to attend its meetings when summoned by the *Bureau*, and the ordinance regulated the way and form in which he was to present his *états* on the school's finances. Otherwise, the *Bureau* was entrusted with continuing carrying out all of the functions linked to the *fondation*, namely continuing the payment of *pensions* and *traitements* to former officers and employees (both of the *École militaire* and La Flèche), the 200 livre *pension* to students in the army and the *pensions* for those in the *collèges*, as well as overseeing and acquitting all other the annual expenses<sup>294</sup>. This was all very much in line with preparations for the re-establishment of the school, for as Saint-Germain put it

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<sup>292</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, qui révoque celui du 10 mai precedent, concernant le Bureau d'administration de l'École Royale-militaire, 31 December 1776, in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 192-194.

<sup>293</sup> *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney...* T. I (London, 1789), 134.

<sup>294</sup> AN MM 660, Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement pour la tenue du Bureau d'administration de l'École royale militaire, Versailles 4 January 1777, 1-2.

in his memoirs, the ordinance for the re-establishment of the *École militaire* was ready in January, following the abandonment of the different schemes for its buildings; it was however delayed over seven months by the king, who had the draft read and modified by parties unknown to Saint-Germain, before it was finally issued<sup>295</sup>.

The re-establishment of the *École militaire* was at last declared by the Ordonnance of 17 July; in its new form, a corps of *cadets-gentilshommes* was housed in the school's buildings, composed of a selected elite of students in the *collèges*. This included both those maintained with the help of the king as well as those whose families could afford to pay a *pension*, to foster *émulation* between the two classes<sup>296</sup>. The nominated students were those signalled by the *Inspecteur-général* and *Sous-inspecteur* as the worthiest to enter the new corps following their annual trips to the provincial schools. The cadets themselves were to be of 13-16 years of age, with the king additionally reserving the right to nominate foreign nobles to the corps, and were to be nominated each June for entry on 1 October<sup>297</sup>. Those *gentilshommes* maintained by their families were to pay a *pension* of 2,000 livres, in addition to a fee of 400 livres on entering the school for their first furnishings and equipment. They were not, however, allowed to receive any other money from their families; the two classes (the *gentilshommes-élevés* or *élèves du roi* and the fee-paying *pensionnaires*) were to be lodged, fed, clothed, and otherwise kept in identical fashion, with no distinction between them<sup>298</sup>. The financial accounts of income and expenses were to be submitted to the *Bureau* each month, with annual accounts ending September of each year submitted to the Minister of War each November. The annual *concours* set up by the decree of 28 March 1776 was suppressed, the nomination of the best students to the new *École militaire* replacing it as a means to maintain *émulation* and reward personal distinction and merit. The first nominees were to be chosen in August in order for instruction to begin on 1 October 1777<sup>299</sup>. The overall responsibility for the new corps was given to the *Inspecteur-général* and *Sous-inspecteur*, but as they were entrusted with the whole of the administration as well as with inspecting the provincial schools,

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<sup>295</sup> Saint-Germain, *Commentaires des Mémoires de Monsieur le comte de Saint-Germain ...* (London, 1780), 63-64. Saint-Germain's view of the matter and its dénouement was that, "On a étrangement abusé dans cette circonstance de la bonté et de la confiance du roi".

<sup>296</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du roi portant création d'une compagnie de cadets et d'un corps d'instruction à l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, Versailles, 17 July 1777, 1-2.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., Articles IV, V and VI, 2-3.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., Articles VII and VIII, 3-4.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., Article XI, XII and XIV, 4-5.

command of the company itself was delegated to another officer. The baron de Moyria was named Captain-commandant of the company of cadets on 18 October<sup>300</sup>.

On 15 August, Saint-Germain addressed a letter to the *Bureau* insisting that time was of the essence in order to ensure all the preparations were in place by 1 October. He specifically insisted on having lodgings for 100 students (50 from the *écoles militaires*, 50 *pensionnaires* sent directly by their families) as well as for several staff members and domestics ready. He furthermore requested that the administrators advise him of the measures they considered best for the re-establishment of the *manège*<sup>301</sup>. Several ordinances followed regulating the admission of candidates to the company<sup>302</sup>, as well as their promotion to *sous-lieutenants* when they left the *École militaire*<sup>303</sup>. On 10 September, d’Auvergne was reinstated as *écuyer*<sup>304</sup>. With everything going apace for the school’s re-establishment, Saint-Germain resigned on 27 September, replaced by his *survivancier*, the prince de Montbarey.

Saint-Germain’s downfall, ironically in light of his dealings with the *École militaire*, came about as the result of his efforts to restore it. The ordinance of 4 January 1777, which made the Superior of the *Aumôniers-militaires* a member of the reconfigured *Bureau d’administration*, was depicted as an insidious effort for the covert reestablishment of the Jesuits. Specifically, the text of Article IX of the Ordinance of 17 July 1777 regarding the chapel’s service and spiritual functions of the hotel, which was entrusted to the *Aumôniers-militaires*, but especially the passage which read “plusieurs parties de l’instruction de la jeune noblesse seront confiées à ses sujets [the Aumôniers]”<sup>305</sup> sufficed to cost Saint-Germain whatever backing from the king he still had. As the comte de Grimoard put it, “on se servit de ce projet ... pour mettre le ministre aux prises avec le Parlement, à qui elle fut dénoncée en février, comme une

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<sup>300</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Commission de Capitaine Commandant d’une c[ompagn]ie de cadets-gentilshommes établie à l’École royale-militaire, pour ... baron de Moyria, 18 October 1777. He was a former captain of the cavalry regiment Colonel-Général.

<sup>301</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de Saint-Germain au B[ure]au d’administration, 15 August 1777, 92.

<sup>302</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire instructif sur les conditions requises pour être admis dans le corps de cadets-gentilshommes établi à l’hôtel de l’école royale militaire par ordonnance du roi du 17 juillet 1777, 1 September 1777; Mémoire instructif sur les conditions requises pour être admis, moyennant une pension, dans la compagnie de cadets-gentilshommes établis à l’Hôtel de l’École royale-militaire..., 18 October 1777.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., Ordonnance du roi, qui règle l’âge auquel il sera expédié des lettres de sous-lieutenants aux cadets-gentilshommes de la compagnie établie à l’École royale-militaire, 11 January 1778.

<sup>304</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, Pièces Égarées.

<sup>305</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du roi portant création d’une compagnie de cadets et d’un corps d’instruction à l’Hôtel de l’École royale-militaire, Article IX, Versailles 17 July 1777, 4.

intrigue tendante au rétablissement des Jésuites sous une nouvelle forme<sup>306</sup>. Saint-Germain's early education by the Jesuits was held against him, and his protestations that a lapse of 50 years separating that stage of his life from his current projects, as well as the fact that not a single nominated *aumônier* was a Jesuit, were of no avail<sup>307</sup>. An idea of the alarm the prospect of a possible Jesuit revival could cause was the allegation that, given a toe-hold in the *École militaire*, they would subsequently spread to the companies of cadets in the regiments as well as the provincial *écoles militaires*<sup>308</sup>. In the end, though not evicted, Saint-Germain thought it best to resign: in his words, “je pris sur-le-champ le parti d’abandonner ma place qui ne pouvoit plus avoir aucuns charmes pour moi”<sup>309</sup>.

Progress toward the reinstatement of the *École militaire* was not stopped by Montbary's arrival, although the change in minister may have slowed the re-opening by some months, the reception of students being pushed back to January 1778. A re-drafted ordinance announcing the establishment of the *cadets-gentilshommes* in the *École militaire* was issued on 18 October 1777; this new measure was shorter and less specific than that of 17 July, repeating some of its provisions in a different order, calculated more to complement than supersede the first ordinance (albeit with all mention of *Aumôniers-militaires* eliminated from the article on religious life in the school<sup>310</sup>). It made no mention of the *École militaire*'s administration other than in the second article, which put the school's military officers under the orders of the *Inspector-general* and *Sous-inspecteur*. Its penultimate article announced that the king was to make his intentions on the school's administration, discipline, instruction, and other

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<sup>306</sup> Philippe-Henri, comte de Grimoard, *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney...* Vol. 1 (London, 1789), 100.

<sup>307</sup> Saint-Germain, *Commentaires des Mémoires de Monsieur le comte de Saint-Germain ...* (London, 1780), 64-65.

<sup>308</sup> Anonymous, *Lettre de M. le comte de \*\*\* à M... président au Parlement de Paris* (N.p., n.d.), 5-6, 14.

<sup>309</sup> Saint-Germain, *Commentaires des Mémoires de Monsieur le comte de Saint-Germain...* (London, 1780), 64.

Saint-Germain's estranged collaborator and the author of the commentaries of the minister's memoirs, the baron de Wimpffen, gave this opinion of the affair: “Son projet pour les Aumôniers était très-bon, peut-être nécessaire, et serait sûrement devenu très-utile par la suite. Mais il a été mal conçu et plus mal dirigé encore.... De tels gens ne sont propres qu’à former des moines et non des guerriers.... il faut donc s’applaudir plutôt que de se plaindre de ce que l’intrigue contre ce ministre, quelque peu vraisemblable qu’elle fût, ait si heureusement réussie”. The text is only just sufficiently ambiguous to leave some doubt as to whether the baron is celebrating the failure of the project for the *Aumôniers*, or the minister's fall. Wimpffen, *Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>310</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Article VIII, Ordonnance du roi, portant création d’une compagnie de cadets-gentilshommes, Fontainebleau, 18 October 1777, 3. The new article simply reads, “La chapelle sera desservie comme ci-devant, et les fondations royales seront remplies conformément aux règlements desdites fondations”.

matters more fully known in future regulations<sup>311</sup>. In fact, the principal changes to the school, other than the re-opening of classes, between the ordinance of 18 October 1777 and the revocation of the *droit sur les cartes* in November 1778, was the admission on 9 November 1777 by royal decision of de Moyria to the school's administrative body with full deliberative voice<sup>312</sup>. Furthermore, the fact that the document noting this development labels it as the "Conseil d'administration" and not "Bureau d'administration" may indicate that the *Bureau* was colloquially referred to as the *Conseil*<sup>313</sup>.

The final decade of the *École militaire*'s existence (1778-1788) in Paris was marked by a relative stability in composition and organisation. The position of *Commissaire des Guerres* attached to the company of cadets was created in February 1778 as the first of several efforts to reinforce the military character of the corps lodged in the *hôtel*<sup>314</sup>. One of the regulations promised by Article XI of the ordinance of 18 October 1777 was issued as an Arrêt du Conseil d'État du Roi of 11 April 1778 which maintained all of the privileges, exemptions, and immunities of the *École militaire*<sup>315</sup>. Its second most important source of income, the *droit sur les cartes* was converted from an independent revenue stream into a payment disbursed annually by the Royal Treasury, as with the erstwhile income from the lottery. Montbarey claimed the credit for the absorption and assimilation of the *École militaire*'s lottery and *droit sur les cartes* by the Royal Treasury. His objective was to exchange the 18 million livres which those rights were valued at for 13 million as a "fondation fixe" for the *École militaire* and 5 million for the order of Saint-Louis. He presented it as a means of ridding the treasury of a "*caput mortuum, sans valeur dans la circulation*" and consolidating the both bodies through "*rentes assurées irrévocablement*"<sup>316</sup>.

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<sup>311</sup> Ibid., Articles II and XI, 1, 4.

<sup>312</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, Pièces Égarées, 9 November 1777.

<sup>313</sup> See also AN MM 675, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil à Marly, 8 May 1779, 3, which is dated six months before the reestablishment of the *Conseil*.

<sup>314</sup> Édît du roi, portant création d'un office de Commissaire des Guerres, près et à la suite de la compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes de l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, February 1778, *Recueil des Édits...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 699-700.

<sup>315</sup> "Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, qui ordonne que l'article X de l'Édit du mois de janvier 1751 ... ensemble ses ordonnances des 17 Juillet et 18 Octobre 1777, seront exécutées selon leur forme et teneur: et maintient l'Hôtel de l'École royale-militaire dans les mêmes franchises, exemptions et immunités que celles accordées à l'Hôtel des Invalides", 11 April 1778, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 168.

<sup>316</sup> Montbarey, *Mémoires autographes de M. le prince de Montbarey: ministre secrétaire d'État à la Guerre...* T. III (Paris, 1827), 280-281. He revealed the worth of the *École militaire*'s principal revenue sources by stating that "les effets cédés par l'école militaire étaient des objets actifs mis en circulation, et dont l'économie et l'intelligence des administrateurs du trésor royal pouvaient tirer un grand parti".

The dispositions taken by Saint-Germain for the *droit* to be *affermé* were abrogated by an *Arrêt du Conseil* of 26 November 1778, which provided for the product of the *droit* to be administered as a *régie* “pour le compte et au profit de Sa Majesté” and revoking the *alienation* of the *droit* granted to the *École militaire* by the edict of 22 January<sup>317</sup>. Another *Arrêt* of the twenty-sixth fixed the indemnity to be granted to the school for the loss of its right to the income from the *droit* at 15 million livres as “quittances de finance, produisant rentes à quatre pour cent sur les aides et gabelles”<sup>318</sup>. In this form, the annual income the new *régie* would provide amounted to 600,000 livres (200,000 livres less than the sum d’Argenson had considered requesting from the Treasury), which led the administration of the school to protest the following day at the loss of 150,000 livres per annum, given that it evaluated the average annual income the *droit* had produced prior to its modification at 750,000 livres per annum<sup>319</sup>. It requested compensation in specie drawn from the sum of 2 million livres assigned to it on the revenues of the Royal Lottery<sup>320</sup>. Montbarey, being the author of the scheme, was likely very little inclined to pay heed to their remonstrations; after all, the similar changes and loss of income which occurred on the expropriation of the *loterie de l’École militaire* by the Royal Lottery in 1776 had not led to protests on the administrators’ part at the time<sup>321</sup>.

Nearly exactly a year later, on 6 November 1779, the administration of the *École militaire* was re-organised as the three *Conseils* were re-established, albeit composed somewhat differently to their original forms. The Minister of War remained *Surintendant*, all decisions ultimately subject to his approval. In his absence, the *Inspecteur-general* was delegated his authority, on condition of his reporting to the

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<sup>317</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d’État du roi, qui ordonne que le droit sur les cartes, et les huit sous pour livre en sus, seront perçus et régis pour le compte du roi, par Dominique Compant, Régisseur général, à compter du 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1779”, 26 November 1778, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. II (Paris, 1782), 519-520.

<sup>318</sup> Arrêt du Conseil ... qui fixe à quinze millions de livres l’indemnité accordée à l’École Royale-militaire, pour raison de la privation du droit sur les cartes, 26 November 1778, in *Ibid.*, 521-522.

<sup>319</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 26 November 1778, 175. A number of other negative effects from the change in form to the *droit* were listed, namely, a delay or suspension in payments it received, a lack of funds to face quotidian expenses both in Paris and the provincial schools, and the depreciation of its contracts if forced to convert them to specie in order to pay for those expenses.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 176. It furthermore insisted that “toutes les pensions de quelque espèce qu’elles soient qui pourront être accordées aux régisseurs du droit sur les cartes et à tous autres employés dans cette régie ne soient pas assignées sur les fonds de l’École royale militaire”.

<sup>321</sup> The income from the *droit sur les cartes* had in fact steadily increased, from 592,262 livres in 1755 to 797,034 livres in 1774, 862,930 livres in 1775 and 867,098 livres in 1777. Laulan, “Aperçu”, 229, 240. The 25-year average revenue of the *droit* 1751-1775 was 582,714 livres per annum, but for the ten years 1765-1775 it was 805,165 livres per annum. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, État Raisonné des revenus de l’Hôtel de l’École Royale Militaire, February 1776.



minister of the measures taken in his absence. The *Sous-Inspecteur* was assigned the correspondence with the provincial *écoles militaires* and reporting on their affairs to the Inspector-general<sup>322</sup>. The *Directeur général des affaires* was entrusted with handling the *hôtel*'s external business and the *Contrôleur de l'hôtel* its internal economic management, both reporting directly to the *Inspecteur-general*, at least until 1783, when the posts were combined (the new post was labelled as the 'Contrôleur général de l'École royale militaire', the post taken by M. Pelé)<sup>323</sup>. The administration of the company of cadets, as regarded both their studies and exercises, depended solely on its Commandant (de Moyria), assisted by the *Aide-major* and *Sous-aides-major*, who were to report to him on each day's events, so he could in turn report to the Intendant-general<sup>324</sup>. The *Conseil d'administration* was to meet as it had before, with the same remit and purview it had always enjoyed, but now composed of the Minister of War as *Surintendant*, the *Inspecteur-general*, the *Sous-inspecteur*, the Commandant, and the *Directeur des affaires* and *Contrôleur*<sup>325</sup>, with other external officers, such as the baron de Wimpffen and marquis de Vaudreuil on 16 October 1781, sometimes in attendance<sup>326</sup>. The *Conseil d'économie* was to meet weekly, composed exactly as the *Conseil d'administration*<sup>327</sup>; a new duty it was given was to have the *Contrôleur des bâtiments* draw up and submit a report of all necessary repairs to the buildings following an inspection carried out by the *Inspecteur-general*, *Sous-inspecteur* and *Contrôleur* each November and December. The report was then to be submitted to the *Surintendant*. Urgent repairs were allowed as needed, with a report of their cost sent to the *Surintendant*<sup>328</sup>. Additional monthly inspections were to be made of all the lodgings, and quarterly inspections of all other spaces used by the cadets<sup>329</sup>. The *Conseil de*

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<sup>322</sup> Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement pour l'Hôtel de l'École royale-militaire, Titre I Article I, 6 November 1779, *Recueil des Édits...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 132.

<sup>323</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148 État des sommes à payer à l'administration de l'hôtel de l'École royale militaire pendant le quartier d'Octobre 1783.

<sup>324</sup> Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement pour l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, Titre I Article I, 6 November 1779, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 133-134.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid., Titre I Article II, 135. Article III stated it was set up "afin que tout se rapporte ... exactement et dans tous les temps, à l'autorité primitive, de laquelle tout doit émaner dans un établissement que Sa Majesté a voulu mettre sous sa protection immédiate".

<sup>326</sup> AN MM 660, 16 October 1781, 28. Both Wimpffen and Vaudreuil were *maréchaux de camp*.

<sup>327</sup> Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement pour l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, Titre II Article I, 6 November 1779, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 140.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., Titre II, Articles IV and V, 141.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., Titre II, Articles VI and VII, 141-142.

*police*, composed as the other *Conseils* but without the *Contrôleur*, was to meet three times per week and also included those parties summoned as circumstances required<sup>330</sup>.

Soon thereafter, on 8 December 1779, Letters patent were issued decoupling the *École militaire* from any charges relative to La Flèche<sup>331</sup>. The principal measures regulating their new relationship stipulated that the administration of La Flèche would henceforth rest entirely with the *Congrégation de la Doctrine Chrétienne* (or the *Doctrinaires*), who had been installed in 1776, under the aegis of the Minister of War<sup>332</sup>. To compensate the *École militaire* for the loss of the buildings of La Flèche, the *Doctrinaires* were to contribute one third of the annual sum for the *pensions* paid to former employees of the *collège* from its period as an *école militaire*. It also stipulated that students of the *École militaire* inclined to pursue theology or law were to be sent to La Flèche, while Fléchois students apt for military service were to be sent to the *École militaire*. Finally, in the cadre of supervision by the Ministry of War, La Flèche's students were to continue being inspected by the *Inspecteur-général* and *Sous-inspecteur* of the *Écoles royales militaires* or any other party chosen by the minister<sup>333</sup>. This was one of Montbarey's final major acts concerning the *École militaire*, along with an ordinance of 5 August 1780 regulating some aspects of domestic life in the *hôtel*<sup>334</sup>; he was removed and replaced by the marquis de Ségur in December 1780.

Ségur carried out practically no changes in the structures and order of the *École militaire*; the so-called Ségur decree which saw the general adoption of the *École militaire*'s requirements for proof of four degrees of patrilineal nobility as a requirement for new *sous-lieutenants* did not affect the institution as such. It may be noted that it consisted of not one "decree" but two measures, both of 22 May 1781, one suppressing the posts of *cadets-gentilshommes* in the regiments created by Saint-Germain<sup>335</sup> and the other stipulating the proofs required of the *sous-lieutenants*<sup>336</sup>. In the event, Ségur

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., Titre III, Article I, 144.

<sup>331</sup> Lettres Patentes du Roi, portant règlement, concernant la régie et administration du Collège de la Flèche et les élèves dudit Collège, 8 December 1779, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. II (Paris, 1782), 817.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., Article I, 818.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., Articles IX, XII and XIII, 821, 823.

<sup>334</sup> Ordonnance du roi, concernant l'École Royale Militaire, 5 August 1780, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 145.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., Ordre du roi, ... concernant la création d'une troisième place de sous-lieutenant en pied, sans appointements, et l'extinction des places de cadets-gentilshommes, 22 May 1781, 169-172.

<sup>336</sup> BnF Clairambault 937, *Lettres et pièces diverses au sujet des sous-lieutenants et des élèves des Écoles militaires, 1770-1789* 'Décision royale au sujet des preuves de noblesse exigées des candidats aux sous-lieutenances dans les troupes', 22 May 1781, 3-4.

himself was opposed to the required proofs<sup>337</sup>. The rationale for the school's proofs and their precedents are examined in my article on Saint-Cyr as a model for the *École militaire*; the notoriety which they achieved thanks to the decisions of 22 May has remained a near-constant source of debate and controversy from their time until the present<sup>338</sup>. In the school, the only notable changes involved the retirement of Kéralio as *Sous-inspecteur* and his replacement by the chevalier de Reynaud de Mons, a former colonel of dragoons, and the combining of the duties of Director-general of studies and Commandant in one post following de Moyria's death; he was succeeded by Louis Valfort. The company of cadets-gentilshommes was given the organisation of a regiment from 19 May 1784, further reinforcing its military character<sup>339</sup>. In March 1787, an expansion of dormitories to accommodate more cadets was being prepared; at this point, the total student body of the *École militaire*, La Flèche, and the *écoles militaires* was 2,775<sup>340</sup>.

It was in this state of relative stability, if not prosperity, that the *École militaire* was closed in 1787 for a second and final time following Ségur's resignation on 29 August. The marshal's departure was a consequence of Louis XVI's appointment of Loménie de Brienne, the archbishop of Toulouse, as his *ministre principal*<sup>341</sup>; the archbishop's younger brother, the comte de Brienne, replaced Ségur, taking office on 23 September<sup>342</sup>. Though the titular head of his department, the comte de Brienne was a

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<sup>337</sup> Chagniot writes that "il paraît que le fameux 'édit de Ségur' de 1781 a été imposé à son signataire par une coterie de la cour et de l'armée"; 'Chapitre II – Les progrès de l'Administration Militaire', in *Histoire Militaire de la France, Tome 2: De 1715 à 1871*, ed. Jean Delmas (Paris: PUF, 1992), 31.

A wounded war veteran, Ségur denounced the idea in strong terms: "Comment voulez-vous qu'on supporte l'idée de voir que le fils d'un magistrat respectable, d'un négociant fortuné, d'un intendant de province, soit condamné à ne servir l'État que comme soldat ou à ne parvenir au grade d'officier qu'à un âge avancé, après avoir vieilli dans les grades les plus subalternes?" Louis Tuetey, *Les Officiers sous l'Ancien Régime: Nobles et Roturiers* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1908), 188-189.

<sup>338</sup> Harold Guizar, "Entering the *École militaire*: Proofs of nobility and the example of the girls' school at Saint-Cyr", *Ex Historia* Vol. 7 (2015), 37-60.

<sup>339</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 157, Résultat des observations du ch[evali]er de Reynaud, après l'inspection des 12 Ecoles Royales Militaires, 1 October 1783; AN MM 676, Lettre de Ségur à Timbrune, Versailles, 19 May 1784, 151. This would incidentally appear to be the only direct, if possibly unwitting, adoption of one of the chevalier d'Arcq's suggestions: that "Cadets devoient naturellement composer des régiments". D'Arcq, *La Noblesse Militaire, ou le Patriote François* (Paris, 1756), 171-172.

<sup>340</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Extrait du marché pour la construction du nouveau dortoir des cadets-gentilshommes, n<sup>o</sup> 2, 28 March 1787; De Ternay, *op. cit.*, 20. Of these, 1,650 were *gentilshommes*. The *élèves du Roi*, counted among the *gentilshommes*, numbered 583 or 20% of the total.

<sup>341</sup> John Hardman, *Louis XVI: The Silent King and the Estates* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 128-130. Loménie de Brienne was dubbed "*ministre principal*, a form of words designed to spare his (Louis XVI's) susceptibilities, since he had declared that he would never have a *premier ministre*".

<sup>342</sup> Brienne was also one of the founders of the *école militaire* at Brienne-le-Château. Under the Empire, his widow was granted a pension by Napoleon.

figurehead, with Samuel Gibiat describing him more as a privileged observer of the reforms undertaken under him than their source<sup>343</sup>. The numerous reforms during his ministry, in turn, emanated from the *Conseil de la Guerre*, itself guided by Saint-Germain's one-time protégé, the comte de Guibert<sup>344</sup>. He was familiar with the *École militaire*'s administration not only from his time in the ministry under Saint-Germain, but also through having been associated to some of Ségur's reforms, and having attended several sessions of the *Conseil d'administration*<sup>345</sup>. Though nominally only the *Conseil de la Guerre*'s rapporteur, he was its animating spirit, and the reforms of the *Maison du Roi* and the *École militaire* 1787-1789 in particular can be seen as achieving (in the former's case) or restoring (in the latter's case) Saint-Germain's vision for both institutions. These were, needless to say, controversial (though not as much as the implementation of a two-track promotion system for officers), and provided fodder to the perennial debates on the merits of these institutions and the best way to administer them. In the event, if one accepts the view of Guibert as attempting to complete Saint-Germain's reforms, the survival of the *écoles militaires* until 1793 may be seen as a credit to their efforts.

The *Règlement* of 9 October 1787 closing the *École militaire*, described the measures undertaken to that effect as furthering the first changes undergone by the institution following the king's ascension. The justification for these changes was the desire to further the "soulagement de ses peuples", juxtaposed to "l'établissement... consacré au luxe et à la magnificence". By suppressing the establishment in Paris, it was envisaged that the number of students supported by the *fondation* would be increased

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<sup>343</sup> Samuel Gibiat, "Athanas-Louis-Marie de Loménie, comte de Brienne, secrétaire d'État de la Guerre, 1787-1788" in *Les Ministres de la Guerre: 1570-1792: Histoire et Dictionnaire Biographique*, ed. Thierry Sarmant (Paris: 2007), 484-490.

<sup>344</sup> Rafe Blaufarb discusses the *Conseil de la Guerre*'s composition, mission, and work in "Le Conseil de la Guerre (1787-1789): Aspects sociaux de la réforme militaire après l'édit de Ségur", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, n° 43-4, July-September 1996, 446-463 and *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 37-45. He says that it was set-up on Ségur's order to Guibert (the marshal previously having set-up a *Comité de la Guerre* during 1781-1784), but only constituted on Brienne's arrival. The comte de Brienne does not rate a comment in either the article or the book; Blaufarb portrays Loménie de Brienne as the impulse for reform: "the cost-cutting Brienne (the *ministre principal*) looked favorably on Guibert's preparatory work and approved the formation of the proposed War Council on 9 October 1787. Even before its first meeting at the end of the month, Guibert secured the minister's permission to disband three units of the *Maison militaire*". Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820*, 38.

<sup>345</sup> AN MM 660, 19 August 1783, 29 and 24 May 1784, 30. These meetings examined the annual accounts for 1780, 1781 and 1782, which showed positive balances of 2,213,558, 2,406,384 and 2,560,183 livres respectively.

and an economy of 120,000 livres achieved<sup>346</sup>. Thus, the *Règlement* decreed that the school would close on 1 April 1788, that its students would be sent to the provincial schools and their number increased to 700, that its revenues would be directed to the paying of these students' *pensions*, and subsequently to general military expenses, and that these would continue to be administered by the Minister of War. Finally, a *Conseil de direction* was established, composed of the *Inspector-général*, the *Sous-inspecteur*, and four men of letters drawn from the Academies and the University; its buildings were turned over to the city of Paris to establish a hospital for the poor<sup>347</sup>.

The *Conseil de direction*'s composition and role was detailed in a lengthier *Règlement* of 1 February 1788. Timbrune was named as its president with Reynaud seconding him; the other members were the Morelet from the *Académie Française*, Le Gendre and Bailly of the *Académie des Sciences*, and Charbonnet, a former rector of the University<sup>348</sup>. A secretariat was also established to maintain the correspondence with the *écoles militaires* and keep the archives. It was composed of a secretary and two *commis*. The *Conseil* was to meet weekly from 1 November until Easter, with the Inspector and *Sous-inspecteur* carrying out visits to the *collèges* accompanied by another member of the *Conseil* during the rest of the year. Furthermore, the *concours* envisaged by Saint-Germain but abolished before it was set-up was re-established, another measure Guibert revived in his second stint in the Ministry<sup>349</sup>. Meanwhile, the closing of the *École militaire* was completed by 1 April as planned, with Timbrune remaining in residence after its final evacuation<sup>350</sup>.

The *écoles militaires* continued functioning as events took their course about them<sup>351</sup>. The school at Brienne, chosen in 1788 to prepare those cadets destined to

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<sup>346</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, *Règlement fait par le Roi, concernant l'École royale militaire*, 9 Octobre 1787, 1-2. As the coincidence of the dates indicate, the planning for the closing of the *École militaire* must have been carried out before the *Conseil de la Guerre* first met.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles I-VIII, 3-4.

<sup>348</sup> *Règlement du roi pour l'école militaire*, Articles I-III, 1 February 1788, in Jourdan, Isambert and Decrusy, *Recueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises...* (Paris, 1827), 497. In the *Inspecteur* and *Sous-Inspecteur*'s absence, they were to take precedence in the order listed, the member of the *Académie Française* coming first, and followed by the others.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles VII, X. The description of how the *concours* was to run is given in articles XI-XIX. Yet another example of a resurrected initiative was the creation of places for *cadets-gentilshommes* in the regiments on 17 March 1788, although their revival proved unfruitful.

<sup>350</sup> Laulan, *Le Monument*, 58; *Le Champ-de-Mars*, 28.

<sup>351</sup> For more on the *écoles militaires* during the Revolution, see Part 2 Chapter 3 of J.C. Blanchard, "Le Collège et École Militaire d'Auxerre", mémoire de maîtrise d'histoire, Université de Bourgogne, 2003 and Chapters 9-10 of Daniel Porquet, "L'École royale militaire de Pontlevoy: Bénédictins de Saint-Maur et boursiers du roi, 1776-1793", thèse de doctorat d'histoire, Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2011.

become military engineers, played that role until 1790<sup>352</sup>. On the comte de Puységur's ascension to the post of Minister of War following the Brienne brothers' fall in the autumn of 1788, the *Conseil de direction* went so far as to request the restoration of the *École militaire*<sup>353</sup>. On 26 March 1790, proofs of nobility for admission to the *École militaire* and Saint-Cyr were abolished, places now being open to all sons of officers<sup>354</sup>, while students at Brienne fraternised with members of the *Garde Nationale*<sup>355</sup>. On 23 April 1790, the inspection of the *écoles militaires* was suspended and Reynaud informed of the same, and on 18 March 1792, Timbrune was granted an extended leave of absence to look after his health<sup>356</sup>, an opportunity he then took to emigrate. Although the zeal of those students sent to the front was praised<sup>357</sup>, there were also concerns about their political reliability, as in the case of one Louis-François de Cachard. A former student at Tournon and subsequently lieutenant in the regiment of Agenois, he was accused of conspiring to re-establish the monarchy and condemned to death by the *Tribunal révolutionnaire* in 1793<sup>358</sup>. Despite reforms such as that of 26 March 1790, which was decried as useless as long as “ces écoles et maisons existeront sur le même pied, tant qu’il dépendra du *ministre*..., tant qu’il y aura enfin *des élèves alimentés* aux dépens de l’*impôt public* (emphasis original)”<sup>359</sup>, the end for the schools came soon enough. State-funded military education was abolished on 9 September 1793<sup>360</sup>, but not before the Convention liquidated the *fondation*, worth nearly 3 million livres<sup>361</sup>.

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<sup>352</sup> Bruslé de Valsuzenay, *Mémoire* (n.d.) in L.M. Patris-Debreuil, *Oeuvres Inédites de P.J. Grosley, Membre de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres...* (Paris, 1812), 142.

<sup>353</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 157, Récapitulation du mémoire donné à Monsieur le comte de Puységur relativement à l'École Militaire par le Conseil de Direction des Etudes de cette Ecole (n.d.).

<sup>354</sup> Arrêt du Conseil d'État du roi, portant révocation des règlements qui exigent des preuves de noblesse pour l'entrée à la Maison royale de Saint-Cyr, à l'École Militaire, et dans d'autres Maisons royales d'éducation, 26 March 1790.

<sup>355</sup> De Ternay, *Les cadets gentilshommes de l'École royale militaire de Louis XVI, 1778-1787: Dictionnaire Biographique* (Paris: P. Du Puy, 2008), 9.

<sup>356</sup> SHD 157, Écoles Royales Militaires 1790. This file has the word 'Royales' in its title crossed out.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. The praise however was tempered with concern that “il faut les réserver pour des occasions plus pressantes, parceque on (sic) les exposerait à ne pouvoir plus faute d'instruction, entrer dans les corps pour lesquels ils sont destinés”.

<sup>358</sup> M. de Saint-Allais, *Nobiliaire Universel de France, ou Recueil Général des Généalogies Historiques des Maisons Nobles...* T. I (Paris, 1814), 279.

<sup>359</sup> Bertrand Verlac, *Mémoire présenté à nosseigneurs de l'Assemblée Nationale...* (Paris, 1790), 38-39. Verlac was a former professor of English at the *École royale de marine* in Vannes, Brittany.

<sup>360</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 158 Écoles Royales Militaires; however, even as late as July 1793, a decree was issued allocating 116,139 livres to pay the *pensions* of the students of the *écoles militaires*. J.B. Duvergier, *Lois, Décrets, Ordonnances, Règlements et Avis du Conseil d'État ... de 1788 à 1824 inclusivement, par ordre chronologique...* T. VI (Paris, 1825), 12.

<sup>361</sup> AN AD-VI-49, Rapport de la Fondation des écoles militaires de la République, January 1793; Rapport et projet de décret: École militaire, 1793; AD-VI-10B in Ralph Croal, “The Idea of the *École Spéciale Militaire* and the Founding of Saint-Cyr”, PhD diss. University of Arizona, 1970, 144.

#### Part IV: Chapter One Conclusions

The impression gathered from an overview of the *École militaire*'s evolution is one of regular, if not near-constant, change and upheaval. This was the result of shortcomings in the vision for the original project itself, especially but not exclusively with regards to its financing, as the conflicts between various parties shows. The result was short to mid-term uncertainty which hobbled the institution during its first decade of existence. Thereafter, Choiseul's ministry signalled the first of a series of reforms in both the overall configuration as well as the inner workings of the school, which may be read less as a series of attempts to fine-tune the institution than a search for a durable, solid set-up which would prove satisfactory in both structural and pedagogical terms; in turn, the criticisms that it had been exposed to from its beginnings over the best form of officers' education resulted in its complete transformation. In the eyes of some critics, the clerical nature of the new education was backward-looking, but in terms of the expansion of students and the re-allocation of the income allotted to the *École militaire*, it was a success, curtailed only by the Revolution. The repurposed *collèges*, together with the Parisian institute, may in turn be regarded as different incarnations of the same institution; this stance is supported by statements such as "lesdits collèges devant remplir l'objet des établissemens de l'ancienne École militaire, tant à Paris qu'à la Flèche; et l'institution de ladite École subsistant en effet partiellement dans chacun desdits collèges"<sup>362</sup> as well as the fact that the umbrella term "École militaire" was applied to the 12 provincial schools collectively in the *Arrêt du Conseil* of 26 March 1790. This is not to diminish the important position the *École militaire* held at the top of the system of general military education after it was united with La Flèche; it was after all referred to as the "mère maison" of the *écoles militaires*<sup>363</sup>. Instead, it simply serves to underline the administrative links which bound all of the schools by sharing what had been the *École militaire*'s solitary task during the first phase of its existence during 1753-1764.

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<sup>362</sup> Règlement concernant les nouvelles Écoles Royales-militaires, 28 March 1776, Titre I Article II, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 79.

<sup>363</sup> Anonymous, *Lettre Adressée à Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Toulouse, Ministre principal, le... à la Cour, en lui envoyant un Mémoire (ci-après) pour prouver la nécessité de conserver l'Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire à Paris* (n.p., n.d.), 17. La Flèche in turn was itself referred to as "le berceau et la mère nourricière de l'École Militaire". AN MM 680, Observations sur la réponse faite par Choiseul, 17 April 1770... [undated, May-June 1770], 41.

The *Conseil de l'hôtel*, the principal intermediary of all of these complex processes, proved able to adopt to change forced on them and the institution through external circumstances. The administration's constant concern was to use the defense of its rights as a mechanism to better preserve the autonomy and prerogatives granted by the king to the institution. For the most part, it proved able to face challenges without resorting to supplications of aid from its superiors in the form of the Minister of War or the king, at least in non-financial matters. Financially, it proved perennially dependent on either the wits of its founder, Duverney, especially in the early years, or on the whims of the minister or his agents, who twice employed the excuse of effecting economies in their department to suppress it. The *École militaire*'s original weakness then, the nature of its *dotation* and the use of its *fondation*, never proved an adequate support and defense against the rhetoric and views of its opponents, even after attaining the fiscal maturity and wherewithal to fund thousands of students and alumni in both the provincial schools and the army's ranks<sup>364</sup>. Finally, the varied reactions it inspired may be summed up in its architectural legacy, on the one hand condemned by those who saw it as a monument to royal vanity, but on the other inspiring imitation, the façade of the Palais de Justice 1783-1786 in Paris for instance being a direct homage by its architect Antoine to Gabriel's *chef d'oeuvre*<sup>365</sup>. Its entire existence, then, reflected both the constant battles for legitimacy and stability, and the effects these had on a project envisaged as an asset to the nation, mediated by the *Conseils*' view of itself as an agent of royal authority. It is the ideas behind these views, the *École militaire*'s rhetorical foundations, that the next chapter discusses.

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<sup>364</sup> In 1790, the 200 livre *pension* was being paid to 984 former students, while the student body of the *écoles militaires* in 1792 was 657, only 43 short of the statutory 700. Hennes, *op. cit.*, 116, 118-119.

<sup>365</sup> André Mussat, "L'École militaire de Paris (À propos d'un ouvrage récent)", in *Revue historique*, T. 209 (1953): 243.



## Chapter 2: The Project for Socio-Military Reform: Debate, Justifications, and the Defence of the *École militaire* as an Institutional Solution

“Je vois de toutes parts des établissemens immenses, où l’on élève à grands frais la jeunesse pour lui apprendre toutes choses, excepté ses devoirs.”

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours Qui A Remporté le Prix à l’Académie de Dijon, en l’Année 1750...*, 45

The *École militaire*, being a prominent national project and symbol, provoked and elicited a range of discourses on its nature, purpose, utility, and other aspects inherent to such a signal institution. This was particularly so given the contentious nature of its principal funding mechanisms, based on gambling, and the open question of what constituted the best possible education for both impoverished nobles and for future officers. For if, as Gemma Tidman points out, “on n’a cessé d’écrire sur l’éducation”<sup>366</sup> in this period, the field of military education was no less active with the work of would-be and actual reformers debating the nature of officers’ education. Before considering the contribution to a general debate on education of prominent figures such as Fénelon, Rollin, d’Alembert, Rousseau, La Châlotais, Diderot, and others, it is worth pointing out the diversity of projects for military reform which were linked to efforts to improve the knowledge and culture of the officer corps. These range from a project for the creation of a corps of cadets inspired by Mazarin’s *Collège des Quatre Nations* labelled the “Compagnie des Quatre Nations”<sup>367</sup>, to an “Académie Militaire” conceived of as a sort of school of war for staff officers<sup>368</sup>, to a proposal to establish a series of “Académies Militaires” along the lines of the great seventeenth-century academies: these would award prizes to the best works of military writing produced by army officers and men throughout France<sup>369</sup>. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to present the opinions of the founders and backers of the *École militaire* in their intellectual milieu. It specifically analyses their view on its objectives and purpose in the general context of wider debates on both education and noble-military reform, and

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<sup>366</sup> My thanks to Gemma Tidman for sharing and allowing me to quote this statement. Her source is an anonymous letter of 15 April 1763 in volume 3 of Grimm and Diderot’s *Correspondance littéraire*.

<sup>367</sup> SHD 1 M 1781 Mémoires Écoles Militaires 1736-1784, Projet de l’Etablissement d’une compagnie de 2000 Cadets de 4 différentes nations appelée Compagnie des 4 Nations, circa 1728.

<sup>368</sup> François-Antoine Chevrier, *Testament politique du maréchal-duc de Belle-Isle* (Amsterdam, 1761), 100-101. Such an academy would “former, indistinctement, tous les officiers, généraux, colonels, et tous les capitaines qui auraient dix ans de commission; on discuterait... toutes les matières analogues à la guerre...” Although this is an apocryphal work, not in fact written by Belle-Isle, it is cited as an example of the ideas in circulation at the time.

<sup>369</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 164 Académies Royales Militaires – Plan Général de leurs établissemens [undated].

how they conceived the contribution that the new institution would make by regenerating the impoverished nobility. It then closes by considering the tax on playing cards and how it influenced lasting perceptions of the school.

#### Part I: Contextualising and Defining the Terms of Reform

As seen in the thesis introduction, the roots of efforts to establish a military school for the nobility can be traced to the late sixteenth century. With regards to the ideas and discourse which influenced the *École militaire* directly, however, it is more useful to consider the example of one of its principal institutional models, the *Maison royale de Saint-Louis* established at Saint-Cyr in 1686. Despite the limitations that the gender differences of the two institutions impose on any comparative analysis, the moral concerns which served as causal influences in the process of establishing and assuring two royal institutions which sought to aid the same demographic cross-section of the French nobility render such a comparison valid. Specifically, the desire to rehabilitate the impoverished provincial nobility by providing both concrete aid and moral instruction spanned a period in which national anxieties about virtue, luxury, education, and the role of the nobility in the body politic were very much currency for debate, as seen most prominently in the works of Rollin, Montesquieu and the marquis d'Argenson. A short overview of the perspectives on moral reform in some of these figures' work will help set the stage for a more detailed discussion of the several *apologiae* written for the *École militaire* up to 1755, with the intent of better elucidating their philosophy and motivation in the context of military education. The evolution in these currents of thought, from the foundation of Saint-Cyr onward, is thus presented here not so much to draw out the influence of previous thinkers on the defenders of the *École militaire*, but to better place these men's thought in the current of discussion on these issues, which gained a renewed vigour in the 1750s, between the publishing of Rousseau's First Discourse and the famous debate between the abbé Coyer and the chevalier d'Arc on the nature of the nobility<sup>370</sup>.

The content of Fénelon's criticism of luxury, commerce, and the court and polite society's influence on the nation's body politic, principally as articulated in *Télémaque*,

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<sup>370</sup> A significant, if often over-looked influence on Coyer, was Vauban, specifically his project for the "dîme royale". See "La Noblesse Commerçante", 30-31, 51-53, 66-71, and 105. For a recently published compilation of his philosophical and economic writings, see: Vauban, *Écrits économiques de Vauban*, introduction by Benoît Malbranque (Paris: Institut Coppet, 2014).

is well known<sup>371</sup>. More relevant here however is his influence as mediated in the institutional context of Saint-Cyr, where some of his ideas were put into practice well before the (unwilling) publication of his most celebrated work. Carolyn Lougee's reading of madame de Maintenon's intention for Saint-Cyr as an institution meant to "contribute to the reform of the French nobility which coincided... with the reorientation of values and social role Fénelon had already formulated"<sup>372</sup> based on his influence on her ideals and thinking provides a suggestive perspective on the legacy of his polemics. One aspect of his programme was "professionalization, with its ethic of work and simplicity" as the antidote to "courtly society", a key "enemy of professionalization.... 'the army general thinks much more about paying court than about defending the state... paying court spoils men of all professions, and stifles true merit'"<sup>373</sup>. Maintenon for her part "aimed to produce at Saint-Cyr girls who, like Fénelon's ideal, were hard-working, useful to the state, capable of reviving their families' fortunes"<sup>374</sup>.

As the *Mercurie Galant* of September 1686 put it, Saint-Cyr "donne aussi lieu à la noblesse de servir le roi, puisque les pères qui auront des filles dans cette communauté, étant déchargés de la dépense à laquelle les engagerait l'obligation de les faire instruire selon leur naissance, seront plus en pouvoir de servir le roi avec leurs fils"<sup>375</sup>. Although they did diverge on important matters, so that "Fénelon decried ... the very wars Maintenon urged her girls to support because they taxed the people too heavily"<sup>376</sup>, their agreement on the best way to order society, by reorienting it away from commerce and its corrupting effects towards the ennobling labours of agriculture, and simultaneously restoring the neglected nobility<sup>377</sup>, spoke to concerns which continued to resonate in the eighteenth century. If it seems counterintuitive that a project

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<sup>371</sup> See Jay M. Smith, *Nobility Reimagined: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth Century France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 37, 41-49.

<sup>372</sup> Carolyn C. Lougee, "Noblesse, Domesticity, and Social Reform: The Education of Girls by Fénelon and SaintCyr", *History of Education Quarterly*, 14 (1974), 96.

<sup>373</sup> Fénelon, "Examen de conscience sur les devoirs de la royauté", in *Œuvres*, éd. Aimé Martin (Paris, 3 vols., 1882), III, 346, in *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>374</sup> Lougee, *op. cit.*, 96.

<sup>375</sup> Odile Cassou-Mounat, "Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr, une approche de la Noblesse Pauvre sous l'Ancien Régime", mémoire de maîtrise (Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1982), 35.

<sup>376</sup> Lougee, *op. cit.*, 99.

<sup>377</sup> Fénelon's opinion of the court was that "the personnel of the court, especially the non-noble and newly-ennobled ministers, had usurped the political authority which rightfully belonged to the ancient nobility", while arguing "that agriculture was the basis of national prosperity". The girls of Saint-Cyr were to be taught, among other things, "the broader areas of estate management", and all that such responsibilities entailed. *Ibid.*, 96, 90, 92.

established by a royal mistress at the most brilliant court in Europe dictate that her new girls' school be "permeated with a spirit of opposition to the court and to 'la politesse du siècle' as a whole"<sup>378</sup>, the establishment of a military school for the impoverished nobility by another mistress and financiers 65 years later was arguably no less incongruent<sup>379</sup>.

Saint-Cyr, of course, had little or no influence on what and how the courses at the *École militaire* were taught. It served rather as model (along with the *Invalides*) from which the latter's founders borrowed elements for their new school, while sharing the same moral goals for their pedagogical mission and targeting the same purportedly disadvantaged demographic<sup>380</sup>. Although other institutional models existed, none were as significant as the two *louisquatorzian* institutions were, be it in terms of prestige, longevity, or innovativeness. This latter element in particular was stressed by the *École militaire*'s founders, who sought a near-total break with the educational structures and traditions then dominant in France. The most famous name calling for such a change in education in the first half of the century was undoubtedly Charles Rollin, and Emmanuelle Chapron considers that the way the *École militaire*'s curriculum was fashioned "relaie en particulier l'attention aux vertus morales du second ordre" in line with Rollin's emphasis of the same virtues<sup>381</sup>. His view that a noble seeking distinction "must base his reputation, then, not on birth... but on that 'nobility of sentiments' that expressed itself in virtue, love of the *patrie*, and true selflessness"<sup>382</sup> admittedly did not align exactly with the view of the school's founders, who sought rather to maintain the distinction of the noble-born against the threat of encroachment by bourgeois and *anoblis* elements by fostering those same qualities. There was nonetheless a shared appreciation for the need for educational reform and the continuing search for an

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<sup>378</sup> *L'Esprit de l'Institut des filles de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1699), 22 in *Ibid.*, 97. "Elles doivent propager dans la noblesse ... une morale diamétralement opposé aux vertus héroïques de loisir et de magnificence qui demeurent la figure de proue de la haute société". Cassou-Mounat, *op. cit.*, 35.

<sup>379</sup> Pompadour wished to create a foundation for military widows modelled on Saint-Cyr and the *École militaire*, but nothing came of this project. Marquis d'Argenson, 19 March 1756, *Journal*, éd. Jannet, T. IV, 243.

<sup>380</sup> For their parallels in the field of social selection, see my article "Entering the *École militaire*: Proofs of nobility and the example of the girls' school at Saint-Cyr", *Ex Historia*, 7 (2015), 37-60. Choiseul suggested "Saint-Cyr si vous aviez besoin d'exemple pour régler votre conduite" in dealing with students without aptitude, an element of its "institution politique". AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil, Versailles, 2 April 1765, 133.

<sup>381</sup> Emmanuelle Chapron, "Des livres 'pour l'usage de l'École royale militaire': choix pédagogiques et stratégies éditoriales (1751-1788)", *Histoire, économie & société*, 33 (2014): 4.

<sup>382</sup> Charles Rollin, *Traité des Études. De la manière d'Enseigner et d'Etudier les Belles Lettres, par rapport à l'esprit et au cœur*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1805), 3: 68, in Smith, *op. cit.*, 54-55.

adequate form of public instruction which would inspire love of the *patrie*, sacrifice in students, and foster the moral qualities which were considered necessary for the greater good of their profession and country<sup>383</sup>.

The marquis d'Argenson, according to Jay Smith, wrote perhaps "the most devastating critique of nobility before the Revolution"<sup>384</sup>, and his thought is worth considering here, not due to any residual influence on his younger brother ("no love was lost between them"<sup>385</sup> in Adrienne Hytier's words), but rather to throw into sharper relief the solutions to the nobility and nation's predicaments proposed by different concerned parties, here a one-time Minister of Foreign Affairs and there the founders of the military school. The interface of his arguments with those of the *École militaire's* apologists is complex: these would not necessarily have agreed that "the nobility adds to its privileges each day" or decried the fact that it "consummates its separation from the rest of the state"<sup>386</sup>. They would have agreed however that "the 'simple nobility'... had become victims of the illusory reign of 'circulation and credit'", and unreservedly condemned the trend that saw "simple nobles, most of them serving in the military" drawn "to acquire the signs of... 'illustration', that is, public representations of honor", and thus facing "an ever-losing battle against the 'false' aristocrats, who actually controlled the means of illustration"<sup>387</sup>. Though the marquis d'Argenson's proposed solution to the quandary of the "simple nobility", a vision for national democracy, could hardly have been more different in nature and scope than that represented by the *École militaire*, a final consonance in his and the founders' aims may be seen in his intent to "abolish the entry into the corps of Nobles of unworthy people [who gain access] by way of finance"<sup>388</sup>. He was, no less than Fénelon, the partisan of agriculture and the scourge of luxury and its attendant evils<sup>389</sup>; in one of his reviews of a work commenting on Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois*, he warned that the Legislator:

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<sup>383</sup> For an analysis of Rollin's opinion on military matters proper, see Julia Osman, "Ancient Warriors on Modern Soil: French Military Reform and American Military Images in Eighteenth-Century France", *French History* (2008) 22 (2): 175-196.

<sup>384</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 60. This was the *Considérations sur le gouvernement ancien et présent de la France* (Amsterdam, 1765).

<sup>385</sup> "An Eighteenth-Century Experiment in Historical Realism: The Marquis d'Argenson and Bonnie Prince Charlie" *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 (1969): 221.

<sup>386</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 61.

<sup>387</sup> The 'false aristocracy' was composed "not of a pure aristocracy of the nobility but an aristocracy of ministers, court grandees, financiers, and the rich". D'Argenson, *Considérations*, 175, 191 in *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>388</sup> The marquis d'Argenson, *Considérations*, 310-11 in *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>389</sup> Commenting on the publication of the *Mémoires de Sully*, he praised that minister's qualities, observing: "Sully n'aimait pas les manufactures, mais l'agriculture, et que, par une marche contraire,

doit viser à bannir l'inégalité et le luxe, et approcher autant qu'il pourra de l'égalité et de la frugalité. Autrement c'est prendre le défaut pour l'essence, et désespérer de la monarchie.... Je sais qu'un bon législateur s'accommode à la dureté des cœurs; mais un meilleur encore vise toujours à la perfection<sup>390</sup>.

Before continuing to an analysis of the works by several of the backers of the *École militaire*, an explanation of some fundamental terms will be made. In the various short-lived schools which preceded the establishment of 1750, the terms "education" and "training" would have been basically equivalent and interchangeable. Though today distinct in both qualitative and denotative terms, one study dedicated to the concepts of military education and training has traced the origins of the distinction in what had previously been largely synonymous terms to the mid-eighteenth century. That example is given in English, such that "in Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755 the verbs to 'train', 'to educate' were equated with 'bringing up'" meaning "each had connotations of shaping or moulding to a pattern"<sup>391</sup>, and contemporary French usage shows similar associations. The entry for "Éducation" in the 1762 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* defines it as "the care taken in the instruction of children, whether in regards to the exercises of the spirit, in regards to the exercises of the body, and above all in regards to morals"<sup>392</sup>. The definition for "Formation", in the subsection on its definition as training, reads "To Instruct, to shape by instruction", with the examples given being "To instruct a young man, to shape his spirit. To shape the youth of a prince, to instruct him in virtue, and in good morals"<sup>393</sup>. Now, though this evidence ought not be taken to argue that the training received by raw recruits in the army was in any way comparable to the education in canon law a prospective cleric received, it does suggest that a broad range of pedagogical initiatives and practices among certain strata of society which were preoccupied as much with mental and moral criteria as with strictly practical and utilitarian concerns could fall under the wide category of formal

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Colbert a dépeuplé les provinces et introduit le luxe destructeur". The marquis d'Argenson, *Mémoires et Journal...* T. V (Paris, 1858), 103.

<sup>390</sup> The marquis d'Argenson commenting on the *Apologie de l'Esprit des lois, ou Réponse aux observations de l'abbé Delaporte* of 1751 in *Ibid.*, 118-119.

<sup>391</sup> Kenneth Lawson, "Introduction: The Concepts of 'Training' and 'Education' in a Military Context" in *The Educating of Armies*, edited by Michael D. Stephens (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989), 3.

<sup>392</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 4<sup>e</sup> édition. T. I, s.v. "Éducation". "Le soin qu'on prenne de l'instruction des enfants, soit en ce que regarde les exercices de l'esprit, soit en ce que regarde les exercices du corps, et principalement en ce qui regarde les mœurs", 591.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, 767. The examples given are "Instruire, façonner par l'instruction. Former un jeune homme, lui former l'esprit. Former la jeunesse d'un prince, le former à la vertu, aux bonnes mœurs".

education. This was especially so if what was offered was of a preparatory nature directed at noble children or adolescents with a view to their future careers<sup>394</sup>.

It was the moral aspect of the definitions of both terms that constituted a preeminent concern in the minds of the *École militaire*'s founders. The agent for moral improvement was itself summed up in the concept of *émulation*, a term which despite some notice has for the most part not been subjected to substantive analysis in the manner that other moral qualities such as honour, merit, fidelity, or virtue have been in discussions of French noble ideals. Jay Smith briefly touches on it in *The Culture of Merit*, arguing that it exemplified a shift in the meaning of merit<sup>395</sup>, and seeing it as maintained by the mechanisms of “the discriminating gaze of one’s superiors” as well as “the success of peers who rose by their own exactitude and talent”<sup>396</sup>. His definition differs little from that given by the 1740 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, which explains that *émulation* was “a sort of jealousy which inspires one to equal or surpass someone in a laudable pursuit”<sup>397</sup>. Smith’s mechanism of a superiors’ gaze however is not a quality of *émulation* itself, but an element of the disciplinary and enforcement tools used to apply normative standards in total institutions, or, as he argues, to extend the sovereign’s gaze to that effect<sup>398</sup>.

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<sup>394</sup> Even in contemporary usage, education is sometimes taken, if not as synonymous with training, then at least grouped with it or as a subcategory thereof in some discussions of military affairs. See the entry “Education” in *A Dictionary of Military History and the Art of War*, ed. André Corvisier (Oxford: Blackwell 1998), which redirects the reader to the entry on “Training”, 214, 810-817.

<sup>395</sup> Smith makes mention of *émulation* in *The Culture of Merit* in the context of what he sees as a shift in the meanings and standards of merit under the monarchy. His argument does not directly touch on the issues broached here, but it has been thoroughly critiqued by David C. O’Brien. He argues persuasively that Smith’s “...counterposing of old and new virtues, is in fact an artificial product of the interpretative scheme itself and its sharply honed antithesis”, and instead posits “a point that is surely beyond argument: that the French soldier, in becoming more professionally accomplished, was not expected to become any less faithful, zealous and brave” (what O’Brien describes as the ‘traditional’ military virtues). The article is well-worth reading for its original critique and perspective on standards of service in the army, as well as the enduring legacy and effect of feudal values in an influential element of the *ancien régime*’s officer corps until the coming of the Revolution. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 216; David C. O’Brien, “Traditional Virtues, Feudal Ties and Royal Guards – The Culture of Service in the Maison du Roi” *French History*, 17 (2003): 45-46.

<sup>396</sup> Smith, *The Culture of Merit*, 216.

<sup>397</sup> *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> éd. T. I, s.v. “Émulation”, 574.

John Shovlin’s identification of emulation with honor is an apposite observation, but the context of his discussion is somewhat different from that broached here, which limits itself more strictly to military and pedagogical contexts. Shovlin, “Emulation in Eighteenth-century French Economic Thought”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 36/2 (2003): 224-230.

<sup>398</sup> My use of the idea of total institutions is based on Erving Goffman’s definition of the concept. See his *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books), 1961, 6.

A more suggestive presentation of *émulation* may be adduced in the work of Charles-Léopold Andreu de Bilistein, who wrote on his notions for reform in a book entitled *Institutions Militaires pour la France, ou le Vegece François* in 1762<sup>399</sup>. In it, he considers the motivations that impel men to action before discussing how to direct such motivations to carry out reform. He began by stating that the first state of man is that of being; this state implies needs, which in turn shape men's interest, the first agent of action. The second agent of action is composed of the love of glory and honour, which are born of education and reflection. Bilistein saw reflection as always needing action and renewal to prevent it from flagging. Taken together, he believed that the love of glory and honour could inspire the greatest actions. Competing for men's desire alongside honour are riches; of these two, honours have the greatest attraction, if they are dispensed in a manner calculated to flatter *amour-propre*. Honour is connected to interest, which is its ultimate source; man on his own is neither good nor evil, but ready to be one or the other, as the common interest guides him to good or evil<sup>400</sup>. It is the task of the Legislator to find the means which have as their goal the common interest<sup>401</sup>, and then to direct every member of the body politic by satisfying their penchants individually, and then guiding them according to the views of the Legislator<sup>402</sup>.

In support of this approach, Bilistein quoted Montesquieu to reinforce his theory of education:

Man, that flexible being, conforming himself in society to the thoughts and impressions of others, is equally capable of knowing *his own nature*, when it is shown to him, and to lose *even his sentiment*, if it is stripped from him. ... *It is*

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<sup>399</sup> Charles-Léopold Andreu de Bilistein, *Institutions Militaires pour la France, ou Le Vegece* (sic) *François*, Première Partie (Amsterdam, 1762). De Bilistein was a former lawyer at the *Parlement* of Lorraine who was called to serve as a secretary to Crémilles by the comte de Gisors.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, xii-xiii: "en effet l'homme sensible pour lui seul, indifférent pour les autres, n'est ni bon, ni méchant, mais prêt à être l'un ou l'autre, selon qu'un intérêt commun le réunit ou le divise".

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, 77: "Il est bien rare de voir de grandes richesses et de grands talents dans le même sujet; l'émulation a un objet de moins. Si l'intérêt est un mobile si puissant, que ne doit-on pas attendre de la nécessité? Elle est la mère de l'industrie et de la prudence; elle rend les hommes capables des plus grandes choses, et lorsque l'honneur l'accompagne, elle les mène toujours dans le chemin de la vertu".

<sup>402</sup> One of the final documents establishing the curriculum of the *École militaire* echoed this view: "Nous avons tous dans le cœur le germe des vertus et des vices; on met tout en œuvre pour étouffer les uns, et développer les autres... on ne néglige rien pour régler et exercer ces dispositions, afin de rendre ces petits hommes utiles et heureux, par le bien qu'ils feront, et qu'ils éprouveront eux-mêmes". In the context of the *Maison royale*, the administrative body of the school took on the mantle of the legislator. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148 'Discours préliminaire': Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785.



*therefore absurd to hide from men the principle which moves them; it is not a matter of indifference that the People be instructed (emphasis original)*<sup>403</sup>.

Bilistein then stated that man is capable of everything, but is in need of guides. Those guides are the persons charged with men's conduct. As to the purpose that the guides ought to lead their people to, the goal was to be that which was best for the Legislator and for the body politic. Nothing could be more advantageous than a great population, and nothing more honourable than well-formed and maintained troops. In sum, the art of inspiring heroism lay in uniting the sentiments of the first and second order: personal interest, love of glory, honour, and hope. The mechanism for bringing these elements together was an informed education, while the key element of education was the provision of ample opportunities for the candidate to prove his abilities<sup>404</sup>.

Admittedly, Bilistein does not mention the word *émulation* itself in this context, but his ideas on men's nature and the best way to spur them on by appealing to their higher faculties, and therefore achieving an improvement in both man's moral character as well as his profession, and the nation at large, are clearly echoed in the use that the founders and administrators of the *École militaire* made of that term. Bilistein's conceptualisation might seem overly broad, but the variety of applications that *émulation* was given in the contexts associated with educational reform in that period justifies the association of his notions with what was perhaps the single most important theoretical concept employed for its motivational power. Although most applications of *émulation* in the school are by the *conseils*, there are also instances of its use by others, such as the *Inspecteurs des Études*. They believed that "toute institution publique" depended on "la méthode, l'émulation, et la discipline"<sup>405</sup>. It was used as an operative element in institutional reform, with Choiseul describing the lack of *émulation* in

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<sup>403</sup> Though Bilistein does not provide a citation, the last part of the quotation in the original reads: "Il n'est pas indifférent que le peuple soit instruit". Montesquieu, Préface, *De l'Esprit des Lois* in *Œuvres Complètes de Montesquieu...* (Paris, 1838), 189. Smith utilises the same quote in "Social Categories, the Language of Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution: The Debate over *noblesse commerçante*", *Journal of Modern History*, 72 (June 2000): 357 and *Nobility Reimagined*, 77. In both cases it reads, "It is not an indifferent matter that the people should be enlightened".

<sup>404</sup> In the administration's words, "C'est sur cette base d'éducation que porte l'instruction particulière des élèves, de façon qu'ils s'habituent à trouver leurs intérêts personnels dans le plan du bien général, et que pour quelque genre de service qu'ils soient destinés, ils commencent de bonne heure à être humains et patriotes". SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, 'Discours préliminaire': Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785.

<sup>405</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1605-283, Mémoire que présentent à nosseigneurs du Conseil de l'École Royale Militaire les Inspecteurs des Études, 19 October 1764.

*maîtres* and students as a motive for the changes of 1764<sup>406</sup>. Students themselves, in turn, adopted the idea in a positive way, as something to benefit from. This is the case of one Breton *gentilhomme* d'Héral, who wished to avoid the lack of *émulation* which resulted from his solitary studies at La Flèche. He used the absence of that quality to support his request for a transfer to continue his studies in Paris, where he would presumably be in a better position to benefit from *émulation* among his peers<sup>407</sup>.

## Part II: The Reformers' conception of nobility, poverty, and education

Having defined the basic terms and suggested how the ideas of the founders and defenders of the *École militaire* might have aligned with some of the best-known commentators on political, noble, and educational reform in the 65 years preceding its founding, we can now turn to their own statements and arguments, a study which has not until now been carried out in detail. The principal texts examined here are Duverney's *mémoires* and correspondance, François-Hugues Pepin du Montet's *Requête au Roy* of June 1752<sup>408</sup>, the *Essay sur le Service Militaire* by an anonymous author published in April 1754<sup>409</sup>, Pâris de Meyzieu's *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel françois à M.--- sur l'École royale militaire* of 1755<sup>410</sup>, and the *Réflexions sur l'École royale militaire*<sup>411</sup>, also anonymous. This last work, though it is undated, must, through the evidence of the arguments made and knowledge of the school's internal administrative matters, have been published shortly after de Meyzieu's polemic, itself published the same year as his article 'École Militaire' in the *Encyclopédie*.

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<sup>406</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l'École Royale Militaire à Compiègne, 11 August 1764. His judgment was: "Il ne sera peut-être pas aussi facile de remédier aux causes qui ont fait que jusqu'à présent on n'a pas cultivé avec assez de soin dans l'École militaire les bonnes dispositions qui s'y sont rencontrées. Je n'examinerai pas en particulier où peuvent être ces causes. Mais en portant les yeux sur l'objet en général, j'en aperçois une qui a dû vous faire le plus grand mal; c'est le défaut d'émulation dans les maîtres et dans les écoliers".

<sup>407</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 22 September 1776, 11. Gemma Tidman is carrying out further research on *émulation* in this period in a chapter of her thesis on Rousseau, *Littérature*, and *Émulation*.

<sup>408</sup> François-Hugues Pepin du Montet, *Requête au Roy, tendante à obtenir la confirmation de l'établissement d'une petite École militaire pour les pauvres enfans nobles de France...* (Paris, 1752). This pamphlet is interesting for being the earliest known call for the creation of a system of preparatory military schools to educate and prepare the children of indigent noble families for eventual entry to the *École militaire* in Paris.

<sup>409</sup> *Essay sur le Service Militaire, pour l'instruction d'un jeune Seigneur Francois*, par M.\*\*\* (Paris, 1754).

<sup>410</sup> Jean-Baptiste Pâris de Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel françois à M\*\*\*. sur l'École royale militaire* (London, 1755).

<sup>411</sup> *Réflexions sur l'École royale militaire* (n.p., n.d.). The BUP holds manuscript drafts of de Meyzieu's *Encyclopédie* article and the *Réflexions* in the Fonds d'Argenson P 40.

As the following chapter shows, despite the spread of numerous specialised institutions for noble, military, and technical education, the issue of the need for formal education provision for the nobility was not completely put to rest before the Revolution. The *École militaire* additionally straddled several fault lines in debates on education, financial administration, and the role of the nobility: due to its composition and cost, in some eyes due to its nature, it always remained a controversial idea. The *Invalides*, though also expensive, might be expected to have been less prone to criticism on its merits thanks to its being an open and entirely charitable foundation. This, however was not entirely so; in a letter to the Abbé de Bernis, Duverney sought to make the point that projects which had once been scorned later became respectable. He reported that friends of Colbert had criticised the *Invalides* for being a hospital humiliating to the military, but that it had ultimately become worthy of receiving retired Lieutenant-colonels<sup>412</sup>. Even so, contemporary criticism persisted, one significant figure being the comte de Saint-Germain, the future Minister of War. In his opinion, the *Invalides* was more ostentatious than useful, an expensive way to keep men he considered able contribute to society in indolence. He went so far as to propose emptying the *Invalides* and housing the *École militaire* there, thus avoiding all capital construction expenses<sup>413</sup>.

For its part, the iconoclastic purpose of the *École militaire* comes across clearly in Duverney's *mémoires*. Labelled an 'anti-collège'<sup>414</sup>, the *École militaire*'s pedagogic and moral foundations were steeped in a philosophy diametrically opposed to that which formed the cadres of the *Parlements* and clergy, the classical *collège* system. Writing in the context of a moment when both the *Parlement* and the provincial *États* were in ferment due to Machault's imposition of the *vingtième*, with the clergy strongly objecting to the same measure, and when Parisians were rioting due to the rumoured kidnapping of young boys, Duverney asserted that nearly every reign in the country's history had been troubled in various degrees by the machinations of the ecclesiastics and the *Parlements*<sup>415</sup>. If such factiousness was not exactly the product of the education

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<sup>412</sup> Réponse de Duverney, 3 Mars 1753 in *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bernis, ministre d'état, avec M. Paris-du-Verney ...* (London, 1790), 31.

<sup>413</sup> Saint-Germain à Duverney à Bièvre, le 19 Octobre 1753 in *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney...* T. I (London, 1789), 55-56.

<sup>414</sup> Marcel Grandière, *L'Idéal pédagogique en France au dix-huitième siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), 174 in Chapron, *op. cit.*, 4.

<sup>415</sup> AN K 149 n° 7, Mémoire secret, 24 April 1750, 2.

afforded the members of those bodies, neither did Duverney consider it fit for purpose in either moral or political terms. The *mémoire* of 11 January 1750 alleged that Paris was over-full of *collèges* whose founders had intended only to form men for the cloisters and church, or at the very most for “la grammaire, la médecine ancienne, et la jurisprudence romaine”, all subjects of mediocre relevance, but which at that point were taken to constitute the essential of what ought to be learnt. The list of subjects which suffered neglect as a result included the study of warfare on land and sea, the knowledge of politics, the financial administration of the kingdom, the maintenance of law and order, foreign commerce, and the duties of the high magistrature. Those were all very broad categories of knowledge, and indispensable to learn; however, their study was obstructed by the familiar prejudice against innovation, which was condemned as dangerous<sup>416</sup>. This, in turn, led to the waste of the flower of nobles’ youths, as the group in greatest need of quality education only received a neglectful, defective one.

The impressions they could hope to collect in the *collèges* were not those that they ought to be cultivating, for at the most they could expect to spend seven or eight years learning, with difficulty, some elements of a language which they would forget in three or four years of life in the world<sup>417</sup>. The verdict condemned the classical system as a sprawling, backward, inward-looking irrelevance, pedagogically outdated thanks to an excessively narrow focus on minimally useful topics which hindered the progress of the kingdom’s administration and other affairs<sup>418</sup>. These criticisms were in turn echoed by d’Alembert in his summary of the education given at the *collèges* in the *Encyclopédie*:

Il résulte de ce détail, qu’un jeune homme après avoir passé dans un collège dix années, qu’on doit mettre au nombre des plus précieuses de sa vie, en sort, lorsqu’il a le mieux employé son tems, avec la connaissance très-imparfaite d’une langue morte, avec des préceptes de Rhétorique & des principes de Philosophie qu’il doit tâcher d’oublier; souvent avec une corruption de mœurs

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<sup>416</sup> AN K 149, n° 1, Mémoire sur l’utilité de l’établissement d’un Collège académique pour la jeune Noblesse de France, 11 January 1750, 1.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>418</sup> A modernised pedagogy called for the reduction of Latin to make room for the study of French and other modern languages. The practice, as well as the study, of Latin at the time is described as follows: “... ils la parlaient constamment au collège, du moins dans les classes supérieures (syntax, poetry, rhetoric), en toutes circonstances et même en récréation”. J. Javaux- R. Lechat-L. Willaert, *Les Jésuites inaugurent place du XX-Août le 30 avril 1582*, éditée par le Collège St-Servais (1982) in Cécile Bertrand “Le Latin des Jésuites Wallons de Liège au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle: Analyse Factorielle”, *Revue, Informatique et Statistique dans les Sciences humaines* XX, 1-4 (1984): 26.

dont l'altération de la santé est la moindre suite; quelquefois avec des principes d'une dévotion mal-entendue; mais plus ordinairement avec une connaissance de la religion si superficielle, qu'elle succombe à la première conversation impie, ou à la première lecture dangereuse<sup>419</sup>.

As Robert Granderoute points out, "en 1753, d'Alembert n'innove pas; il procède plutôt à une... synthèse ferme et brillante"<sup>420</sup>. While the Duverney and de Meyzieu in turn can hardly be considered more innovative, their thought and work nevertheless marked an important point in the search and adoption of alternatives to the pedagogical philosophy espoused by the *collèges*.

The deep-seated hostility and wide-ranging criticisms of the educational provisions at the time by the school's founders were based not only on the perceived failings of its professional preparation, but also on the supposed moral and social drawbacks of the *collège* system. The *École militaire* was to be unlike any other *collège*, which imparted no moral or patriotic principles to its charges. The customary stint in the ranks common to young men of status was merely a genuflection to social expectation, the holding of a title in lieu of merit and talents, and no barrier to their giving themselves over entirely to independence and libertinage. The blame for this was placed on the *collèges*, which imparted neither solidity nor constancy, nor any true principles on anything, and in fact rendered study and books repulsive to their students. It was hardly surprising that no true statesmen issued forth from such a deplorable milieu<sup>421</sup>. A further criticism was that the *collège* education, such as it was, could only be purchased by the well-off, and was thus closed-off to the rest of the nobility. The result was a loss of talent to the State, as anyone who did not live in Paris or could not afford an education was condemned to wallow in destitution. It was left to the imagination to form an idea of the possibilities and gains which could be made in the high

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<sup>419</sup> He listed the five subjects of public education, namely *Humanités* (Latin), *Rhétorique*, *Philosophie*, *Moeurs*, and *Réligion*. These, in turn, were the preparatory subjects for the *Trivium* (Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic) and *Quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy) of the *Studia Generalia*, and further advanced studies in faculties of theology, philosophy, and law. D'Alembert, *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences...*, T. III, s.v. "Collège", 636. Liliane Alfonsi further notes that in Jesuit *collèges* during the eighteenth century, the *Quadrivium* "est bien souvent, faute de personnel compétent, sacrifié à la Théologie". Liliane Alfonsi, "Les mathématiques au XVIIIe siècle dans les manuels d'enseignement: Du 'Pourquoi?' au 'Comment?'" , *Images des Mathématiques* (CNRS, 2012) <http://images.math.cnrs.fr/Les-mathematiques-au-XVIIIe-siecle.html>. Accessed on 09/08/2014.

<sup>420</sup> Robert Granderoute, "La fortune de l'article *Collège* dans le discours pédagogique (1753-1789)" in *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie* 5 (1988): 58.

<sup>421</sup> AN K 149, n° 1, Mémoire sur l'utilité de l'établissement d'un Collège Académique pour la jeune Noblesse de France, 11 January 1750, 6.

magistrature, diplomacy, and cabinet affairs by men without means but with education who would otherwise be abandoned to their fate. Furthermore, this poverty distorted the kind of education sought by those able to avail themselves of one, who inevitably chose the law, a subject necessary in order to obtain a hereditary charge for their family and thus to act as a stop-gap against the dissipation of their fortune<sup>422</sup>.

On the other hand, the structure of the Magistrature and judicial careers again foreclosed the possibility of advancement to those of limited means. The “versatility of charges” (*versatilité des charges*) had always closed the door to wealth and advancement in jurisprudence to naked merit, shorn of any goods. Thus, a poor student, no matter how talented, would be wasting his time studying the law as his knowledge would be useful neither to him nor the country. Though he does not use the word “venality”, the Duverney clearly refers to it, for he surmises that the only way to make a path for oneself in the law is with “merit sheathed in gold”. Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical state was always a temptation for the sons of impoverished nobles, with its promises of riches and honours without cares, risk, hard work or effort, especially when juxtaposed to a military career whose sole reward was honour attained by hard work and peril, but only assured by death<sup>423</sup>.

De Meyzieu also saw the education provided by the *collèges* as suited only to produce amicable men, but not men suited for warfare. Describing its result as equally incomplete and useless, he protested the fact that the noble students who had been educated in this way were put in command of troops almost immediately upon graduating. While he did not dispute that the high nobility deserved special privileges, he nevertheless pointed out, in understated criticism, that such practices were inconvenient. His view of the subject was essentially that of separate, non-complementary professional competencies, as summarized in his criticism of the *collèges*' curricula. To him, the best turned out product of a college had a passable grasp of Latin, sometimes knew Greek, had a good way with verse, had some knowledge of geography and history, a tincture of “physique”, and knew a little geometry. Instruction in religion, morals, and social refinement, he concluded, was no doubt given in accordance to excellent principles. Although the fact that those principles were nearly completely neglected by the students was undoubtedly the pupils' fault and not that of

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>423</sup> AN K 149, n° 6<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire, 24 April 1750, 1-2.

their masters', his skirting of sarcasm in that comment hardly masked his contempt for the system of classical education<sup>424</sup>. De Meyzieu concluded by saying that a university professor was as well-suited to draw up military manoeuvres as an infantry major was to interpret Pindar or Demosthenes. He did not set himself against a literary education in principle, but his tone left no doubt as to how suitable he considered it for the nobility most in need of rehabilitation for the state's service<sup>425</sup>.

If the lack of suitable educational provision was a substantial obstacle to the progress of the military nobility, its lack of means and resources constituted another, one which most author's discussing the nature of the new *École militaire* dwelt on at length. Thus, du Montet stated that no class had greater cause for complaints on account of their suffering than the impoverished nobility: his first complaint was that noble fathers were reduced to sending their children to parish schools alongside *roturiers*, and that often they did not even have that debasing option<sup>426</sup>. With immediate and long-term effects including a decline in religious feeling, the loss of their services to the state, the deterioration of noble houses, increased ignorance, and incorrigible spirits<sup>427</sup>, du Montet saw the nobility as suffering an acute crisis of morale and purpose, but one which improved education for its children could help to arrest and reverse. From the crib onwards, the education and instruction of the sons of the nobility was of the utmost importance. Though he did not specify the age at which they should be sent to schools, his use of the expression "dès leur plus tendre enfance", followed by his opinion that the experiences at such institutions should form and prepare their "impressions" for the next step at the "grande École (here referring explicitly to the *École militaire* in Paris)<sup>428</sup>, implies that, as children at the Parisian school were admitted from the age of 8-9 onwards<sup>429</sup>, they would presumably be taken at du Montet's preparatory schools at

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<sup>424</sup> De Meyzieu, *op. cit.*, 41.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>426</sup> Du Montet, *Requête au Roy*, 4.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* A selection from the original text reads, "La religion en souffre, ils ignorent ses principes: l'état y perd, ils sont incapables de le servir; les grandes maisons dégénèrent ... L'ignorance les obsède, la rusticité s'empare de leur esprit; ... Combien de temps employé, et souvent perdu pour changer ces caractères indociles, ces humeurs difficiles que le défaut d'éducation produit, ... et qu'il est presque impossible de vaincre si on ne les corrige dès le berceau!"

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.* "Ces inconvénients démontrent assez la nécessité de les admettre dès leur plus tendre enfance dans de petites écoles, où l'on puisse les préparer à recevoir les impressions qu'on leur donnera dans la grande..."

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.* Article XV of the edict of January 22 stipulated that students would be received between the ages of 8-9 as the lower limit, and 10-11 at the upper limit, the exception being orphans, who were admissible up to the age of 13. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Édité du roi, 22 January 1751, 9.

approximately 5-6 years of age. With these preliminary steps taken, the student's talents, intellect, and knowledge would be prepared to flourish.

The lack of educational opportunities for the bulk of the French nobility, along with the widespread ignorance of the officer class and the consequent neglect of its duties, is similarly emblematic of the other authors' theses, all of which emphasised different aspects of the malaise afflicting the nobility. The identification of the nobility with the officer class was a fundamental tenet in all of their minds. The author of the *Essay* saw the division of tasks in French society, with the example of the Magistrate for the service of justice, the Labourer for the harvesting of the fruits of the earth, and the Artisan for the manufacture of all that was necessary and useful, as leaving the nobility with no other option but to serve the State through the profession of arms. This state of affairs was underlined by the fact that, while the British aristocrat enjoyed an active role in government in Parliament, and the German princelings were largely autonomous, a French *seigneur* had little authority in his territories and no role in the public administration<sup>430</sup>. The author of the *Réflexions* makes the same case, pointing to the nobility's age-old affiliation with honour and the practice of arms, whose first and sole duty, as assigned by the body politic, was the defence of the State. It could not, in consequence, neglect this duty in the pursuit of other enterprises, nor sink into idleness and desuetude with the same effect<sup>431</sup>.

Interestingly, the author of the *Réflexions* took a position not widely held by other thinkers on the subject with regards to the military service of the high nobility. He asked if the nobility could be considered to be faithful to the first law of its class, service to the state, and replied that the high nobility was irreproachable on those grounds<sup>432</sup>. Honour was more active among that stratum of nobility, which thus impelled it to military service even when it had other avenues to advancement available to it. The rest of the nobility however, suffered from a lack of *ardeur* and *émulation*. It preferred instead to weigh its prospects, and if it could survive at home, it would not hazard to risk itself in war. If it did enter into military service it was only for a few years, during which its youth was wasted before finally retiring from its commitment

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<sup>430</sup> *Essay sur le Service Militaire*, 154-155.

<sup>431</sup> *Réflexions*... 2. "La noblesse est... l'essence de toute monarchie, parce que l'honneur en est le principe... entre toutes ces distinctions, il en est une qui lui est propre, ... c'est le service militaire".

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* "...la noblesse est-elle aujourd'hui bien fidèle à la première loi de son institution, et paye-t-elle à l'état par les services qu'elle lui doit, le prix des honneurs et des privilèges qu'elle en reçoit? Il n'y a ... aucun reproche à faire sur cela à ... la haute noblesse".



due to enervation and insipidity. In defence against arguments that the situation as he expressed it was exaggerated, he cited the fact that there were entire provinces in France that sent fewer than 10 *gentilshommes* to the king's service, a situation which was only counterbalanced thanks to the spirit of the old nobility and by the fact that other provinces compensated for such neglect by their fidelity<sup>433</sup>. Those who compensated for regional imbalances in this way were in his view actually the least well off in material terms, leading him to conclude that mediocrity and necessity were more conducive to leading men into steadfast virtue and devoted service than riches and comfort<sup>434</sup>. It would appear, then, that the author of the *Réflexions* saw the active service military nobility as a mixture of the highest and lowest nobles, who were united not by their material situations, but by the elements of honour, sacrifice, and duty which ought to be the mainstays of the nobility at all times.

Having established the nobility's role in society and in the military, the author then discussed the role of education in its preparation and ability to carry out its archetypal role. However, education, beneficial and useful as it undoubtedly was in the eyes of these writers, did not stand on its own as an end in itself or a positive but detached quality. It was very clearly presented as a key, if not exclusive, counter to the decay afflicting the nobility and the vices which had crept into the armed forces. A closer examination of the symptoms of these afflictions, their causes, and their effects will help establish the basis for evaluating more precisely what the improvements to education hoped to accomplish, why the particular forms and measures envisaged were posited, and how they were defended against objections by others who no doubt saw the need for reform but criticised the proposed measures advanced by reformers.

The two principal scourges of the nobility were taken to be excessive luxury and excessive poverty, each detrimental in their different ways, but both contributing to

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 2-3. "L'honneur plus actif chez elle (la haute noblesse),... la porterait sans doute au service militaire, quand ce ne serait pas la seule route qui lui fût ouverte pour arriver aux grands emplois ... Il n'en est pas de même du reste de la noblesse:... si ses facultés lui suffisent pour subsister dans sa province, elle s'expose rarement aux hasards de la guerre; ou si elle entre au service, ce n'est que pour y passer les années inutiles de la première jeunesse ... énervée par l'oisiveté, elle perd ... de vue un objet que son origine devrait lui rappeler sans cesse ... Ce tableau pourrait paraître exagéré, si nous n'avions pas ... des provinces entières où l'on ne compterait peut-être pas dix gentilshommes au service du roi; il en est d'autres heureusement où l'esprit de l'ancienne noblesse s'est mieux conservé, et qui sont par conséquent moins stériles en hommes de guerre".

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 3. "Ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable, c'est que ce sont précisément les moins riches;... la médiocrité et la nécessité sont plus propres à maintenir les hommes dans la vertu et le devoir, que les richesses et l'aisance".

ignorance, a lack of discipline, and wrecked morals. The strongest criticism was typically reserved for affluent nobles, with those without means usually seen as the victims rather than protagonists of their own deprivation. The author of the *Essay* listed the ways in which rich young nobles fell short in their military duties. The quality of *émulation* suffered in the military due to a surrender of morals to luxury and softness. Even so, a modicum of courage remained in French hearts. Unfortunately, courage alone was insufficient to salvage the nobility and the army from the moral predicament which bedevilled them. Though many officers believed themselves to enjoy a surfeit of knowledge beyond what was essential, they were still as little knowledgeable after years of service as a newly received *Mousquetaire* of the *Maison du Roi*. It was thus hardly surprising that the least pretext gave them reason to leave, with the consequence that the noble-born were rarely given significant commands, while those with lower social qualifications took more military offices<sup>435</sup>. Furthermore, it was considered so remarkable to see young nobles of the first rank dedicated to the military profession, that excessive praise was heaped on them when a positive disposition to learn and improve was shown<sup>436</sup>. The author described his criticisms as made with the intention of stimulating *émulation* and deliberately pricking noble pride, in order to direct it along a better path. Since vanity was universal, along with the desire to climb and supersede others, the author of the *Essay* posited that it ought to be more desirable to merit praise and honour rather than to be distinguished by external ornamentation and finery<sup>437</sup>.

In one passage the author of the *Essay* focused his criticism on the excessive value and emphasis placed on bravery, saying it was suitable for the rank and file and for subalterns, but a grave disqualification in a staff officer. The imaginary addressee was typical of the court nobles, born to lead, promoted to high position even before coming of age, and the son of commanders of armies and governors of provinces. All of those advantages, even allied with bravery, were of no recourse without the cultivation

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<sup>435</sup> *Essay*, 151-152. This author stressed that “la noblesse est incapable de dégénérer”, a statement reminiscent of the conception of nobility which had legal force in Brittany: “C’est un usage constant dans la province que la noblesse ne s’y perd jamais par prescription ni par dérogeance”. Acte de notoriété du barreau du Parlement de Rennes, April 1715; see Arlette Jouanna, “Dérogeance”, in *Dictionnaire de l’Ancien Régime: Royaume de France, XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Lucien Bély (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 399.

<sup>436</sup> *Essay*, 170-171.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 151-152. “Je voudrais... que ces sentiments ne fussent en vous qu’une louable émulation ... Tout le monde a de la vanité, tout le monde veut s’élever et l’emporter sur les autres. N’est-il pas infiniment plus noble et plus satisfaisant de mériter les louanges et les honneurs que l’on ambitionne, que de se distinguer par la parure et les équipages et autres profusions semblables”.

of *génie*, as it was the head and not the hands which decided a general's fate. Such an undertaking was the work of a lifetime, a fact which was too often forgotten by fiery, presumptuous youths. They held the misguided belief that the habits of command were easily acquired and were the result of simple practice and observation. While acknowledging that theory alone was insufficient for a commander, the author pointed out that the typical practical education through service and the observation of troop evolutions, fortified cities, marches, sieges, and battles was equally lacking<sup>438</sup>.

What was needed was an intellectual basis and framework for evaluating the results of undigested observation. Unaided observation left the apprentice officer without a grasp of the reasons for everything he saw, or a basis for distinguishing actions which were properly carried out from those which were not, or any criteria for intelligent observation of campaign operations and manoeuvres. He would be handicapped by his inability to discern mistakes in even a highly able general's conduct, in brief, his uninformed observation would fall short of imparting the necessary knowledge and the means of utilising it. Ideally, the combination of theory and practice would help form his ideas, give them shape, and make their use and application of no difficulty. But again, this would only be attainable by shaking off the indolence which made such youths grow fat and incapable of reaching the higher reaches of their profession<sup>439</sup>.

De Meyzieu's analysis of officer conduct during and after the most recent three wars provided the empirical basis for his criticisms of the noble class and possible remedies. In his opinion, officers in the War of the Spanish Succession knew nothing of comfort, instead often lacking even essential necessities and marching on foot, campaigning alongside their men, and eating the same hard tack as their soldiers. They never sought early retirement and thus fulfilled their duty to the king. He saw the situation as having been dramatically transformed in the last two wars<sup>440</sup>, those of the Polish and Austrian Successions. He admitted that plenty of bravery and intrepidity, even valour and intelligence, were displayed. However, he condemned the fact that a great many officers fit for many more years of service retired too soon. The source of such dereliction of duty and lack of fidelity he described as being rooted in opulence,

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 167-168.

<sup>440</sup> De Meyzieu, *op. cit.*, 75: "Les deux dernières guerres".

for the majority of the officers who remained in the service were poor, constrained by their situation to depend on the sole reliable source of income available to them. Indeed, he stated that not a single poor officer retired, in contradiction to the author of the *Réflexions*, basing his claim on the reports filed by the army's Inspectors. The rich officer, on the other hand, would not tolerate the least discomfiture even if it had good cause. On obtaining a *croix de Saint-Louis* he would feel justified in quitting the army and thenceforth sink into tranquil retirement and idleness, with no further regard to his duty to the *patrie*. As de Meyzieu put it, a rich officer was not always the man in whom one would find dedication to his profession, exactitude of service, a desire to become better instructed, care to maintain his men, vigilance in discipline, or great zeal. These were the reasons for the lack of subordination in the army, while debauchery and lethargy, cognate vices of opulence, ruined many men who would otherwise have provided good service. These vices also contributed to the enervation of the troops, who became incapable of sustaining any fatigue, or claimed to be crushed by it when in reality they suffered only from intemperance<sup>441</sup>.

Criticisms such as these were largely directed at those with the means of procuring themselves an education of some sort, or of being commissioned an officer in a regiment, *faute de mieux*. For most of France's nobility, however, such discussions were entirely academic, with the prospect of formal education or military employment being as distant a prospect as the likelihood of presentation at court and the attendant possibilities for preferred advancement. The widespread lack of knowledge among those who obtained a military office was, beyond discussions of class and monetary drawbacks, rooted in ignorance. The fact that knowledge and ability were not requirements for entering the officer corps or advancing in it, along with the examples

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 74-77. "Nos officiers dans l'ancienne guerre; non-seulement ils ne connaissaient pas ... l'aisance,... ils manquaient souvent du nécessaire; j'en ai vu alors, ... joindre leurs corps à pied, faire la campagne de même, manger le pain de munition comme le ... simple soldat. Le roi était bien servi, et jamais un officier ne demandait sa retraite. Il s'en faut bien que j'aie rencontré la même chose dans les deux dernières guerres. Je ne disconviens pas de la bravoure,... de nos officiers ... qui se sont distingués par leur valeur et par leur intelligence, mais ... j'en ai vu grand nombre se retirer, que leur âge, leur forces et leurs facultés mettaient en état de servir très-longtemps encore, et tous ceux-là... étaient dans l'opulence.... sur cela je m'en rapporte à tous nos Inspecteurs,... il n'y a pas un officier pauvre qui se retire.... il n'a pour toute ressource que son emploi, ce n'est qu'en continuant à servir qu'il peut espérer ... une sorte d'aisance. Un homme riche au contraire, n'essuiera pas le plus léger désagrément, ... comme si on pouvait cesser de se devoir à son maître et à sa patrie". Whatever the case may have been for the army in general, the opposite to what de Meyzieu asserts was the case with military engineers: some 53, a sixth of their corps' manpower, died on campaign 1744-1748, either in action, from their wounds, or due to fatigue. Anne Blanchard, *Les Ingénieurs du 'Roy' de Louis XIV à Louis XVI: Étude du corps des fortifications* (Montpellier: Imprimerie Déhan, 1979), 190-192.

cited by the polemicists, demonstrate the keen awareness of the perniciousness of the situation which stimulated their calls for educational improvements. Of these authors, de Meyzieu's *Lettre* contains the most comprehensive and wide-ranging discussion of the issues. Being involved in setting up and administrating the new school, it might seem that he had a vested interest in criticising extant procedures and structures. Without discarding such caveats, it ought to be noted that de Meyzieu in the *Lettre* was stating the case for and refuting arguments against the founding of the school, and that his methodology relied on examples drawn from experience, which he utilised to build the structure of his defence. This allowed him to present his arguments as rational rebuttals of established practice and habits which were inimical to reform.

This was the basis for his assertion that the practice of arms was the most difficult of all professions, and that its noble status did nothing to negate this; if its difficulty was nominally acknowledged, it was ignored in practice<sup>442</sup>. His list of the disciplines and principles which made up the conduct of warfare, ranging from foraging to castrametation to orders of battle<sup>443</sup>, formed a body of knowledge with particular rules which was not acquired by simply donning a uniform. He stated that a common prejudice in France was that something could be known without first being learnt, summed up by the view that it was sufficient to be brave to be an officer. To sound out such primitive attitudes, he summarised the reasons why previous generations had not needed a military school. When the nobility had spent all of its time in tournaments, combat practice, and equitation, all of its activities had been directly relevant to war. The turning point for de Meyzieu was the creation of a standing army and permanent regiments in the king's pay, which marked the break with feudal raising of levies and the formerly near-constant armed disputes between different *seigneur*. In such conditions, he stated that the perennially squabbling nobles had been forced to learn the practice of warfare in spite themselves and that they had had no other school than that of necessity<sup>444</sup>. What is intriguing about his perspective with regard to the evolution of military structures is that it identifies one of the key periods in the formation of the

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<sup>442</sup> De Meyzieu, *op. cit.*, 40.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. The complete list reads, "la tactique, le génie, l'artillerie, les campements, les fourrages, les marches, les retraites, les détachements, les convois, les embuscades, les surprises, les ordres de batailles". This is evidently a list of strictly military disciplines, not a curriculum for the school.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-17.

modern French state and imposition of absolutism, and its attendant centralisation and institutionalisation, with the decline in military virtues among the nobility<sup>445</sup>.

De Meyzieu proceeded to draw a straight line from Richelieu who domesticated and then emasculated the nobility (a task achieved by Mazarin) to Louis XIV's glorious but ruinous wars and the establishment of Louvois's short-lived companies of cadets. Their establishment was justified by the fact that the nobility had all but lost its taste for war<sup>446</sup>. The decline was achieved in the War of the Spanish Succession; he criticised the knowledge of generals, whose ruinous defeats might have been surmounted by more capable leaders. As for more recent wars, he said he could not venture to say whether they increased the nobility's taste for warfare, knowing only that they had not improved its intellectual faculties<sup>447</sup>. He repeated this view on the role of education in military leadership in his article 'École militaire'. There he asserted that the immortal fame won by generals such as Scipio and Pompey had been due to the educational practices of antiquity, a practice without parallel in French history. The few French cases (which he didn't list) who could rival the heroes of antiquity he saw as being the products of an education available only to the great nobles (*aux grands*). However, he did not consider that anomaly as being of enough consequence to serve as an exception to the rule which limited the nation's ability to live up to the example of the ancients<sup>448</sup>.

As an example of the malaise afflicting the country, and the degree to which it had spread in the nobility, de Meyzieu posited that there was not only not a family, but not a person of quality in France who did not have an unfortunate relative without means; those subjects had only need of a good education to make their way in the

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<sup>445</sup> Jay Smith has suggested that the requirement that the nobility perform military service ended with the final feudal levy called by Louis XIV in 1674, after which the *ban et arrière-ban* continued to be a theoretical obligation for the nobility but never again utilised. Smith, *Nobility Reimagined*, 34; John Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 369-371.

<sup>446</sup> De Meyzieu, *op. cit.*, 18. "Ce fut alors que ce monarque reconnut que la noblesse n'avait plus pour la guerre qu'un goût impuissant".

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19. A *mémoire* of 1728 considered the extended period of peace positively dangerous for the quality of the officer corps: "Une assez longue paix qui ne laissait pas même, pour s'instruire, la ressource de la pratique, a fait penser... qu'il était important de se précautionner contre l'ignorance totale, dont le corps des officiers était menacé si l'on ne prenait aucun soin d'instruire la jeune noblesse..." SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, *Mémoire sur la nécessité de réduire les six compagnies de cadets en une seule...* December 1728. Coyer condemned such attitudes, incredulous that because "on se plaint tous les jours du petit nombre de débouchés pour les familles nobles... on va jusqu'à désirer la guerre". *Op. cit.*, 93.

D'Arcq in turn was careful to avoid any warmongering, preferring to emphasise the respect that a strong military brought to a prince and his state both in peace and war. *La Noblesse Militaire, ou le Patriote François* (Paris, 1756), 14-15.

<sup>448</sup> De Meyzieu, *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "École Militaire", 307.

world<sup>449</sup>. The cost that ignorance was exacting on the armed forces, meanwhile, was too high. Obedience and exactitude were lacking in the army, and having the best military ordinances in the world was of no avail if they were ignored by the majority of the officers. He decried the consequent inability of the officers to enforce in their troops that which they themselves did not practice. The *Aide-major* was often the only officer with the knowledge which ought to be widely held by all the others, and in consequence his proper role of correcting minor lapses was impossible to fulfil. One of the benefits of the War of the Austrian Succession was that it demonstrated the lack of precision in drill, leading to the first tentative reforms. The officer, pitiably, was often in greater need of drill instruction than his soldiers, and indeed cases of a troop being well-drilled and ready to manoeuvre but without an officer with the slightest notion of how to command it were not unheard of<sup>450</sup>. As for the higher echelons of the chain of command, innate ignorance was just as prevalent. Colonels, absentee proprietors of their regiment who obtained rapid promotion through influence and connections<sup>451</sup>, would often consult their lieutenant colonels or other officers who had gained their confidence, either due to their talents or mere chance. In de Meyzieu's experience, such counsel and advice was enlightening only in proportion to the intellect of the one who received it. With greater access to a good education, however, such predicaments would be less common due to the higher quantity and intake of knowledgeable men<sup>452</sup>.

This did not mean that all officers were unaware of their own intellectual limitations or of the need to redress these. De Meyzieu remarked that he knew many who were conscious of their shortcomings and wished to improve themselves, but who were held back by an excess of *amour-propre* from returning to the basic principles and procuring an education. He pointed out with subtle poignancy that some officers, all too aware of their ignorance, were afraid of showing it, and that the same pernicious tendency was only reinforced by age and years of service. Too many officers were held back by age from becoming what they might have been had they studied hard in their

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<sup>449</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 36-37, "Pourrait-on me citer une personne en France, quelque favorablement qu'elle fût traitée de la Fortune, qui osât se flatter de ne pas avoir quelque parent malheureux, quelque parent à qui il ne manque souvent que les secours d'une bonne éducation pour briller et parvenir dans le monde?"

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>451</sup> Such connections remained important until the end of the *ancien régime*: "... of all the colonels in infantry regiments in 1789 (over 200), only six were non-titled nobles", Albert Duruy, *L'Armée royale en 1789* (Paris, 1888), 83-4 in Samuel F. Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army to the French Revolution: The Role and Development of the Line Army, 1787 – 93* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 23.

<sup>452</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...* 57.

youth. Years later, however, most would not learn much beyond the basic elements. The imparting of key principles in their youth, would have remedied all of that<sup>453</sup>. That was one of the *École militaire*'s principal roles, to serve as a model of the education to be imitated and emulated across France; but even if it did not fulfil that goal, he claimed that it would fulfil the more limited but concrete objective of supplying a corrective to the otherwise indifferent education available to the nobility<sup>454</sup>.

In the mind of the reformers, the fate of the unschooled children of provincial nobles rotting in squalor, with the attendant consequences for their class, their profession, and the nation, was intimately tied to the availability and quality of education open to them. Though these issues were not forcibly tied up with questions of class rivalry or noble exclusivism, the examples posited as symptomatic of the provincial nobility's quandary illustrated its relative disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the moneyed bourgeois and *anoblis*. The author of the *Réflexions*, in support of his argument on the utmost importance of filling all possible "emplois militaires" by nobles, cited two examples to underline the depths to which France's military establishment had fallen. The first was when the Minister of War had been forced to invite the sons of the well-off bourgeoisie to fill the excess number of vacancies in the officer corps on the outbreak of war in 1734, a shameful situation in his opinion coming as it did after twenty years of peace. Though such a recourse was not unheard of at the end of long wars, when the nobility and its resources were exhausted<sup>455</sup>, he considered it scandalous that such a measure should have taken place at the beginning, and not the end, of a war. The second was the edict of November 1750 granting nobility to non-noble general officers<sup>456</sup>. After listing the damaging economic and demographic consequences that he saw as the result of such an inversion of the social order, he decried the fact that the expulsion of non-nobles and their replacement by nobles had never been carried out in

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 44: An "... avantage de l'École militaire, c'est d'être un modèle pour les études des jeunes gens destinés aux armes. Mais supposons qu'on ne le suive pas,... nous allons voir que cette institution supplée en partie, au mal qui provient de la mauvaise éducation de la noblesse préférée pour les grades".

<sup>455</sup> For more on this practice, see André Corvisier "Aux approches de l'Édit de Ségur: le cas du sieur de Mongautier, 1779", *L'Actualité de l'histoire*, 22 (1958), 10-11.

<sup>456</sup> *Réflexions*, 3-4, "La nécessité où le ministre de la guerre se trouva en 1734, après vingt années de paix, de faire inviter les enfants de la bourgeoisie opulente à prendre ces emplois, en est une première preuve, et on en trouve une autre dans l'Édit du mois de Novembre 1750, qui accorde la noblesse à la supériorité des services militaires".



the army<sup>457</sup>. Instead, the old nobility had had to suffer the humiliation of measures such as the edict of 1750, a law necessary to flatter and attract those of lower social extraction in order to make up the shortfall in officers, but nevertheless a just reward for men willing to pay with their blood to replace nobles<sup>458</sup>. Such an allusion to the feudal notion of the *impôt du sang*, the result of a society of estates and justification for noble privileges, is interesting in this context, as it is critical of non-noble intrusion yet extends the strictly noble concept of the blood tax to a non-noble element in a discussion arguing for continued exclusion of *roturiers* from what ought ideally to be, in the author's mind, the exclusive preserve of the deprived nobility<sup>459</sup>.

The effect of these allegedly detrimental developments on the nascent *École militaire* further helped exemplify the nobility's decline according to the author of the *Réflexions*. In his eyes, the fact of its establishment helped demonstrate the precarious state that the old nobility had come to; the table of eight classes indicating the priority of admission to be given to eligible candidates to the *École militaire* ranked the classes according to the degree of sacrifice in military service that the prospective student's father had made and the resulting deprivation suffered by his family. This order of admission gave absolute preference to the orphans of officers killed in the field or who were in the care of their widowed mothers; the fifth class was the first that was open to the children of officers then on active duty, and only the last class admitted those children who had neither a father nor any ancestors who had served in the military<sup>460</sup>. To the author of the *Réflexions*, the fact that only 60 children who met the criteria for

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 9. These are namely the loss of productivity to the state and decrease in the birth-rate due to the number of unmarried men in the army, which would have been less of a problem if the officer corps was populated by nobles, of whom apparently only the eldest sons ever typically married and inherited.

<sup>458</sup> *Réflexions*, 9-10. "Extrémité humiliante pour l'ancienne noblesse, mais juste par rapport à des hommes qui payent de leur sang l'avantage de tenir sa place".

<sup>459</sup> The text of the edict of 1750 itself eschewed any egalitarian language: it was framed as the reaffirming and reinforcing of the dispositions set out by Henri IV in Article XXV of the edict of 1600 on the *tailles*, but which subsequent laws had modified and diluted. The new proclamation simply intended, "en y statuant de nouveau par une loi expresse, renfermer cette grâce dans de justes bornes". It was furthermore framed in terms of not desiring to increase the burden on the king's "sujets taillables", through the fiscal privileges accorded to the nobility, a disposition reinforced by provisions of the declaration which followed two years later clarifying the edict. Édît du Roi, portant création d'une Noblesse Militaire, Fontainebleau, November 1750, 2; Déclaration du Roi, en interprétation de l'Édit du mois de novembre 1750, portant création d'une Noblesse militaire, Versailles, 22 January 1752, 1-2.

<sup>460</sup> The second class was open both to the children of officers who had died on active duty, or of those who had retired after thirty years of service; the concession to thirty years' service was applicable until the fourth class. The sixth class was for the children of officers retired due to age, their infirmities, or another legitimate reason, and the seventh for those whose fathers had not served but whose ancestors had. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XIII, Édît du roi, 22 January 1751, 8.

the first four classes were assembled illustrated the weakness of the military nobility<sup>461</sup>. The fifth class was opened to applicants in November 1753. The author stated that contrary to expectations of a deluge of applicants, only 90 applications were received by the Ministry in a span of six months. Of these, 20 were from officers of the *Garde-Côte* of Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy, along with a similar number from officers in the *Maison du Roi* or from reformed officers, the Irish, and the *État-Major des Places*. He calculated the total number of requests from officers in the line regiments (infantry, cavalry, and dragoons) as fewer than twenty; in his eyes, the military qualities of all those who were not members of the line troops were clearly inferior<sup>462</sup>. He disregarded the last three of the eight classes, as they grouped those whose fathers had not died or retired due to their wounds, or who had less than thirty years' service as an officer. From these totals he concluded that there were not as many *gentilshommes* serving as officers in the army, and in the infantry in particular, as some might have believed<sup>463</sup>.

De Meyzieu also used the example of the outbreak of war in 1734 and the Edict of 1750 in his arguments for the creation of the *École militaire*, though less acidly than the author of the *Réflexions*. His reply to critics of the creation of a national military school began with a response to the demographic argument that France was too well-supplied with nobles to ever lack officers for its armies. On the contrary, he pointed out, the fact that the Minister of War had been forced to write to the provincial *Intendants* at the beginning of the War of the Polish Succession requesting that they find suitable officer material among the bourgeoisie in their departments to counter the shortfall in *sous-lieutenants* and lieutenants, even after the drafting of the six hundred *cadets-*

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<sup>461</sup> An *état* of the *élèves agréés par le roi*, the students received at the *École militaire* in June 1753, appears to back this author's point. The *état* lists 47 students, seven in the first class, eight in the second, 13 in the third, and 19 for the fifth. The *état* lists their age, the *généralité* they were from, and the date of their admission, but not their father's names or any information concerning their service. This is only 13 short of the 60 mentioned by the author of the *Réflexions*, a difference explained by the fact that not all those who were admitted (e.g. considered suitable candidates) were in fact received (e.g. matriculated); some could also be received at a later date. AN MM 678, *Élèves agréés par le Roi*, June 1753, 4-6.

<sup>462</sup> *Réflexions*, 4-5. His thoughts on the military qualities of officers in the technical branches can only be a matter of speculation, as none of the parents of children he numbers served in either the artillery, navy, or as military engineers.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6. "Or en comparant les demandes que les cinq premières classes ont produites, avec celles... pour les classes subséquentes, où il n'est pas question de services actuels, on trouve que le nombre de celles-ci est infiniment supérieur au nombre des autres, et il est nécessaire d'en conclure qu'il n'y a pas... dans les troupes, et surtout dans l'infanterie française [as opposed to foreign regiments], autant de gentilshommes qu'on aurait pu le croire". The author also comments in a footnote that some estimates put the number of *gentilshommes* in the infantry at less than half, others finding even that total generous. He posited that point to counter the argument that the low intake of the *École militaire* might simply be the result of a high number of unmarried officers, instead of being due to a lack of nobility in the army.

*gentilshommes* at Metz, demonstrated the very opposite<sup>464</sup>. Also, if, as was commonly and erroneously believed, the officer corps was reserved for the nobility, de Meyzieu posed the question of what the purpose of the edict of 1750 really was. His answer, though not articulated, was not that it aimed to create an exclusively military nobility, or to reward *roturiers* in the military for their service. Rather, these were subsidiary objectives, indeed side-effects, which served as the tacit acknowledgment of a state of affairs which was not in fact meant to be, and which the edict imperfectly remedied. Though he made his point less pointedly than the author of the *Réflexions*, de Meyzieu shared largely the same outlook and appraisal of the situation. The ennobling of *roturier* officers by the Edict helped to lend a superficial social homogeneity to a socially mixed officer corps, which did not however deceive close observers of the situation or defenders of the noble prerogative in the army<sup>465</sup>. In the mind of the author of the *Réflexions*, the edict of 1750 could be assimilated to the permission granted by Louis XIV and Colbert to the nobility to engage in commerce in 1669. Both measures were aimed only at the “nouveaux nobles” rather than the “noblesse d’extraction”, the permission to engage in trade being meant to reduce the burden to the state that leaving the *anoblis* idle would cause<sup>466</sup>. He did not blame the intentions of these new nobles in branching out from commerce to take up the career of arms, but rather the effect of their actions in further restraining the opportunities available to old nobles.

These interpretations may help to temper the view that the edict of 1750 granting military nobility to non-noble officers was a forward-looking, egalitarian measure<sup>467</sup>.

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<sup>464</sup> According to Smith, a principal cause of their disbandment was the cadets’ having accepted *roturiers* using counterfeit proofs of nobility; one observer claimed that they had been “filled with provincial commoners, to the prejudice of the *gentilshommes* for whom it had been established”, which if true would further explain the apparent recourse to well-off bourgeois by the Ministry of War. SHD 1 MR 1781, no. 19, “Projet pour un nouvel établissement de Cadets gentilshommes,” [1742], 5 in Smith, *The Culture of Merit*, 217. The official reason for the disbandment was that due to the issuing of commissions to most of the cadets, the company (the original six companies having been reduced to one) was no longer needed in wartime. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Ordonnance du roi pour licencier la compagnie de gentilshommes entretenuë à la citadelle de Metz, 22 December 1733, 3.

<sup>465</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d’un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 13-14. According to Samuel Gibiat, the edict of 1750 was the readoption of the “noblesse militaire graduelle et coutumière qui avait existé depuis le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu’à l’édit des tailles de janvier 1634”. F. Bluche, P. Durye, *L’anoblissement par charges...*, 40-42 in Gibiat, *Hiérarchies Sociales et Ennoblement – Les commissaires des guerres de la Maison du roi au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: École Nationale des Chartes, 2006), 238.

<sup>466</sup> *Réflexions*, 7. This is pointed out in footnote five: “le commerce maritime a été permis à la noblesse; pourvu qu’elle ne vendit pas en détail. Ce n’est que depuis mil sept cens un qu’on lui a permis le commerce de terre en gros. Mais cela ne regarde-t-il pas plutôt les nouveaux nobles que l’ancienne noblesse d’extraction; on a senti que la multiplicité de ces nouveaux nobles épuiserait l’état, si on les laissait oisifs”.

<sup>467</sup> As articulated by Christy Pichichero, for instance, “...a few immediate reforms reflected some level of egalitarian thinking—such as the creation of a *noblesse militaire* through the ennobling of all army

Dismissing attitudes such as the one held by the author of the *Réflexions* as the simple prejudice of the *noblesse d'épée*, as Croal does, risks obscuring the factors at play in contemporary debates<sup>468</sup>. Instead, the edict of 1750 was viewed by the *Réflexions*'s author as a measure which might be deplorable but which nevertheless offered a partial solution to the crises of nobility which numerous trends had inexorably led to, by complementing the creation of the *École militaire*: “le roi y a préparé un remède en instituant l'École Militaire. Il était réservé à la sagesse de ses vues, de faire rentrer la noblesse à son service, sans paraître en exclure des sujets que des circonstances fâcheuses y ont appelés, et qui, tout déplacés qu'ils y sont, en ont su mériter les honneurs”<sup>469</sup>. As for the roots of the apparent decline, de Meyzieu traced them to the middle ages. He listed the causes of the nobility's emasculation as the increase in the possessions of the Church, the consequent loss of much of its lands, the substantial increase in gold and silver specie, and the excess of luxury<sup>470</sup>. In that period, a surfeit of pious zeal and short-sighted subservience to the Church led to its aggrandisement at the nobility's expense, who squandered their strength in fruitless Crusades, with the result that France was brought to the edge of ruin in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He in fact demonstrated naked anticlericalism, with an invective against the monks whom he saw as the architects of all those disasters<sup>471</sup>. This provides another reason, beyond the pragmatic-minded opposition to an education excessively reliant on classical learning, for the break with the religious inculcation undergone by nobles that the founders of the *École Militaire* sought to make<sup>472</sup>.

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generals in 1750, regardless of caste (an order for which only about two hundred families qualified before 1789)”, in “Le Soldat Sensible - Military Psychology and Social Egalitarianism in the Enlightenment French Army”, *French Historical Studies*, 31 (2008): 576.

<sup>468</sup> Croal, *op. cit.*, 117. He goes so far as to call the edict of 1750 the “‘magna carta’ of the *roturiers*”. However, this seems something of an exaggeration in light of the figures provided by David Bien, showing that for the period 1750-1789, *roturiers* only accounted for 5.2% of those eligible for ennoblement at the rank of *maréchal de camp* or above, and never more than 7.9% in any given decade. These numbers, in turn, are below the percentage of *roturiers* listed among the newly-arrived officers in the aristocratic *Mousquetaires* (10.5%) and *Chevaux-légers* (11%) for the period 1750-1780. David Bien, “Caste, Class and Profession in Old Regime France: the French Army and the Ségur Reform of 1781”, *St. Andrews Studies in French History and Culture*, ed. Guy Rowlands (2010): 36-37; idem., “La réaction aristocratique avant 1789: l'exemple de l'armée”, *Annales: E.S.C.*, 29 (1974): 518-519.

<sup>469</sup> *Réflexions*, 10.

<sup>470</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 5-6.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8. “(La) noblesse presque anéantie; ses états dépeuplés, ses campagnes dévastées; les tristes restes de la nations ruinés; et les moines, auteurs de tous ces désastres, enrichis des dépouilles de ces victimes infortunées.... les acquisitions réitérées des Moines auraient enfin absorbé tous les biens-fonds du royaume...”.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67. This, however, did not prevent de Meyzieu from seeing the *École Militaire* as a sort of cloister, at least as far as the sacrifice students had to make with regards to home comforts and family life.

Rafe Blaufarb has examined the link between the edict of 1750 and the establishment of the *École Militaire*, seeing them as being related aspects of an effort to associate the nobility more effectively with the military<sup>473</sup>. As pointed out above, contemporaries could and did assess the situation in a different manner; after all, the edict provided a route to ennoblement to military *roturiers* while the *École militaire* excluded them as well as *anoblis*. The reformers' concern for professionalising the officer corps centred on rehabilitating the class they saw as best suited to that role, impoverished nobles, and not on the recruitment of potential candidates, no matter what their qualities, from other classes in society. Whatever its effectiveness in allying different classes of officers under arms to the king's service, to them measures such as the edict of 1750 reminded them of the spectre of infiltration by affluent bourgeois. More prosaically, the *École militaire*'s requirement for four degrees of nobility meant that both the children and grandchildren of newly created military nobles would have been excluded from the school; only their great-grandchildren would have been accepted.

The internal divisions of the nobility for them operated as a sort of scale of virtue, the impoverished sword nobles coming at the top of the moral scale but bottom of the economic one: their idealisation of the *gentilhomme* rested on the idea that “every gentleman is noble, but not every noble is a gentleman. The Prince makes nobles, but blood makes gentlemen”<sup>474</sup>. This was one of the primary motivations for the three elements dictating the social composition of the *École militaire*: the requirements for proofs of four degrees or generations of patrilineal noble descent, proofs of (relative) impoverishment, and the order of eight classes giving preference to the children of officers fallen on the field of battle<sup>475</sup>. David Bien's research has amply demonstrated

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<sup>473</sup> Rafe Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 20. A later measure which benefited new nobles serving in the military, an edict dated April 1771, stated that the children and descendants of those *anoblis* who were ennobled after 1715 either from charges and offices granting *noblesse transmissible au premier degree* or *graduella*, as well as those *anoblis* who served in the army or navy at the time of the enunciation of the edict, were exempted from paying the *droit de confirmation* stipulated by that edict for other *anoblis*. “Anoblissement”, in *Dictionnaire Raisoné des Domaines et Droits Domaniaux, des Droits d'Échanges, & de ceux de Contrôle des Actes des Notaires & sou Signatures privées...* 2<sup>e</sup> ed., T. 1<sup>er</sup>. (Rennes, 1782), 221.

<sup>474</sup> Guízar, *art. cit.*, 44.

<sup>475</sup> Ralph Croal sees the nobility's request to the Regent for the imposition of proofs of four degrees of nobility from prospective officers as evidence of noble reaction. Ralph F. Croal, “The Idea of the *École Spéciale Militaire* and the Founding of Saint-Cyr”, PhD. diss. University of Arizona, 1970, 96; however, the example of other European nobilities' protection of their prerogatives, such as the measure of 1641 in Poland where “a royal act of ennoblement was barred from conferring full nobility in the first instance: three generations of nobility had to follow before the ennobled family was entitled to the full range of

that the Ségur decree of 1781 is best understood not as indicative of a purported aristocratic reaction aiming to bar bourgeois parvenus, but of the imperatives of military reform, professionalisation, and the desire to eliminate the influence of money and connections in advancement through the ranks<sup>476</sup>. These were largely the same motivations which inspired the reformers involved with the institution and development of the *École militaire*, but, as their writings show, the corrupting influence which they associated with the threat of bourgeois encroachment figured more prominently in their minds than in those of the reformers who took the *École militaire*'s proofs as their model thirty years later.

The author of the *Réflexions*, for one, having so decried the negative effects on the economy and society the misalignment of classes with their duties supposedly led to, predicted that the *École militaire* would repopulate the depleted ranks of the nobility and the military on the one hand, and effortlessly remove those who were not made for that state. In practical terms, the exclusion of the bourgeois, or *privilégiés* as he labelled them, was not the imposition of one sort of favouritism over another, that of nobles over the members of the third estate, but a contribution to the rebalancing of both civil and military society. By carrying out that task, the burden of accommodating the intruders would be substantially reduced, and the class fit for military service would fill it to the happiness of civil society at large<sup>477</sup>. It is worth emphasising the extent to which he saw the problem as one which indeed affected society at large; in a footnote he mentions that the functions of the judiciary were suffering from neglect and abandonment due to the penchant of the young for the career of arms. In this conception, then, it would seem logical that redirecting those destined to the bench or the bar through their exclusion from the army would be a solution to that problem<sup>478</sup>. Whatever the truth of the matter

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noble privileges" instead suggests, along with the tightening of social admission requirements at French institutions such as the *pages* post-1720 or the *Collège Mazarin* during the same period, the nobility's efforts to maintain what it saw as its immemorial rights. M.L. Bush, *Rich Noble, Poor Noble* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 18.

<sup>476</sup> Bien, "La réaction aristocratique avant 1789: l'exemple de l'armée", *Annales ESC*, 29 (1974): 379-404; idem., "The army in the French Enlightenment: Reform, Reaction, and Revolution", *Past and Present*, 85 (1979): 68-98.

<sup>477</sup> *Réflexions*, 11. "C'est par elle (l'École militaire) que les choses avec le temps rentreront dans leur ordre naturel. Elle repeuplera insensiblement notre militaire de noblesse, et elle en écartera sans violence ceux qui ne sont pas faits pour cet état... enfin toutes les fonctions civiles en seront mieux remplies".

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 [footnote seven]: "On doit mettre dans le nombre de ces fonctions, celles de la judicature, si négligées aujourd'hui, qu'il y a aux parties casuelles un grand nombre d'offices qu'on n'y lève point. La jeunesse se porte naturellement au parti des armes, parce que ce parti se concilie mieux avec ses inclinations, et que la vanité y gagne". Not all youth abandoned the law, however. On the apparently

in that regard, it helped to transfer the brunt of the problem, as well as the solution, from a particular segment of society to the nation-state at large.

There was, of course, criticism of both the system of proofs of nobility used by the *École militaire*, and of the order of preference it administered. One anonymous observer argued in a *mémoire* entitled ‘Plan de Constitution pour l’entretien et l’éducation, de cinq cent élèves’ that the titles of nobility should be presented not to the royal genealogist but to the provincial Intendant. He would have them examined by four *gentilshommes*, and these in turn present him with a signed certificate; his principal reason for preferring this method were that it would apparently lessen the possibility of a genealogist being deceived, while *gentilshommes* familiar with the candidate’s environs, and who knew each other, would be much less susceptible to being taken in by deception<sup>479</sup>. This proposal was of the sort known as the *preuve testimoniale*, described as “le témoignage de personnes dignes de foi”<sup>480</sup>. However, as Patrick Clarke de Dromantin has shown, although the *preuve testimoniale* had long been used and accepted, it was almost totally supplanted by the *preuve littérale* (documentary proof of titles) in the eighteenth century<sup>481</sup>. There was thus little hope that it would be adopted in the *École militaire*<sup>482</sup>. Even less susceptible to implementation were suggestions such as that made by another author that exams should be instituted in the army not only for incoming *sous-lieutenants*, but also for candidates for promotion to the rank of lieutenant and captain; this would have been the adoption of an entirely different sort of *preuves authentiques*, dependent on knowledge not blood, the nature of which he considered so indispensable that any officer examined for promotion and considered unsuitable would be re-examined by his corps’ assembled captains and lieutenant-

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“numerous ‘boy magistrates’”, see Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword – The Regrouping of the French Aristocracy after Louis XIV* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1953), 116-118.

<sup>479</sup> AN K 149 n° 27, Plan de Constitution pour l’entretien et l’éducation, de cinq cent élèves, 5 August 1761, 5-6.

<sup>480</sup> Jouanna, “Preuves de noblesse”, in *Dictionnaire de l’Ancien Régime: Royaume de France, XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 1013.

<sup>481</sup> Patrick Clarke de Dromantin, *Les Réfugiés Jacobites dans la France du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: L’exode de toute une noblesse pour cause de religion* (Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2005), [footnote] 80. The *preuve testimoniale* survived in the *Gardes du corps* until 1775; its gradual abandonment is one reason Dromantin sees Irish genealogies as carrying little weight with French genealogists.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. Antoine d’Hozier, describing the process of proving one’s nobility in Great Britain and Ireland in 1770, stated that “À la tête d’un tribunal héraldique, un roi d’armes nommé par le souverain est chargé du soin de faire inscrire dans des registres publics les noms et les qualités des personnes nobles domiciliées dans son district et d’après ces dépôts il donne des attestations de noblesse précédées des degrés ou des ascendances généalogiques”.

However, the *cadets-gentilshommes* continued to apply the requirement which d’Hozier had labelled as lapsed for their German candidates after 1776. Guízar, *art. cit.*, 52.

colonel. If his incapacity was confirmed, he would be excluded without possibility of readmission<sup>483</sup>. Tempting though it seems to label such views forward-looking and ahead of their time, the fact that the author justified his view not only through appeals to the imperatives of military professionalism but also to distant (non-classical) historical precedent helps contextualise the nature of both his arguments and the debate<sup>484</sup>.

The author of that proposal did go on to make other, more substantive criticisms, in line with the letter and the spirit of the edict of 1750, complementing some of the reformers' concerns while dismantling others. His main proposal was that the children of an officer killed on campaign be received in the *École militaire* without needing to furnish any proofs of nobility, as long as they were born of a legitimate marriage and were indigent<sup>485</sup>. He saw this as the means of preventing the absurd scenario whereby the son of a father killed in the service, but not having the requisite number of degrees, despite being "noble au fond", was overlooked in favour of one whose father had taken care not to sacrifice himself. To him, the order of preference ought to be first those sons of officers fallen in the service and able to prove their nobility, followed by those whose fathers had met the same fate but were unable to prove their nobility. He based his opinion on three arguments, namely the assertion that only merit constituted true nobility, that the only good nobility was that whose origins were lost in time or which had been acquired by arms, and that poverty in itself was an insufficient criterion for admitting nobility to the school. On the grounds of merit, most noble families failed due to their status having been acquired through the robe, other charges, and commerce<sup>486</sup>. As he saw it, this sort of nobility was not worth a "vertueuse roture", which to him was proof that the only suitable nobility was that ancient or military<sup>487</sup>. As for poverty, to

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<sup>483</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 147, *Projet d'établissement d'études de géométrie, dessein, fortifications, artillerie, et tactique pour le militaire*, 3-4.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. The author's historical example was the establishment by the Chinese Emperor Taizu of Song (whom he labelled 'Tsai-Fsou') in AD 964 of an examination for the *gens de guerre* resembling that already extant for the men of letters; he claimed that from that time on they were obligated to prove their ability by the compositions they made on the military art, and by the exercises prescribed by regulations.

<sup>485</sup> They were only to be required to provide such proof if they were candidates for the cross of Saint-Lazare. AN K 149 n° 2<sup>7</sup>, *Plan de Constitution pour l'entretien et l'éducation, de cinq cent élèves*, 5 August 1761, 8.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>487</sup> This phrase is a clear echo of the phrase quoted above by the author of the *Réflexions*, "des hommes qui payent de leur sang l'avantage" and which carried connotations of the ennobling quality of military service; however, the two authors were arguing in opposite directions, the *Réflexions* seeking to exclude all non-nobles in order to rehabilitate the destitute nobility, while the 'Plan de Constitution' desired the recognition of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the king's service, whatever their social category.



him the most common causes for noble families' ruin were unwise expenses, the dissipation of their goods, or bad marriages, none of them suitable motivation for the king to provide them with aid. The king and the nation were only indebted to those nobles who merited such help due to their service; though the author claimed that the nobility was a precious element of the state, and he had no wish to infringe on its privileges, he held that only the most impoverished element should be admitted to the school, and furthermore that the children of a penniless non-noble officer fallen in the field be preferred to all those whose father had not sacrificed his life<sup>488</sup>.

Although calls such as that presented in the 'Plan de Constitution' were not adopted<sup>489</sup>, there were some modifications to the provisions dealing with the order of eight classes for admission. De Meyzieu suggested and was authorised to draft a *mémoire* in January 1760 concerning the order of classes<sup>490</sup>: in it he remarked that it seemed extraordinary that the son of an officer who had less than twenty-four hours' service in the ranks was preferred to that of an old veteran who had retired due to his age or incurable infirmities (this is in reference to the ordering of the fifth and sixth classes)<sup>491</sup>. Though some observers speculated that that provision had been adopted in error, it had in fact been deliberate, its rationale described as the "motif de politique" of attracting the nobility which did not serve to the ranks, and retaining that which was already in the service. It was the preferring of a lesser degree of present merit to a greater degree of past merit. It had subsequently been considered, however, that it would not diminish the political motive to include among the candidates for the fifth class the children of fathers retired due to their wounds or infirmities, as well as those who had retired after thirty years' of service, leaving in the sixth class those whose fathers had retired with less than thirty years of service due to other causes<sup>492</sup>. By means of comparison, the edict of 1750 had grouped in the same class of ennoblement both those who were in active service with thirty years of experience, including twenty at the

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<sup>488</sup> AN K 149 n° 2<sup>7</sup>, Plan de Constitution pour l'entretien et l'éducation, de cinq cent élèves, 5 August 1761, 10-11.

<sup>489</sup> Benjamin Mercier however seems to imply that the children of simple soldiers with good service records were admissible to the school after 1760. Benjamin Mercier, "Charles-Louis-Auguste Fouquet, duc de Belle-Isle, secrétaire d'État de la guerre, 1758-1761", in *Les Ministres de la Guerre: 1570-1792: Histoire et Dictionnaire Biographique*, ed. Thierry Sarmant (Paris: 2007), 402.

<sup>490</sup> AN MM 665, Conseil de Police, 17 January 1760. "M. de Meyzieu s'est chargé de faire un mémoire à cet égard pour obtenir du roi une décision interpretative sur cet article de l'Édit".

<sup>491</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated], 190; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XIV, Édit du Roi, 22 January 1751, 8.

<sup>492</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated], 190; this *mémoire* and the *projet d'ordonnance* for the minister's approval were read in a deliberation of 7 February. AN MM 665 Conseil de Police 7 February 1760, 168. Another *mémoire* summarising the first one was drafted in July 1760. See AN MM 679, 13-14.

rank of captain and were chevaliers of Saint-Louis, with those who had reached the rank of captain and were chevaliers of Saint-Louis but had been forced to retire due to their wounds, and were consequently exempted from the time requirements<sup>493</sup>. According to de Meyzieu then, the stipulated time requirements had been thus fixed in order to retain officers in the service, and seeing as how wounded officers were exempted from that provision in the edict of 1750, the same motives being present in the edict of 1751, their effects should also be the same.

He nevertheless had some reservations about the qualification of thirty years' service, as he considered that many officers with that amount of experience were still young enough to continue in the ranks. An officer commissioned at the age of sixteen would only be forty-six and able to enjoy the measures' benefits by retiring, at an age when his experience would however be sorely missed in the army. He consequently warned against multiplying favours for officers who had served for a specified number of years in the ranks. On the other hand, the requirement for twenty years' service as a captain was not considered suitable for application in the *École militaire*, as it would exclude many who grew old as subalterns without ever being promoted, especially in the cavalry. It would also exclude the sons of *gentilshommes* serving as simple recruits in the *Maison du Roi*. Summarising these reflexions, and fashioning them in the manner considered most likely to retain officers as long as possible in the army, de Meyzieu recommended that the fifth class include the children of both fathers then in the service and those who had been forced to retire through their wounds or infirmities, but not those with thirty years of service, unless the last category were restricted in some way<sup>494</sup>. His proposal was largely adopted in the declaration of 24 August 1760, which modified the provisions of Article XVI of the edict of 1751. Articles I and II of the new declaration dictated that henceforth the children of fathers who retired due to their wounds, infirmities, or accidents were to be included in the same class as those whose fathers were still in the service<sup>495</sup>. Article V admitted to the same class the children of officers retired after thirty years of uninterrupted service, without qualification, the candidates having to provide merely evidence of such service and obtain a certificate

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<sup>493</sup> See articles IV and VIII, Édît du roi, portant création d'une Noblesse Militaire, Fontainebleau, November 1750, 3-4.

<sup>494</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated], 191.

<sup>495</sup> Déclaration du roi, concernant l'École Royale Militaire, Articles I, II and V, 24 August 1760, *Recueil des édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 19-20.

from the Minister of War<sup>496</sup>. Thus, although most of de Meyzieu's suggestions were applied, it was not considered necessary to make the requirement for thirty years' service any more stringent than it already was.

There were two requirements which were subsequently to be more narrowly defined and strictly enforced, however, those concerning the families' fortunes and the titles presented. As d'Argenson explained in a letter of 7 May 1754 to the *Intendant* of Guyenne the marquis de Tourny, there was no general rule concerning the degree of indigence required of the candidates for the *École militaire*, as such a rule could only be unjust and impractical; the sort of indigence which was considered was that which excluded *gentilshommes*, particularly those destined for military service, from an education. Unqualified privation was not necessary, only a relative indigence. This was the basis for the eight classes adopted for ordering admission. Thus, an orphan with 500 livres of *rente* could be considered more impoverished than a child with less income but both parents still alive<sup>497</sup>. This subjective scale was modified several times, and the *École militaire* always attempted as best it could to verify the revenues of the children that sought admission. Thus, in March 1760 one student Essarts was to wait "qu'il est vérifié que l'état de sa fortune n'est pas tel qu'il avait été annoncée", while the same deliberation mentioned Crémilles writing to Baillon, the Intendant of La Rochelle, "de faire vérifier scrupuleusement à Rochefort" the actual monetary worth of the Chavagnac family which was proposing its children for the *École militaire*<sup>498</sup>.

The declaration of 24 August 1760 required a closer scrutiny of poverty, Article VII stating that the assets of the parents, or of the candidate himself if orphaned, were to be audited by the provincial Intendants and their commissioners, who were in turn to deliver detailed certificates verified on the *rôles des impositions*<sup>499</sup>. Proofs of nobility for their part were henceforth to be presented only by original titles, and not by collated

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid., 3. Both articles IV and VIII, which dealt with the documentation for proving the current situation of the candidate's father, for the first article, and of the families' assets, for the second, required the acts to be prepared in the presence of and signed by two *gentilshommes* of the same domicile.

<sup>497</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre écrite par d'Argenson à M. de Tourny, 7 May 1754, 24-25. The letter was written in response to Tourny's inquiry concerning the Fars de Fosselandry brothers, admitted to the *École militaire* in the spring of 1754 despite their father being well-off enough to grant them all an inheritance. However, as this only came to 200 livres each, d'Argenson considered that sum inadequate for the provision of a suitable education.

<sup>498</sup> AN MM 665, Conseil d'administration, 5 March 1760, 180-181.

<sup>499</sup> Déclaration du roi, concernant l'École Royale Militaire, Article VII, 24 August 1760, *Recueil des édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 21.

copies<sup>500</sup>. The *règlement* of 28 March 1776 in turn confirmed the dispositions of the measures of January 1751 and August 1760, while adding that the certificates audited by the Intendants were also to be verified by the provincial governor and the bishop of their diocese<sup>501</sup>. That these regulations were not always followed exactly is borne out by the correspondence of the ministers with the Intendants, the former repeatedly attempting to ascertain with the greatest accuracy possible “l’objet du revenu des pères”<sup>502</sup>. That the students were not all penniless paupers is in any case attested by Dupont de la Motte, who remarked, “ils ne manquent pas d’argent”, on those students who arrived in La Flèche from Paris during 1776<sup>503</sup>.

The rapport between society and the destitute nobility was more than a thread tying together the numerous arguments in favour of the *École militaire* and against the social abuses for which it offered a purported solution. The dilemma of poverty was a primordial concern, and it was in its context that all other issues, from military professionalism to educational theory, were considered and discussed, and solutions sought. The strength of feeling attached to the plight of the provincial squires helps partially account for statements such as the one found in the *Réflexions* which held that, if any abuses persisted in the military which led to the removal of the indigent nobility, the *École militaire* would remedy them. The foundation for this new regime was first of all the absolute impossibility of venality in the *École militaire*, with the result that there would be no possibility of the usurpation of a *gentilhomme*’s place by the son of a rich merchant. Once on active service, where the cost of living and of supporting themselves would undoubtedly make their situation difficult, the education the students received would equip them to survive through frugality and make do with *bonnes moeurs* what they lacked in material means<sup>504</sup>. More than a detached economic argument, this was

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid., Article IX; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145 Édit du Roi, 22 January 1751, 9.

<sup>501</sup> Règlement concernant les nouvelles Écoles Royales-militaires, Titre II, Article VI, 28 March 1776 in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 87.

<sup>502</sup> SHD AG A<sup>1</sup> 3446, Lettre de Ségur à Pajot, Intendant de Grenoble, 27 January 1781, 84. The rest of the letter reads, “Je joins... une copie de l’article 6 du titre 2 du même règlement [28 March 1776], concernant la fortune de parents ... Je vous prie de vouloir bien en donner connaissance aux subdélégués de votre département”.

<sup>503</sup> This comment was with regards to the students deciding to dye their breeches black, as they thought the regulation blue unbecoming. They also requested hair powder and mirrors, which Dupont de la Motte could not provide. See the entries for 23 May and 7 July 1776 in the *Journal*, 9<sup>th</sup> cahier, 26 March-30 September 1776. He had already noted on 12 February 1775 that “l’argent n’est plus rare parmi les élèves” of La Flèche. *Journal*, 6<sup>th</sup> cahier, 5 December 1774-19 April 1775.

<sup>504</sup> “S’il subsiste encore dans le militaire de ces abus qui pourraient en écarter la noblesse indigente, l’École militaire y remédiera; les ordonnances du roi y ont proscrit la vénalité des emplois... il ne sera plus possible alors,... que le luxe justifie, de préférer le fils d’un marchand aisé, à celui d’un gentilhomme

the position echoed in the oft-repeated criticisms of the corrosive effects of luxury, such as the ones the author of the *Essay* repeatedly made: in his view, only the sight of duty could revive the passion for glory that vice, pleasure and decadence threatened to smother<sup>505</sup>. In fact, important though honour (here presented as allied to the noble love of glory) was to an *honnête homme*, ultimately duty would be the principal and determining motivation<sup>506</sup>.

### Part III: Defending the *École militaire*: The justification of gambling

Of all the facets the *École militaire* presented, few exposed it to more criticism than its funding mechanisms, its cost, and the magnificent buildings that came to house it. What follows is a short overview of how the tax on cards and the lottery were presented as suitable resources for an exclusive nobiliary enterprise, and how they played into public debates on the financial basis of the school.

Robert Kruckeberg's basis for his analysis of the *loterie de l'École militaire* is the tension between the philosophical mind-sets embodied by Rousseau and Casanova (who helped set up the lottery), the first being the partisan of simplicity and selflessness, the second that of luxury and libertinage. Rousseau's rejection of the benefits of the arts and sciences for society's moral progress and praise of military service as "one of the most pure forms of selfless dedication" in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* of November 1750 serves as the backdrop to the debate on the nobility's role which was given a new *élan* thanks to Coyer's *La noblesse militaire* and d'Arcq's reply in *La noblesse militaire*, both published in early 1756<sup>507</sup>. He presents this as the intellectual context in which the lottery came into being: "there was a major cultural and intellectual tension inherent in a lottery meant to support the French nobility", the contrast between the noble "selfless warrior class" and "lottery ticket consumers" with "selfish hopes of expanding their personal wealth" representing "a seismic fault line between new modern commercial enterprise and traditional Old Regime culture", a tension which

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pauvre. Enfin, s'il est plus difficile... de se soutenir au service avec peu de bien qu'il ne l'était autrefois, on apprendra aux élèves de l'École militaire ... à regagner par la frugalité et les bonnes mœurs, ce qui manquera à leurs moyens", *Réflexions*, 11-12.

<sup>505</sup> *Essay*, 153.

<sup>506</sup> "Mais quelque impression que l'honneur fasse sur un honnête homme, l'amour du devoir sera pour lui le motif principal et déterminant". *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>507</sup> Robert D. Kruckeberg, "The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France – The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics", PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009: 97-101. The same analysis can be found in his article "The Loterie de l'École Militaire: Making the Lottery Noble and Patriotic", vol. 37 *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* (2009): 85-97.

“the new lottery would have to reconcile”<sup>508</sup>. His analysis, clear, succinct and convincing, nevertheless makes a major omission: he completely overlooks the *impôt sur les cartes*, the tax on playing cards, which was the main funding mechanism prior to 1757, and which furnished the bulk of the school’s autonomous revenues until the end of the decade. This measure, unlike the lottery, was an actual tax, and like the lottery, was made up entirely of gambling revenue. All of the difficulties in shoehorning such a controversial expedient into a depiction of the *École militaire* as a noble, worthy undertaking had thus already been broached by the adoption of the tax on cards, the defence of the tax beginning before the school even existed, in 1750<sup>509</sup>.

Although the *École militaire* was not compelled and never sought to provide public accounts on its finances, that did not stop more or less informed observers from forming their judgments on these from reports and rumours which reached them. That the impressions thus formed were less than flattering for the project was not attenuated by the lack of clarity on the school’s cost, the tax’s revenue, and the protracted struggles of financing and construction which afflicted the school. Duverney, in a confidential *mémoire* of 6 July 1750, which analysed the case for the tax, admitted that “on ne peut pas évaluer au juste ce qu’il en coûtera pour les bâtiments”, only commenting that the buildings would never be finished if only 400,000 livres were spent on the construction per annum<sup>510</sup>. Five years later, de Meyzieu could do little better in his published *Lettre*, pointing out that construction was financed by the 2 million livre loan, with an extra 1 million (in fact only 500,000) granted by the king for 1755, and that “quelque vaste que soit ce bâtiment, de quelque magnificence qu’on veuille le décorer, il est certain que la dépense aura des bornes, et que ces bornes sont prévues”<sup>511</sup>. More than objections such as the comte d’Argenson’s that the “droit sur les cartes m’avait déplu comme un objet peu digne de sa dotation”<sup>512</sup>, the fact that financiers as wily and experienced as Duverney and Tournehem had miscalculated both the overall cost and the annual expense of the project must have rankled the most: that the tax produced some 400,000

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<sup>508</sup> Kruckeberg, “The Wheel of Fortune”, 95.

<sup>509</sup> The first reference to the *École militaire*’s place in the 1750s debates exemplified by the Coyer-d’Arcq “conflit idéologique” is probably in Roger Chartier, Marie-Madeleine Compère, and Dominique Julia, *L’Éducation en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: SEDES, 1976), 218.

<sup>510</sup> AN K 149 n° 16<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire Collège Académique 6 July 1750, 9. He closed the *mémoire* by acknowledging that “l’aliénation propose n’a jamais rien valu”; he clearly believed that leveraging its future revenues via the 2 million livre loan would be sufficient for all capital costs and initial expenses.

<sup>511</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d’un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 22.

<sup>512</sup> BUP d’Argenson, P 40, Lettre par d’Argenson à Pompadour [undated].

livres per annum instead of the 200,000 Duverney had originally envisaged was little comfort in light of the massive overruns and consequent acute shortage of funds that the project ran into.

An effort was made to justify the original financial arrangements: de Meyzieu dedicated thirteen pages of the *Lettre* to make the case for these. Admitting that royal finances could not “qu’à peine permettre l’entreprise de l’édifice”<sup>513</sup>, this lack of means was a first justification for the tax; to him, the “droit sur les cartes” ought not be labelled a tax at all, as it targeted only discretionary spending by being aimed “au luxe tout seul”. He made no moral defence of the tax as such, which was most popular in Paris where “il y a plus d’argent et plus de mauvais exemples”<sup>514</sup>. His was the most literal case of the ends justifying the means. This moral dichotomy was embodied by regulations stating “il est défendu à quelque élève que ce soit de jouer aux cartes”<sup>515</sup> despite providing for their education and livelihood. Though such arguments might have held up better had the tax fulfilled its intended purpose of financing the building as planned, in the event it did little to dispel the doubts evident in the comments of observers such as the marquis d’Argenson or the duc de Luynes. The first commented on 19 December 1750 that “on augmentera l’impôt sur les cartes à jouer et autres impôts, ce qui va faire crier le public plus que jamais. Il faudra beaucoup d’argent pour cet entretien et pour le bâtiment”<sup>516</sup>. Early in 1751, he reported on the reaction to the tax among the populace of Paris, which mocked it, the enterprise it was meant to sustain, and dubbed its future students “gentilshommes de carte”<sup>517</sup>. The latter, less emotive, simply presented the facts as known to court nobles and let them speak for themselves: “les constructions de bâtiments et l’établissement monteront aux environs de 5 millions de dépense,... l’entretien ordinaire ira à environ 1,200,000 livres....le droit sur les cartes ne peut guère aller qu’à 100,000 écus par an”<sup>518</sup>. Even less convinced were critics such as the baron de Grimm, who commenting on de Meyzieu’s *Lettre*, decried it to his eye

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<sup>513</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d’un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 25. This squeeze on royal finances justified the use of an innovative finance mechanism. It was attitudes like his that the comte d’Argenson referenced in a letter, wryly noting that “on a trouvé alors un si grand avantage à tirer de néant une affaire négligée ... et à former un aussi grand établissement du produit d’un droit qui ne rapportait presque rien”. BUP d’Argenson P 40, lettre par d’Argenson à Pompadour [undated].

<sup>514</sup> De Meyzieu, *Lettre d’un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 27, 29.

<sup>515</sup> Règlement Général pour les Élèves de l’École Royale-militaire, Article CXXXV, 13 December 1759, *Recueil des Édits* ... (Paris, 1782), 262. This prohibition was reiterated in later ordinances.

<sup>516</sup> Marquis d’Argenson, 19 December 1750, *Journal et Mémoires...* (Paris, 1864), 316.

<sup>517</sup> Marquis d’Argenson, 27 January 1751, *Journal*, éd Rathery, T. VI, 346.

<sup>518</sup> Duc de Luynes, 28 January 1751, *Mémoires du duc de Luynes...* T. XI (Paris, 1863), 11.

mediocre education which would “coûtera au roi et à l'état des millions” and proposed instead the instruction of young officers by engineers in garrison<sup>519</sup>.

The adoption of the lottery, in turn, represented not so much the recognition of the failure of the tax on cards as the successful reconfiguration of a funding mechanism which had been misconceived from the start<sup>520</sup>. Thereafter, attention and debate shifted to the lottery<sup>521</sup>, at least until 1776, when an unsuccessful attempt was made by some *fermiers* to gain control of the *régie de l'impôt* following Saint-Germain's reforms<sup>522</sup>. Both funding sources being replaced by direct payments from the Royal Treasury by 1778, they ceased being objects of contention, criticism instead being directed at the *École militaire*'s alleged opulence and expenditure. This criticism came to a head following Ségur's dismissal in 1787, with numerous tracts being published for and against the school's destruction with financial arguments put forth to support opposing opinions. Indeed, the 1787 reform served as an opportunity to hold forth on the imperatives of reform, and in the opinion of one Migonneau, “Il ne devoit donc sortir de l'École militaire, toute dispendieuse qu'étoit cette institution, que très-peu de sujets vraiment utiles et distingués”<sup>523</sup>. For the administrators of the *École militaire*, such views were nevertheless of minor relevance next to the opinion of the Minister of War

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<sup>519</sup> Baron de Grimm, 1 April 1755, “De l'École Militaire” in *Correspondance inédite de Grimm et de Diderot, et Recueil de Lettres, Poésies, Morceaux et Fragmens retranchés par la Censure Impériale en 1812 et 1813* (Paris, 1829), 10. His entry opens thus: “Il a paru cet hiver une lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel, sur l'École militaire, qui ne me fera pas changer d'opinion sur la nature et l'utilité de cet établissement”. With his project, “nous ne verrions pas à Paris un beau et vaste bâtiment avec l'inscription: *École militaire*; mais l'exécution de mon projet épargnerait au roi quelques millions, et au lieu de cinq cents particuliers ... toute la noblesse du royaume aurait part aux soins du monarque, et serait élevée convenablement”, 9, 10.

This was similar to the marquis d'Argenson's claim that double the amount of officers could be trained for much lesser sums, and who would additionally join practice to theory. 19 March 1752, *Journal du marquis d'Argenson*, T. VIII (Clermont-Ferrand: Paléo, 2005), 256.

<sup>520</sup> A letter by Duverney to a supplicant seeking employment for two friends shows that the lottery was being discussed years before its adoption. BUP d'Argenson P 36, Letter by Duverney, 2 February 1755.

<sup>521</sup> See for instance *Le patriote français* (Paris, 1759) in Kruckeberg, “The Wheel of Fortune”, 116-120. In 1772 Jean-Jacques Bachelier met and told du Pont that he planned to request some funding for his *École royale gratuite de dessin* (established in 1766) from the lottery's revenues, due to “l'immensité des richesses de l'École royale militaire”, to which du Pont replied “qu'il était dans l'erreur sur l'immensité des richesses” and that he was opposed to the scheme. AN MM 669, 11 February 1772, 32.

<sup>522</sup> Dominique Schalck-Pommellet, “L'École Royale Militaire de Paris et la ‘Révolution’ du comte de Saint-Germain, 1751-1776-1793”, thèse pour le doctorat d'état (Paris, 1968), 94-96.

In early 1777, the *Bureau d'administration* presented Saint-Germain and Montbarey with three *mémoires* arguing that if “l'on mettrait ce droit en ferme”, that “il serait perdu pour l'École Royale militaire, dont il fait la principale ressource”. AN MM 670, Bureau d'Administration, 27 January 1777, 26.

<sup>523</sup> Migonneau, *Considérations Intéressantes sur les Affaires Présentes Par M.\*\*\** (London, 1788), 165-166.



and his agents<sup>524</sup>; though it could weather the stinging criticisms of a Choiseul or Ségur without fearing existential danger, when an avowed opponent such as Saint-Germain or Guibert took power, it was ultimately helpless, its status as a royal institution providing no safeguard against such implacable reformers<sup>525</sup>.

#### Part IV: Chapter Two Conclusions

It is, in the end, somewhat ironic that a school created by financiers to aid an indigent demographic, counteract the effects of luxury on the military and national body politic, and glorify the reign of the ruling dynasty without burdening the public should in the end prove so vulnerable to attacks on the basis of its financial foundations. It was not just those opposed to noble privilege or expensive constructions who criticised initiatives such as Saint-Cyr, the Invalides, or the *École militaire* moreover. Louis XV himself told Pompadour, “voilà comme sont les bégueules de Saint-Cyr. Madame de Maintenon s’est bien trompée avec d’excellentes intentions. Ces filles sont élevées de manière qu’il faudrait de toutes en faire des dames du palais, sans quoi elles sont malheureuses et impertinentes”<sup>526</sup>. Although there is no record of Louis XVI’s thoughts on the *École militaire*, his allowing it to be reformed (or “destroyed” in the words of its defenders) twice hardly speaks to a high regard for it as an institution. On the other hand, Coyer’s description of Saint-Cyr as the nation’s most beautiful monument, “s’il n’y avait ni Hôtel des Invalides, ni École militaire”<sup>527</sup> was applied to dismantle d’Arcq’s call for the creation of *maisons* across the country to raise noble girls “avec les mêmes principes de vertu” as Saint-Cyr<sup>528</sup>. If the *apologiae* for the *École militaire* were

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<sup>524</sup> The *Conseil* was not alone in seeking to defend the *École militaire*: a short pamphlet was published condemning the suppression of the *École militaire* after it closed in 1787. It attacked the *École militaire*’s condemnation in the 9 October 1787 *Règlement* for alleged luxury, as well as the financial motives and legal basis of the declaration. Comparing it to other establishments of similar or greater expense (such as the Invalides), the author concluded: “Rassurons-nous, on n’en veut qu’à l’École Militaire”; he also specifically dismantled several articles of the *Règlement*. Anonymous, *Mémoire sur la suppression de l’Hôtel de l’École royale militaire* (Paris, 1788), 1-14.

<sup>525</sup> Though space does not allow for detailed considerations of the financial arguments for or against the school’s suppression, it may be noted that Jacques Necker described the annual two million livre sum paid to the *hôtel*’s treasury following Clugny’s 1776 and Necker’s own later reforms to the lottery as a set-up “très-favorable au trésor royal, [qui] a consolidé en même temps la fortune de l’école royale militaire”. This was in April 1787, only six months before the order for the school’s suppression. Jacques Necker, *Mémoire* (Paris, 1787), 41.

<sup>526</sup> Madame du Hausset, *Mémoires de Madame du Hausset, femme de chambre de madame de Pompadour, avec des notes et des éclaircissements historiques* (Paris, 1824), 98.

<sup>527</sup> Abbé Coyer, *Développement et défense du système de la noblesse commerçante*, Première partie (Amsterdam, 1757), 194-195.

<sup>528</sup> D’Arcq, *La Noblesse Militaire ...*, 191-193. He shared his thoughts on the school soon thereafter: “la politique est intéressée, non seulement à rechercher les génies, mais encore à les développer,... Il paraît même qu’un des plus grands ministres l’ait pour objet dans l’établissement de l’École militaire à laquelle

ultimately of uncertain success in their principal mission of defending the institution, however, they unquestionably serve to elucidate very clearly the motivation for the social composition its student body was given as well as the justification for the defence of its institutional and administrative autonomy<sup>529</sup>. The simple fact that it was created set it apart from the dozens of other projects for reform which were condemned to be forgotten and gather dust unread in the archives, instead of leaving a mark on the face of the nation and the earth. The shape that the intellectual content its reforming mission took is examined in the following two chapters.

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on travaille aujourd'hui". D'Arcq, 'Discours Préliminaire', *Histoire Générale des Guerres, Divisée en Trois Époques...* T. I (Paris, 1756), xlvi.

<sup>529</sup> Shovlin comments in a footnote in his book on the political economy of virtue that "Coyer may have written *La noblesse commerçante* at the behest of the administration [the *contrôle-générale*]..." to fill "the need for some propaganda favourable to the project because a trading nobility had been criticised by Montesquieu in 1748..." If so, this may partly explain why Coyer avoided any direct attack on the *École militaire* in the short mention he made of it when comparing it to the Venetian merchant vessels which served as the Republic's "École pour leurs enfans et un germe de prospérités..." However, even in 1770 Coyer maintained a largely neutral stance on the *École militaire* in his treatise on education, simply mentioning its buildings as a model of spaciousness highly beneficial for physical education, a spaciousness no Parisian *collège* enjoyed.

Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism, and the Origins of the French Revolution*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 59.

Coyer, *La Noblesse Commerçante*, 103-104; *Plan d'Éducation Publique* (Paris, 1770), 17.

### Chapter 3: The *École Militaire*'s Curriculum – Its Antecedents and Development

“Un général qui n’a pas l’esprit du calcul tombe toujours dans des mécomptes dont son armée et son honneur sont les tristes victimes”.

- Anonymous, ‘Établissement d’une École de Mars à Paris pour l’Instruction de la Noblesse à l’hôtel d’Enragues’, SHD 1 M 2-1781 [undated]

The *École militaire* sought to improve the social and professional prospects of the disadvantaged nobility by three distinct means. The first was the provision of an education that would shape the intellect of its students in preparation for their careers; the second lay in instilling the principle of subordination and military discipline necessary for officers; the third was the charitable help it provided by offering material aid to progress their careers. The curriculum was a key element for the application of these priorities. Despite the growing importance of structured technical education, especially for future artillerymen, engineers, and naval officers, there was no overall consensus on the weight, composition, and nature which maths should have in general military education in the period. Thus, one author could claim that “des maîtres de mathématiques” were “les seuls professeurs *tactiques* que nous ayons” (emphasis original)<sup>530</sup> while the *Conseil de l’hôtel* emphasised the mental effect over the practical application of the subject: it was not necessary “qu’un élève atteigne jusqu’aux choses sublimes de la géométrie” when its principles “sont suffisantes pour opérer sur l’esprit”<sup>531</sup>. Its approach meant a counterintuitive alliance of the prosaic and the noble in the implementation of mathematical instruction in the *École militaire*. Another goal the *Conseil* prioritised was a heuristic approach to the material taught: “heuristic” as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is the quality which “enabl[es] a person to discover or learn something for themselves”<sup>532</sup>, and was key to efforts to make often basic instruction remain effective when students left the institution. Keeping such intentions in mind, then, we can proceed to present how the *École militaire*'s curriculum continued in the tradition of pedagogy considered appropriate for aristocratic subjects, but in a new, unique institutional context and setting.

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<sup>530</sup> François-Alexandre Aubert de La Chesnaye, ‘Science de la Guerre’ in *Dictionnaire Militaire ou Recueil Alphabétique de tous les termes propres à la guerre, sur ce qui régarde la tactique, le génie, l’artillerie, la subsistance des troupes, & la marine...* T. II (Dresden, 1751), 903-904.

<sup>531</sup> AN MM 669, 30 November 1771, 21. These are Bizot’s words in a report to the *Conseil* following the adoption of his *Plan d’Études* in 1769 which recommended students be examined in maths, German and drawing, a suggestion which was approved. The deliberation describes how the exam was administered.

<sup>532</sup> <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/heuristic>. Accessed 29/09/2014.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, reformers saw the existing *collège* education as unfit for the nobility on both moral and professional grounds. In their vision, the new course of instruction would comprise an important technical element, but only as part of a wide-ranging curriculum thought to be suitable and necessary for a young noble destined for the army, not solely for the technical branches. This programme continued in an established vein of extant educational practices, not those of the *collège*, but rather those of the riding academies, and more specifically those of the court nobility and the Bourbon *princes du sang*. As pointed out by Anne Bruter, the specificity of a discipline resides not only in its content and form, but also in its *finalités*, or ends and purpose<sup>533</sup>. This specific and highly privileged subset of the nobility received a wide-ranging, comprehensive education which included an important technical component in comparison to the classic *collège* offering. However, as demonstrated in the studies of Mark Motley and Pascale Mormiche, such an instruction was not shaped with the goal of preparing its students for a vocational “career” as such, but rather as part of what was considered a suitable education for a member of the political class and social elite. Furthermore, their education may be considered notable not only for its quality, but also, if Bruter is right, as the pedagogical setting “qui a donné naissance à un enseignement historique à finalité cognitive”<sup>534</sup>. The goals of the founders of the *École militaire*, though more prosaic and in fact designed as a preparatory element for its students’ future profession, nevertheless paralleled established conceptions of a suitable aristocratic education to a degree which has never been suitably acknowledged.

Though evaluations of the *École militaire*’s technical nature can be found in works from Frederick Artz’s studies of French technical education to Marie Jacob’s

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<sup>533</sup> In her discussion she contrasts the essentially rhetorical *finalités* of Jesuit collegiate education with the *finalités cognitives* of a modern education as providing not only an explanation for the absence of “des disciplines scolaires d’aujourd’hui” in the humanist curriculum, but also as the framework for better understanding the nature of rhetoric in the setting of the *collège* and how it instrumentalised other disciplines. As the *science-reine*, rhetoric was conceived of not only “comme technique, mais aussi comme savoir, et même comme sagesse... elle cherchait aussi à fournir de quoi meubler le discours, et guider la vie”. Annie Bruter, “Entre Rhétorique et Politique: l’histoire dans les collèges jésuites au XVIIe siècle”, *Histoire de l’éducation*, 74 (1997): 62.

<sup>534</sup> Though Bruter’s discussion in this context is limited principally to the evolution of the study of history (with additional remarks on geography and mathematics), her insights also apply to the whole range of disciplines studied outside of the *collège*; It was not only the study of history which “s’est en effet accompagnée d’une véritable confiscation de son ‘usage politique’”. *Ibid.*, 87.

2008 article<sup>535</sup>, the strongest assertion of its technical role is Thomas B. Hughes's commentary on David Bien's paper on mathematics in the *École militaire* at the Third Military History Symposium. He argues that:

there were, in eighteenth-century France, practical, technological reasons ... for stressing math in the curriculum of the *École militaire*. ... Louis Antoine Paris, Paris-Duverney (sic), and others, who helped to establish the *École militaire*, saw the need to familiarize all officers with the problem-solving techniques of all branches of the army, including the engineering and artillery. The spirit of [Vauban] still had enormous influence in mid-eighteenth century France<sup>536</sup>.

Hughes proceeds to analyse contemporary military engineering and technological developments, concluding that "it would be more difficult to explain a failure to stress mathematics than to explain the stress on it"<sup>537</sup>. Pâris de Meuzieu indeed hoped that Mézières would remedy a situation whereby "nous avons encore des Vallières, et nous n'avons plus de Vaubans"; in the school itself, "quant à l'attaque et à la défense des places, on leur enseigne les œuvres de ... Vauban"<sup>538</sup>. However, as the next chapter shows, these particular lessons were only adopted in 1785, and though the school may or may not have venerated the cult of Vauban, the famous engineer did not escape criticism in the period<sup>539</sup>. To clarify the place of technical considerations alongside the

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<sup>535</sup> Her focus on the years 1769-1775 skews her evaluation of mathematics' role in the first period of the school's existence, while an overview of its evolution 1753-1788 permits a better understanding of its overall importance. Marie Jacob, "L'École royale militaire – un modèle selon l'Encyclopédie?", *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 43 (2008): 105-125.

<sup>536</sup> Thomas B. Hughes, commentary on David Bien, "Military Education in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France: Technical and Non-Technical Determinants", in *Science, Technology, and Warfare*, Monte D. Wright and Lawrence J. Paszek eds. (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 69.

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>538</sup> Pâris de Meuzieu, *Encyclopédie*, T. V, s.v. "École Militaire", 310; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785. Jean Chagniot compares de Meuzieu and Vauban's views in an article, but not on the issue of mathematics; rather, it is on the subject of religion. Chagniot, "Vauban et la pensée militaire en France au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle", *Journal des savants* 3 (1982): 330.

<sup>539</sup> The maréchal de Saxe wrote, "Nous l'emportons sur les Romains dans l'art de fortifier les places; mais il s'en faut bien que nous soyons parvenus au point de perfection. Je ne suis pas bien savant, mais la grande réputation de messieurs de Vauban & Coëhorn ne m'en a jamais imposé. Ils ont fortifié des places avec des dépenses immenses, et ne les ont pas rendues plus fortes; du moins leur force ne sert pas à grand-chose, et la promptitude avec laquelle on les a prises en est une preuve". Maurice, comte de Saxe *Mémoire sur l'Art de la Guerre augmentée du Traité des Légions ainsi que de quelques Lettres* (Dresden, 1757), 205; the marquis de Montalembert proposed a new system of fortification to Choiseul on 19 April 1761, but publication was only authorised fifteen years later, under the title of *La Fortification Perpendiculaire, ou Essai sur plusieurs manières de fortifier la ligne droite...* (Paris, 1776). On Montalembert's dispute with the *Corps de Génie*, see chapters 11 and 12 of Janis Langins' *Conserving the Enlighthenment: French Military Engineering from Vauban to the Revolution*. On Choderlos de Laclos criticisms of Vauban and his debate with members of the *Corps de Génie*, Lazare Carnot (author of the *Éloge à Vauban*), his notions for military reform, and the sanction he suffered as a

range of subjects which composed the curriculum, this chapter begins by evaluating the *École militaire*'s curriculum and its place in the centuries-long evolution which preceded it. The following chapter will then more closely analyse to what extent its course of instruction can be considered to reflect a technical nature.

#### Part I: The evolution of institutional military curricula up to 1755

An analysis of the evolution of different schools' curricula demonstrates that most subjects later taught in the *École militaire* had been taught in one form or another across the continent since the Renaissance. In the matter of curricular development, its roots are described by J.R. Hale, who traces both proposed and adopted projects across a number of Western European countries prior to 1700<sup>540</sup>. Of these institutes, the most significant in France were riding schools. He describes the best known of these academies, Antoine Pluvinel's early seventeenth-century Parisian establishment, as a "martial finishing school" for young bloods who were taught to "fence, do gymnastics, dance and ... [learn] mathematics and military drawing"<sup>541</sup> in addition to horsemanship. Hale sees two currents at work in these developments, the result of a dialogue involving the "conservative fostering of 'politeness'" as well as a more progressive demand for "a professionalised army", leading to "institutionalisation"<sup>542</sup>. "Politeness" and "professionalism" were not the sole qualities present in reformers' minds, however. The Venetian Giovanni Maria Memmo for one had an "aspiration to create ... virtuous citizens as well as trained soldiers"; although Hale considers that such goals blurred Memmo's notions on military education<sup>543</sup>, such projects' instigators thought that military education and moral reform, far from muddling their vision, were integral aspects of national regeneration and renewal, without which the national character risked further enervation and degeneration.

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result under the Ministry of War in 1768, see chapters 1 and 5 of Jean-Paul Bertaud's *Choderlos de Laclos: L'auteur des Liaisons Dangereuses* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 20-22 and 149-158.

<sup>540</sup> John R. Hale, "The Military Education of the Officer Class in Early Modern Europe", *Renaissance War Studies* (London, 1983). The principal gap in the study is the omission of Spain's military schools, among the oldest such permanent institutions in Western Europe.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 236; They were even taught lute-playing. Pontaymery, *L'Academie*, 3r., in Treva J. Tucker, "From *Destrier to Danseur*: The Role of the Horse in Early Modern French Noble Identity", PhD diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2007, 134.

<sup>542</sup> Hale, *art. cit.*, 237.

<sup>543</sup> *Dialogo nel quale... si forma un perfetto principe ed un perfetto republica, e parimente un senatore, un cittadino, un soldato e un mercatante*, Venice, 1563, 132-7, 182, in *Ibid.*, 238.

The first recorded attempts to implement French proposals for a new system of military education are traced to the latter half of the sixteenth century. In 1570, Jean Antoine de Baïf’s literary academy offered lessons in “natural philosophy... poetry, mathematics as well as music, painting in addition to languages, even military discipline and gymnastics”<sup>544</sup>. This was a notable development at a time when young French nobles hoping for advanced riding instruction had little choice beyond attending Italian riding schools. Another such example dates from 1612, when Louis XIII’s tutor David de Flurance Rivault established an ephemeral academy where “the methods of warfare...’ [were] to be discussed on an equal footing with questions of theology and literature” and also provided instruction in the “military exercises”<sup>545</sup> while also calling for instruction in “humanités ... the mechanical arts, ‘[les] recherches de l’antiquité’, mathematics (including ballistics), the art of war, the art of governing” and more<sup>546</sup>. Though each school’s influence likely had little impact beyond the lifetime of its founder and any alumni, they are noteworthy as the first steps in the distillation of the set of ideas which would be eventually be more widely applied.

François de La Noue, the father of the concept of national military education, proposed a comprehensive curriculum remarkably similar to that which would be adopted over a century and a half later. His *Discours politiques et militaires* proposed teaching “mathematics, geography, fortification, and some vulgar tongues”<sup>547</sup>, “riding ... the handling of weapons; gymnastics, swimming and wrestling; music and painting; possibly dancing” with lectures “in French, on the writers of Antiquity ‘qui traitent des vertus morales, de la police & de la guerre’, and on ancient and modern history”<sup>548</sup>. La Noue’s relationship to the crown and the nobility, as well as how his powers of observation and years of experience in military service shaped his ideas for military education has been the subject of a dedicated study<sup>549</sup>. It is worthwhile considering some of the notions expressed by La Noue, especially as they shed light on some of the preoccupations which were still in play well over a century after he voiced them. For instance, David Bien emphasises the concern of the reform-minded founders of the

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<sup>544</sup> F.A. Yates, *French Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London: 1947), 25. in *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, 277-8.

<sup>546</sup> *Le Dessein d’une Académie* (Paris: R. Estienne, 1612), f. 12 recto in James J. Supple, “François La Noue and the Education of the French ‘Noblesse d’Épée’”, *French Studies*, 38 (1982): 272.

<sup>547</sup> Frederick B. Artz and L. Cahen, “Les Débuts de l’éducation technique en France (1500-1700)”, *Revue d’histoire moderne*, 12 (1937): 504.

<sup>548</sup> Hale, *art. cit.*, 238.

<sup>549</sup> Supple, *art. cit.*, 270-281.

school to replace “Latin, rhetoric, and literature”, associated with the *collèges* and the robe nobility, with mathematics<sup>550</sup>. J.J. Supple, in making his point that La Noue’s “commitment to ‘l’idéal de l’humaniste lettré’” went hand in hand with his efforts to “modify the humanist ideal almost as much as he tries to change the educational patterns of his peers”<sup>551</sup>, sees the pragmatism that underlined his project as dictating what was to be included and excluded from the subjects young noblemen were to study, as well as their content. His efforts would have meant that Latin, grammar, and rhetoric would either have been much reduced (for Latin) or suppressed (grammar and rhetoric). Supple sums up La Noue’s attitude to the classical humanist educational ideal as one which “can be seen both to accept and to reject the ‘modele (sic) de l’humaniste lettré’”<sup>552</sup>, his own programme clearly promoting a quality education and indeed a university education when appropriate (namely for those desiring a legal or ecclesiastical career), but recommending the academies for those nobles not thus inclined<sup>553</sup>.

Though not adopted, there are evident parallels between his ideas and their partial embodiment in Pluvinel’s academy. Though Henri IV failed to implement La Noue’s educational ideas, his “riding master gave lessons every day, and ... engaged masters of fencing, dancing, music and mathematics” from 1598 on<sup>554</sup>. It was Pluvinel who proposed the creation of proto-military academies in the spirit of La Noue’s appeal in 1624, which would include a number of subjects not offered at his academy. These included riding, “weapon management, dancing, gymnastics and mathematics” and the whole order of war, from engaging in combat to fortification and the inculcation of a sense of duty and subordination<sup>555</sup>. Though this proposal to Louis XIII apparently foundered on its projected cost, Hale considers that it inspired Richelieu. Richelieu’s academy from 1629 to 1642 is presented as the implementation of de Pluvinel’s proposal, with lessons in “riding, gymnastics, mathematics and fortification” and additional courses in which “they were to learn the elements of logic, physics and metaphysics and moral philosophy – all taught in French” along with “some geography

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<sup>550</sup> Bien, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>551</sup> W. Huseman, “François de La Noue, la dignité de l’homme et l’institution des enfants nobles: contribution à l’étude de l’humanisme protestant”, *BHR*, xiii (1980), 7-25 (12, n. 2; 17, n. 1; 19, n. 1) in Supple, *art. cit.*, 270, 271.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 273-74, 276.

<sup>554</sup> *Décade contenant la vie et gestes de Henri le Grand...* (Paris, 1614), 428, in Hale, *art. cit.* 239.

<sup>555</sup> Antoine de Pluvinel, *L’Instruction du Roy* (Paris, 1625), 191-204, in *Ibid.*, 241.



and the outlines of universal history”<sup>556</sup>. From this combination of academic and martial subjects it is clear that Richelieu envisaged the king’s men as fulfilling the criteria necessary for potential diplomats and ministers as well as for officers.

The most ambitious attempt at formal officer instruction before the founding of the *École militaire*, Louvois’s companies of *cadets-gentilshommes* 1682-1696, was rather reductive and less cultured. The officer cadres were taught “mathématiques, le dessin, la fortification, l’usage des armes, exercices militaires, et en surplus l’allemand et la danse”<sup>557</sup>, as well as riding, geography, and writing<sup>558</sup>. R.F. Croal explains the moral aspects of the *cadets-gentilshommes*’ training: “The daily routine, outlined by Louvois himself, was to include the usual drill... Such schooling was considered adequate to expose the young *cadets-gentilshommes* ‘to everything necessary to train in the profession of arms a *beau cavalier*, a good officer, a proper gentleman, and a Christian”<sup>559</sup>. Guy Rowlands underscores how they were intended as “vehicles for moral regeneration... ‘in reality seminaries”<sup>560</sup>. Unfortunately, plagued by all sorts of problems ranging from the organisational to the moral and instructional, it is doubtful that the lessons offered imparted even the rudiments of the requisite knowledge. Revived under LeBlanc (1726-1733), the cadets again received instruction in mathematics, arms, and dancing so that they would thus become acquainted with the principles of the military art, be capable of distinguishing themselves in battle, and sustain the honour which their class had obtained from time immemorial; they were apparently not taught fortification, but were given instruction in religion, the military art, reading and writing, and while their drummers learnt the *Mousquetaire*’s march<sup>561</sup>. The scope of their possible contribution was even more limited than Louvois’s

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<sup>556</sup> F. Funck-Brentano, “L’Éducation des officiers dans l’ancienne France”, *Réforme Sociale*, 1918, 21-2, in *Ibid.*, 241-242.

<sup>557</sup> Artz and Cahen, *art. cit.* 508.

<sup>558</sup> Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 182.

<sup>559</sup> Louvois as quoted by Eugène Titeux, *Saint-Cyr et l’École Spéciale Militaire en France* (Paris, 1898) in R.F. Croal, “The Idea of the *École Spéciale Militaire* and the Founding of Saint-Cyr”, PhD Diss. University of Arizona, 1970, 65.

<sup>560</sup> Rowlands, *op. cit.*, 182. The marquis de Souches was the observer who described the companies as seminaries. On page 184, Rowlands notes: “The teaching on offer in the companies was of a reasonable standard, and some maths, at least, rubbed off on the cadets, yet only musketry was really compulsory. ... trying to teach most cadets anything else was casting pearls before swine...”

<sup>561</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145 Ordonnance du roi, pour l’établissement de six compagnies de cadets de cent gentilshommes chacune, 16 December 1726.

companies, however, as the revived companies only provided subalterns to the provincial militia, not to line regiments.

From these examples one can see which set of subjects came to form the core of a noble's military and gentlemanly education, as well as a shifting set of secondary disciplines which were taught or dropped according to the available resources and dispositions. A count of the curricula of the ten proposed or actual institutes for noble education up to the princes in column X shows maths listed ten times, riding nine times, fencing eight, gymnastics and religion seven, tactics, military exercises, dancing, history, fortification, languages, and drawing six times, while all other subjects are mentioned less frequently. Of these 22 subjects, the first eleven are mainly intellectual disciplines, while physical exercises comprise most of the rest; the table shows that maths was one of the earliest and most frequently adopted intellectual disciplines to complement the physical disciplines. Only the eighteenth century saw anything like the adoption of de La Noue's ideas, along with more military subjects such as artillery and fortification<sup>562</sup>.

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<sup>562</sup> The table also includes the list of subjects listed in de Meyzieu's article on the *École militaire* for the *Encyclopédie*, which are not counted in the discussion. Subjects in columns with wholly underlined headings, as in II and VI, were only ever proposed and not implemented. In column III, the underlined subjects are those that were called for without apparently being implemented.

Subjects in light gray in other columns are those which may or may not have been in the curriculum, pending more evidence on each case; these are not counted in the discussion below.

Some subjects with different denominations are taken as analogous, for instance 'gymnastics' and *voltige*. In column VII 'physics' and 'metaphysics' are given in the same row, and share row 22 with naval studies of column X despite being different disciplines due to space constraints. All listed subjects are taken from secondary sources except for the final two columns XI and XII.

Table 3.1 – Proposed and actual curricula, 1570-1755

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	J. A. de Baif	de La Noue	de Fluhrance-Rivault	de Phurinel's	Henri IV's private	de Phurinel's
	<i>Académie</i>	<u>proposal</u>	<i>Académie</i> <u>Project</u>	<i>Académie</i>	<i>Académie</i>	<u>proposal</u>
Dates:	1570	1580 -85	1612	1594 -1620	1598 -1610	1624
Subjects:	Natural Philosophy	Moral Virtues	Theology/ <u>Philosophy</u>			Moral Philosophy
2	Poetry		Literature/Poetry			
3	Languages	"Vulgar" Languages	<u>Humanities</u>			
4	Mathematics	Maths	<u>Maths</u>	Maths	Maths	Maths
5						
6		Geography				
7		A & M History	<u>Recherche d'antiquité</u>			A & M History
8			Art of Governing			Politics
9		Fortification	<u>Mechanical Arts</u>			Fortification
10						
11	Painting	Painting		Military Drawing		(Military Drawing)
12	Military Discipline	<i>Vertus de la police</i>	Art of War			Art of War
13		<i>&amp; de la guerre</i>	Methods of Warfare			
14			Military Exercises		Tout exercice honet	Field Exercises
15				Dancing	Dancing	Dancing
16		Wrestling		Fencing	Fencing	Weapon managemer
17	Gymnastics	Gymnastics		Gymnastics		Gymnastics
18	Equitation	Equitation		Equitation	Equitation	Equitation
19					Letters & writing	
20		Swimming				
21	Music	Music		Lute-Playing	Music	(Music)
22						

Table 3.1 continued

VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Richelieu's <i>Académie</i> 1629 -1642	Cadets-Gents Louvois/Le Blanc 1682-94/1726-33	Pages des Écuries 1666 -1722	Princes du Sang 1601 -1760s	Chevaux-légers de la garde 1755	Paris-Duverney's article 'École Militaire' 1755
Moral Philosophy	Religion (1732)		Moral Philosophy	Religion	Religion & Moral Law French Grammar
	German	German	E, G, L, I Maths	Maths	G, L, I Maths
Maths	Maths (arithmetic)	Maths	Logic (Philosophy)		Logic
Logic					
Geography	Geography	Geography		Geo. chronology	Geography
A & M History		History	History Politics	History	A & M History <i>Droit naturel</i>
Fortification	Fortification <sup>o</sup>		Fortification (T&P)	Fortification	Fortification (T&P)
(Military Drawing)	Drawing Military Art (1726)	Drawing	Artillery theory Drawing Tactics/Military art & theory	Artillery practice Drawing	Artillery (T&P)
					Tactics & Military theory Military Ordinances
Military Exercises	Mil. Exercise & Drill	Military Drill		Military exercises	Troop Exercises & Drill
(Dancing)	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing
Arms training	Use of Arms	Fencing	Fencing	Fencing	Fencing
<i>Volige</i>		<i>Volige</i>	Physical ex/ <i>Volige</i>	<i>Volige</i>	
Equitation	Riding	<i>Manège</i>	Riding & Hunting	Equitation	Equitation
	Reading/writing	Writing	Writing		Writing
(Music)	(Music) 1726		(Swimming)	Swin. (mounted)	Swimming
Physics & metaphysics			(Music)		
			Naval studies/Astronomy		

Corinne Doucet describes the ideal noble education as based on a set of three subjects, “ce trio ‘équitation, danse, escrime’” forming “la base de l’enseignement sur laquelle se sont développées les académies”<sup>563</sup>. This continuity remained intact from its medieval roots up until the development of professional military schools, but if the comparisons made above are any guide, it shows that the “ideal trio” had by the mid-seventeenth century developed into a four-legged stand of mathematics, riding, fencing, and gymnastics, relegating dancing to a lower tier (religion is not counted in this discussion). This points not so much to a move away from the physical and bodily graces implicit in the earlier mentality, but rather its integration into a more comprehensive, well-rounded, intellectual curriculum. On the other hand, the “ideal trio” could also serve to damn by association, as in Vauban’s cutting summary of all the good the instruction given to Louvois’s cadets had done: “Ce sont tous gens ... sans naissance, d’un mérite inconnu ... qui ne savent au plus que l’escrime, danser et quereller, qui ont ... une très-mauvaise éducation”<sup>564</sup>. The emphasis on the *exercices du corps*, even allied to religious and intellectual instruction, did not guarantee that physical development would be accompanied by the cultivation of the mind and morals.

The seventeenth century saw “an increase in the importance of physical grace and ‘culture’ in the noble construct... [Schalk] specifically situates these qualities as products of the *académie*”<sup>565</sup>. Doucet describes how the mission of the riding schools adapted to shifting noble mores, meaning “ces institutions ... ont participé à l’élaboration d’une nouvelle éducation de la noblesse. Graduellement, celle-ci se tourne davantage vers la cour que vers la guerre”<sup>566</sup>. Not all disciplines however lost their martial content or application. The role of dancing went beyond the attributes sought by aristocratic clients, namely grace and *sprezzatura*; it also addressed the military

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<sup>563</sup> Corinne Doucet, “Les académies équestres et l’éducation de la noblesse (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)”, *Revue Historique*, no. 628 (2003/04): 829. She adds that “son importance remonte au Moyen Âge et il y a là une réelle continuité”. This is the same trio or triad described by Mark Motley: “The main forces of the curriculum at all institutions was a trio of physical exercises: riding, dancing, and fencing, which were usually supplemented with the study of military mathematics or ‘fortifications’”. He also explains its Italian roots and growing French antipathy to transalpine influence. *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 139.

<sup>564</sup> Vauban as quoted by Edgard Boutaric, *Institutions militaires de la France avant les armées permanentes, suivies d’un aperçu des principaux changements survenus jusqu’à nos jours dans la formation de l’armée* (Paris: 1863), 424-425.

<sup>565</sup> Tucker, *op.cit.*, 11. In this period, *académies* were “a new type of noble educational institution”. Motley’s analysis, in turn, suggests that “the initial enthusiasm for founding noble academies was an ‘aristocratic reaction’ against the rise to power of the newer nobility”. Tucker, 125.

<sup>566</sup> Doucet, *art. cit.*, 818.

necessity for strong bodies. Dancing and fencing served “to augment the strength, address, and military grace of the soldier”<sup>567</sup>, while dancing had “the advantage of posing the body in the state of equilibrium most proper to suppleness ... experience has demonstrated that those who apply themselves to it execute the movements of military exercises with much greater ease and promptness”<sup>568</sup>. This was a common justification for the lessons in dancing given to noble officers, and it was even proposed to provide instruction in dancing to common soldiers by the end of the eighteenth century<sup>569</sup>. In the event, the elements combined in the academies represented “the alliance between the subjects connected to the formerly military character of these schools (fortification) on one hand, and activities of a social character (dance, music) on the other”<sup>570</sup>. As seen in the case of dancing, even the social graces could be conceived of as actively martial.

Throughout the early eighteenth century, there were no major innovations or modifications to the composition of the basic noble and military curriculum; developments of interest were mostly confined to naval schools and the artillery schools established in 1720. The various abortive attempts by figures such as Antoine Pâris or Jean-Baptiste Berthier to found some sort of military school contributed little to the theory or development of the subjects which would compose a military curriculum. It was the riding academies with their curriculum consisting of subjects such as modern languages, mathematics, fortification, music, drawing, history, geography, cartography, and law which kept a semblance of military education alive, alongside the *École des pages* and the various schools of the *Maison du Roi*<sup>571</sup>. It is these last schools, the most immediate institutional precursors to the *École militaire*, which will now be considered.

Though not a part of the *Maison militaire du Roi*, the training given to the *Pages des écuries du roi* was military as it provided the children of the affluent nobility high-calibre physical training and social development opportunities, but adding the coveted

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<sup>567</sup> Collection des ordonnances militaires depuis 1112 jusqu'à 1801 recueillies par le marquis de Saugeon, 77 t. en 74 vol. in-fol. (imprimés et manuscrits. Bibl. du Ministère des Armées: AI b 1175) in Hélène Guilcher and Jean-Michel Guilcher, “L’Enseignement Militaire de la Danse et les Traditions Populaires”, *Arts et traditions populaires*, 18/1-3 (1970): 276.

<sup>568</sup> *Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières, par une société de gens de lettres, de savants et d'artistes*, Paris, Panckoucke, t II, 1785, 233, col. I. Carabiniers, in Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid. Though dancing lessons were not generally part of a French soldier's training, a number of recruitment posters offered precisely that as an enticement to enlist, for instance the La Fère and Strasbourg artillery regiments, the arquebusiers de Grassin, and the Carabiniers.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 829-830.

<sup>571</sup> Doucet, *art. cit.* 830.

opportunity to serve in close proximity to the king<sup>572</sup>. In Mark Motley's estimation, the *École des pages* was one institution that "helped to draw different strata of the nobility into the court system and were important in establishing the basis for the officer class... that Louis XIV created"<sup>573</sup>. Describing the growth in number of their members, from approximately 40 before 1666 to over 90 in 1680, Motley speculates that this expansion constituted a key factor in the closure of many Parisian academies in the late seventeenth century<sup>574</sup>. Their curriculum and instruction was virtually identical to that given at the academies<sup>575</sup>, even if the quality of instruction was debatable<sup>576</sup>. Though Motley considers that the key element in Louis XIV's reforms in the pages' education concerned "the attempt he made to integrate all the pages into the rigid ritual of daily routine" at Versailles, and not the changes to instruction or moral discipline<sup>577</sup>, Louis's *Mémoires* emphasise the substantial amelioration in instruction and the quality of instructors, alongside improved discipline, more selective admission requirements, attachment to the royal person, and the possibilities of advancement as key factors in the quality and reputation of the *Écuries'* pages<sup>578</sup>. Furthermore, they distinguished themselves in battle when given the opportunity<sup>579</sup>.

Smith sees the *École des pages* as linked to the *École militaire* by virtue of being institutions "designed specifically for nobles" which displayed "new ideals of military training and performance"<sup>580</sup>. These new ideals were also present in the various corps of

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<sup>572</sup> "L'école des pages était un établissement civil attaché aux écuries et formant des gentilshommes destinés à devenir officiers des armées, et tout particulièrement des officiers de cavalerie". Gaëtan d'Aviau de Ternay, *Les Pages des Écuries du Roi, des Reines, et des Dauphines - Dictionnaire Biographique* (Paris: Patrice Dupuy-Éditeur, 2006), 10.

<sup>573</sup> Motley, *op. cit.*, 169-170.

<sup>574</sup> Though not challenging that specific point, Tucker argues that Motley's "assumption that the *académies* declined from the late seventeenth century on because *manège* equitation and the mounted games related to it had begun to lose their 'social importance' in the culture of the high and court nobility" is unfounded. She argues that "*manège* equitation and mounted games continued to be the central components of noble educational programs, whether at an *académie* or at one of the court schools, and skilled and graceful horsemanship continued to be an important marque de noblesse among the very high and court nobility who had matriculated at one of those institutions". Tucker, *op. cit.*, 357-359.

<sup>575</sup> Motley, *op. cit.*, 178-179; in 1722 their curriculum included "manège, armes, danse, mathématiques, dessin, allemande, voltige, maniement d'armes, écriture, & géographie et l'histoire". De Ternay, *op. cit.*, 34-35.

<sup>576</sup> According to some, the teaching given in the *écuries du roi* was "plus que médiocre", although "le page qui le voulait pouvait faire des études sérieuses". The riding instruction was "ce que l'on faisait de mieux". De Ternay, *op. cit.*, 33, 35, 37.

<sup>577</sup> Motley, *op. cit.*, 179-180.

<sup>578</sup> Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 152.

<sup>579</sup> The *pages* charged with the troops of the *Maison du Roi* at Fontenoy. De Ternay, *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>580</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 217.

the *Maison du Roi*; the original military school had been the *Garde du Corps*, but after 1676 this role was taken over by the regiment du Roi and the *Mousquetaires*<sup>581</sup>. This second body, composed of two mounted companies quartered in Paris, employed professors of literature, science, *art d'agrément*s, and riding instructors<sup>582</sup>; Rowlands, after detailing the placement of 238 musketeers as officers in the army 1674-1705, points out how “as an instrument of Bourbon dynastic policy the Mousquetaires du Roi were an outstanding success”<sup>583</sup>. Moreover, the continuing seriousness with which they took their role as an “*école pour la jeune noblesse du royaume*” led the captain-lieutenant of the first company, Jumilhac, to request and be granted royal permission to teach the new exercise for infantry adopted in 1750<sup>584</sup>.

The largest and best organised school housed in the *Maison* however was run by the *Chevaux-légers de la garde*<sup>585</sup>. It was a proper military school with its own facilities, as opposed to the regimental training system which was the feature of the *Gardes du corps* and *Mousquetaires*, based at the *Hôtel des Chevaux-légers* in Versailles. Though originally only accepting its own members for the courses, it was later opened to officers from the whole army during peacetime provided they don the corps' uniforms. Through that system, it was considered a good source of instruction for captains not only of cavalry, but of dragoons and infantry as well<sup>586</sup>. It taught riding, vaulting, fencing, geographic chronology and history, fortification, drawing, mathematics, dancing, swimming (both individual and on horseback), religious instruction, military exercises, while the use of artillery pieces was practised with

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<sup>581</sup> Samuel Gibiat, *Hiérarchies Sociales & Ennoblement: Les commissaires des guerres de la Maison du roi au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: École des chartes, 2006), 42-43.

<sup>582</sup> Frédéric Chauviré, “La Maison du Roi sous Louis XIV, une troupe d’élite”, *Revue Historique de l’Armée*, 242 (2006): 120.

<sup>583</sup> Rowlands, *op. cit.*, 181.

<sup>584</sup> SHD 254-1 Travail avec le roi à Versailles, 24 January 1751.

<sup>585</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 153 and John A. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 228. Smith calls the corps a ‘light cavalry company’, which is a literal translation of the French term ‘*chevaux-léger*’, but that is not an accurate description of its tactical role. It was a body of heavy cavalry which wore cuirasses on the battlefield and charged home for effect. It was brigaded with the similarly equipped *Gendarmes de la garde* according to the practice of the contemporary *Gendarmerie de France*, an elite corps which was not part of the *Maison du Roi* but immediately followed it in seniority and prestige, composed of an equal number of companies of *Gendarmes* and *Chevaux-légers* and distinguished principally by their appellation and minor uniform details; the *Gendarmerie* were the heirs to the *Compagnies d’ordonnance* created by Charles VII in 1445. Gibiat, *op. cit.*, 36-37, 39-40.

<sup>586</sup> Jean-Joseph Expilly, article “Force”, sub-header ‘*Chevaux-légers de la garde du roi*’ in *Dictionnaire Géographique, Historique, et Politique des Gaules et de la France*, T. III (Amsterdam, 1764), 275-276.



ordnance that it owned for that purpose<sup>587</sup>. In 1757 it numbered 100 students under 10 inspectors and 10 *sous-inspecteurs*<sup>588</sup>. It thus offered one of the best programmes of military instruction in the *ancien régime*. Jacques d’Auvergne, the father of French military equitation, was a captain in the *Chevaux-légers* before being appointed as the *écuyer* of the *École militaire*, whose *manège* he would lead until it closed in 1788<sup>589</sup>.

## Part II: Pâris de Meyzieu and the Curriculum of the *École militaire*

Jacob’s article “L’École royale militaire – un modèle selon l’Encyclopédie?” looks at the relationship between the idea for the project of the *École militaire*, in the form of the article published in 1755 for the *Encyclopédie* by de Meyzieu, and how it reflected the Enlightenment ideals espoused by Diderot’s collaborators. Jacob’s aim is to “place some of the declarations of the *Encyclopédie* article into the perspective of the reality of the school’s first few years of existence, and also to compare it with the educational concepts of other encyclopaedists”<sup>590</sup>. Jacob argues that the *École militaire* generally reflected Enlightenment currents and the various educational reform movements seeking to renew and revitalise education in general, despite its shortcomings once established: “the suppression of Latin, the study of modern languages, the emphasis on science are all themes which were vigorously debated and around which a consensus gradually came to be formed by the advocates of progress in the period”<sup>591</sup>. There were two senses in which the school was innovative: firstly as the institutionalised embodiment of those concepts directly under government authority, and secondly through the social selection of its students. These were neither bourgeois nor *anoblis* (as the majority of those who matriculated in the *collèges* were), nor the affluent nobles or foreigners who comprised the majority of students in the academies, nor court nobles or *roturiers* living nobly as was the case for many members of the

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<sup>587</sup> Charles-Philippe d’Albert, duc de Luynes, *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la cour de Louis XV (1735-1758)*, 5 October 1753, T. XIII (Paris, 1863), 83-84; *Ibid.*, 19 June 1755, T. XIV (Paris, 1864), 184-185; *Ibid.*, 12 June 1757, T. XV (Paris, 1864), 113-114.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 June 1757, T. XV (Paris, 1864), 116. For more on this school, see SHD 261-7 *Chevaux-légers de la garde ordinaire – Hôtel, Manège, École*.

<sup>589</sup> The *écuyer* of the *Chevaux-légers* at the time was the comte de Lubersac, a former *écuyer* of the *Grande Écurie*. The *Conseil* had specifically requested that the *Chevaux-légers* train the *écuyer* for the *École militaire* as it considered that that school would provide the best quality training available, and its *état-major* consented, having him trained personally by Lubersac. However, the proposed candidate took up a posting elsewhere, and he was replaced by d’Auvergne despite the opposition of the *état-major* of the *Chevaux-légers*. The *École militaire* nevertheless reimbursed the *Chevaux-légers* for having trained and fed two of its horses. AN MM 678, Lettre de M. Darget à M. de Vezanne, 8 October 1756, 84-85.

<sup>590</sup> Jacob, *art. cit.*, 105.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

*Maison du Roi* or *pages*. The *École militaire*, through its form and composition, thus mostly broke with past models, both institutional and social, by applying the principles of an aristocratic education to the children of provincial nobles on an unprecedented scale<sup>592</sup>. The degree to which the educational ideas and curricular content of the first group overlapped with those of the second will be better understood through a comparison of the education of *princes du sang* with the ideas articulated in the *Encyclopédie* article, despite the differences in structure and outcome of those two approaches.

Many studies have emphasised the founders' innovative impulse and their wish to break with traditional practices in education. As far as the legacy of the *collèges* is concerned, which educated the majority of students prior to the creation of a free, national public system of education, it may be admitted that this was indeed the case. There was nevertheless plenty of continuity with several precedent institutes for noble education, as discussed above. The similarities are even more striking when compared with another prominent, well-established educational current, a comparison which up to now has evaded notice. Though the nature of the *École militaire*'s education led contemporaries to draw comparisons in general terms to the education of princes (even if such comparisons could be turned against it<sup>593</sup>), subsequent studies have neglected the link between the two. No-one would claim that the teaching imparted to the children of the royal family or other *princes du sang* was primarily technical, despite the martial aspects it included and up-to-date technological practices they were exposed to (including astronomy and naval studies), but if the non-military aspects of the teaching given at the *École militaire* are compared to the instruction of the Bourbon princes, it becomes clear that there was a great deal of continuity in the educational programme as practiced both by the princes and by the *École militaire*. In her diachronic analysis of the subjects taught to the Bourbon princes over two centuries, Pascale Mormiche sees the study of their education as the means of not only preparing them for their adult role but also a tool for understanding the intellectual and consequently political projects of the monarchy<sup>594</sup>. It is the means of "showing how one passes in two centuries from the

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<sup>592</sup> Louvois' companies produced more officer candidates annually, but were socially heterogeneous.

<sup>593</sup> See for instance Saint-Germain's letter to Duverney dated 16 November 1753 in the *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney ...* Vol. 1 (London, 1789), 63-65.

<sup>594</sup> Pascale Mormiche, *Devenir Prince: L'école du pouvoir en France, XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2009), vii.

transmission of a certain tradition and behaviours to the intellectual acquisition of a career and a set of knowledge”. It could be argued that this shift was only imperfectly complete by the time of the Revolution (though Jay Smith argues it was largely complete by 1750)<sup>595</sup>. Be that as it may, if any institution exemplified the tension of the complex relationship between the weight and influence of tradition against the desire to implement concrete and measurable standards of pedagogic progress, it was the *École militaire*. It is by comparing it with aspects of the education of the Bourbon princes that a better picture of the continuity with then-current practice can be demonstrated.

The typical course of the princes’ education is as follows: primary education at the hands of women, began at four, and consisted of the most basic elements. At seven they “passent aux hommes” in a ceremony, to study until they turned thirteen (the age of majority). They could then proceed to take a role in public business, or not, sometimes while continuing studies which could last until marriage, the point which marked the official end of childhood and the dissolution of the *préceptorat* and the formation of the prince’s own *maison*. Often boisterous, if not downright disruptive and rebellious, the younger sons often posed a challenge not just for instructors but for their parents, for whom one possible solution was sending them to war<sup>596</sup>, at least in the seventeenth century. In the *École militaire*’s first phase (1751-1764), students were taken between 8 and 13 years of age, and educated until 18 or when they were considered ready to enter the service<sup>597</sup>. The break in the *École militaire*’s education was not signified by marriage but by commissioning as a *sous-lieutenant* (or as a *cadet-gentilhomme* from 1777 until 1781) if the student successfully completed his studies, or by expulsion or withdrawal by his family, as circumstance dictated.

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<sup>595</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, 216. “The young noble in 1650 hoped to live up to the name of his ‘illustrious house’ and, more specifically, to reenact the examples of generosity set by his predecessors ... By contrast, the noble army officer in 1750 set his sights on the next highest rank in the hierarchy, and he intended to acquire it by performing with ‘exactitude’ the duties attached to his present grade”. The experiences of the mid-century wars however prove that Smith’s exemplary eighteenth century officer was more likely the exception than the rule in this respect.

<sup>596</sup> Mormiche, *op. cit.*, vii-viii.

<sup>597</sup> Articles XV and XIX of the Edict of January 1751 fixed the ages of admission at 8-11 years of age, except for orphans who could be admitted until the age of 13, and the age of their exit at 18-20, or sooner if their education was considered complete before then. The age at which they were to leave was fixed at 18 or sooner under the same conditions on 16 September 1758, and then at 17 in 1764; however, by 1772 students were again being kept at the school to perfect their education until the age of 19, it being considered exceptional for anyone to exit aged 16. Other documents suggested the average stay of a student was 6 years, though this number always varied widely. See SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XIX, Édît du roi, 22 January 1751, 9-10; AN MM 678, Mémoire sur la pension de 200 livres..., 16 September 1758; AN MM 659, 27 September 1764; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 1772; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Règlement 28 March 1776.

A comparison of the subjects which comprised the curricula of the princes and of the *École militaire* helps show the similarity between the two sets of practices more clearly. It should be noted that the royal princely curriculum did not consist of a single, set, immutable programme of courses which was uniformly undertaken by all of its students over the course of two centuries, but a list of items which came and went from favour and which carried different emphases at different moments. The curriculum of the *École militaire* for its part also underwent several changes in its composition and application during the several decades of its existence, according to the differing appreciations of the utility and efficacy of individual courses in the administrators' minds. For all that, the similarities between the two sets remain striking, especially when contrasted with the offerings of not only the *collèges* but also the academies.

Mormiche's list of the principal subjects studied by the royal princes includes moral philosophy, three modern languages (English, Italian, and German) in addition to Latin, writing, history, tactics and military art and theory, mathematics, physical exercises, fencing, dancing, artillery, logic, politics, riding and hunting, drawing, and other military topics such as castrametation (the practice of siting and laying out camps) and siege warfare with model forts. Though not explicitly based on any prior French model, de Meyzieu's list of subjects is remarkably similar: religion, French grammar, languages (Latin, Italian, and German), writing, mathematics, history and geography, tactics and the theory of war and military ordinances, fencing, dancing, artillery, logic, *droit naturel*, troop exercises, riding, and fortification theory and practice<sup>598</sup>. These were the two most similar sets of curricula out of all those practised in France up through 1755, whether in a formal educational institution setting or not. The only other model which was that similar was foreign, namely the 'Corps de Cadets' established in St. Petersburg in 1732 and described by Duverney in 1750<sup>599</sup>. Though direct influence was nullified by distance and the lack of any first-hand knowledge of its functioning, it is still possible to appreciate the principles its founders considered primordial from their interpretation of the way that school functioned<sup>600</sup>. On the other hand, the existence of

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<sup>598</sup> The two lists have 13 subject categories in common (all languages being considered one category, religion/moral philosophy not being counted). The *pages* and the princes shared eight subject categories, while the *pages*, *Chevaux-légers*, and the *École militaire* shared nine.

<sup>599</sup> See AN K 149, n° 8<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire, 18 April 1750, which clearly provides the blueprint for the *École militaire*'s composition and curriculum. For more on the Russian cadet corps, see Paul Keenan, *St. Petersburg and the Russian Court, 1703-1761* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 131-134.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid. The *École militaire* and the St. Petersburg school have 10 subject categories in common; the list of subjects studied in the Russian institution were languages (Latin, German, and French), geography,

established, contemporaneous practice in France which would find some echo in a self-styled innovative institute is of clear interest for a fuller understanding of its own development. Although the resemblance of the two sets of French curricula listed above is not meant to imply that the *École militaire*'s was directly or indirectly derived from that of the princes, their actual similarities suggests enough common ground for a comparison of the processes at work in their different contexts.

Jacob cites the *Encyclopédie*'s article on 'Éducation' as a key reference on the principles of that subject<sup>601</sup>. According to César Dumarsais, its author, education ought to have as its goals to foster firstly the health and good conditioning of the body, secondly the rightness and development of the spirit, and thirdly positive morals, defined as both the conduct of one's life and the cultivation of social qualities<sup>602</sup>. A combination of the abstract and the concrete, the ideal and the practical, those qualities (particularly the final ones) in fact echoed the precepts of a courtly education, available only to the social elite, not the entirety of the nation, and which was consequently limited to a restricted stratum of society<sup>603</sup>. According to the school's founders, the qualities education imparted, though not opposed to Dumarsais's list, ought to have a different orientation, emphasising more the application of the virtues developed through education for the benefit of the common good and less the decoration of the pupil's spirit. To their mind, only public education could impart the *émulation* which would assure the fruit of the lessons given, and inspire the young students to docility, compassion, humanity, and the rest of the social virtues. It would also render them sensible to glory and the love of the *patrie*. The social virtues made an *honnête homme*, but the civic virtues formed the citizen and distinguished him<sup>604</sup>.

Commenting on the difficulties of creating a public educational establishment, de Meyzieu offered his opinion and speculated about the best way to proceed. He wrote that it was easy to find works full of excellent precepts proper to the education of a young man; but that it was difficult to find works on the education of a group of youth

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history, geometry and trigonometry, drawing, fortifications, public and private law, fencing, dancing, military manoeuvres, music, and riding. Music and drawing are the two subjects missing from the de Meyzieu's curriculum.

<sup>601</sup> Jacob, *art. cit.*, 105.

<sup>602</sup> César Chesneau Dumarsais, *Encyclopédie*, T. V, s.v. "Éducation", 403a.

<sup>603</sup> Dumarsais's description is reminiscent of the goals Fénelon had enumerated in *Télémaque*, of a "politique réfléchie d'éducation physique et de santé à des fins morales", 91, 319, in Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 293.

<sup>604</sup> AN K 149, n° 1, Mémoire sur l'utilité de l'établissement d'un Collège académique pour la jeune noblesse de France, 11 January 1750, 4.

as opposed to the individual. The few authors whom de Meyzieu considered the most enlightened on the subject were those whose practice was established on facts drawn from long experience (although he failed to name any of them). According to him, the science of education had no written laws; he explicitly stated that its rules resided with those whose use of them had come through ability developed by practice, but that they remained unfathomable and out of reach. The diversity of what he labelled “génies”, or personalities, dispositions, tastes and goals, was the main cause of the lack of work on group education. He considered that the field of pedagogical theory would be much richer if such laws could be fixed and determined, but that in itself would not suffice<sup>605</sup>. Even if discovered and codified, they would have to be applicable to all *états*, a term which can be taken to mean dispositions, abilities, and inspiration in this context<sup>606</sup>. His epistemology of pedagogy held that every branch of knowledge had certain rules, and that all that had been written to communicate them to mankind always aimed for perfection; such, he held, was the goal of all those who sought to impart instruction<sup>607</sup>. Specialisation was necessary due to the impossibility of embracing the whole of knowledge, it being necessary instead to limit oneself to the principles of the profession one was to follow. As the future *état* of a child was unforeseeable, it was not easy to fix the point to which his abilities should be led in the study of one subject or another. The absolute will of a father could derail the best programme of studies, and make a bishop out of a geometer<sup>608</sup>.

De Meyzieu and his fellow reformers believed that such problems would be absent in the new school. Such inconveniences would be defeated by its very nature and purpose: dedicated to producing but one type of man, dedicated to war, the “science of arms” embraced too many *objets* (and by implication, abilities and inclinations) not to provide something for most pupils. The guiding goals were the cultivation of the spirit

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<sup>605</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 308.

<sup>606</sup> This is suggested by the first, general definition for the term given in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* of 1740: “Disposition dans laquelle se trouve une personne” with various examples, both negative and positive, of its use. Among these we find: “Il est hors d'état de rien entreprendre”, “Je voudrais être en état de vous servir”, “Etre dans un état de consistance...”, or “Se mettre en bon état”. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, t. 1<sup>er</sup>, s.v. “État”.

<sup>607</sup> The goal of perfection was explicitly stated by Duverney: “la perfection est le but où l'on tend. Il y a des militaires en France ... on veut les rendre encore meilleurs, s'il se peut, et l'établissement d'un Collège académique, est sans doute une voye sûre pour y parvenir...” AN K 149, n° 6<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire 24 April 1750, 2; “Perfection” for its part was conceptualised less as the distilled state of the unsurpassable than as a quality reflecting good order, as in the description of equitation in a *mémoire* written two days earlier: “Cet exercice a ses principes, ses règles, ses connoissances, et sa perfection comme l'autre”. AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire ‘Collège académique’ 22 April 1750.

<sup>608</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 308.

and of the body; the culture of the spirit “consists principally in the care of instructing with but useful things, by employing the best means, and in proportion to the dispositions found”<sup>609</sup>. De Meyzieu went on to add some caveats in an effort to reconcile his ideal education with the requirements of pragmatism. The school’s sole purpose being to produce soldiers and citizens, it could not be expected to also produce scholars. A useful, practical education could not fall prey to an excess of ambition and attempt to teach everything; specialisation would be the key as different intellects embraced different subjects<sup>610</sup>. “The necessary knowledge is nothing if not too expansive; thus, in the detail of our work, it will be easy to distinguish by the nature of things that which is essential from that which is advantageous, in a word, the good from the great”<sup>611</sup>. A different presentation of the same principle is given in the account describing the Corps de Cadets in St. Petersburg. After listing the subjects studied there, Duverney adds that “it is easy to imagine that not all of the cadets fulfil the elements of their education equally well. That depends rather on their taste and on their aptitude for such and such an element, and the art of their *maîtres* is to tease out their taste and their aptitude in order to that it may flower”<sup>612</sup>. Pragmatism was to be the guiding rule, as de Meyzieu insisted that the results achieved by the school would be measured in such a way that nothing would be held sacred, with anything found to be useless or harmful being discarded.

The main focus of the *Encyclopédie* article was the *École militaire*’s curriculum; before delving into its contents, it should be borne in mind that when de Meyzieu’s article was published, the school was still housed in Vincennes. His ideas thus constitute more of an idealised project than an objective description of reality at that point. Listing the subjects in their ostensible order of importance, religion came at the head of the syllabus. As was appropriate for a public, royal institution, the archbishop of Paris functioned as its spiritual superior. It was in his remit to “determine the hours and length of the prayers, catechisms, and all spiritual exercises”<sup>613</sup>. His delegates at the school would be doctors from the Sorbonne. In addition to daily prayers and masses,

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>610</sup> This had been one of the practical, non-ideological reasons for rejecting the inclusion of classics in the curriculum: “comme il est démontré impossible de perfectionner également les élèves destinés à l’église et à la magistrature puisqu’on serait obligé de les renvoyer aux écoles ordinaires on conclut en disant qu’on estime, qu’il serait plus convenable de s’en tenir au deux seules destinations de l’art militaire dans toutes ses parties, et de la politique”. AN K 149, n° 6<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire, 24 April 1750, 2.

<sup>611</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 309.

<sup>612</sup> AN K 149 n° 8<sup>1</sup>, 19 April 1750, 7.

<sup>613</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.* 309.

religious instruction would take place on Sundays and feast days, with regular tests on the tenets of the faith<sup>614</sup>. Immediately after religion in importance came the patriotic sentiment of dedication to the king, a sentiment considered so natural that it was needless to insist upon it. The students' patriotic instruction would serve instead simply to redouble their natural zeal and *émulation*, both key qualities associated with the sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the royal person in the aristocratic lexicon<sup>615</sup>.

Grammar headed the list of academic subjects proper. To de Meyzieu, grammar provided the necessary and common rules of all language. What was particular to each language he believed merely exemplified exceptions to a "general grammar", which was what studies at the *École militaire* began with. He stated that "one may easily judge that it cannot be taught but in French", a statement both of intent and a pedagogical challenge to current practice in the Latin-based courses of rhetoric and eloquence in the *collèges*. Once mastered, its basic principles, taught in French, would be applied to the learning of languages such as Latin and German. That method of language instruction in the *École militaire* thus reversed that of the typical *collège*, but was well in continuity with the practice of aristocratic households<sup>616</sup>. The instruction, and thus learning, would be facilitated by its being imparted "*vive voix*", a habit de Meyzieu described as common abroad but rare in France<sup>617</sup>. Its advantages were described as serving to attract the student's attention and concentration more than simple dictated lessons, which he

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<sup>614</sup> For more on religion, see Robert Laulan, "Les Chapelles de l'École militaire et la vie religieuse dans l'ancien hôtel royal", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* 60 (1933): 108-185.

<sup>615</sup> De Meyzieu actually held that patriotism in France was subordinate to the subjects' love for the royal person, or at least that this was the general opinion both in France and abroad. To him, both elements were of a kind, such that "L'amour de la Patrie semble marcher d'un pas égal avec l'attachement au Prince; cependant ces deux sentiments ne se ressemblent point chez les français". He nevertheless insisted that "le français est plus patriote qu'il ne le dit" and that "en servant bien le Roi, nous sommes utiles à notre Patrie". *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...* (London, 1755), 50-51.

<sup>616</sup> "Trying to fit instruction naturally to the norms of the vernacular language and the structure of household relations was fine, but it posed real problems when formal lessons in reading, writing, and Latin grammar began". Motley, *op. cit.*, 90-91.

"Pour la plupart des enfants du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'apprentissage de la lecture se fait par déchiffrement sur des textes en latin dont beaucoup soulignent le rapport simple entre la lecture des lettres et syllabes et leur écriture. Ils n'abordent le français que vers dix-onze ans... Les princes recopient beaucoup plus jeunes, des phrases en français." Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 168.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid. Again, this would seem to be an instance where the exception to general practice was found in an aristocratic setting: "L'orthographe correspond à la prononciation accentuée en usage dans les milieux aristocratiques. Ce code phonographique est ainsi plus facilement intelligible pour les enfants-princes que l'on entoure d'hommes et de femmes parlant une langue jugée pure. L'attention est portée, lors du choix du personnel, sur l'expression orale".



condemned as a waste of time<sup>618</sup>. He specifically noted that this was a tactic employed for the convenience of students rather than the instructors. Its final advantage was that by relying on this method, it would be the faculty of reason rather than rote memory which would be utilised. He added two notes on the constraints inherent to that method. The first was that such lessons could evidently only be given in classes with a high instructor-student ratio. The second was that the demands made by the lessons on students would impose limits on their length. De Meyzieu thus advocated holding lessons which were relatively short but repeated often<sup>619</sup>.

The knowledge of foreign languages being dependent on grammar, the core elements of that discipline formed the basis for their study. The comparison of languages was undertaken by exposing what was analogous and different in each tongue, fixing the common principles common to them all, followed by a consideration of the peculiarities of each one, and thence proceeding to their practice in order to impart the ease of habit and expression. That was all that was necessary to a *militaire*. The key languages were Latin, Italian, and German, the first for its universal use and widely recognized value, the latter two due to the traditional theatres of war being German and Italian territories. Italian being considered an easy language to learn, German would require more attention. In addition to the classroom instruction, the students' valets were all German-speaking in order to aid them with their conversation and pronunciation. The difficulties in pronunciation were considered to be superable thanks to the facility of the tongue at an age when that organ was considered to lend itself well to such a task<sup>620</sup>. Though not envisaged by de Meyzieu, English would be added to the curriculum post-1776 in order to strengthen the preparation of naval candidates at the *École militaire*, while Italian was dropped<sup>621</sup>. The fate of Latin, for its

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<sup>618</sup> In actual practice, the constraints imposed by time would in fact reduce the lessons of some subjects taught at the *École militaire* to simple dictation, as was the case for the study of *droit publique* in the 1780s. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785.

<sup>619</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 309.

<sup>620</sup> Foreign language instruction was principally verbal; when Cappeler, a German language adjunct, started teaching the students to write in German, the *Conseil* decided to reward him with a *gratification ordinaire* of 200 livres. AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 153 v<sup>10</sup>, 2 July 1759, 129. Later promoted to professor, he requested and was granted another *gratification extraordinaire* of 600 livres for producing and printing "grands et petits tableaux" on the basic principles of German, among other tasks. AN MM 660, 9 February 1775, 121. For summaries of the students' language skills, see the various 'États des Élèves' in SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146.

<sup>621</sup> The initiative to teach English was a ministerial decision imposed on the *École militaire*. Montbarey appointed a Professor of English as useful for the students destined for the navy; however, the *Conseil* considered that it was more urgent to improve the students' knowledge and style in French, and requested two professors of French and a *maître d'écriture*. Montbarey approved all the nominees. AN MM 674, Mémoire 21 February 1778, 128.

part, will be more closely examined in the following chapter. Overall, the study of modern languages alongside Latin, but with instruction primarily in French, was another practice with long antecedents in aristocratic pedagogical practice, reflecting their future military vocation or, alternatively, the diplomatic and political roles envisaged for them by their families<sup>622</sup>.

Though it does not head the list, the longest single entry in the article is the one dealing with mathematics, underscoring its importance. De Meyzieu in fact labelled it the single most considerable of all the sciences necessary to military men, with advantages as significant as they were well-known. However, not all mathematical subjects were equally important, for though he saw geometry at the apex of the discipline, he saw little use for it among soldiers, who were better off knowing how to build a redoubt than plotting a comet's course. This opinion was based on disillusionment rather than conviction, as he held that the military had not kept pace with civilian innovations<sup>623</sup>. This was despite some of the advances fostered in the artillery schools, to which he partly attributed its supposed superiority over other countries' artilleries. The neglect of geometrical advances in the military, unremedied since the time of Vauban, de Meyzieu saw as only recently being redressed by the creation of the *école de génie* at Mézières, which, he predicted, would help to regain some of the lost lustre of French arms. Those were secondary concerns, however, as the main principle to guide mathematical study in the *École militaire* was that of direct utility to warfare. Instruction in arithmetic, algebra, elementary geometry, trigonometry, mechanics, hydraulics, construction, the attack and defence of fortified positions, artillery, and other subjects formed the basis of practical mathematical knowledge. Practice and theory would be united in their lessons, with no detail being neglected, and nothing frivolous or superfluous included. Manoeuvres were conducted in an open field dedicated to that objective, following current practice at the artillery and engineering schools. De Meyzieu described that as one of the unique and inimitable advantages inherent to the *École militaire*<sup>624</sup>.

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<sup>622</sup> The duc de Berry (the future Louis XVI) read works by Ariosto in French first and then Italian, eventually progressing to Dante. He could also read judicial texts in German and translate works by both Walpole and Hume. Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 271. For the use of German pages, Italian valets, and other native-speakers as tutors when resident in a *collège*, see Motley, *op. cit.*, 94, 118.

<sup>623</sup> For the *Ecole des Pontes et chaussées*, which de Meyzieu is alluding to here, see Antoine Picon, *L'Invention de l'ingénieur moderne: l'École des Ponts et chaussées, 1747-1851* (Paris: Presses de l'École nationale des Ponts et chaussées, 1992).

<sup>624</sup> De Meyzieu, *art.cit.*, 310.

Geometry nonetheless claimed the majority of his attention, as he analysed contemporary debates on the best age at which to begin instruction in the subject. The arguments regarding the appropriate age rested not so much on the abilities of the students as on the nature and principles of geometry itself. De Meyzieu dismissed those who argued that there was no age at which instruction could begin too soon; their argument was that geometry was nothing more than an elaboration of the principles of truth and evidence demonstrated by reasoning, and that it was natural for the spirit to become accustomed to demonstration, that demonstration being the purpose of such reasoning. De Meyzieu disagreed, stating that those favouring an early start had confused geometry proper with the geometric method of reasoning<sup>625</sup>. As evidence of the weakness of their position he pointed out that too often impeccable geometers proved to be at a loss when faced with situations beyond the remit of their specialty<sup>626</sup>. Even more mistaken to his mind were those who argued that the subject should only be taken by mature and already educated students; he considered that attitude as a holdover from the days when geometric precepts were inaccessible due to ignorance and prejudice. A science which had once been considered the exclusive preserve of superior spirits had come within the reach of any man disposed to cultivate it<sup>627</sup>. He concluded the discussion by noting that it would be premature to prescribe any age at which geometry should begin to be studied, insisting that it depended rather on individual students' aptitudes. They should instead be prepared for geometry by studying logic.

Mathematics, the elemental subject in all commentary on technical education, is viewed as a key but not all-encompassing item by Mormiche. It was a critical element in the learning of castrametation, architecture, and fortification, especially geometry.

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<sup>625</sup> His views on the *méthode géométrique* were positive, as “fort propre à former le jugement, en lui faisant parcourir successivement et avec ordre tous les degrés qui conduisent à la démonstration”. He was however opposed to an overreliance on rules and obstacles to clarity of thinking, as his comments on logic later on demonstrated. He certainly never went as far as the authors of a *cours des études* in 1785 in their comments on geometry for engineering students did. To them, geometry was “la meilleure logique possible; celle qui donne l’esprit d’ordre, apprend à raisonner juste, et forme le jugement dans cette partie...” Point 3, sub-heading ‘Mathématiques pour les élèves qui se destinent au génie’ in SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Enseignement tel qu’il se pratique aujourd’hui dans cette maison, 1785.

<sup>626</sup> This stance is clearly at variance with that of figures such as the author who described geometry as “la meilleure logique possible”, and may help explain his ambivalence on the role geometry should have in a military institution and the best age to begin its study. In this instance his voiced objections centred on what he considered to be the confusion of one method with another, as well as with the overambitious claims made on its behalf. Otherwise, his unrelenting pragmatism continues in evidence here, where he is less concerned with rules than with the methods’ results.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid. “On a vu disparaître des difficultés, qui n’étaient telles que pour le préjugé et l’ignorance. Les principes les plus lumineux y ont succédé, et presque tous les hommes peuvent aujourd’hui cultiver une science, qui passait autrefois pour n’être propre qu’aux génies supérieurs”.

Some voices, such as La Mothe le Vayer's, belittled arithmetic as a "subject not fit for a king"<sup>628</sup>, but Mormiche lends more weight to the influence of François Blondel's influence and push for a better technical education for the nobility. Though largely ignored, including by still-empirically minded artillery officers, Blondel served as tutor first to the Contis and then to the Dauphin. Later, in 1705, the duc de Bourgogne's tutor Nicolas de Malézieu wrote that "though the details of this science are not always worthy of a prince, it is at least true, ... that the spirit of order and precision which it inspires ... is useful at all times and serves as much to guide the views and designs of a pacific prince as much as the projects and exploits of a warrior prince", and that "this science is not incompatible with the other virtues of a hero, and that the lights of your spirit will give you the same advantage over the knowledgeable as valour and intrepidity give you over warriors"<sup>629</sup>. Up to this point, mathematical education had consisted primarily of geometry, algebra and arithmetic, but by the time of Louis XV it also included statistics and the calculation of an army's expenses, and was also being introduced at ever earlier stages, down from 13 years of age in the seventeenth century to three years of age in the case of the duc de Bourgogne in 1754, when he began to be tutored by the encyclopaedist Guillaume Le Blond<sup>630</sup>.

In the final analysis, it is difficult to place exactly where mathematics fits in the scale of importance ascribed to the different subjects royal princes were meant to study, and not just because the pedagogy of maths did not become standardised until the end of the eighteenth century:

Long considered as a *divertissement*, mathematics were conceived either as recreational or as the final object of study. Mathematical games were not to distract the prince from his principle objective, the art of governing. The growing role of maths in castrametation indicates that in contrast to the City where maths became specialised from the beginning of the ... seventeenth century, they remained a necessary, annex subject to a greater object, the art of war. The princes were the only children to profit therefrom... The education of

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<sup>628</sup> La Mothe Le Vayer François de, *De l'instruction de Mgr le dauphin, De l'arithmétique*, 70 in Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 284.

<sup>629</sup> Nicolas de Malezieu, *Éléments de géométrie de Monsieur le duc de Bourgogne*, 1705, 2, in *Ibid.*, 286-287.

<sup>630</sup> Mormiche in *Ibid.*, 289.

princes served, during two centuries, to justify the necessity of the teaching mathematics to the nobility<sup>631</sup>.

In the documents related to the foundation of the *École militaire* there is no direct reference to current practice with regards to mathematical instruction. However, to the extent that a prince's "military instruction as a professional education (was) reinforced as Latin diminished", and that, in contrast to "the students of the *collèges*, the princes broached the technical and scientific domains"<sup>632</sup>, as well as Bien's view that mathematics was valued by the founders of the *École militaire* as a replacement for Latin due not to its technical nature but to its mind-ordering qualities, a moment can be taken for a look at the arguments put forth in favour of mathematics at the *École militaire*.

Besides the article for the *Encyclopédie*, little was written by the school's founders or supporters specifically relating to the study of mathematics before 1755. The author of the *Essay* wrote two lines on the subject. The first exhorted the young officer to cultivate the study of mathematics throughout his whole life, and subsequently detailed the numerous advantages of furthering one's knowledge of modern fortifications by reading on the subject, visiting works, and conversing with those knowledgeable on the subject<sup>633</sup>. His description of systems of fortification was not however reliant on the study of mathematics. Turning to the study of history, his focus was nearly entirely on past military campaigns and exploits, and the examples to be drawn from them. He considered that subject as a pedagogical tool to develop the young officer's military acumen through the analysis of strategic and tactical problems, in fact labelling them of more interest than those of geometry<sup>634</sup>. Though such a stance signals a marked evolution and modification in the pedagogical conceptions of mathematics, geography and history from that of the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* of 1586, which assigned chronology to aid the study of law (also described as a mathematical chronology)<sup>635</sup>, while history through a "better appraisal 'of distances and the appearance of sites' ...

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<sup>631</sup> Ibid., 289-290.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>633</sup> Anonymous, *Essay sur le Service Militaire, pour l'instruction d'un jeune Seigneur Francois* (Paris, 1754), 169.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid., 173-174. "Rien n'est plus agréable que de s'appliquer à résoudre ces problèmes, plus intéressans que ceux de la géométrie".

<sup>635</sup> "Les mathématiques fournissent au droit et à la coutume ecclésiastique un décompte précis du temps". *Ratio Studiorum* (1586), *Monumenta pedagogica Societatis Jesu* V, 109 in Annie Bruter, *art. cit.*, 78.

(was associated) with the theatre of military operations”<sup>636</sup>, there were some contemporary voices which assigned a primordial role to mathematics in the curriculum of the *École militaire*.

The most significant was that by an anonymous author in 1768 who was sent by Choiseul to report on life and instruction in the school, the minister then sending the report to the *Conseil* during the process which led to the adoption of Bizot’s new *Plan d’Études* in 1769<sup>637</sup>. What is remarkable about his perspective is the degree to which it associates the notion of a mathematical with a technical education, an idea which found little or no echo in the writings of others associated with the school. In signalling the *École militaire*’s defects, he considered the fact that out of the three hundred students which the school had produced up to that point only forty had entered the artillery and engineers “is not enough for an institution where the study of mathematics ought to hold the first rank”<sup>638</sup>. Though he noted numerous other shortcomings and proposed curricular and structural reforms (some of which were later implemented)<sup>639</sup>, his conception of mathematics as the capstone of the curriculum, although not explicitly challenged, was nonetheless never adopted with the purpose that he evidently considered central to the school’s mission, even after the numerous reforms of 1769-1781. As the *plan d’éducation* of 25 March 1776 stated, mathematics for non-specialist students was always limited to what was necessary for the knowledge of different

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<sup>636</sup> The ‘evolution’ evoked here is not meant to imply that of a scholastic conceptualisation of history and chronology as inferior to or subsumed in mathematics in general or geometry in particular, to one in which history/chronology/geography was emancipated from its supposed tutelage; it means to signal rather the peculiarity of the *Essay* author’s own stance, at least in comparison to the sixteenth and seventeenth century collegiate schema which considered that geography and chronology “relevaient en principe des mathématiques et non des humanités” because those subjects related “aux ‘choses’ et non aux ‘mots’”, even as contemporary mathematicians “contestaient que l’étude de la géographie fût de leur ressort”. *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>637</sup> The *Conseil* answered that *mémoire*’s objections in a letter to Choiseul of 17 April 1770. AN MM 680, Observations sur la réponse faite par Choiseul, du 17 Avril 1770, qui n’admet point l’établissement de 150 ou 200 Elèves, projeté à Nanterre, 41-42. The *Plan d’Études* of 17 articles is found in the Règlements Généraux, arrêtés par Choiseul en 1769, concernant les Officiers de l’État-major, les Officiers des Compagnies, les Professeurs et maîtres, et les élèves dudit Hôtel, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 355-359.

<sup>638</sup> AN K 149 n° 2<sup>5</sup> [untitled *mémoire*], 1768.

<sup>639</sup> An example is his suggestion that professors be given *suppléants* to continue classes in their absence when they fell ill or were otherwise indisposed. This measure was adopted in the 1780s, with each subject and course having a designated professor and substitute, the substitute also usually working on free days and holidays supervising his classes’ correspondence. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148 École royale militaire, 1785, Enseignement tel qu’il se pratique aujourd’hui dans cette Maison.

aspects of the military art, and did not extend to the imparting of technical knowledge either for its own sake, or for its potential mind-ordering qualities<sup>640</sup>.

Though logic could serve as a preparatory stage for the study of mathematics, neither it nor *droit naturel* were actually taught in the *École militaire*. Logic is considered here to help better understand de Meyzieu's conceptualisation of mathematical thinking. He thought logic was generally taught well in the *collèges*, but he nevertheless sought an improved method for imparting its principles to young minds. His approach relied less on rules, which he considered difficult for students, than on "clear ideas" arrived at by constantly exercising the mental faculties through the processes of definition and division. This method's advantage was its reliance on simple repetition and ultimately habit, rather than on a prescribed set of rules. From such a foundation the student could then proceed to consider "ideas and judgments on knowledge, notions of truth and falsehood, the uncertain, the affirmed, the negative, and the consequent"<sup>641</sup>. The entire scheme of logic rested on basic, irreducible principles on which all other concepts depended, and by the application of these methods and the habits of reasoning which they imparted, it was supposed to lead the students to just reasoning, preparing them for the study of mathematics. Although Jacob speculates that logic and *droit naturel* were included in the curriculum solely for the purpose of avoiding criticism from conservative pedagogues<sup>642</sup>, de Meyzieu's tone as well as his general lack of compunction when addressing controversial issues belies any attempt to avoid or minimise criticism. In fact, by reducing logic to a preparation for mathematics, he reversed the traditional subordination of the latter subject to logic and physics in the *collège* curriculum. The contrast between his language and the apologetic stance of the mathematician and professor Dominique François Rivard, who in 1732 wrote that "this element of philosophy (mathematics) is not less worthy of their (philosophy professors') attention than logic"<sup>643</sup> makes that clear. Although not adopted in Paris, logic was present in the curriculum of La Flèche and the *écoles militaires*, meaning most of the

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<sup>640</sup> This was the curriculum outlined for the students of the newly established provincial *écoles militaires*, but it was echoed in documents dealing with the re-established school in Paris post-1777, as described in the next chapter. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145 Plan d'Éducation des élèves, Article XVIII, 25 March 1776.

<sup>641</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 310.

<sup>642</sup> Jacob follows Sicard's lead with regards to the comments on logic and *droit naturel*. Sicard, *Les études classiques avant la Révolution* (Paris, 1887), 473 in Jacob, *art. cit.*, 124.

<sup>643</sup> Physics in the *collèges* was taught as an element of philosophy in the final year of studies (*Philosophie II*). It was as an element of that subject in turn that most mathematics in the *collèges* was studied. Dominique François Rivard, *Éléments de géométrie avec un abrégé d'arithmétique et d'algèbre*, Paris 1732, in Liliane Alfonsi, "Les mathématiques au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les manuels d'enseignement: Du 'Pourquoi?' au 'Comment?'" , *Images des Mathématiques* (Paris: CNRS, 2012): [n.p.].

*École militaire*'s students were exposed to it after 1764, while *droit naturel* featured under the rubric of *droit public* in 1785 and was thus present in the final stages of the school's development<sup>644</sup>.

Geography and history may be taken together, the two subjects being interdependent. De Meyzieu did not consider that the *École militaire* would be innovative in its treatment of geography, and thus did not provide much detail on it. Although its utility to the military was self-evident, he saw it is a subject which was forgotten as easily as it was learnt. To counteract this, he suggested connecting and associating distinct locations with historic events in order to make them more memorable. Though the student's memory would consequently have to amass much more information, this would lead to a more solid grasp of the subject. This method of instrumentalising history in order to provide a better grasp of geography was another reversal of the approach taken in the *collèges*, where "la nature même des faits rapportés par les historiens anciens, qui étaient souvent des faits militaires, nécessitait d'apporter aux élèves des informations géographiques permettant de situer batailles et mouvements de troupes"<sup>645</sup>.

History, for its part, was a discipline whose study in France suffered in comparison to the usage of other nations. De Meyzieu criticised the neglect of the subject in French schools, while foreigners taught it in all their universities and academies<sup>646</sup>. He admired the way in which professors abroad, no matter what their topic, began their lectures by a prolegomena on the history of their subject, which he considered sufficient to guide the path of those desiring to delve more deeply into its study<sup>647</sup>. Though de Meyzieu considered that the study of history without guides was

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<sup>644</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785.

<sup>645</sup> Geography (alongside chronology), was considered one of the "yeux de l'histoire" in that pedagogical scheme. Despite its status as an aid to the teaching of history, Bruter considers that geography "se taille en tout cas la part du lion dans la prélection-modèle". Annie Bruter *art. cit.*, 77-78.

<sup>646</sup> In her in-depth analysis of history's place as a discipline had in the French classical education, Bruter posits that it was indeed taught in the programme of the *collèges*, but only as a minor branch of rhetoric, utilised as one of several elements to impart knowledge and wisdom to the orator, defined as much by its form as its content, and thus studied not as a subject in its own right, but as one of the tools of eloquence in the tradition of Cicero and Quintilian. Specifically, in the classroom, "L'étude des textes historiques ne se distinguait d'ailleurs pas, en cela, de celle des autres textes lus en classe... Il est significatif que ces mêmes instructions pour la 'leçon sur l'historien', énumérant par ordre hiérarchique les divers points à examiner, mentionnent en premier lieu 'la spécificité de la phrase et du style'... L'effort pour ordonner les objectifs de la leçon montre ainsi très clairement la préoccupation première qui doit être celle des régents, celle du mode d'expression". And finally, "l'objectif majeur de la 'leçon sur l'historien' n'était pas de faire connaître les événements... il restait d'enseigner comment on écrit l'histoire". The time allotted to it was also quite restricted, only half an hour in the mornings. *Ibid.*, 75-77.

<sup>647</sup> By praising the oral method of instruction as he had in the context of language lessons, de Meyzieu echoed a notion which predated him by well over a century: "Réfléchissant à la manière de 'lire' l'histoire



dangerous, he saw that as little excuse for its neglect up to that point, and sought ways to remedy that oversight. History taken as a universal whole would be too broad a subject to be mastered by anyone in a lifetime. It was consequently necessary to focus on that which would likely be most relevant to the student<sup>648</sup>. Thus, a future magistrate, ecclesiastic, or scholar should all study those aspects of history which had the greatest importance for their discipline<sup>649</sup>. What a *militaire* required from a study of history were examples of virtue, courage, prudence, greatness of spirit, and attachment to the sovereign, apart from the details of military history proper. History provided examples of admirable discipline and unconditional subordination, the qualities which made men possessing them the masters of their domains. More routine matters such as the contemporary state of affairs and their origin, the sovereign's rights, and foreign princes' interests could also be discovered in history. De Meyzieu considered that the government's tendency for choosing diplomats from among military men provided another reason to promote the study of history<sup>650</sup>. This, in turn, formed the rationale for the inclusion of the study of *droit naturel*, or natural law, in the curriculum.

In the section on military ordinances, troop exercises, and tactics, de Meyzieu covers the military components of the curriculum. The main point of interest here is not so much his elaboration of the content, which added little to extant practice and concepts, but rather his outlining of their role as the martial elements in the *École militaire*. He described the more academic subjects as all being meant to serve as a preparation for the study of military ordinances, which like them was composed of theoretical and practical aspects<sup>651</sup>. The regulations for camp life were not only taught by officers, but were also applied and carried out at the school as if on campaign. The

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(c'est-à-dire de l'enseigner), R. de Lusigne demandait 'que ceux qui en veulent enrichir leurs enfants eussent pour eux des hommes accomplis en la leçon générale & particulière de l'histoire; lesquels la contassent de vive voix...' R. de Lusigne, *La Manière de lire l'histoire* (Paris, 1614), fol. 17 in *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>648</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 311.

<sup>649</sup> De Meyzieu's conception of history and its use for imparting specific qualities to students is very much in line with that articulated by La Mothe La Vayer a century before him and which was labeled as "libertin" in that period: "Les exercices ne sont pas recherchés pour eux-mêmes, mais uniquement pour le résultat qu'ils peuvent avoir". Mormiche adds: "Son principe va plus loin: il s'agit de subordonner chaque action, chaque geste, chaque exercice à un seul but qui est la formation ... à son métier. Point de vertus royales mais un métier à acquérir, c'est une révolution idéologique". La Mothe Le Vayer François de, *De l'Instruction de Monseigneur le Dauphin à Monseigneur l'éminentissime cardinal duc de Richelieu* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1640), in Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 36.

<sup>650</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 311.

<sup>651</sup> An early *mémoire* in fact described military exercises as the discipline which "sans doute ... doit tenir le premier rang" in the school. The reasons why that and similar statements purporting to rank subjects by order of importance cannot generally be taken at face value is considered in the following chapter. AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, *Mémoire 'Collège académique'*, 22 April 1750.

military exercises consisted of daily drills, weapons handling, and learning the evolutions that the students would then execute in the field under officers instructed in those matters<sup>652</sup>. Through such a careful application and skilful instruction, the quality of officers produced would lead to the school fulfilling its role as the *pépinière* of the army. Duverney for his part desired that the military exercises should be of a recreational instead of burdensome nature for the students<sup>653</sup>. The theory of the art of war, the study of tactics, was based on the study of military ordinances, and it had additional challenges particular to it. The first difficulty was that of replicating battlefield manoeuvres with a small number of men. In that scenario, the theory would evidently have to be presented without its full practical application. De Meyzieu did not, however, believe that such a lapse would result in a significant gap in the quality of the education, as the school's heuristic purpose was not to provide the army with the finished article or accomplished officers, but simply to equip the students with the attributes necessary for them to become good subalterns<sup>654</sup>. The school's alumni would, at a minimum, have basic advantages in knowledge which other officers did not enjoy. What the great military thinkers and authors had neglected in their works, the students would compensate for by their zeal and *émulation*.

Military ordinances and tactics being disciplines which aimed to cultivate the spirit, de Meyzieu turned to the activities which would render bodies "robust, vigorous, and adroit". First came dancing, whose advantages were to impart to the body a sense of balance and equilibrium, along with suppleness and lightness. He claimed that experience demonstrated that those who practiced it could execute military exercises with greater ease and promptness<sup>655</sup>. In any case, the goal of the lessons was not to attain any perfection in that art. Its main purpose being to impart the quality of grace, students were simply to be exercised in it to a degree that demonstrated that the students had received a good and happy education<sup>656</sup>. Fencing, as in the academies, went beyond

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<sup>652</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 311.

<sup>653</sup> The original terms used were "une récréation, un amusement". AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire 'Collège académique' 22 April 1750.

<sup>654</sup> This stance reinforces the perception that the goal of "perfection" as articulated in the *mémoire* of 24 April 1750 was not that of literally producing the best officers ever trained for the army, but simply of providing an improved option to existing alternatives.

<sup>655</sup> Though music was not taught, this was one of the few times when students were exposed to music outside of the chapel services. However, the *maîtres* for dancing Feuillade and Lany had to play the violin themselves and also lead groups of 20 to 28 students simultaneously, hindering their progress. They thus requested the funds to hire a *prévôt* to play the violin so that they could concentrate on instruction, and were granted 800 livres to do so. AN MM 659, 31 March 1773, 157-158.

<sup>656</sup> AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire 'Collège académique', 22 April 1750.

simply handling the sword, an activity which de Meyzieu labelled as sadly necessary. It encompassed all sorts of martial exercises, even including archaic weapons such as the flail, iron-tipped staff, and two-handed great sword<sup>657</sup>. This was nothing more than the continuation of practices dating back to the early seventeenth century, as fencing schools then already offered instruction in a variety of weapons and martial arts. His opinion was that practice with those and other implements, allied to a moderate exercise in violence<sup>658</sup>, constituted the source and basis of good health<sup>659</sup>. Duverney emphasised that the purpose of the exercise in arms was solely to teach the students to defend themselves, and never to attack. Signalling the apparent decline in duelling, the role of the school would in turn be to destroy any remaining traces of ferocity and inspire in the students sentiments that conformed to the laws of honour and the state<sup>660</sup>. As for swimming, de Meyzieu's comments here were limited to pointing out its obvious (although not further detailed) advantages for soldiers and its essential role as an element in any well-rounded education, whose neglect would inevitably lead to regret<sup>661</sup>.

If there was one respect in which the instruction received by the provincial students in the *École militaire* and that given to the princes was significantly different from that of the majority of the nobility, it was the nature of their equestrian training. Academies “taught neither the basic skills of riding nor the technical skills of military equitation, but rather the intricate manoeuvres of the *manège*”<sup>662</sup>. In the early to mid-seventeenth century, the princes had been instructed alongside the nobility in the Parisian riding academies, but the creation of the *écuries* at Versailles from 1682 subsequently led to their being taught exclusively there by the royal *écuyers*. This

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<sup>657</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 312.

<sup>658</sup> Hale, *art. cit.*, 236; His words are, “ce qui peut entretenir le corps dans un exercice violent”. De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 312.

<sup>659</sup> The *École militaire*'s first *maître en fait des armes*, Rousseau, was also the *maître d'escrime* to the *enfants de France*. He was put on *appointements* of 1,800 livres per annum; however, his commitments at Versailles did not allow him to serve as intended in Paris. His salary included 600 livres to train a student at Versailles to assist him named Etienne, who in turn replaced him at the *École militaire*. Etienne's methods of instruction proving satisfactory, he was given a *gratification* of 200 livres, which eventually became an annual payment in recognition of his exactitude and talents. See AN MM 658 f°82 v°, 23 December, 1756, 70; AN MM 659, 18 October 1765, 88-89; *Ibid.*, 15 July 1762, 67-68; *Ibid.*, 6 January 1763.

<sup>660</sup> The *mémoire* reads, “travailler à détruire les restes d'une férocité”. The concluding remarks on honour make an interesting contrast to a statement earlier in that same passage on duelling: “On ne dira pas qu'il faille fermer l'oreille des élèves aux règles délicates de notre point d'honneur, mais en même temps il faudrait leur en donner une idée si juste qu'ils ne pussent pas les confondre avec les funestes préjugés dont on a vu tant de victimes”. AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire ‘Collège académique’ 22 April 1750.

<sup>661</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 312.

<sup>662</sup> Motely, *op. cit.*, 142.

separation led to a difference not simply of location but also of degree in the equestrian education of the princes versus that of the nobility able to afford to attend an academy: “contrary to the (rest) of the nobility, the princes had a long training at the *manège*, often more than three years at the rate of two or three (lessons) per week. ... If the education of the nobles was completed at the Academy, this was not the case of that of the princes”<sup>663</sup>. The students of the *École militaire* were supposed to enjoy a similarly extended period of equestrian training under d’Auvergne although it is likely that few did. They could, in theory, practice equitation for up to six years until 1769<sup>664</sup>; the *Plan d’Études* of that year limited riding instruction to the students who faced a more imminent departure from the school, those of the third and fourth divisions<sup>665</sup>. After 1778, the amount of riding instruction was reduced to two years, in line with the overall length of the programme<sup>666</sup>. To Meyzieu, riding was a practice which though useful to the general population was defined by its importance to the military. The instruction received by the riding students was to be of such quality that it would enable them to proceed and instruct their students in the same manner. In this regard, the ambition for the quality of the students’ instruction went beyond the heuristic quality which characterised the majority of the curriculum and instead reached the level of advanced instruction, as only a highly developed grasp of the applicable principles would allow a former student to train others.

De Meyzieu strongly insisted that imparting equestrian “grands principes” to students was not below their dignity. He stated that the king desired that only what was known to be the best and most apt practice for the inculcation of future riding-masters be practised in its *manège*<sup>667</sup>. His views echoed Duverney’s as articulated in the *mémoire* of 22 April 1750, a document openly critical of the academies. Horsemanship

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<sup>663</sup> Mormiche, *op. cit.*, 299.

<sup>664</sup> As early as 1759, d’Auvergne requested that due to a shortage of mounts, instruction be limited to future cavalry officers only. AN MM 665, Conseil de Police, 12 November 1759, 129; students attended lessons which were held daily in the morning, each session lasting four hours. Those learning to ride only went three times per week, from 8 to 10 in the morning., AN K 149 n° 2<sup>5</sup> [untitled memorandum] 1768.

<sup>665</sup> Exposition du Plan d’Étude pour les élèves de l’École Royale-militaire, Article XV, *Recueil des Édits* ... T. I (Paris, 1782), 359. However, the *règlement* was not strictly followed, some students from the second division managing to get riding lessons; this led to renewed attempts to enforce the rules, which included limiting riding lessons to four months for future infantry officers. AN MM 669, 24 June and 5 July 1773, 98-99.

<sup>666</sup> In the 1780s, riding lessons began at 7 in the summer and 7.15 in the winter, students attending sessions which lasted an hour and a half and followed each other until 12.15. By then, however, students studying to join a technical branch (artillery, navy, or the engineers) received no riding lessons, and future infantry officers only took six months of lessons. *École royale militaire, 1785, Enseignement tel qu’il se pratique aujourd’hui dans cette Maison*, SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148.

<sup>667</sup> De Meyzieu, *art. cit.*, 312.

was the second most important subject to be taught at the school (after military exercises and ordinances). Not only were students to be taught how to ride, to lead the mount with address and to maintain themselves with grace, they were also to be instructed on the nature of the animal itself. This included familiarising them with the production of horses by regions, their qualities, their different uses, and their maladies and associated remedies, all categories of knowledge not found in the academies<sup>668</sup>. Despite the numerous changes that were implemented in the school's curriculum, its methods of instruction, structures, personnel, and more, in equitation the principles demonstrated an impressive continuity<sup>669</sup>. In 1785 d'Auvergne still taught the best method of riding by uniting two distinct bodies, the mount and the horseman, without needing to abstract either the will of the animal or the character of the rider<sup>670</sup>. That method improved the rider's ability, fatiguing him less, while obtaining from the mount the most service possible and extending its useful lifetime. D'Auvergne's methods moreover were rigorously demonstrated to the *Académie royale des sciences*, who named three commissioners who then approved the demonstration. Prospective cavalymen additionally received dedicated lessons on the nature of horses, their anatomy, and their *tares*<sup>671</sup>.

This, then, is the general view of eighteenth century military education as conceived by the men who established the first permanent French military school and expounded their views in the *Encyclopédie* and other writings. In summary it might be said that the competing priorities at the centre of the *École militaire*'s goals and

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<sup>668</sup> AN K 149 n° 5<sup>1</sup>, Mémoire 'Collège académique', 22 April 1760.

<sup>669</sup> Circumstances external to the *École militaire* which presented challenges to its functioning include a four-year period from 1764 until 1768 when not a single student was able to obtain a place in the cavalry or dragoons due to a shortage of available openings. Students had to compete for brevets as *sous-lieutenants* with volunteers with several years of active experience as well as with *cornettes réformés* and relatives of the regiments' commanding officers. In 1768, however, nine students were sent to the cavalry and dragoons. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145 [untitled *mémoire*] 1768.

<sup>670</sup> D'Auvergne's technique was that "l'équitation devait tirer ses principes de la mécanique", so that "la mécanique a servi à démontrer les principes de l'union parfaite de l'homme, et du cheval, par le moyen des centres de gravité des deux corps: cette union mène à charger toujours l'animal également; à ne le point contrarier dans ses mouvemens; par conséquent à obtenir de lui le plus de service possible". SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, École royale militaire, 1785, Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid. The seriousness with which military riding was taken at the *École militaire*, and which has generally been overlooked by most authors not writing specifically about the school's *manège*, is suggested in a *mémoire* written during the mid-1750s. It stated: "comme l'exercice de cheval est un des objets du plus essentiels de cette École, ces officiers seraient choisis par préférence dans la cavalerie et dans les dragons". This refers to the candidates to fill six vacancies as lieutenants for the student companies. There were 146 officers applying for the positions, and the *Conseil* considered that only five of them had the necessary qualities. They were listed by name and regiment, three of them coming from the cavalry, one from the *Chevaux-légers*, and one from the dragoons. AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated, pre-27 July 1756], 77-78.

mandates were a reflection of the diverse currents competing for influence in the army of the period: a belief in and push for immediate progress unrestrained by past shortcomings, the application of relevant foreign practices in the context of primary education, technical progress alongside the consolidation of a noble officer caste, and ultimately a search for the perfectibility of military institutions as well as of the cadres' moral qualities. In these and many more areas of debate and development, the *École militaire* mirrored the army in general in its struggles to adapt to its circumstances even as it endeavoured to innovate. The reasons for some of the difficulties it faced, in turn, may be adduced by considering some of the notions on pedagogical methods and educational theory in de Meyzieu's article. A strong and recurring emphasis in the curriculum was the application of pragmatism to his theories. Though content to cite authorities in his support (despite never naming them), he was rarely dogmatic on any given subject and seemed as prepared to assimilate as to discard received wisdom to his own ideas. Resolutely conventional on certain topics, such as religion, de Meyzieu saw himself as an innovator, if not iconoclast, in other realms of knowledge, like grammar or history, and a moderate between opposed camps in yet others, such as geometry.

Perhaps ironically, it was appeals to the authority of a nebulous, indeterminate 'reason' which generally provided the justification for a particular approach or method. An overreliance on an uncritical notion of 'experience', whether personal or that of unspecified authorities, hobbled an institution which despite some precedents was largely experimental in form and structure. Another central principle was the idea that the instruction and subjects taught should be adapted to the abilities and needs of the young students. Closely allied to this notion was the heuristic imperative that the basic nature of the majority of the students' instruction should nevertheless provide them with a sufficiently solid grasp of the subjects for them to continue their progress once embarked on their careers<sup>672</sup>. Despite such creditable initiatives, the lack of standardised parameters for admission or the measuring of academic progress proved a substantial

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<sup>672</sup> The alliance of the elementary nature of the instruction with the heuristic principle is presented by a would-be reformer who believed that the general notions of tactics, geometry, fortification, and drawing could as easily be taught to a six-year-old as his abecedarium, and clearly enough for others to learn independently without a *maître*. A *militaire*'s free moments were frequent enough to learn those elements without interrupting his pleasures. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 147, Projet d'Établissement d'études de géométrie, dessein, fortification, artillerie, et tactique pour le militaire, 5.

A warning on the potentially negative aspect of the heuristic tendency, on the other hand, was given by Choiseul's agent who opined that well-instructed students had been formed by the professors of the *École militaire*, but that their number was small. If students left without acquiring knowledge, their nature was to blame; but when they left and spread ignorance with spirit, it was to be feared that their instructors would be accused. AN K 149 n<sup>o</sup> 2<sup>5</sup> [untitled *mémoire*] 1768.

handicap to students' attainments. Though de Meyzieu's ideas on the methods for instruction varied between detailed prescription, as for grammar, and complete neglect, in the case of swimming, his conception of a teaching method tailored to youthful students was in the end too idealistic, and was to be one of the principal difficulties in the functioning of the newly-established school. In the end, the administrators' lack of any previous practical pedagogical experience substantially counteracted the worth of their theoretical musings.

### Part III: Chapter Three Conclusions

Overall, it is clear from de Meyzieu's tone, the school's stated purpose, and his own hopes that the new *École militaire* was conceptualised as something of a breakthrough, an innovative development worthy of imitation. On the other hand, it is clear how much he owed to previous ideas and developments in the long line of efforts to rationalise French noble military education. That many continued to question any formal military education, however, can be perceived in an anonymous *Mémoire sur l'organisation des armées* which is undated but was probably written shortly after Ségur's departure from the ministry. It presented a programme of general reform for the army based on the work of Saint-Germain, to be carried out by a *Conseil de la guerre*<sup>673</sup>. According to its author, cadets should be educated in the garrisons after passing through a *collège* by re-embodied Aumôniers under officers' supervision. As a result, the "École militaire de Paris deviendra inutile", with the result that "on viendra dans nos camps pour étudier l'art de la guerre comme à nos académies pour apprendre à penser"<sup>674</sup>. The *École militaire*'s partisans did not easily give up however. One writer opined that the provincial *écoles militaires* "ne peuvent être que vicieux" when they sent their students directly to the army instead of the *École militaire*, for despite the quality of their intellectual disciplines, the general lack of physical, military preparation ensured their charges "arriveront donc au service du roi à peu près dénués de toutes les connaissances qui leur sont et leur deviennent essentielles" in the army<sup>675</sup>.

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<sup>673</sup> Though undated, it was clearly written in anticipation of the formation of the *Conseil de la guerre*; the most telling clue is a margin note that mentions that another *mémoire* on the militia was then in the hands of M. de Brienne. SHD 1 M 1716-37 A.H. n°. 15 *Mémoire sur l'organisation des armées*, 9.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 15.

<sup>675</sup> Anonymous, *Lettre Adressée à Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Toulouse, Ministre principal, le... à la Cour, en lui envoyant un Mémoire (ci-après) pour prouver la nécessité de conserver l'Hôtel de l'École Royale Militaire à Paris* (n.p., n.d.), 6-7. The author claimed to be a former student of the *École militaire*.

Despite the outcome of that debate, at least one point may be conceded to the exertions of de Meyzieu, Duverney, and others in the cause of innovation and progress: the successful establishment of an exemplary institution. The fact of the establishment of a national noble military school, less than the novelty of its curriculum, signalled the accomplishment of a set of ideas which had been debated by men of different classes for well over a century, and the *École militaire* took its place as the last of the great schools, institutes, and academies created by the *ancien régime*<sup>676</sup>. It was the final innovative precursor to the Revolution's *Grandes Écoles*, the Republic's sole institutional innovation in the realm of education probably being the creation of "écoles centrales", which existed 1795-1802<sup>677</sup>. But to better understand the *École militaire*'s legacy, we must first consider how its curriculum evolved, which is concern of the following chapter.

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<sup>676</sup> One other possible example might be the 1778 *École des Mines*, which was closed in 1790; see Frederick Artz, "L'éducation technique en France au XVIIIe siècle (1700-1789)", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 13 (1938): 383-385.

The *École d'état-major* created by Choiseul in 1766 and famously led by Bourcet only lasted until 1771. See Johannès Pallière, *La Question des Alpes: Aspects de la Question des Alpes Occidentales jusqu'à 1760 (De la Savoie au Comté de Nice en 1760: V. II)*, (Montmélian : La Fontaine de Siloé, 2006), 420-423.

The *École militaire* for its part did not suffer a solitary demise, so to speak. The *École des Trompettes* in Strasbourg and the *École royale vétérinaire de cavalerie* were also closed in the period 1788-1790. The schools for military medicine created in 1788 on the other hand are symptomatic of the reforms that the military was undergoing near the close of the *ancien régime*, and which were subsumed in the general overhaul of the royal army in the first years of the 1790s. On these schools, see the various *États militaires de France* and the deliberations of the Convention for those years.

<sup>677</sup> For a short overview of the *écoles centrales*, see René Grevet, *L'Avènement de l'école contemporaine en France (1789-1835)*, 274-284. The *École normale de l'An III* was based on the creation of the *concours* established in 1766 to select the new corps of *docteurs agrégés* to replace the departed Jesuit *collège* professors in the branches of *philosophie*, *belles-lettres*, and *grammar/humanities*. For more on the *agrégation*, see André Chervel, *Histoire de l'agrégation. Contribution à l'histoire de la culture scolaire* (Paris: INRP, 1993) and Yves Verneuil, *Les Agrégés: Histoire d'une exception française* (Paris: Belin, 2005). Edme Mentelle, professor of geography, taught at both the *École royale militaire* and the *École normale*. See Michael Heffernan, "Edme Mentelle's Geographies and the French Revolution" in *Geography and Revolution*, eds. David N. Livingstone and Charles W.J. Withers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

On the *École Polytechnique*, "the model for the French system of *grandes écoles*", see Janis Langins, "The *École Polytechnique* and the French Revolution: Merit, Militarization, and Mathematics", *Lhull* 13 (1990): 91-105.



## Chapter 4: Theory in Practice at the *École Militaire*: The Adoption and Modification of Curricular Concepts, 1753-1785

“Il est de nécessité absolue, que les officiers... connaissent à fonds les rapports inhérents de la tactique et de la géométrie; s’en fassent une application sérieuse ... Alors il existera en France une armée manouvrière; c’est-à-dire une armée réelle.”

- Anonymous, ‘Réflexion sur la tactique élémentaire’,
  - SHD 1 M 1716 n° 10, circa 1784

The pedagogical theory which informed the *École militaire*’s founders, as discussed up to now, shows how it fitted into the current of contemporary discourse on education, from Fénelon to Rollin to d’Alembert; this theory was based on a view of education which relied on John Locke’s prescription for virtue: “C’est donc la vertu, la pure, la simple vertu qui est le point difficile et essentiel qu’il faut se proposer dans l’éducation”<sup>678</sup>, a moral effort reinforced by *émulation* and the heuristic nature of the instruction imparted. It furthermore anticipated some of the prescriptions for general reform in French education by La Chalotais, principally an approach based on “la connaissance des choses existantes’ et non sur les mots” and instruction in history, geography, geometry, modern languages, and the teaching of French alongside Latin. Language teaching consisted of translating leading authors instead of engaging in Latin composition and rhetorical exposition<sup>679</sup>. Although an extended analysis of the interplay suggested by these comparisons or the inspiration of the school’s principles by the “philosophie cognitive de Condillac”<sup>680</sup> is certainly enticing, this chapter limits itself to

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<sup>678</sup> Jean-Baptiste Pâris de Meyzieu, *Lettre d’un ancien lieutenant-colonel françois à M\*\*\*. sur l’Ecole royale militaire* (London, 1755), 54-55. He used Coste’s translation of Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. The original quote reads as follows: “It is virtue, then, direct virtue, which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education”. John Locke, *The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes*, Vol. 8 (London, 1824), 59.

<sup>679</sup> L.R. de Caradeuc de la Chalotais, *Essai d’éducation nationale ou plan d’études pour la jeunesse* (s.l., 1763), 39-44, 61, 65, and 81 in Dominique Julia, “Une réforme impossible: le changement de cursus dans la France du 18<sup>ème</sup> siècle”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 47-48 (1983): 56-57.

Julia considers that the curriculum as adopted in the provincial *écoles militaires* after Saint-Germain’s reforms “répond aux attentes éducatives d’un d’Alembert ou d’un La Chalotais”. *Ibid.*, 66.

Dominique Schalck-Pommellet argues that “l’organisation des classes [1778-1788]... reprit... les principes établis par le plan d’éducation de 1769” in the Parisian establishment. Schalck-Pommellet, “L’École Royale Militaire de Paris et la Révolution du comte de Saint-Germain, 1751-1776-1793”, thèse pour le doctorat d’état, Université de Paris, 1968, 389.

In fact, after the 1764 reform, the combined curriculum of a preparatory school such as La Flèche or Saint-Germain’s *collèges* and the programme of the Paris *École militaire* constituted a combination of both classical and Enlightenment elements.

<sup>680</sup> Emmanuelle Chapron, “Des livres ‘pour l’usage de l’École royale militaire’: choix pédagogiques et stratégies éditoriales (1751-1788)”, *Histoire, économie & société*, 33 (2014): 4. The element of his thought which she emphasises is that which “lie effort de connaissance et intérêt pratique des élèves”.

tracing general changes to the curriculum, principally in four categories: military subjects, writing, French and Latin, and mathematics.

As seen in the previous chapters, the *École militaire*'s apparently innovative curriculum was deeply rooted in established practice, if not quite in a comprehensive, rationalised programme. In this sense, its innovation was not so much intellectual as it was structural. Its establishment as a permanent school institutionalised not only a corporation consisting of the student body with the required support personnel, but also spread its embodiment of a military education across the nation following Saint-Germain's reforms and its imitation by other parties such as the blind poet Pfeffel at his *école militaire* in Colmar, Alsace<sup>681</sup>. The *École militaire* was intended not simply to take ignorant youths and mechanistically fashion a finished article, but rather to provide for their nourishment, mental instruction, physical strengthening, and moral preparation, in what could be termed either a holistic or totalising manner. This extended to an oversight of their eventual careers by means of the 200 livre *pension*, additional discretionary aid, correspondence with their colonels, and other measures, which allowed the *Conseil* to supervise the former students' progress as discussed in chapter 4.

#### Part I: The general curriculum and military subjects

This chapter presents an overview of the changes in the curricular structure of the *École militaire*, changes which are emblematic of the instability and search for lasting solutions in the school. Surprisingly, no such study of its curricular changes from its origin to its close exists; this chapter seeks to make a start in that direction, leaving the study of the actual course content and pedagogical methods for future studies. The focus of a diachronic evaluation of curricular developments is thus less a detailed analysis of its contents at any particular moment, than a view to provide a better perspective not only of its adaptation to changing circumstances, and thus of the mentality of those charged with administering it, but also of the school's evolution itself. This analysis will not evaluate the curricula of La Flèche or the 12 provincial

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<sup>681</sup> George Livet, "Esprit militaire et société provinciale sous l'Ancien Régime. Le cas d'une province frontière: l'Alsace", in *Le Soldat, La Stratégie, La Mort* ed. Jean Pavlevski (Paris: Ed. Économica, 1989), 221-236. More examples of the *École militaire*'s influence in the provinces are given in Pascal Roux "Éducation et formation des officiers militaires à Toulouse dans la deuxième moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Histoire, économie et société*, 20 (2001): 373, 375-377, 381, 383.

schools, but, for reference purposes, their curricula are listed at the end of the table outlining the *École militaire*'s curriculum.

The numerous curricular modifications entailed not only a changing set of disciplines, but also variations in the weight accorded to those which were taught at one point or other. Thus, although the earliest curriculum was broad-based, after 1769 mathematics was the dominant subject, while in 1778 was followed by the effort to re-establish a rationalised curriculum after the upheavals of Saint-Germain's ministry, in a way paralleling the first stages of the school's existence. The consolidation of the school took form in conditions less idealised than the *Encyclopédie* presented: one of its basic tasks was the need to improve literacy, or for the most benighted, to simply instil it<sup>682</sup>. Without a solid basis in languages it was considered of little use to try to teach anything else. Concurrent with such pedagogical tasks were the *Conseil*'s efforts to produce virtuous citizens fit and eager to serve the king. This is reflected in the moralising aspects of education and life at the school on the one hand, and in the approach taken to control and discipline on the other, all practiced in a military setting. All aspects of this moral imperative can be summed up in the concept of *émulation*, which served to provide inspiring models, was a spur to achievement, and deprivation of which was a punishment concomitant with more punitive sanctions. It was “un des meilleurs moyens que l'on puisse mettre en usage pour arriver aux progrès de l'École... et porter les élèves à la subordination, à la docilité, à l'attention dans les études et exercices et à l'exacte pratique des devoirs”<sup>683</sup>. This moral perspective remained paramount whatever curriculum was in use at any particular moment.

Although the *École militaire* has been criticised for being an indifferent educational institution, it is worth emphasising the goals which its founders and administrators set for their students, and thus the degree to which they were overly ambitious or sober and realistic. Beyond that, they illuminate the pedagogic philosophy which guided the curriculum's application. One of the earliest indications in this respect

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<sup>682</sup> As Robert Laulan points out, “on trouve en 1763 102 livres d'ABC”. Laulan, “Pourquoi et comment on entrain à l'École royale militaire de Paris”, *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 4 (1957), 219. Their literacy was apparently meant to be improved by having each student read their personal copy of the 181 article *règlement* of 1765 ordering life in the school each Sunday under their officers' supervision. Règlements généraux, arrêtés par M. le duc de Choiseul en 1765, concernant les Officiers de l'État-major, les Officiers des Compagnies, les Professeurs et Maîtres, et les Élèves dudit Hôtel, Articles CLXXVIII-IX in *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 349.

<sup>683</sup> AN MM 658, n°117 v<sup>10</sup>, 30 March 1758, 97.

was given in a *mémoire* of 24 April 1750. Contrasting the instruction at the future *École militaire* to that given at the *collèges*, Duverney states that in the former instruction was to be abridged in comparison with the preliminary instruction given to future magistrates and churchmen. In the new school, “tout se bornera à former des hommes sans entreprendre de faire des savants”, which though not sufficient for men of the cloth, was all that was required of military men<sup>684</sup>. After it had been established, an even more utilitarian conception of its pedagogy was delineated. Its purpose was to “élever et de former des guerriers. C’est à ce point unique que doivent se réunir toutes les vues de ceux qui entrent pour quelque chose dans les arrangements de cet établissement”<sup>685</sup>. It was not enough that all the lessons the students would receive should have as their object the matter of war; it was essential that their bodies also submit to the same habits which were to shape their minds, and to make, if possible, “des guerriers dans la pratique et dans la spéculation”<sup>686</sup>. A *mémoire* of 1754 made a similar point: the school would form good soldiers through a virtuous and informed education, making their courage more prudent and consequently more useful to the State<sup>687</sup>.

The *École militaire*’s curriculum was thus applied with a discrete goal, that of producing reliable subalterns for the infantry and cavalry with the requisite qualities for military service. This was despite criticisms such as those of Saint-Germain in 1753, at that point still a taciturn major-general in the French army. In a letter to Duverney he questioned the point of a project such as the *École militaire* if the majority of its products were destined for the subaltern ranks, or a Lieutenant-colonelcy at best, and likened it to a château built on sand if it was not properly managed<sup>688</sup>. He held that it would be difficult to find six good Lieutenant-colonels in a hundred regiments, a lamentable situation resulting from promotion through seniority rather than merit<sup>689</sup>. In his reply, Duverney casually pointed out that he knew of several general officers who had begun their service as lieutenants; if their number was not as great as could be desired, it was due to a lack of merit, not to the lack of recognition given to it, a merit which could result from a good education. His main point, however, was that even if the

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<sup>684</sup> AN K 149, n° 6<sup>1</sup>, *Mémoire*, 24 April 1750.

<sup>685</sup> AN MM 678, *Mémoire sur la subsistance des élèves de l’École royale militaire* 1 Juillet 1753, 1.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>687</sup> AN MM 678, 12 Novembre 1754, 62.

<sup>688</sup> Saint-Germain à Duverney à Bièvre, 16 Novembre 1753, *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain ... avec M. Paris du Verney ...*, V. I (London: 1789), 64-65.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

majority of students only became lieutenant-colonels, the school's efforts could not be considered to have been wasted, as it could only benefit the army to multiply the number of good lieutenant-colonels, and to have these ready to instruct young colonels<sup>690</sup>. The same held for captains in the ranks, who were to correct the excess of indiscipline and insubordination among the troops. Ignorant officers could be good soldiers, but never good officers, as warfare was an art with principles which required them to be studied and practised in order to be mastered<sup>691</sup>. The first decade of running the school in turn reinforced the administrators' intent to produce a good subaltern; the school would deliver docile subjects, and it was their superiors' responsibility to ensure they continued on the right path<sup>692</sup>. Later, a letter to Montbarey described the sole goal which ought to hold at the *École militaire* as the training of *sous-lieutenants*, not generals of the army. This goal could be considered fulfilled if the students destined for the technical branches had an elementary grasp of mathematics<sup>693</sup>.

Before continuing to a more detailed consideration of how instruction functioned at the *École militaire*, a short overview of the students' military organisation and disciplinary regime will be given. De Meyzieu provided a summary of how these functioned in the *Encyclopédie*. The students were organised in companies commanded by active military officers, with the grades of corporal, sergeant, and *anspessade* given to students as a prize to reward merit and intellectual effort. There was ample opportunity to observe who might qualify for such distinctions, as the students were supervised by officers during the day and their rooms were guarded by sentinels from the *Invalides* at night, the sentinels being posted and relieved according to the schedule employed in camps on campaign<sup>694</sup>. There were originally four companies of twenty students each, totalling 80 which was the number of students in the *École Militaire* by September 1754<sup>695</sup>. The companies were classed by letter, such that the first was *compagnie A*, the second *compagnie B*, and so on<sup>696</sup>. When the student body reached 210 in July 1756, the companies were augmented to seven and strengthened to 30

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<sup>690</sup> Réponse de Duverney à Paris, 21 Novembre 1753, *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain*,... 68-69.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

<sup>692</sup> "Nous les livrons dociles, c'est aux chefs des corps où ils entrent à les y maintenir". AN MM 679, Lettre du Secrétaire du *Conseil* à M. Charlot, Premier Commis de la Guerre, 29 January 1765, 121.

<sup>693</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire en réponse à la note envoyée par Montbarey, au Conseil d'administration concernant l'observatoire de cette Maison, [undated], 126.

<sup>694</sup> De Meyzieu, *Encyclopédie*, T. V, s.v. "École Militaire", 312.

<sup>695</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated], 77; AN MM 658, f°18 v<sup>10</sup>, 27 September 1754, 18-19.

<sup>696</sup> AN MM 658, f°21 r<sup>10</sup>, 6 May 1754, 9.

students each, all under a captain and lieutenant, shortly before the transfer of the school from Vincennes to the new buildings<sup>697</sup>. The companies served not only as units for drill and related exercises, but also for regulating other aspects of students' lives, for instance their recreation periods. Ball games and other amusements such as the *jeu de quilles* were distributed at the beginning of the sessions by the school's Sergeant-Major to each company's Sergeant, Corporal, and *Anspessade*, who then distributed them among their company's students<sup>698</sup>.

Each subject had its own professor, aided by assistants chosen by himself, outside the military and administrative control structure and responding only to the *Directeur-général des études*. Though one might be tempted to see an element of academic freedom in that measure, in reality it was simply dictated by pragmatism: it was believed that giving professors that choice was the best way of ensuring the subordination of the assistants and the uniformity of the instruction delivered<sup>699</sup>. As the director of studies was a member of the various *Conseils*<sup>700</sup>, a certain measure of autonomy was thus afforded to the academic side of the school's functioning. As the school's first director of studies, de Meyzieu was given the opportunity to apply and develop his numerous ideas on education *in situ*. Meanwhile, the *Conseil de police*'s disciplinary role sought to avoid some of the failings reputedly found in other establishments with regards to student conduct and discipline. The officers functioning under its auspices had no authority over the students, but were to observe and write up reports on misconduct which they then presented to the *conseil*, and only it would have the authority to pronounce and enforce punishment. Through this structure it was hoped to avoid both the abuse of students by their superiors and the building up of resentment of students towards overbearing masters. Not only would the place run more smoothly but the students in turn would form a better idea of justice which they would hopefully take with them on leaving the institution and apply it in their future careers. "Raisonnons toujours avec les enfants, si nous voulons les rendre raisonnables"<sup>701</sup> was the motto to be applied in all circumstances. However, as a student cabal to murder

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<sup>697</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire [undated], 77.

<sup>698</sup> AN MM 658, F°80 R<sup>10</sup>, 21 October 1756, 68.

<sup>699</sup> The view of professors enjoying academic freedom is nonetheless reinforced by the *Conseil de l'hôtel*'s stating that "nous n'avons jamais prétendu régler la méthode dont les professeurs doivent se servir dans leur manière d'enseigner". AN MM 679, Lettre du Conseil à Choiseul, 7 February 1765, 221.

<sup>700</sup> De Meyzieu, *Encyclopédie*. T. V, s.v. "École militaire", 312-313.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

Croismare and escape from the school in the confusion caused by a fire they lit in a classroom shows, the best of intentions instead too often fell woefully short<sup>702</sup>. The range of draconian punishments, which included the use of cages and solitary confinement in a *cachot noir* doubtlessly contributed to reports of the school's students as exhibiting "de la dureté entr'eux et avec tout le monde"<sup>703</sup>.

Another purportedly pragmatic principle was applied to the school's general administration; it was stated that in a project such as the new *École militaire* not every eventuality could be foreseen, and that experience and the act of implementing the *règlements* would dictate the necessary additions or changes to be made<sup>704</sup>; some *règlements* were explicitly described as provisory, to be adapted as determined by daily experience. They could only be changed by informing the *Surintendant*, whose agreement would be required for each proposed modification<sup>705</sup>. Consequently, the arrangement as outlined in the *Encyclopédie* underwent several sometimes substantial modifications. As the following table shows, the actual curriculum as practiced in the school in the period that de Meyzieu wrote his article was somewhat different<sup>706</sup>:

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<sup>702</sup> AN MM 664, 27 February 1758, 61. The active students were de Mengin, d'Orillac, and Chamborant, although others knew about it but were either intimidated into silence or tacitly backed the plotters. The ringleaders were all sent to the school's prison.

<sup>703</sup> AN K 149, n° 2<sup>5</sup>, 1768. The *mémoire*'s anonymous author added, "ils y conservent la dureté qu'ils contractent sous la loi d'une subordination absolue et perpétuelle".

<sup>704</sup> AN MM 658, f°15 r<sup>10</sup>, 21 June 1754, 13.

<sup>705</sup> AN MM 658, Mémoire, [undated, but written 26 July-13 August 1754], 18.

<sup>706</sup> The list of subjects shown is compiled from the *Encyclopédie*, AN K 149, MM 658, MM 659, MM 662, MM 665, MM 666, MM 669, MM 678, MM 679, O<sup>1</sup> 1605, SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Y<sup>a</sup> 146, Y<sup>a</sup> 148, Y<sup>a</sup> 149, the *Recueil d'Édits ...* (Paris, 1762), the *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), various *États militaires de France*, Dupont de la Motte's *Journal*, and the duc de Luynes's *Mémoires*. Subjects which were adopted on a contingent basis such as heraldry, navigation or astronomy are not shown, and swimming is omitted as it was never taught in Paris.

For the provincial schools, the subjects in parentheses were those adopted by different schools but not stipulated by the *Règlement* of 28 March 1776. For these, music is listed in row #8 which is the row reserved for *droit* in the *École militaire*. The non-regulation subjects are drawn from secondary sources.

Table 4.1 – The *École militaire*'s curriculum, 1753-1788

	I	II	III	IV	V
	<u>Encyclopédie</u>	<u>First Years</u>	<u>Minor Additions</u>	<u>Union with La Fleche</u>	<u>First Major Reform</u>
Dates:	1755	1753-1758	1758-1764	1764-1769	1769-1775
Subject	1 Religion	Religion	Religion	Religion	Religion
List	2 French Grammar	French Grammar	French Grammar	French Grammar	French Grammar
	3 German, Latin, Italian	German, Latin, Italian	German, Latin, Italian	German, Latin, Italian	German
	4 Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths
	5 Logic				
	6 Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography
	7 History	History	History	History	History
	8 <i>Droit naturel</i>				
	9 Fortification		Fortification & castrametation	Fortification	Fortification
	10 Artillery	Artillery	Artillery		
	11	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing
	12 Tactics	Tactics	Tactics (15yo+)	Tactics	
	13 Military Ordinances	Military Ordinances	Military Ordinances (15yo+)	Military Ordinances	Mil. Ordinances (rec '71)
	14 Military Exercises	Military Exercises	Military Exercises	Military Exercises	Military Exercises
	15 Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing
	16 Fencing	Fencing	Fencing	Fencing	Fencing
	17	<i>Volige</i>	<i>Volige</i>	<i>Volige</i> (recreation only)	<i>Volige</i> (rec)
	18 Equeitation	Equeitation	Equeitation	Future cavalymen only in '63	Limited for inexp. students
	19 Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing & <i>chiffre</i>	Writing
	20		<i>Physique experimentale</i>	<i>Physique experimentale</i> '67	<i>Physique experimentale</i>



Table 4.1 continued

VI	VII	VIII	i.	ii.
<u>Early re-configuration</u>	<u>Implementation of split career tracks</u>	<u>Final Curriculum</u>	<u>Curricula Provincial Écoles</u>	<u>Collège Royale de La Fleche</u>
1778-1780	1781-1784	1785-1788	1776-1793	1764-1776
Religion	Religion	Religion	Religion	Religion
French Grammar	Grammar & <i>belles-lettres</i>	Grammar & <i>belles-lettres</i>	French Grammar	Grammar & Rhétorique
German, English	German, English (Naval only)	G, English (Navy), Latin (rec.)	German, Latin	Humanités (Latin)
Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths	Maths
			(Logic)	Logic
	Geography	Geography	Geography	Philosophy
	History	History	History	Seconde
		<i>Droit publique</i>	Music	Troisième
	Fortification	Fortification	(Fortification)	Quatrième
				Cinquième
	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing	Sixième
				<i>Musique militaire</i>
				<i>Physique</i>
Mil. Exercises (rec)	Mil. Exercises (rec)	Mil. Exercise (rec)	(Mil. Exercises)	
Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	Dancing	
Fencing	Fencing	Fencing	Fencing	
<i>Volige</i> (rec)	<i>Volige</i> (rec)	<i>Volige</i> (rec)		
Equitation	Equitation (Non-tech students)	Equitation		
Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	
			<i>Physique expérimentale</i>	

The clearest difference between de Meyzieu's article and the subjects actually taught is the absence of logic, *droit naturel*, and fortification, and the addition of drawing and *voltige*<sup>707</sup>. The *École militaire* never saw logic taught, although after 1764, the students received from La Flèche would have been exposed to it there, while *droit* was only adopted in 1785. Drawing was often taken as a preparatory element for technical studies due to its practical utility for engineers. However, it was sometimes described in different terms, as useful for its mind-ordering qualities: "le dessin fixe les objets, et retrace continuellement à l'imagination, ce que la vue ne peut lui offrir que passagèrement"<sup>708</sup>. In the *École militaire*, the drawing lessons given were *dessin de fortification*, *de paysage*, and *de figure*, with care taken to note those students who distinguished themselves in this and other disciplines in the *États des élèves* regularly sent to the Ministry in Versailles<sup>709</sup>. As for the study of fortification proper, it appears to have begun with an instruction for lessons on castrametation in 1759<sup>710</sup>; the maths professor de Campagne's "projet du polygone"<sup>711</sup>, though welcomed, met with delays. The polygon was eventually being on the Île-des-Cygnés, which the school did not finish acquiring until 1778<sup>712</sup>. The *Plan d'Études* of 1769 all the same instructed that students have lessons "sur le terrain" on the application "des principes de géométrie à la pratique" on fair-weather "jours de fêtes et de congé"<sup>713</sup>. Practical lessons were not resumed after 1776 until 1785, after the completion of the polygon.

The evolution of *physique expérimentale* is somewhat murky. A professor to teach it was hired in 1758, but his name then disappears, although the *États militaire de*

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<sup>707</sup> Limited space does not permit a consideration of the physical exercises here. On these, see Robert Laulan, "L'Enseignement des Exercices du Corps à l'École Royale Militaire de Paris", *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, 79-81 (1952-1954): 43-57.

<sup>708</sup> AN K 149 n° 2<sup>7</sup>, Plan de constitution pour l'école royale militaire, 5 August 1762, 19.

<sup>709</sup> De Beaucrey "entend très bien les fortifications, lève et lave bien un plan. Il dessine supérieurement", while the chevalier de Brécard "entend les fortifications et peut opérer sur le terrain. Il dessine bien la figure et le paysage". Both joined the infantry, despite the *Conseil's* hope that they would be sent to the artillery. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, État des élèves en âge de sortir ..., 1 October 1765.

<sup>710</sup> Règlement concernant les officiers de l'état-major de l'École royale militaire, et leurs fonctions, Article XLVI in *Recueil d'Édits ...* (Paris, 1762), 88.

<sup>711</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil de police, 7 July 1760, 17. That meeting also examined a proposal for "petits ouvrages de fortifications en relief".

<sup>712</sup> Robert Laulan and Jules Riollot, *Le Champ-de-Mars avant la Révolution: Annales de 1750 à 1790 ornées de 14 gravures* (Paris: Librairie de l'Armée, 1936), 12; the extension of the Champ de Mars was completed by purchasing the Île de Cygnés from the city of Paris and filling in the branch of the Seine separating it from the river's main eastern bank. The 'Pièces relatives à l'acquisition que l'École royale militaire a faite d'une partie de l'Île des Cygnés' are found in AN MM 657 Titres 1678-1778, 103-106.

<sup>713</sup> Instruction pour les professeurs et maîtres de l'École royale militaire, Article XXVIII, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 369. The instruction began: "Il ne suffit pas que les élèves sachent dessiner et construire des plans et profils de fortifications, il faut encore qu'ils sachent dessiner des cartes, lever des plans et rapporter les plans sur le papier", which they would learn in their practical lessons.

*France list physique expérimentale* as taught from 1759 until 1769<sup>714</sup>. In 1767, the *Conseil* wrote Choiseul requesting permission to hire Pagny as professor of the subject due to his patroness the queen's insistence (which included lobbying Duverney and Choiseul)<sup>715</sup>. It gave him the title of professor and began the acquisition of the necessary equipment while awaiting Choiseul's approval<sup>716</sup>, but he cuttingly rejected their request, adding: "je me propose ... d'examiner s'il ne serait pas à propos de les réduire [the subjects taught], étant persuadé avec raison que le plan d'éducation le plus simple dois en même temps être le meilleur"<sup>717</sup>. However, less than a month later he granted his approval to Pagny due to pressure from the queen<sup>718</sup>. Artillery lessons for their part were led by artillery officers and modelled by d'Argenson on the practice of the *École des Chevaux-légers*<sup>719</sup>. However, the officers brought in for that purpose 1754-1755 were respectively pensioned off in 1756 and 1759, meaning the practical study of artillery, whatever its worth, was short-lived<sup>720</sup>.

This was not so with military exercises; a *mémoire* of late 1753 explained that as soon as students arrived at the *hôtel* they were put under arms and made to carry out military exercises. This was considered a practical initiation to an art composed of theory and principles. Despite the care that had been taken with regards to the languages and other general subjects necessary for soldiers, the *Conseil* believed that was not the case with regards to the instruction dealing strictly with the profession of arms. At Vincennes, which had its own garrison in addition to the companies of *bas-officiers invalides* attached to the *École militaire*, students saw military drill carried out daily, as

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<sup>714</sup> AN MM 658, f°143 v<sup>10</sup>, 17 May 1759, 120. The professor's name was de Lor; Chevalier de Montandre and M. de Roussel, *État militaire de France...*, Vols. 1-11 (Paris, 1759-1769).

<sup>715</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre du Conseil à Choiseul, 27 April 1767, 160. They presented *physique expérimentale* as useful for future artillerymen and engineers.

<sup>716</sup> AN MM 659, 27 April 1767, 99-100.

<sup>717</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul en réponse, Versailles, 5 May 1767, 162. In his words, "le roi... ne veut point de leçons de physique à l'École militaire".

<sup>718</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul, au Conseil de l'hôtel, Marly, 31 May 1767, 163. Although not listed in the 1769 *Plan d'Études*, in 1772 in Bizot's dispositions for "expérience de physique expérimentale" were approved by Monteynard. AN MM 669, Conseil d'administration, 25 September 1772, 62.

<sup>719</sup> D'Argenson reportedly "fait faire une artillerie pareille pour l'École militaire", which may have been his intention but likely never came to fruition. Charles-Philippe d'Albert, duc de Luynes, *Mémoires du duc de Luynes sur la cour de Louis XV (1735-1758)*, 19 June 1755, T. XIV (Paris, 1864), 185. On 7 August 1760, a *mémoire* by Campagne was read in the *Conseil de police* on his ideas on "des leçons à donner ... sur l'artillerie", but apparently not seen through. AN MM 666, Conseil de police, 7 August 1760, 26. A 1752 engraving of the school by Samson now in the BnF depicted a "gazon pour l'exercice de la bombe et du canon".

<sup>720</sup> They were Le Brun de Brueil and Boileau de St. Pau. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, État de messieurs les officiers ... pour entrer en qualité de lieutenants dans l'école royale militaire, 8 May 1754; Memorandum of 3 April 1755; Memorandum of 11 July 1756; État des officiers sortant de l'École royale militaire, 11 July 1759.

well as the mounting of a guard, posting of sentinels, conducting of patrols, and more, without having any idea of the rules governing those actions<sup>721</sup>. In order to fulfil its mission of instructing them in the principles of the art of war, the exercises and practical operations which comprised it, and the bases on which it was founded, it was resolved to instruct them in those matters by means of lessons on military ordinances, to be given by the students' commanding officers. Five of the seven points which comprise its plan of study are of particular interest. The first is point number two, which stated that the method of teaching ought to be easy and recognised as proper. Point number three stated that the officers charged with the conducting the classes would hold conferences in order to determine the parameters and pace of the lessons. Point number four stipulated that what had been decided at the conference would be followed in an exact manner in order to preserve the uniformity of principles, an indispensable point for a pedagogic effort shared by several people. Point six concerned the student's schedule; as they did not carry out military exercises daily, it was proposed to alternate the days that they conducted them with those dedicated to classroom instruction<sup>722</sup>.

Point seven provided more detail on the content. It noted that the realm of tactics was so broad that only royal ordinances helped maintain uniformity between regiments. These ordinances, in turn, were so numerous that taken as a whole they were overwhelming. The method for broaching this topic, as with all the others, was to proceed by degrees, progressing in steps in preparation for the most complex and difficult elements. The *Conseil*, without wishing to be overly prescriptive, nonetheless offered suggestions on the elementary knowledge to be taught the students. It could begin with the teaching and definition of military terms, such as "company", "battalion", "regiment", "brigade" and "army". This exemplified what it labelled the progressive method of instruction through degrees of difficulty, proceeding from the simple to the complex. Despite being a dry topic at first, it was hoped that it would progressively become more engaging through the use of anecdotes and similar devices. The instructing officers, in turn, were to familiarise themselves with the charts and orders for campaign, in order to better instruct the students. The conferences established

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<sup>721</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire, 17 December 1753, 12.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 12-13.

for the purpose of discussing the theory of war among professors would doubtless prove their utility for such a purpose<sup>723</sup>.

A *mémoire* was written in the summer of 1754 in order to fulfil d'Argenson's intentions with regards to the instruction given on military subjects, which was to begin with the youngest students of the *École militaire*. Before the instruction outlined in the 17 December 1753 *mémoire*, students were taught what a soldier's weapons were, his equipment, the officers' weapons, their individual names and use, their components, and the way they were used. By this final element a preparation began for the students' introduction to fencing. Only then did the definition and explanation of the concepts of bodies such as "company" or "regiment" begin. These terms were explained first for the infantry, and then for the mounted branches. At the end, the whole was brought together to explain the general composition of an army. Then the *génie* and artillery were introduced, to be approached without haste. On completing the presentation of those subjects, the explanation of military ordinances began<sup>724</sup>. Due to the differences between students' ages, dispositions, and dates of arrival to the school, they were divided into three classes. The classes were not only created due to the practical concern with the disparities listed above, but also to stimulate *émulation*, as those in the lower classes would have the opportunity to progress to a more advanced class if they improved<sup>725</sup>.

Of the three classes, the first was composed of the students with the best intellects and memories, who were pushed with *vivacité*. The second was made up of students who were slower, and the third of those who were the least instructed and most ignorant. The three classes were led by members of the school's *État-major*, principally the school's major and two *Aides-major*, under the inspection of the Governor and *Lieutenant de Roi*; thus, the instruction of military ordinances, drill, and tactics fell under the supervision of the school's military hierarchy. The Governor and *Lieutenant* supervised the *État-major* directly, or had an account of their work presented to them the day after, if they were not present at the classes. To draft the *plan général* for the lessons, they brought together the *État-major*, with the finished text then being presented to the major and *Aides-major*; these studied it and agreed on a common

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<sup>723</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>724</sup> AN MM 658, *Mémoire*, [undated, but written 26 July-13 August 1754], 16.

<sup>725</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

manner of explaining it in order to ensure uniformity and prevent any difficulty in comprehension by students passing from one class to another<sup>726</sup>. This goal was assured by their composition of a *cahier* for each lesson given. Students who were judged sufficiently prepared to progress to a more advanced class were then examined by the Governor, who would decide together with the major and *Aides-major* whether to allow them to advance. As for the classes themselves, all the military officers were invited to be present in the classrooms during each lesson, to observe in silence and then present their opinions individually to the *Lieutenant de Roi* or Governor<sup>727</sup>.

The number of classes was soon increased to four in 1758, and they served not only as academic units, but also as structures of control and discipline, the members of each class distinguished by differences in their uniforms. These served to signify not only belonging to a class but also as morally significant differentiating markers. Their purpose was to indicate an individual's status as compliant and in the administration's good graces, and thus as a progressing or regressing student as the case might be. It is particularly interesting that the new classes represented not only the expected differences in intellectual and physical ability, but also moral status in the eyes of the *Conseil*, with a hierarchy of punishments and protections particular to each class. Their overall organisation will be considered first, before an examination of some of the disciplinary schemes that were subject to.

The *Conseil* instituted a scheme of distinctive marks for the students of the four classes<sup>728</sup>. It considered this an ideal means of piquing their *émulation*, the distinctive marks serving to indicate the merit of the students and reflect their worthy conduct. The classes each had their own denominations and distinctive marks, and students were placed in them following written evaluations and an *État des élèves* provided by the officers of the *État-major* for their companies, as well as by the professors and their adjuncts, without consideration of age; the sole criteria for their assignment to a class was their ability and behaviour, essentially their discernible intellectual and moral qualities<sup>729</sup>. The first class was denominated that of “*très bons*”, given a silver epaulette on the right shoulder. Without digressing on the topic of discipline and punishment, it is

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<sup>726</sup> AN MM 658, Mémoire, [undated, written 26 July-13 August 1754], 17.

<sup>727</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>728</sup> This method echoed de Meyzieu's arguments that the *croix de Saint-Lazare* should be used as a mechanism for signaling its bearers' qualities to the public. De Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 68-69, 85.

<sup>729</sup> AN MM 658, n°117 v<sup>10</sup>, 30 March 1758, 97.

worth indicating that the first class was designated as a purely military troop by the *Conseil*, and consequently subject only to military discipline. All the other classes had an expanding range of more severe, non-military, and consequently ignominious sanctions. The second class was called “*des bons*”, with a silk epaulette in silver and poppy red. The third was that of the “*médiocres*”, bearing a red wool epaulette. The lowest class was called the “*classe des mauvais*”, with a wool brown epaulette. The criterion for a student’s advancement from the two lower classes to the first two was the demonstration of noticeable improvement and visible progress. A student from the first two classes could similarly be demoted if it was determined he no longer deserved his class’s distinctions and prerogatives. A change in class was accompanied by a change in epaulette, which could not be changed or removed except by an order of the *Conseil*; any student who changed or lost their epaulette would automatically be sent to the fourth class, and a student from that class who did the same would be sent directly to the *cachot noir*<sup>730</sup>.

The issue of the students’ uniforms having been a source of some pecuniary concern, and several earlier measures having been deemed unsatisfactory, the resolution was taken to provide the students with a new hat and *justaucorps* every year, beginning from 1 May 1759<sup>731</sup>. In order to ensure the uniforms’ longevity and the students’ cleanliness, they were to be frequently inspected. Thus, the major and the *Inspecteur Contrôleur Général* inspected the students on the first and 15<sup>th</sup> day of each month during their hour of recreation. The captains also inspected their own companies on the day they were posted to the *piquet* or service, and also during the recreation. The same procedure for inspection was followed by all the officers, with a tailor present at all inspections. The company formed a single line, the students standing with their coats unbuttoned, wearing their hats and carrying their forage caps in their hands. The officer began at the head of the line and closely examined each student and element of the uniform, ascertaining that the correct company number was fixed on the hat and cap. The officer then had the tailor create an *État* of all the necessary repairs for each student. After the inspection, the company’s *gradés*, or subalterns (themselves students), stored all the items to be repaired together. At the next inspection, the officer took the *État* from the previous inspection and checked to see if all the necessary repairs

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<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>731</sup> AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 138 r<sup>10</sup>, 1 March 1759, 115-116.

had been carried out exactly. Hats were subject to their own regulations: as each student only had one, they were to take great care to not ruin it; it was to be carried to the *salle d'écriture* and otherwise used only for military exercises, riding, fencing, and dancing. At all other times when they were required to cover their heads, they were to use their caps, which were always to be carried in their pockets when not in use. It was expressly forbidden to exchange their headwear with other students, or to remove the company numbers, on pain of punishment<sup>732</sup>.

Although the classes were abolished and replaced by divisions in 1761, the divisions still numbered four and were composed of companies as under the old system; the principal change seems to have been an increase in the frequency of inspections. General inspections were henceforth carried out by the *Aide-major de service* on the first Sunday of each month and on the days when the students exercised in the afternoon<sup>733</sup>. Company reviews to inspect uniforms, meanwhile, were henceforth carried out after dinner (the noontime meal) and before the recreation every other day, namely Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The inspection was carried out by the *Aide-major* accompanied by a tailor, with the company's captain and lieutenant noting the necessary repairs to be carried out. After the inspection, the students reassembled by division and proceeded to their designated court for the recreation<sup>734</sup>. In 1765, however, the divisions reverted to companies, only to be restored in 1771, in a series of seemingly constant restructurings which created a less than ideal environment in which the students could progress<sup>735</sup>. In the same period, the men responsible for supervising the students and maintaining order underwent two reorganisations: military officers were employed 1753-1759, to be supplanted by civilian *Inspecteurs des Élèves*, and then replaced by military officers again 1769-1776<sup>736</sup>; the reforms furthermore kept the professors on edge over their employment status<sup>737</sup>.

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<sup>732</sup> Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>733</sup> AN MM 666, Conseil d'administration, 1 May 1761, 95; AN MM 659, Article I, 22 June 1761, 53.

<sup>734</sup> Ibid., Article V, 54.

<sup>735</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l'hôtel, 9 April 1765, 133; Règlements Généraux, arrêtés par ... Choiseul en 1769, concernant les Officiers de l'État-major, les Officiers des Compagnies, les professeurs et maîtres, et les élèves dudit Hôtel, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 355.

<sup>736</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, État des Officiers sortant de l'École royale militaire, et des grâces qu'on propose au roi de leur accorder, 1759; Règlements Généraux, arrêtés par ... Choiseul en 1769 ..., *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 330.

<sup>737</sup> "Les professeurs même, sachant bien que quelques uns d'entreux, par le partage projeté; et qui rendra les élèves plus nombreux dans chaque classe, deviendront inutiles, sont dans un état d'incertitude et d'inquietude qui nuit à leur propre travail". AN MM 679, Lettre du Conseil à Choiseul, 7 March 1765, 127.



A concession to students' differing abilities came when the study of the art of war and military ordinances was reserved for students at least 15 years old in 1759<sup>738</sup>. Military exercises were also adapted to students' physical strength. Those who were too young to manoeuvre or who could not take part in firing practice due to a lack of strength or celerity in the execution of the necessary movements were exercised apart from the rest. The firing practice was carried out individually for as long as it was deemed necessary. They were examined by the *Premier Aide-Major* who would present his account of their progress to the major, who would in turn present his report to the *Conseil* in order to determine if those students could be readmitted to the standard practice of firing in line<sup>739</sup>. This measure, and others similar to it, underscore not simply the *Conseil's* flexibility with regards to the students' range of abilities and differing rates of progress; it reinforces the contingent nature of much of the teaching and its supporting structures at the *École militaire*. It should be remembered that there was a lapse of four years between the matriculation of the first students in October 1753<sup>740</sup>, who were immediately put under arms, and the implementation of the measure for the students poorly suited to military drill. In this light, the *Conseil* sought not so much to innovate as to evolve and adapt, always searching for better methods and improved results, holding nothing sacred but the maintenance of discipline, good order, and the provision of opportunities for students to demonstrate their merit and exercise the faculty of *émulation*. Beyond those parameters, the whole enterprise was a great pedagogical and social laboratory, with the expected unevenness in approach and results that this implied.

Tactics for instance proved an unsuitable subject for students. On 4 March 1758, the marquis de Paulmy wrote to Croismare regarding Louis-Félix Guynement de Kéralio's appointment as *sous-directeur des études*, his suitability for the post due to his knowledge of tactics, and the urgency of beginning proper lessons in tactics<sup>741</sup>. In October 1769, however, the study of tactics was abolished, with only the study of

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<sup>738</sup> Règlement concernant les Officiers de l'État-Major de l'École Royale Militaire, et leurs fonctions, Article XLI, *Recueil d'Édits*,... (Paris, 1762), 87.

<sup>739</sup> AN MM 658, f°105 r<sup>10</sup>, 30 Juin 1757, 87. This measure was approved on 5 November 1757. AN MM 664, Conseil d'administration, 52.

<sup>740</sup> AN MM 658, Réponse de Duverney à Plaisance, 7 September 1753, 65; AN MM 658 f°18 v<sup>10</sup>, 27 September 1754, 18-19.

<sup>741</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre de Paulmy à Croismare, 4 March 1758.

For a relatively recent presentation of Kéralio's life, see Jean Sgard, "Louis Félix Guynement de Kéralio, Traducteur, Académien, Journaliste, Intermédiaire", *Dix-huitième siècle* 40 (2008/1): 43-52.

military ordinances to continue. The reason given for that decision was that the study of tactics required a great deal of preliminary knowledge which could only be acquired through experience; the theory of tactics was denuded of any experience, considered the sole element capable of making a just application of its principles to practice<sup>742</sup>. The study of military ordinances was in turn to consist solely of the elements necessary for young officers to know their duties and fulfil their tasks as subalterns. Its study was not to divert them from the study of other subjects and was only to be done on free days or holidays<sup>743</sup>. Kéralio now led these lessons instead of the ones he had given in tactics. The contents of the lessons were limited to four topics, namely the ordinances necessary to learn military exercises and evolutions, service in garrison, military infractions, and service on campaign, the first three being considered essential to the understanding of the fourth<sup>744</sup>. Of the consequently reduced lessons, the point of greatest interest is one that is analogous to heuristic learning: the lessons on military exercises and evolutions focussed on the theory of what the students had practiced in their daily exercises, in order that they should understand the principles of marching and handling arms, but also so that they could themselves teach and explain in an intelligible fashion the different evolutions, to demonstrate that they were fit to command a body of troops up to the size of a battalion. They were to be judged fit for such a command when they were considered sufficiently well instructed on the ordinance, and could present their reasons for the need for good discipline, prompt obedience, exactitude, and continual attention while under arms in order to execute manoeuvres with precision<sup>745</sup>.

## Part II: Handwriting and Languages

Other changes of varying importance were implemented, with the curriculum modified in an at times *ad hoc* manner. Thus, de Flainville, formerly an *Inspecteur des Études*, was charged by de Meyzieu to give lessons on heraldry (*blason*)<sup>746</sup>, a subject which though studied for centuries did not typically feature in the official *plans*

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<sup>742</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Règlement portant instruction pour l'enseignement des ordonnances militaires, 9 April 1771; see also AN MM 659, 2 July 1771, 140.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid., Article I. Even though the study of what had formerly comprised tactics and military ordinances was now reduced to the second subject only, the title of *professeur des ordonnances militaires* was to be suppressed, as the number of professors employed to teach it was reduced from three to one in accordance with the reduced amount of time subsequently to be devoted to it. Ibid., Article III.

<sup>744</sup> AN MM 669, 20 August 1771, 7; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Règlement portant instruction pour l'enseignement des ordonnances militaires, 9 April 1771, Article V.

<sup>745</sup> Ibid., Article VI.

<sup>746</sup> AN MM 659, 3 July 1760, 20.

*d'instruction* of institutions charged with the education of the nobility<sup>747</sup> (if one is willing to exempt cases such as the chapter of the cathedral of Lyon, for instance)<sup>748</sup>. Another addition to the planned curriculum involved de Pantigny, a *Commis au Bureau des Comptes des Vivres*, who was chosen by the *Conseil* on 30 July 1760 to give the students lessons on accounting and the keeping of register books (*registres carnets*)<sup>749</sup>. He was also to provide supplementary lessons on handwriting, considered useful for future regimental staff officers<sup>750</sup>. Writing, which might appear to fall under the rubric of grammar and language, in fact required quite specific and dedicated attention as an independent discipline, and came to be the focus of the *Conseil*'s care and attention in that respect<sup>751</sup>. A *mémoire* drafted in 1778 stated that writing correctly and having good penmanship (*peindre*) was an object of the first importance to warfare<sup>752</sup>. Despite that document's dating from after Saint-Germain's reforms, it merely reiterated one of the *Conseil*'s long-held beliefs; as the *Plan d'Études* of 1769 put it, "c'est à la sortie des humanités", where students "se sont accoutumés à mal écrire, qu'il faut ... former la main; cette occupation est d'ailleurs analogue à celle du dessin"<sup>753</sup>. For that goal, *maîtres à écrire* were employed in addition to the professors for grammar. In its search for practical and efficacious ways to improve the students' abilities, the *Conseil* sometimes devised creative means of reaching several goals at once. Its scheme for monitoring students' correspondence with their parents fell under this rubric, which it saw as an opportunity both for improving their writing and regulating their exposure to the outside world, one more mechanism to observe and control their charges<sup>754</sup>.

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<sup>747</sup> Another example of *ad hoc* instruction in heraldry is found in La Flèche when it was still a Jesuit college; it was one of several subjects, along with history and geography, used to fill any left-over time after the study of Greek and Latin. Henri de Rochemonteix, *Un collège des jésuites aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, vol. 2, Le Mans, 1889, 191 in Mark Motley, *Becoming a French Aristocrat: The Education of the Court Nobility, 1580-1715* (Princeton, 1990), 102.

<sup>748</sup> C.F. Menestrier, *La Nouvelle Méthode Raisonnée pour apprendre le Blason d'une manière aisée, réduite en leçons par demandes & par réponses* (Lyon, 1718).

<sup>749</sup> AN MM 659, 16 February 1764, 76. The idea for lessons on "la manière de tenir l'état d'un régiment tant pour les décomptes en argent, vivres, fourrages" and more had been suggested by Duverney four years earlier. See AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 31 July 1760, 25.

<sup>750</sup> De Pantigny's efforts were considered successful enough to merit a reward of 1,200 livres.

<sup>751</sup> If anything, the *Conseil*'s early budgetary constraints led to the reverse situation, as it requested the dismissal of three professors of French grammar as "on s'appuie à cette partie ... particulièrement par les maîtres d'écriture". AN MM 679, Mémoire, 25 June 1760, 5.

<sup>752</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 21 February 1778, 128.

<sup>753</sup> Exposition du Plan d'Étude pour les élèves de l'École Royale-militaire, Article VI, *Recueil des Édits* ... (Paris, 1782), 356.

<sup>754</sup> For a complete account of the supervision of the students' writing as a mechanism for control, see Robert Laulan, "La Discipline à l'École Militaire de Paris (1753-1788)", *L'Information Historique* 17 (1955): 140 and Schalck-Pommellet, *op. cit.*, 451-454.

Students' correspondence with their parents was a matter of interest to the administration from the beginning. A *mémoire* of 7 December 1753 detailed the way it was to be turned to the administration's advantage. The correspondence served, naturally, to keep parents informed of their children's health and life in the school, and additionally to aid the *Conseil de police* in its dealings with the students, whether it was by the marks of satisfaction students received from their parents which could promote *émulation* in those who conducted themselves well, or by enlisting the parents' support for disciplinary measures for the less well-behaved<sup>755</sup>. In order to more effectively control both the content of the correspondence and the impression it could make, the *Conseil* drew up a *délibération* with the rules to govern the handling of the students' correspondence. In order to avoid any possible confusion or contradiction in accounts of life in the school, individual officers were not to follow up the letters their students received; continuing correspondence was reserved exclusively to the *Conseil* and the officers it designated. The replies to parents were decided in the *Conseil de police*, with its own letters written and signed by Duverney; its accounts were informed by consulting the register of decisions taken concerning the relevant students' faults. The students' letters themselves, meanwhile, were collected by the officer on duty, and passed on to Duverney. To enable the *Conseil* to be better informed about the students' characters and dispositions, their letters were opened before being sent to their parents. Duverney in turn indicated to the parents that they were to send their replies opened, so that the *Conseil* could more easily consult their contents if deemed necessary and in order to make the parents conscious of the sort of replies they ought to make<sup>756</sup>.

Students were allowed to write to their families as often as they wanted the first years of the *École militaire*'s existence, until July 1755. Parents were requested to write *à mi-marge*, in order that the students write their replies to each section and thus better learn to order their correspondence. It was to instil further order in their correspondence that students were henceforth restricted to composing their replies on Sundays and holidays; on those days they would work on their letters in the *salle d'études* after vespers under the supervision of two *sous-professeurs*. These would provide instructions on the form and manner the letters ought to be written, concerning both style and protocol<sup>757</sup>. This adapted system was again modified two years later, due to

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<sup>755</sup> AN MM 658, f°3, 7 December 1753, 2.

<sup>756</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>757</sup> AN MM 658, f°37 a<sup>10</sup>, 28 July 1755, 33.

the increase in student numbers<sup>758</sup>. Consequently, they were henceforth to be limited to a single letter per month to their parents, unless decided otherwise by the *Conseil*. After the students wrote their letters, these were given to their class's Latin professor or adjunct, who would examine them during their free time. These corrected any faults in the composition of phrases, in the style of the language, and of spelling, all without altering the students' thoughts as expressed in the letters. They were then returned to the students, who composed a correct draft. That step completed they were ready for mailing<sup>759</sup>.

The raw material that the *École militaire* had to shape was not promising; a *mémoire* described the majority of students as having neither style nor the ability to correct it; they did not know how to compose a letter and additionally had bad handwriting and spelling<sup>760</sup>. It was furthermore apparent that the methods applied in the first decade of the school's existence (1753-1763) were less than satisfactory: after the subjects absolutely necessary for warfare, the most indispensable one was the ability to learn, speak, and correctly write French<sup>761</sup>. This was despite the fact that the *Conseil* considered the study of languages and all the other subjects to be utterly different from the practice of the military exercises<sup>762</sup>. The *Conseil* was all too well aware that a number of students then in the regiments had left the *hôtel* in ignorance of the necessary linguistic principles. The necessity of preserving the school's reputation urgently required the application of a remedy. It was thus determined to examine all the students' then in the *hôtel*, in all of the subjects they were studying, and that those without any aptitude for Latin, or any other subject they were endeavouring to learn, would be withdrawn from those lessons and made to focus entirely on French grammar and writing, and any other subjects for which they showed a penchant<sup>763</sup>. Such an "examen des élèves, second objet, a été fait sur le rapport par écrit des professeurs"<sup>764</sup>.

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<sup>758</sup> The *École militaire* counted 60 students at Vincennes in October 1753; they numbered 80 in September 1754. AN MM 658, f°18 v<sup>10</sup>, 27 September 1754, 18-19. 136 students joined the establishment the summer of 1756. AN MM 658, 1 July 1755, 43.

<sup>759</sup> AN MM 658, 28 March 1757, 81.

<sup>760</sup> AN MM 674, *Mémoire* 21 February 1778, 128.

<sup>761</sup> AN MM 659, 27 September 1764, 79.

<sup>762</sup> "L'étude des sciences et des langues est une chose si différente de tout ce qu'on appelle exercices militaires..." AN MM 678, *Motifs du Règlement provisoire pour toutes les espèces d'études et d'instructions*, [undated, summer of 1753], 3.

<sup>763</sup> AN MM 659, 27 September 1764, 79.

<sup>764</sup> AN MM 679 *Mémoire* 7 February 1765, 122. As a result, "Ceux qui ne profitent pas dans certaines classes ont été fixés à celles pour les quelles ils avaient le plus d'aptitude; l'étude de ces variations est ci joint".

The curriculum was consequently reorganised in order to correct “past abuses and the lack of success of the studies” which had been the source of “trouble to the order of the knowledge which the students could have already acquired”<sup>765</sup>. The necessary reforms were outlined in an undated document which was likely written shortly after the reorganisation of classes into divisions. This new *Plan d’Études* envisaged the students studying six or seven years, and listed the subjects they would be taught in that span as French, Latin, German, Italian, maths, fortification, ancient and modern geography and history, tactics, figurative drawing, fencing, dancing, and riding. French and Latin were two elements which were to be studied in tandem, their particular programme described as developing over five years of instruction. The first-year students were to learn read French and Latin well, as well as the grammatical terms, verb declensions and conjugations. The second year continued the study of declensions and conjugations, adding syntax, exposure to some well-regarded author, and a great deal of reading in French. The third year prolonged the study of syntax, commenced the explanation of authors such as Cornelius and Vegetius, and introduced the students to work on translating Latin to French. The fourth year brought the study of Julius Caesar, Sallust, Latin prosody, and the elegies of Ovid. The fifth year was dedicated to elements of Virgil, Horace, mythology, Livy, and perhaps Tacitus<sup>766</sup>.

The way the study of French and Latin was distributed over the entire seven year programme was as follows: the first-year students were to be “seriously applied to French writing” and introduced to Latin. In the second year their study of French would continue, and they would additionally receive four hours of Latin lessons daily. The third year this was reduced to two hours of Latin, with French writing continuing, and two hours of German introduced (the third year also marked the end of dancing lessons, and the beginning of the study of mathematics). In the fourth year Latin was reduced to study every other day (the same held for mathematics), while German continued on a daily basis, and figure drawing was introduced (also done every other day). And in the fifth year German was reduced to study on alternate days, the basis on which Latin continued, while in maths geometry, trigonometry, and operations on terrain began, in order to provide a basis for the study of geography. Students were nonetheless to have already been familiarised with geography through their language courses if, as

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<sup>765</sup> AN K 149 n° 2<sup>3</sup>, Nouveau Plan des Études, [undated but likely drafted in 1761], 1.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

suggested, those lessons included the study of maps necessary to the understanding of the authors being read. In the sixth year, Latin was no longer studied, being replaced by Italian; it was considered that by that point the students' study of Latin and French would have provided them with sufficient basis for them to grasp Italian in the course of one year. The seventh-year students were to study according to the ability they had shown in specific subjects, with only German, maths, and modern history being prescribed<sup>767</sup>.

This reform, in turn, lasted five years at most, as the *Conseil* took stock of its situation and decided to embark on a pedagogical experiment which would be one of the elements influencing the major curricular reforms of 1769. By 1764 the *Conseil* had enough evidence to evaluate the results of the curriculum, pedagogical methods, disciplinary scheme, hierarchical structure, and professional insertion of the students into the troops. It may be surmised that, in addition to the disappointing results with regards to the students' grasp of French and other subjects, Choiseul's top-down reforms and the prolonged stoppage to of the construction work on the *hôtel* created a sense of urgency. For their part, the suspension of works at Grenelle had been one of the factors leading to the conversion of the former Jesuit *collège* at La Flèche into an *école militaire*<sup>768</sup> to provide the educational basics to younger students before sending them to Paris; furthermore, as the vast buildings and facilities of La Flèche could suffice all on their own for the *École militaire*'s needs, the urgency for the Parisian establishment's physical expansion was consequently much reduced<sup>769</sup>. The situation must have struck more than one observer as potentially awkward, if not an embarrassing irony, especially considering the amount of criticism the expenditure on the *École militaire* had already drawn. To Choiseul, "le remède à l'inutilité, à l'inapplication, à l'indocilité et à la méchanceté est bien simple", the alliance of La Flèche and the *École militaire* providing the impetus of structural reorganisation to remedy the functioning of both institutions<sup>770</sup>.

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<sup>767</sup> Ibid., 4-8.

<sup>768</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069-308, Don Générale n° 1<sup>er</sup> École Royale Militaire, 19 August 1764.

<sup>769</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1069-307, Art. 5, Don Générale n° 2 École Royale Militaire, 28 October 1764, 4.

David Hume had described La Flèche thus during his stay there in the 1730s: "There is no place more proper than La Flèche.... The People are extremely civil and sociable and besides the good company in the Town, there is a college of a hundred Jesuits, which is esteemed the most magnificent both for buildings and gardens of any of that Order in France or even in Europe". Ernest Mossner and Raymond Klibansky, eds., *New Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1954), 1-2 in Alison Gopnik, "Could David Hume Have Known about Buddhism?: Charles François Dolu, the Royal Collège of La Flèche, and the Global Jesuit Network" *Hume Studies* 35 (2009): 8.

<sup>770</sup> AN MM 679, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l'hôtel, Compiègne, 11 August 1764, 113.

That, then, is the general context of institutional upheaval and ferment in which the *Conseil* decided to launch its experiment on the best method for instruction in French.

On 10 August 1764, the king agreed to the admission of 70 new students, all 11 years of age or more, and some nearing their thirteenth year; they were to arrive in succession, not *en masse*. As they were all required to leave at 17 years of age, they had a maximum of six years of studies to carry out in the *hôtel*<sup>771</sup>. The *Conseil* thus decided to conduct an experiment to determine the best way to teach students to speak and write French. The experiment consisted in testing the use of lessons entirely in French against the use of lessons given exclusively in Latin. Thus, the first 25 new students were to receive their lessons only in French. That group would be taught reading, spelling, and geography by the Abbé Vallard and writing and numbers by Sauvage. The first lessons were to be given to the first seven students who had already arrived, beginning on 1 October. As for the newly arrived students without any knowledge of Latin, they were either to be formed into a new class by the director of studies, or distributed among existing Latin classes. They were then to be evaluated after two years, to see if the so-called Latin method succeeded in teaching them to write French with the correct spelling as well as those students in the French class<sup>772</sup>. When the time came for students to be evaluated for the *changement des épaulettes*, their professors and *maîtres* were to provide written observations for each student, which would determine if they were to be made to continue with their language lessons or withdrawn from them<sup>773</sup>. Additionally, 37 older students who had been withdrawn from French and Latin lessons for over two or three years were formed into a new class for French grammar, a class “dont les succès marquent combien l’oubli où ces jeunes gens ont été laissés a nui à leur éducation”<sup>774</sup>. If the French class formed to compare with the Latin one fared as well, it is unsurprising that Latin was suppressed in the curricular reform of September 1769<sup>775</sup>. Choiseul observed that henceforth “il ne sera plus question... que des études propres à des militaires” for students arriving from La Flèche<sup>776</sup>.

Though it might at first appear peculiar that it was considered realistic and plausible to compare the use of French and Latin *grammaires* to teach French, it should

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<sup>771</sup> AN MM 659, 27 September 1764, 79. See also AN MM 662, 27 September 1764, 54.

<sup>772</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>774</sup> AN MM 679, Mémoire, 7 February 1765, 122-123.

<sup>775</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 3 June 1778, 149.

<sup>776</sup> AN MM 680, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l’hôtel, Marly, 16 June 1769, 9.



be borne in mind that grammar was conceived of as a sort of universal linguistic structure, of which different languages were simply varying manifestations, as explained by de Meyzieu in the *Encyclopédie*. Thus, its elements as revealed in French and applied to the study of Latin<sup>777</sup> could just as easily be reversed and the supposedly universal principles of a fundamental language taught in Latin in order to improve French, echoing the *collèges*' method, where work consisted of translating Latin to French or vice versa in preparation for composition in Latin<sup>778</sup>. The founders of the *École militaire*, antithetical as they were to the classical system of education, were not so iconoclastic as to pre-emptively discard one of the sole mainstays of that system to remain in their institution without adapting it to their own purposes and testing it. Indeed, as the organisation and content of the study of Latin in the *Nouveau plan des études* reveals, they were happy to use a broad range of Classical authors, both those utilised by the Jesuits such as Ovid, Virgil, and Tacitus, as well as those better known for their association with a princely education, such as Caesar. Though it was desirable to exercise youths' minds by whatever means possible, and thus impart the faculties of comparison, reasoning, and judgement, Latin was not, in the minds of the founders, the sole means of acquiring that facility. Mathematics, as well as other subjects, was held to be as efficacious in attaining the desired result. It was considered best to resist the use of a single method which future conditions might render useless, a predicament avoided by the bringing together of a wide gamut of means<sup>779</sup>. Latin in the *École militaire* was stripped of any transcendent or unifying value, being applied in an entirely utilitarian fashion for its use in the drafting of international treaties, to facilitate the learning of Italian<sup>780</sup>, and to conduct experiments such as the one detailed above. Once its usefulness was brought into question, it gave way to the study of other, evidently more important subjects along with the study of tactics<sup>781</sup>; after 1769, only students' recently arrived from La Flèche continued to study it on free days<sup>782</sup>.

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<sup>777</sup> De Meyzieu, *Encyclopédie*, T. V, s.v. "École Militaire", 310.

<sup>778</sup> D'Alembert, *Encyclopédie*, T. III, s.v. "Collège", 636.

<sup>779</sup> AN K 149, n° 1, Mémoire sur l'utilité de l'établissement d'un Collège Académique pour la jeune noblesse de France, 11 January 1750, 2-3.

<sup>780</sup> AN K 149, Mémoire 'Collège académique', 22 Avril 1750.

<sup>781</sup> Indeed, the degree to which Latin came to be regarded as ill-suited to the study of French can be seen in the *Conseil*'s protests to Montbarey over his appointment of Alexandre, protégé of the duc de Chartres and professor of Latin until 1769, as professor of French in 1778; this, from a body which was happy to employ professors hired to teach one subject engage in the instruction of another given they had some familiarity with it. AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey 28 January 1779, 184.

<sup>782</sup> Instruction pour les Professeurs & Maîtres de l'École Royale-Militaire, Article XXXII in *Recueil des Édits...* (Paris, 1782), 370-371.

That was not the final denouement of Latin as a subject of study, however. In the general re-evaluation of the institution, its curriculum and the methods it employed, the *École militaire* was criticised on a number of levels. One document described it as “defective on all points”, emphasising one of its principal inconveniences as being “trop différente de l’éducation ordinaire”<sup>783</sup>. The effect of separating the students from other youths of their age, in order to raise them as an “order apart” instead ensured that they were “neither schoolchildren nor soldiers”. That memorandum insisted on the importance of giving the children of the *École militaire* an education which was *commune*, “both for the children destined for the profession of arms as for those who will fill the other *états* in society”<sup>784</sup>. Another document in 1776 made the same point, decrying the institution’s considerable expenses and the apparent lack of success of its instruction. It prescribed the basis of the ideal education as consisting of a thorough knowledge of the duties of religion and morality, lessons on writing and arithmetic, the first elements of geometry, French, geography and history, a short course on logic, and some notions on physics. Such an education would entirely fulfil its goal if it additionally equipped the most able students with lessons on drawing, fortification, Latin, German, and fencing and riding<sup>785</sup>. The *collèges* which were to host the new provincial *écoles militaires*, however, were not all equally suited to the task, as in many of them instruction was restricted solely to the study of dead languages<sup>786</sup>. The elements of a serious education, with regards to languages, were considered to consist of applying students to the study of modern languages concurrently with Latin<sup>787</sup>. The *Plan d’éducation des élèves* for the new *écoles militaires* in turn defined that study as follows: French was to have priority as the most useful language to learn, as it was considered shameful to be ignorant of it. German was to be studied as a vernacular tongue, not as a theological language. The study of Latin, finally, was to concern itself solely with equipping the provincial *cadets-gentilshommes* with an acquaintance with the Classical authors, and not be taken any further in order not to subtract any time necessary for other subjects. Only the students of the *collèges* who were not destined for a military career would devote more time to the subject and learn Latin verse and carry

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<sup>783</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, La Flèche, [n.d. but written in 1776].

<sup>784</sup> Ibid.

<sup>785</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Sorèze, [n.d., but written in 1776].

<sup>786</sup> Ibid.

<sup>787</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, La Flèche.

out exercises in rhetoric<sup>788</sup>. In the end, though Latin was restored for the students in the preparatory *écoles militaires*, it was not formally reinstated in the Parisian institute after its re-establishment by Saint-Germain in 1777. Though still considered an important part of a general education, it was no longer taken to be necessary for a strictly military education.

The warning against reliance on a single method or subject for achieving the desired intellectual and moral goals of instruction – given above with regards to Latin – serves as a useful reminder of the holistic vision of education that the founders of the *École militaire* took, whatever its practical shortcomings may have been. Prior to its abolition, Latin, like all the other subjects, was taught near-exclusively with a military purpose. As de Meyzieu described it, the instruction of languages was to be applicable to the military art, and the Latin that was taught limited to the reading of Caesar's *Commentaries*, Quintus Curtius Rufus, and Vegetius<sup>789</sup>. Keeping Latin in such bounds consequently permitted the instruction of students in modern languages, geography, history, and especially geometry in its practical aspects, as applied to engineering and the artillery. Maths itself was limited to what was useful for a soldier. This method would ensure that the students would not leave as *naïfs*, like the students from the *collèges*, instead having at least the principles of the knowledge necessary for its practical application. They would be able to study with method, an advantage for beginning their careers<sup>790</sup>. In the *Conseil's* view, the first cohort of students produced by the *École militaire*, who left in the spring of 1759 and were in their majority destined for the army of the Lower Rhine<sup>791</sup>, were considered to be sufficiently endowed with those qualities. Even mediocre cadres who had only applied themselves to the subjects they were inclined to, followed military discipline, could carry out and lead the exercises, knew how to write, dance, fire, ride, and had the practical notions of mathematics and geometry<sup>792</sup>. They would enter the army already better prepared than their fellow uninstructed officers.

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<sup>788</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Article XVI, Plan d'éducation, 25 March 1776.

<sup>789</sup> The first author, Quinte-Curce in French, authored the *Historiarum Alexandri Magni Libri*, while the second was famous for his *De re militari*, also known as the *Epitoma institutorum rei militaris*, which influenced men such as Folard and Saxe. De Meyzieu, *Lettre d'un ancien lieutenant-colonel...*, 42-43.

<sup>790</sup> Ibid.

<sup>791</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau d'administration à St. Germain, 20 August 1777, 91.

<sup>792</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire, 16 November 1759, 126.

How the students actually performed is another matter<sup>793</sup>. Duverney, in his correspondence with Saint-Germain, opined that French military engineering had significantly declined from its heyday sixty years earlier. To him, the artillery had done much better and worked wonders in the two previous wars. In any case, both branches would be improved by receiving better candidates, and students with a potential vocation for that aspect of service would be observed and selected early on in the *École militaire*<sup>794</sup>. In the event, the promotion of 1759 included only two students for the technical branches, de Courcy for the artillery regiment of La Fère and de Fars for the *génie*<sup>795</sup>, compared to 27 for the infantry and 10 for the cavalry<sup>796</sup>. This outcome would appear to be well in line with the view that after the study and practice of military exercises, the most important discipline was that of equitation. It would in fact be misleading to attempt to create a scale of subjects taught by order of importance<sup>797</sup>. That mathematics was one of the cornerstones of the curriculum and pedagogic efforts at the *École militaire* cannot be doubted. Its utility for future officers in the technical branches, who were always a minority (a state of affairs the *État des quarante élèves* announced, and which would be formalised following the school's re-establishment 1777-78), was the link between the *École militaire* and candidates for the artillery, or for the engineering and naval schools, while its general value for the other students rested on its supposed usefulness, as part of a general course, for ordering and improving mental faculties, as posited in the *mémoire* of 11 January 1750<sup>798</sup>. It also, in

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<sup>793</sup> The *Conseil* cited the fact that several students had been appointed to their regiments' *États-major* in a short period after their joining their corps as proof of their knowledge and talent, and as a vindication of the king's backing for the *École militaire*. However, no names of the students, regiments, or the numbers involved are given. AN MM 678, Copie du Mémoire dont est question dans la lettre précédente, [undated, 1759], 175. Ten years later, a student Hébert de Boulon who had become a *Sous-aide-major* in Royal-Infanterie was granted a 300 livre *gratification extraordinaire* due to favourable reports of his conduct there. AN MM 680, Lettre de Choiseul à Croismare, 2 July 1769, 13.

The *Conseil* was understandably less keen to trumpet the cases of students like Pechpeyrou de Beaucaire who displayed cowardice, or who deserted, like Maltzem. AN MM 666, Conseil de police, 11 September 1760, 33; MM 666, Conseil de police, 30 November 1761, 139-140.

<sup>794</sup> Réponse de Duverney à Paris, 21 November 1753, *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain...* 70.

<sup>795</sup> AN MM 678, État des quarante élèves prêts à sortir de l'École royale nilitaire, et des corps dans lesquels ils peuvent être employés, 18 May 1759, 136-137.

<sup>796</sup> Another student was sent to Mézières that year, Raguét de Fossé in the autumn. AN MM 678, Lettre de Croismare à Crémilles, 26 October 1759, 173; meanwhile, a student who had been a *sous-lieutenant réformé* in the Royal-Artillerie was reassigned to the infantry. AN MM 678, February 1758, Lettre du même [unspecified] à Crémilles, 129.

<sup>797</sup> AN K 149, Mémoire Collège Académique, 22 April 1750; de Meyzieu's listing of subjects by their supposed rank in the *Encyclopédie* was an idealised, not practical rubric; the supposedly most important subjects at any given moment were liable to vary by the author and date of their ranking.

<sup>798</sup> AN K 149 n° 1, Mémoire sur l'utilité de l'établissement d'un Collège académique pour la jeune Noblesse de France, 11 January 1750, 2-3.

all its forms, served to open to study other subjects too numerous to be listed, but which ranged from fortifications (geometry) to astronomy (essential for maritime navigation), or mechanics and hydraulics, the latter two added to the curriculum in 1772 as a result of students' progress in their mathematical studies<sup>799</sup>.

It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that the school's founders or the *Conseil* expected to produce a set number of students for the specialised branches each year. On the contrary, just as students were to be permitted to join the ranks when they were judged sufficiently well-prepared to do so, or expelled if they failed to adhere to the *hôtel*'s disciplinary code, only those who showed the greatest progress in mathematics and other disciplines were to be sent to study at Mézières; those with a demonstrated aptitude for the elements of artillery were to be admitted directly as *sous-lieutenants* to that branch without needing to pass through any of the artillery schools<sup>800</sup>. This approach was not that of a competitive preparatory technical school for further advanced studies or professional apprenticeship<sup>801</sup> (and admission to the artillery schools, and thus that branch, was very competitive<sup>802</sup>), but of a preparatory school constituted on a general basis to prepare its students for the whole range of military careers open to them and based on a philosophy aiming to let students' natural talents reveal themselves and subsequently reinforce them, not to conduct them in a pre-determined manner<sup>803</sup>. Thus, though maths was the most widely taught subject at the *École militaire* by 1778, whose instruction could not be allowed to lapse<sup>804</sup>, it does not necessarily follow that it was the predominant subject (especially in view of the fact that this example depicts the situation at its reestablishment that year, three months after the student body numbered 64 students<sup>805</sup>). With these caveats in mind, it is possible to

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<sup>799</sup> AN MM 659, 11 August 1772, 150.

<sup>800</sup> Ordonnance du Roi, pour régler la manière dont les gentilshommes-élèves de l'École Royale Militaire, seront distribués et employés dans les troupes du roi, Article III, 30 January 1761, in *Recueil d'Édits ...* (Paris, 1762), 48-49.

<sup>801</sup> Advanced study and professional apprenticeship can be taken to include the ecclesiastical and legal careers, though as will be seen in a subsequent chapter, the *Conseil* was not always antithetical to aiding students who subsequently chose to abandon the military and take the cloth.

<sup>802</sup> See Frédéric Naulet, "Les Écoles d'Artillerie au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle", Chapter 2, thèse de maîtrise, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, 1990.

<sup>803</sup> The same spirit guided the placement of students in the non-technical branches: "Les autres seront répartis dans l'infanterie, la cavalerie et les dragons, suivant les talents et les dispositions qu'ils auront pour l'une ou l'autre de ces espèces de service, et cette répartition se fera à tour de rôle". Ordonnance du Roi ..., Article IV, 30 January 1761, in *Recueil d'Édits ...* (Paris, 1762), 49.

<sup>804</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 13 September 1778, 169.

<sup>805</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à de Montbarey, 28 January 1779, 183.

assess the role that the teaching of mathematics played in the *École militaire* and the *Conseil*'s system.

The level of mathematical instruction appears to have been generally good. The progress which permitted the addition of mechanics and hydraulics to the curriculum has already been mentioned. Those specialised sub-categories of mathematics included practical lessons with special machines, which were carried out on Sundays and holidays<sup>806</sup>. Earlier, demonstrating the value that the *Conseil* placed on versatility, it had appointed a supernumerary professor named Koch to teach mathematics, German and Latin. As a supernumerary, he was on lower wages than regular professors, 1,000 livres *per annum* as opposed to the standard 1,800<sup>807</sup>. He not only served creditably in that role, but also went beyond his stipulated duties and instituted a daily maths course on his own initiative, which resulted in his students' demonstrating tangible progress. He was rewarded by being appointed full professor, on the sole condition of carrying on as he had up to that point<sup>808</sup>. Another candidate with the qualities that the *Conseil* considered ideal was Ver Kaven. He had taught himself mathematics, and had subsequently become a tutor in the subject. He was an acquaintance of d'Alembert, Condorcet, Bézout, and Bossut, who all sent him students to tutor, the last two in preparation for the examinations they held for admission to the artillery schools and Mézières respectively. Additionally, he had read *Belles-lettres* and could teach drawing and fortification<sup>809</sup>. Some of the school's best students distinguished themselves in the study of mathematics. Six were selected in the spring of 1759 for the distinction of receiving awards following a successful examination by three *maréchaux des camps*, including the director of engineers, in acknowledgment of their application in their studies and their zeal. Three of the students were presented with an engineer's *planchette* and alidade, both in copper, and three others with an engineer's compass, and all of them copper cases filled with brushes, pencils, colours and china ink, and a copy of the deliberation approving that measure<sup>810</sup>.

There were, of course, those who conducted themselves in a less than stellar manner; one student, de Boutigny, progressed well in draughtsmanship, military

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<sup>806</sup> AN MM 659, 11 August 1772, 150-151.

<sup>807</sup> AN MM 659, 19 October 1765, 89.

<sup>808</sup> AN MM 659, 26 January 1767, 97.

<sup>809</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 13 September 1778, 169.

<sup>810</sup> AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 144 v<sup>10</sup>, 17 May 1759, 124-125.

ordinances, German, and riding, but had lessened his efforts in maths upon renouncing his goal of becoming an engineer<sup>811</sup>. However, neither cases such as that, which fell within the expected range of schoolboy behaviour, nor rather more serious incidents of staff insubordination<sup>812</sup>, troubled the functioning of the school as much as its numerous reorganisations did. The late 1760s were probably the most turbulent point in the school prior to 1776, with Choiseul asking for a new *Plan d'Études* after the union with La Flèche and the *Conseil* protesting that it was hamstrung by the unforeseen resignation of d'Aubigny. The minister's acerbic tone in his correspondence points to a near-total breakdown in their working relationship: "Si je n'étais pas convaincu depuis longtemps que votre méthode actuelle ne vaut rien et si presque tout le monde ne pensait pas de même, je me donnerais bien de garde d'en adopter une autre"<sup>813</sup>. He nonetheless approved the new *Plan*, which featured 12 maths professors, over a third of the 31 new professors employed after 1769<sup>814</sup>. With the arrival of Monteynard in late 1770, a more harmonious relationship was established, one which gives credence to comte Philippe-Henri de Grimoard's claim that the *École militaire* was closed by Saint-Germain "au moment où M. du Pont ... le portait à sa perfection"<sup>815</sup>.

### Part III: The Curriculum, 1778-1785

After Saint-Germain's reforms, the growth in student numbers (from 34 on 1 April 1778 to 160 by October 1781)<sup>816</sup>, the lack of sufficient faculty to teach all of the

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<sup>811</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Extrait du Registre du Directeur Générale des Études de l'École royale militaire, 1 April 1772.

<sup>812</sup> Among the worst internal crisis in the history of the school was the rebellion of several professors against the orders of de Dromgold in October 1774. The uprising was led by the professors of mathematics Bertrand and Cannebier. Details are in: AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau à St. Germain, 17 March 1777, 62-63. AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 30 March 1779, 192-193.

<sup>813</sup> AN MM 680, Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l'hôtel à Marly, 16 June 1769, 9. The *Conseil* further exasperated him with its repeated pleas for the creation of another preparatory *collège* to supplement La Flèche in Nanterre, Choiseul repeatedly refusing and finally declaring that the king desired that "ma lettre fut la loi d'après laquelle l'administration de l'École royale militaire eût à opérer". Ibid., Lettre de Choiseul au Conseil de l'hôtel à Marly, 30 June 1770, 43.

<sup>814</sup> Ibid., État des Professeurs qui ont paru le plus mériter, par leur capacité, d'être admis à l'École Royale militaire, 7 September 1769, 23. The other professors numbered 5 for German, 3 for *dessin de paysage*, 6 for fortification, 3 for military ordinances, 1 for history and geography, and 1 for writing. This *État* does not list the *maîtres* for the physical disciplines, i.e. dancing, fencing, *voltige*, or equitation.

<sup>815</sup> Philippe-Henri de Grimoard, "La Vie du comte de Saint-Germain" in *Correspondance particulière du comte de Saint-Germain*,... 88.

<sup>816</sup> These numbers come from SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire sur les moyens d'instruction et sur la distribution de l'emploi du temps pour la compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes à l'École militaire depuis leur arrivés le 6 Janvier 1778 jusqu'au mois de Septembre 1781.

re-established courses<sup>817</sup>, and the uncertain financial situation due to the loss of its former tax exemptions and other fiscal privileges<sup>818</sup> all meant that the administration considered the viability of the *École militaire* to be somewhat precarious. The changes carried out since 6 January 1778, when courses began again in the re-established school, had not proved entirely satisfactory in a review of the school's curricular and instructional development carried out in 1781. The programme was now only two years long; although each class was not supposed to have more than 20 or 25 students, they often numbered 40 due to a lack of *maîtres*. Lessons of the same genre, especially in abstract sciences which were to follow on each other with no more than a one-day interval, were often interrupted for two or three days. The lack of professors often forced different classes to be combined in one classroom, resulting in the depredation of the books, papers and maps used by students, which also led to a waste of lesson time. The shortage of personnel further meant that students were not always able to follow the same professor for each subject, considered an indispensable element of the school's pedagogy. Finally, the *cadets-gentilshommes* destined for the artillery and navy only received 2 hours a day of maths lessons, an unsatisfactory amount considering that the students of provincial *collèges* and the artillery schools received 6 hours a day<sup>819</sup>.

This was the context for the final major instructional and curricular changes in the school. One other causal element which helped effect the modification of the curriculum was the new social composition of the school: the teaching of the government-maintained *élèves du roi* alongside the fee-paying *pensionnaires*. The change itself consisted of the implementation of two different but parallel programmes of study in the *École militaire*, which for the first time was not dictated by the students' ability or behaviour but by their future career. Though the two programmes were not completely disassociated, as some courses were common to both tracks, it in fact

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<sup>817</sup> Ibid. The company of *cadets-gentilshommes* set up in the *École militaire* in 1778 was formed into two divisions by 8 May 1780, when the students numbered one hundred. Each division was separated into three classes; however, due to a lack of faculty, the six classes were reduced to four.

<sup>818</sup> Although the royal *déclaration* of 1 February 1776 confirmed all of the *École militaire*'s endowments (*dotations*), donations, concessions, alienations, and other rights and income provided it by the Edicts of 1751, the *Conseil* still had to insist to Montbary that its privileges, immunities and exemptions be restored, as it was functioning on a day-to-day basis, in order to avoid paying fees which it had previously been exempted from; the storehouses were empty, and what was purchased second-hand was of inferior quality. Montbary agreed, on the condition only that the *Conseil* provide a *mémoire* and supporting documents on each *réclamation*. AN MM 674, *Mémoire*, 26 November 1778, 175; AN MM 674, *Une lettre du Conseil à Montbary* 7 January 1778, 119-120; AN MM 674, *Lettre de Montbary au Conseil*, 18 January 1778, 122.

<sup>819</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, *Mémoire sur les moyens d'instruction ... jusqu'au mois de Septembre 1781*.



instituted the formal split between the instruction for students destined for a technical career in either the engineers, navy, or artillery, and that reserved for the rest of the students, overwhelmingly destined for commissions in the line regiments or other postings. The date of this reform, then, can be taken as the moment when a dedicated technical component specifically aimed at preparing candidates for competitive examinations to the advanced institutes which opened the door to a career in the technical branches was adopted in the *École militaire*. It would no longer be the case that all students received a broad, generally noble and military education with some technical components included due to their potential utility for a minority of the students' admitted by the school<sup>820</sup>. What is particularly telling is that the proposed modification reflected not only the administrative difficulties resulting from the second foundation of the school, but also the perceived unsuitability of the technical elements of the curriculum as instrumentalised up to that point.

The career implications of the social composition of the school were put in plain terms. The *compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes* being composed of two sorts of students, the *pensionnaires* were described in terms reminiscent of the student body of the riding academies. Scarcely any of them were future candidates for the technical branches; “l’objet de leurs parents n’est même que de les former à la subordination militaire, aux exercices du corps, principalement au manège, et de leur procurer quelque teinture des sciences que l’on enseigne”<sup>821</sup>. The *élèves du roi*, on the other hand, were more likely to serve in a branch which required knowledge and talent, “c’est pourquoi il est nécessaire de les appliquer plus particulièrement aux espèces d’études qui peuvent les leur procurer”. However, because strict parity and equality were to be maintained between the *pensionnaires* and the *élèves du roi*, their instruction in ordinary classes was to be identical<sup>822</sup>; their sole distinction was to be that they should “assister plus

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<sup>820</sup> Only two years after the Ordinance of 30 January 1761 exempted the graduates of the *École militaire* from having to attend the *école des élèves* for artillery candidates at La Fère and admitted them directly as *sous-lieutenants* in the artillery schools after sitting the necessary examination, it was recommended that those students produced by the *École militaire* who were judged to be insufficiently instructed be made to pass through the *école des élèves* before applying for a posting as *sous-lieutenants* in the artillery. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Mémoire Élèves de l’École militaire, 21 July 1763.

<sup>821</sup> Prior to 1778, rich, socially well-connected students had occasionally been admitted by the *Surintendant* to receive “leçons d’exercice du corps, de l’allemand, et des mathématiques”, as in the case of the Prince of Nassau. AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 19 January 1761, 67.

<sup>822</sup> The regulation concerning the equality among the two kinds of students dictated that they were to be entirely maintained in the *hôtel* without any dependence on their families, and were to receive no money on any pretext. Another regulation in the same spirit had earlier been stipulated with regards to the *cadets-gentilshommes* in the regiments; those cadets whose families were in a position to aid them were

souvent au genre d’instruction analogue à celui du service auquel ils se destinent”<sup>823</sup>. This was despite Ségur’s view that the *pensionnaires* “ne sont effectivement de la composition, ... de cette maison royale; et la pension qu’ils payent, ... est une reconnaissance qu’ils n’en font point partie”<sup>824</sup>.

This stipulation evolved into two related but distinct curricula by October 1781, with further specialisation in the technical instruction according to the specific branch the students were to serve in. This development can be traced by the lists of student numbers, the number of professors and *maîtres* available, and the subject classes and their frequency as given for 1778, 1779, 1780, and 1781. On 6 January 1778, with the arrival of 11 students from the provincial *écoles militaires*<sup>825</sup>, there were 15 professors or *maîtres*, and the schedule consisted of three maths lessons following Bossut’s course per week, two lessons per week in fencing, dancing, writing French, equitation, and English, and five lessons every fortnight for the rest of the subjects<sup>826</sup>. A few months later, on 1 April 1778, the number of students had increased to 34, and there were now 19 professors, with the schedule remaining the same but with the addition of French grammar to the curriculum, taught twice a week. On 14 September 1778, the number of cadets had nearly doubled, totalling 60, with 20 professors. The frequency of maths lessons remained the same, but riding and English lessons were now given twice in five days, those being the most frequent classes in the school<sup>827</sup>. The rise in student numbers, the frequency of lessons, and lack of professors together were approaching the point where a decision on specialised tracks, both to improve the use of the limited resources available and to better deliver the necessary curricular content, came to be made.

The limited number of hours devoted up to that moment to the study of mathematics by the artillery and naval candidates in the *École militaire* was only one aspect of the problem with their instruction. The content was the other facet of the

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not to be exempt from sharing common quarters with their comrades, nor be permitted any luxury or distinction which would differentiate them and reduce the equality among them. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance ... portant création d’une compagnie de cadets à ... l’École royale militaire, Article VIII, 17 July 1777, 4; SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance..., Article XIX, 25 March 1776, 13.

<sup>823</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire sur les moyens d’instruction et sur la distribution de l’emploi du temps pour la compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes à l’École Militaire depuis leur arrivés le 6 Janvier 1778 jusqu’au mois de Septembre 1781.

<sup>824</sup> AN MM 675, Lettre de Ségur au Conseil de l’hôtel, Versailles, 19 January 1782, 168.

<sup>825</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 7 January 1778, 119-120.

<sup>826</sup> These were geography, drawing, German, and fortification. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire sur les moyens d’instruction ... jusqu’au mois de Septembre 1781.

<sup>827</sup> Ibid.

difficulties in professional preparation that they faced. Candidates to be admitted to the advanced, specialised schools preparing future officers for the technical branches had to undertake competitive examinations in order to be admitted. The examinations for the artillery and naval schools were administered by the *académicien* Étienne Bézout, who was also the author of the textbooks studied in preparation for those exams<sup>828</sup>, while the examinations for Mézières were administered by the abbé Charles Bossut, formerly a professor there and also a member of the *Académie royale des sciences*<sup>829</sup>. Thus, each branch had its own course of studies necessary for preparation to be admitted to the particular schools that prepared its future officers<sup>830</sup>. However, at the *École militaire*, only Bossut's course had been taught since its re-establishment, and it was considered urgent to begin teaching Bézout's course to the artillery and naval candidates, as his course was as important for the candidates for those two branches as Bossut's was for the engineering candidates. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that at the *École militaire* only a small minority of students destined for service in a technical branch were in fact sent to Mézières. Since 6 January 1778 there had only been two candidates for the *génie*, against 40 for the artillery and navy, of which 19 were admitted to those schools<sup>831</sup>. With that imperative in mind, Bézout's course was adopted on 8 May 1780 and a mathematics class was formed specifically for the artillery and naval candidates. They would continue attending the other courses during the day, and attend the special class from 5 to 7 in the evening. As this was still below the amount of technical instruction given in the artillery and naval schools, however, the course offering was

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<sup>828</sup> For more on Bézout's work on naval mathematics and his composition of the textbooks for the naval candidates, see Liliane Alfonsi, "L'enseignement scientifique et technique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans les écoles des Gardes de la Marine: le rôle essentiel d'Étienne Bézout (1730-1783)", in *III<sup>e</sup> Congrès de la Société française d'histoire des sciences et des techniques* (Paris, 4-6 September 2008).

<sup>829</sup> Upon Bézout's death on 27 September 1783, Bossut presented himself as one of the contenders to succeed to his positions as examiner for the artillery and naval schools; however, Pierre Simon Laplace was appointed examiner for the artillery and Gaspard Monge for the navy. Though Bézout and Bossut had written new works on taking over their predecessors' posts as examiners, Laplace and Monge continued to use Bézout's books. Details on Laplace's lobbying for the post are given in Denis I. Duveen and Roger Hahn, "Laplace's Succession to Bézout's Post of Examineur des Elèves de l'Artillerie", *Isis*, 48 (1957): 416-427.

<sup>830</sup> On the administration of the examinations for the artillery, navy, and above all Mézières in this period, see Dominique Julia, "Sélection des élites et égalité des citoyens. Les procédures d'examen et de concours de l'Ancien Régime à l'Empire", in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée*, 101 (1989): 341-345.

<sup>831</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire sur les moyens d'instruction et sur la distribution de l'emploi du tems pour la compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes à l'École Militaire depuis leur arrivée le 6 Janvier 1778 jusqu'au mois de Septembre 1781.

modified once again<sup>832</sup>. The curriculum as described in the *emploi du temps* for the approximately 150 to 160 students present in the *École militaire* in October 1781 consisted of eleven subjects, distributed over five days of work per week; these were maths, fortification, drawing, dancing, geography and history (and *belles-lettres* as well), German, French grammar, fencing, riding, English, and writing. Military exercises and the *voltige* were described as recreational (and thus not counted in the eleven subjects) and were carried out on free days, while riding, English, and writing were subject to special arrangements, leaving eight subjects to be arranged in a uniform manner.

The October 1781 *emploi du temps* formalised the split between technical and non-technical students in the *École militaire*. While maintaining the functional uniformity which dictated that “l’instruction des classes ordinaires doit être la même pour tous, et les uns ne doivent être distingués des autres”, it instituted two different sets of courses, depending on the eventual destination of the students. The students had their lessons arranged by a *tableau des leçons* for the two divisions into which the company of *cadets-gentilshommes* was split (each of the division’s three classes consisting of approximately 25 students). Each class had four lessons a day, so that the eight basic subjects (maths, fortification, drawing, dancing, geography, German, French grammar, and fencing) were covered by each class in two days, the lessons of the first day being repeated on the third day and those of the second day on the fourth and so on, leaving no more than a one-day interval between each subject. Each lesson was given in a two-hour block so that each of the three classes had their lessons given simultaneously, as shown in this chart, from 7 to 9 and 10 to 12 in the morning, and 2 to 4 and 5 to 7 in the afternoon:

1<sup>er</sup> Jour – De 7 à 9 h.

- Maths ..... 1
- Danse .....2
- Fortification ..... 3

De 10 à 12 h.

- Grammaire française ..... 1
- Géographie ..... 2

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<sup>832</sup> This was despite, not because, of the professors’ input. Timbrune had requested the professors’ opinions on the most useful and practical plan to follow, but this request had only served to further divide them. Ibid.

- Allemand ..... 3

De 2 à 4 h.

- Fortification ..... 1
- Dessin ..... 2
- Danse ..... 3

De 5 à 7 h.

- Allemand ..... 1
- Escrime ..... 2
- Géographie ..... 3

2<sup>e</sup> Jour – De 7 à 9 h.

- Danse ..... 1
- Maths ..... 2
- Dessin ..... 3

De 10 à 12 h.

- Géographie ..... 1
- Grammaire française ..... 2
- Escrime ..... 3

De 2 à 4 h.

- Dessin ..... 1
- Fortification ..... 2
- Maths ..... 3

De 5 à 7 h.

- Escrime ..... 1
- Allemand ..... 2
- Grammaire française ..... 3

Candidates for artillery service and the navy, however, were to attend their own lesson, which was held twice daily, once in the morning and again in the evening, when other classes were attending lessons in mathematics, fortification, drawing, and dance.

Artillery and navy candidates were to continue attending lessons during the time they were not in their special session, namely for geography, German, French grammar, and fencing. Two professors were assigned to teach this separate lesson, with the total number of professors and *maîtres* then employed totalling 26; eight were used to conduct lessons on ‘free days/holidays’ and to substitute professors who might fall ill during the normal school week, and one of these was the second professor of

mathematics for the artillery and navy candidates. He was not only to substitute the regular professor but also to work as necessary during the free days<sup>833</sup>.

As a result of the re-organisation, students who were not destined for service in a technical branch of the military had five lessons in two weeks on the eight basic subjects, and eight more for reading books and writing letters on the free days. Those in the technical branches, on the other hand, had 20 lessons on mathematics, and five lessons each on German, geography and history, French grammar, and fencing; they also had eight to spend on reading, unless they were naval candidates, in which case they had eight English lessons (the choice of lessons was formulated after consulting directly with Bézout). Finally, those cadets who arrived without knowing how to write received eight lessons on writing from the *maître d'écriture*. Each professor and *maître* who worked the hours set by the *tableau des leçons*, meanwhile, had 16 hours of work in two weeks, though it was possible that they should work more hours if they were called upon to substitute another professor who fell ill. A final modification to the lessons came about as a result of these changes. The arrangement set by the *tableau des leçons* meant that the cadets would receive at most three riding lessons a fortnight which was insufficient in the *écuyer*'s opinion; desiring the minimum to be four riding lessons a fortnight, their proposed remedy was to limit instruction in the *manège* to the 120 cadets who were not meant to join the technical branches<sup>834</sup>. This could be done without prejudice to the equality between the *pensionnaires* and the *élèves du roi*, as it would only affect the students aiming to join the artillery, navy, and *génie*. Indeed it was considered necessary that the latter group give up the *manège* in order to be able to attend their daily mathematics lessons. If the number of candidates for the technical branches was less than thirty or forty, it was suggested to deprive those who were destined for the infantry and who showed no promise whatsoever in riding from equestrian instruction as well<sup>835</sup>. By adopting the separation between two elements of the student body, the *Conseil* was prioritising neither one nor the other, but arranging its

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<sup>833</sup> Ibid., sub-headings 'Tableau des leçons', 'Classe pour les aspirants à l'artillerie et à la marine' and 'Jours de Congé'.

<sup>834</sup> The baron de Moyria in fact suggested excluding all students for the technical branches and the infantry as well from riding lessons, but according to the report on education in 1785, only future military engineering students were kept from practicing equestrian. AN MM 675, Lettre de Ségur au Conseil de l'hôtel, Versailles, 17 November 1781, 153.

<sup>835</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Mémoire sur les moyens d'instruction et sur la distribution de l'emploi du temps pour la compagnie des cadets-gentilshommes à l'École militaire depuis leur arrivée le 6 janvier 1778 jusqu'au mois de septembre 1781, sub-heading 'Manège'.

available resources in time and personnel to the best of its ability, while attempting to maintain and further its pedagogic and associated goals.

In the final stages of the curriculum's application, the limited goals and pragmatic spirit which were the abiding characteristics of the pedagogical philosophy developed in the *École militaire* continued in evidence. As the "Discours Préliminaire" of a report on the instruction in the school from 1783 to 1785 put it, the programme of studies, set at two years, considerably limited the time dedicated to the individual subjects considered necessary to perfect the education of a *gentilhomme militaire*. Professors thus restricted themselves to the most indispensable elements in their lessons, and considered their task accomplished if those students who showed some positive disposition and talent possessed the elements of the *sciences de longue haleine*, but above all a sure method to develop their own knowledge in those subjects when left to their own devices. What might be termed the "humanising" purpose of the educational programme is also described: "C'est sur cette base d'éducation que port l'instruction particulière des élèves, de façon qu'ils s'habituent à trouver leurs intérêts personnels dans le plan du bien général, et que pour quelque genre de service qu'ils soient destinés, ils commencent de bonne heure à être humains et patriotes". It was only the cultivation of talents which required differentiation according to the students' future branch of service; otherwise the whole of the education given was described as uniform and general<sup>836</sup>. The common elements, as the "Discours Préliminaire" described them, were not the contents of any particular subject but rather the moral qualities inherent to the whole of the educational programme. The comments on the teaching of geography for instance reflected both the general goals of the education imparted and its limits. The author of the report thus emphasised the utility of presenting to the students ideas which they could grasp and utilise, as well as the importance of exercising their memory with facts which they needed to know, and could retain. It was not just the constraints of time which dictated this, as each different element of the study of geography demanded considerable mental application and a substantial amount of memorisation; even with such efforts, it would not be possible to master the multitude of details the discipline comprised. The unofficial motto of "on ne se propose pas de faire des élèves des

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<sup>836</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 148, 'Discours préliminaire', Enseignement tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui dans cette Maison, 1785.

savants” was repeated, as were the limited goals of the education, which were to simply inspire in the students a taste for knowledge, and open the path to their careers<sup>837</sup>.

The 1785 report confirmed that the dispositions set out in the *Mémoire* of September 1781 had been adopted and implemented without major changes. Students were divided into two divisions of three classes for each subject of study and for their physical exercises, taught by the same professor. The first class was composed of new students, the second of those who had already spent a year in the *École militaire*, and the third of those who had to be kept there beyond the prescribed time-limit due to age or other circumstances. In following the *cours des études*, most students received one two-hour lesson every other day for a given subject, with the exception of those who were to be sent to the technical branches. They each had four hours of mathematics lessons per day. The student meant for the *génie* had no dance, fortification, French grammar, or riding lessons, while those for the artillery and navy studied French grammar but not drawing<sup>838</sup>. Latin was reintroduced, likely due to the influence of the ingress of the alumni of the provincial *écoles militaires*, but it was not part of the curriculum and its study was relegated to free days and holidays solely for those students who had been exposed to it in their previous education<sup>839</sup>. English was taught on the same basis, outside of the set curriculum and only to those prospective naval candidates who already had some familiarity with the language<sup>840</sup>. The biggest change with regards to all previous curricula was the introduction of *droit public*. It was taught by two professors, Junker and Floret, one for each division. The time allotted to it was taken from that formerly dedicated to fencing and dancing; the two hour sessions of vigorous exercise being considered too much for students, these were consequently reduced to one hour, the other hour henceforth being dedicated to the study of *droit public*. It was arranged so that the students received two hours of lessons in the subject every other day as they did for all the other academic subjects. However, they were not taught in a single two-hour block, but in two one-hour blocks, in the morning and evening. The report acknowledged in a margin note that “il sera impossible d’achever ce cours de sciences politiques, pendant le séjour que font ordinairement les élèves dans cette école”, but nonetheless expressed the desire that the cadets learn:

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<sup>837</sup> Ibid., sub-heading ‘4°. Histoire et Géographie’.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid., ‘Discours préliminaire’.

<sup>839</sup> Ibid., sub-heading ‘Classe de Latin’.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid., sub-heading ‘3° Langue Anglaise’.



... que le bien-être de la société, et de chaque individu, est essentiellement et inséparablement lié à l'observation de l'ordre; à graver dans leurs cœurs les principes de la justice, de l'honnêteté, et de la bienfaisance; à leur donner des notions vraies et utiles, des affaires politiques, les plus intéressantes.

They were to take those principles from the individual elements of the course, consisting of *droit naturel* and *morale*, *droit politique* or the theory of civil society, the *droit de gens nécessaire* or the basis of international relations, an introduction to the constitution and current affairs, the *droit des gens conventionnel* or the system of peace and commercial treaties, summary reflections on the rights of Princes, and finally a description of the functions, duties, and rights of ambassadors and other public servants. Lacking an elementary textbook, however, the lectures simply consisted of dictation in the first, morning, lesson, with explanations on any elements which remained unclear in the second, evening session, likely precluding any detailed consideration of the listed course content<sup>841</sup>.

The division of the study of mathematics according to the students' future branch continued as set in 1781. Ver Kaven taught Bossut's mathematics course to the candidates for the *génie*, in the two two-hour blocks of lessons given daily. Although this arrangement was evidently the result of the *Conseil*'s awareness of the necessity for the most specialised instruction given to its technical candidates yet, and of the central, indispensable place of mathematics for admission to that branch, its description of some of the course's elements could be surprisingly non-technical. Algebra was described as imparting the spirit of combination and discovery, a suitable if rather general description of its mathematical function, but geometry was described in much the same way that it had been by de Meyzieu in the *Encyclopédie*. It was again described as the best logic possible, which taught order to the mind and imparted the quality of just reasoning, forming the candidate's judgement. This conception did not detract from the process of preparing the candidate however, as once the necessary subjects were covered in the lectures the time remaining in the year was spent reviewing the material learnt and being regularly examined by the professor<sup>842</sup>. Artillery and naval candidates

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<sup>841</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Droit public'.

<sup>842</sup> It consisted of the study of arithmetic, algebra, geometry with trigonometry, algebra applied to geometry, conical sections in the first year and, differential and integral calculus, and mechanics and hydrodynamics based on works by d'Alembert and Euler in the second year. To master hydrodynamics, knowledge of infinitesimal calculus was considered essential. Ibid., sub-heading 'Mathématiques pour les élèves qui se destinent au Génie'.

were finally taught Bézout's course by Agetet and Monge in preparation for admission to those branches' schools, the subjects covered being arithmetic, geometry, rectilinear trigonometry, and their application to the drawing of plans and to *nivellement*. Naval candidates additionally had to prepare for spherical trigonometry and navigation. Upon completion of their programmes at the technical schools, they would then be examined on all those same subjects and additionally on algebra, algebra applied to geometry, and mechanics and hydrostatics. To prepare the candidates, lessons were tailored to the abilities of the students, who were taught all the elements progressively, then made to review them, and finally demonstrate the principles themselves to their professors. As in all the other lessons given in the *École militaire*, weak students were paired with stronger ones, a practice which was supposed to aid not only academic progress but also social development by strengthening friendships and establishing a debt of gratitude<sup>843</sup>.

The mathematics course for non-technical students was professed by Le Gendre and Grou, substituted by Dez. As with all the substitutes, Dez gave correspondence lessons on holidays and free days. The students were taught arithmetic, geometry, and algebra up to equations of the second degree. Those students who made the most progress for their part could be introduced to more advanced elements of algebra, its application to geometry, conical sections, spherical trigonometry, mechanics, and more if time allowed. Professors tailored their methods so that demonstrations which were useful and comprehensible to some students but not to others were complemented by an approach which made the necessary principles understood by those students who had not immediately grasped the content. Above all, professors were not to move from one principle to another unless they were certain that the first one had been understood<sup>844</sup>. All in all, then, the mathematical content for the majority of the students continued to be fairly basic and rudimentary; they had the opportunity to learn some of the practical applications of mathematics in their lessons on fortification. This began with a short history of ancient fortifications, followed by an exposition of the rules and principles of modern fortification. Everything considering the *enceinte* of *places* was explained, as well as the breadth of walls and methods of construction and the angles which composed them. The fortifications of a main site were covered, followed by the exterior

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<sup>843</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Artillerie et Marine'.

<sup>844</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Mathématiques pour les élèves destinés pour la cavalerie et l'infanterie'.

works. Each work required a particular knowledge to understand its object, construction, and the advantages and inconveniences of its form and position.

Everything was explained to students with great precision and as distinctly as was possible. The students were made to draw *plans* and profiles. They were then taken to the *polygone* in the *cours de récréations*, which the students themselves had built under their fortification professors' instructions<sup>845</sup>. There the first notions which they had been given were better explained by giving form to each work and permitting explanations which would be easy to understand by tracing the *plans*. Their first year of study of this subject concluded with an introduction to irregular fortifications, so that students could better exercise their imagination, and the study of maps. The second year of the subject covered field fortifications, the attack and defence of *places*, and operations on the terrain<sup>846</sup>. A discipline which was often considered allied to the technical subjects, however, that of drawing, was not taught that way outside of the fortification lessons. Instead, its study began with the principles of the figure. The duration of this phase of study varied according to the progress of each student. The second year concerned the drawing of landscapes. Near the end of that year, it was necessary to see nature and study it; the *militaire* had to make his observations of the terrain. The study of the figure and landscape thus taught them how to distinguish objects and not confuse them. It accustomed the eye to exactness (*justesse*) and prevented them falling into error due to a mistaken observation<sup>847</sup>. According to those principles, it is the benefits to mental organisation and ocular training which receive the greatest emphasis, an approach which complemented the more technically-grounded method taught in the fortification lessons.

#### Part IV: Chapter Four Conclusions

The final stages of the curriculum's application demonstrate the degree to which the *Conseil* was willing to modify and adapt the set of subjects deemed indispensable to the students as well as the stability and continuity of several basic pedagogical concepts evident throughout the *École militaire*'s existence. These are the basic nature of the education provided, the filling of the students' days so as to prevent idleness, buttressing moral qualities through *émulation*, and the heuristic nature of the instruction

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<sup>845</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Exercices Militaires'. On completion, it was nicknamed the "Fort Timbrune".

<sup>846</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Fortification'.

<sup>847</sup> Ibid., sub-heading 'Dessin'.

given<sup>848</sup>. This reflected the continuous balancing act imposed on the *Conseil* by the criticisms made of the school's education by outsiders, its own continual search for improvements, and the limited nature of the time and resources at its disposal. This meant the partial or total rejection of some criticism, such as that by one observer who considered that the school's education was too military (and thus a source of rudeness)<sup>849</sup>. Though the education provided in the provincial *écoles militaires*' education was indeed less military than that which was found in the Parisian school - to the extent that they were mocked for being labelled "écoles militaires" under monkish tutelage<sup>850</sup> - the *cadets-gentilshommes* were described by the ordinance of 25 March 1776 as forming an "école d'obéissance et d'instruction", an "école des officiers"<sup>851</sup>.

Furthermore, the opening of the *École militaire* to the *pensionnaires* was not simply a result of financial considerations or the desire to improve the possibilities of socialisation, but was rather calculated to establish a solid *émulation* between the *élèves du roi* and the *pensionnaires*, in order to make their advancement and distinction depend on their personal merit, and thus create a form of perpetual competition open to all of the nobility under the king's eyes<sup>852</sup>. The degree of merit which the students demonstrated through their conduct, service, study, and exercise, would be the main determinant for the military posts they would take<sup>853</sup>. In such conceptualisations, technical considerations undoubtedly played a part, but as throughout the history of the institution, only as an element of a broader effort to impart moral as well as professional qualities to the students. The achievements which merited recognition and reward were those open to students both whilst they pursued their studies in the school, as well as when they embarked on their professional careers. Further research remains to be done in order to determine to what extent the literary works studied in the school reinforced

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<sup>848</sup> Bizot's maths exams may be seen as part of an effort to reinforce the heuristic principle: "beaucoup d'élèves feront des opérations dont le principe et la théorie leur sont suffisamment connus pour opérer, mais dont ils auront peine dans ce moment cy de rendre compte, soit parce qu'ils n'ont point encore assez réfléchi, soit par le défaut d'habitude de rendre leurs idées par écrit". Giving them the opportunity to explain their ideas would better reinforce the ideas' principles. AN MM 669, 30 November 1771, 21.

<sup>849</sup> The author of the 1768 report quoted Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois* on the effect that the Greeks' exercises for their children's bodies, especially for war, resulted in their rudeness. Those exercises needed to be tempered by others which would shape their *mœurs*. AN K 149 n° 2<sup>5</sup>, 1768, xiii.

<sup>850</sup> "Cette inscription, 'École Militaire', tracée sur la porte de quelques monastères, est le comble du ridicule". Anonymous, *Mémoire sur la suppression de l'Hôtel de l'École royale militaire*, Paris 1788, 7.

<sup>851</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du roi, portant création des cadets-gentilshommes dans les troupes de Sa Majesté, Articles XIV and III, 25 March 1776, 9, 2-3.

<sup>852</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du roi portant création d'une compagnie de cadets et d'un corps d'instruction à l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, 17 July 1777, 1-2.

<sup>853</sup> *Ibid.*, Article III, 2.

such tendencies, or, in the case of *Télémaque*, revealed the unfiltered or attenuated influence of authors like Fénelon<sup>854</sup>. Whatever the case may have been in that regard, however, there is no denying that the *Conseil* worked hard work to reward merit, foster progress, improve the institution, and promote royal authority in a different field. This was through the many and varied charitable initiatives it undertook in addition to its educational mandate.

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<sup>854</sup> “Lû un commencement d’extrait de *Télémaque*, histoire d’Idoménée par le chevalier de Cambis, et qui demontre dans cet élève beaucoup d’esprit, de mémoire de setniments, et plus de style que l’on n’en a à son âge”. AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 27 July 1761, 114.

## Chapter 5: The Administration of the *École militaire* as a Charitable Institution

“Ce n’est pas assez d’avoir fait le bien quand on peut faire le mieux”

- The *Conseil* to Choiseul, 21 August 1760. AN MM 680

The charitable nature of the *École militaire* was a part of its nature and function partially inspired by the institutional precedents of the *Invalides*, Saint-Cyr, and Louvois’s *cadets-gentilshommes*. Its association with the edict of 1750 presented it as another effort by the king to recognise and reward his officers’ sacrifices in his service. The proofs of nobility, poverty, and military filiation were the bases for its charitable status, as they helped ensure that those who sought the school’s aid were those *nobles d’épée* whose rightful place in the army was ostensibly being threatened by rich bourgeois and *anoblis*. Once set up and running, the importance placed on the school’s charitable mission is revealed by the administration’s request for direct royal aid in the spring of 1759, in breach of the terms Article XI of the edict of 22 January 1751<sup>855</sup>. Its own aid to the students, in the form of the 200 livres *pension* as well as the *croix de Saint-Lazare*, was intended to demonstrate royal satisfaction with students who merited his benevolence (and hence to bind them more closely to his service), as well as to provide support for their careers and progress through the ranks<sup>856</sup>. Its charitable purpose, in short, was a means for furthering its pedagogical mission, maintaining military professionalism, and reinforcing the attachment of the nobility to the king. Although educational institutions are intrinsically beneficial to society, that does not necessarily entail that they are charitable institutions, especially when they serve, either through design or circumstance, an artificially limited demographic; it is these aspects which make the *École militaire*’s extra-pedagogical charitable endeavours worth examining more closely.

The *École militaire*’s charity has been widely acknowledged and integrated into previous studies. However, most works’ focus on the charitable impulse, apart from studies of the school’s origins, is principally on the students after their exit from the *École militaire*. Robert Laulan is one of the few to mention its charity for non-students

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<sup>855</sup> The relevant passage reads: “de façon qu’il sera et demeurera totalement détaché de nos finances” and “qu’il ne puisse être reçu, ni accepté pour icelui, aucunes fondations, dons, gratifications, qui pourraient lui être faites par quelques personnes, et pour quelque cause que ce soit”. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Édît du roi, Article XI, 22 January 1751, 7.

<sup>856</sup> On the distribution of the cross of Saint-Lazare, see Robert Laulan’s “Comment on Sortait de l’École royale militaire de Paris, 1759-1788”, *Actes du 82<sup>e</sup> Congrès national des sociétés savantes, Bordeaux* (1957): 35-43.

in the school, stating that its treasury resembled a “bureau de bienfaisance ... soit qu’elle payât certaines dettes d’officiers très pauvres et méritants, soit qu’elle consentit pensions et secours à son personnel civil, ou même à des parents de professeurs et de maîtres ayant perdu leur soutien”, but without further studying these actions<sup>857</sup>. In practical terms, this means that the difficult balance the school’s administration often had to strike between its immediate needs and future liabilities is underplayed, and even studies that present a balanced overview of the post-academic relationship between the administration and students elide the difficulties that fulfilling its obligations often entailed, at least prior to 1764. Furthermore, there is no study that properly treats the wide range of charitable works that the *École militaire* backed and funded, and which may be grouped into three categories: firstly, the students, the primary beneficiaries due to statutory requirements; secondly, former staff, to whom the school was beholden to for their services; and thirdly, a broad category of people with differing degrees of association with the school, be they former staff’s families, manual labourers, and others who sought the school’s financial aid. These last two categories have been largely overlooked, and analysing the nature of the requests they made, and the administration’s replies, will help further develop the image of the charitable role that the *École militaire* played. It will be seen that it was not only a charity for military purposes, but also for those segments of society which had the opportunity to interact with it and which consequently represent a broader cross-section of the population of the *ancien régime* than might at first seem apparent.

#### Part I: Definitions; Charitable acts to non-students

The range of charitable acts that were effected through the agency of the *École militaire*, across a much wider demographic than simply that of adolescent men on their way to join their regiments, have as their sole point of unity and commonality the body to which they were addressed, and the response which it gave to each one. This was not the king, or the Minister of War, although requests were at times sent to the Ministry, but the *Conseil de l’hôtel*<sup>858</sup>. Its method for dealing with requests was to adhere to the statutes and regulations governing the school in the area concerned, where these existed and were applicable, or to consider the merits of a case in light of the claimant’s status,

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<sup>857</sup> R. Laulan, “La Loterie de l’École Militaire, mère de la Loterie Nationale”, *Revue des Travaux de l’Académie des Sciences Morales & Politiques et Comptes Rendus de ses Séances*, 1 (1951): 38.

<sup>858</sup> The requests addressed to the minister were usually forwarded to the *Conseil*.

previous service if any, and the *hôtel*'s present resources, always conscious that its decisions were subject to ministerial approval. In rare cases where there was a variance of opinion between a minister and the *Conseil*, this body always sought to minimise the *hôtel*'s liability and fiduciary exposure, and to maintain its rights and independence when it believed any particular request might threaten the same. Student's requests concerning pensions understandably rarely, if ever, rose to that level of seriousness, but some claims by former professors were of a nature to become a substantial drain on the *hôtel*'s finances. Thus, it is not the financial nature of the overwhelming majority of the requests that makes them interesting, or provides their common basis, but the body to which they were addressed. With this in mind, the chapter will not discuss the progress of students' careers (though an evaluation of some students' status in the ranks will take place); what will be examined is how the benefits granted to them by the administration reveal its intentions. First, however, its actions with regards to the claims of those without statutory right to claim its beneficence will be made, in order to sketch the parameters which it set itself in cases where it had neither any clear constraints or guidance, other than the precedents generated by its own previous charity. A look at its interactions with former faculty and staff members will then take place before proceeding to a study of how it fulfilled its statutory obligations.

The definition of charity as employed in this chapter is used to serve as a general category encompassing the whole of the aid, financial and otherwise, which was within the *Conseil*'s remit and discretion to provide to all parties, internal or external, who either requested relief or which it deemed worthy of indemnification. In practical terms, the nature of the issues which came to its attention ranged from those born from its own sense of an obligation for social responsibility, to rewards for excellent work, to increases or extensions in meritorious parties' *pensions*. Due to the discretionary nature of what were essentially gifts, the *Conseil* felt no obligation to grant all the claims which reached it, or to award the amounts requested in the cases it did admit. Even when dealing with categories of standing liabilities regulated by statute, such as *pensions*, it had the latitude to decide whether or not to maintain, augment or extend the same, seeing as requests typically fell into one of those categories and were made by parties who believed the statutory amount to be insufficient. Overall, the examples of its concessions to requests for charity reflect what may be described as the institution's social conscience, playing the role described by Annie Duprat as "ce modèle



d'humanité ... incarnée par l'homme d'État philanthrope: n'a-t-il pas tout pouvoir de faire le bien et donc de réaliser le plus grand bonheur possible pour le plus grand nombre d'hommes"<sup>859</sup>.

Without attempting to broach the subject of the *École militaire*'s finances, the nature of the beneficent acts carried out under its aegis nonetheless entails a consideration of some of the financial nomenclature applicable to its charitable work. This will help better present the meaning of some of the terms used in the documents to describe the monies disbursed by the school and their particular varieties. Many of these terms come with modifying descriptors, some of which were rarely if ever used in the context of the school's business, while others are key to understanding the nature of its work. We may begin by comparing two terms which were of a completely voluntary nature, "*grace*" and "*gratification*". The edition of 1740 of the dictionary of the *Académie Française* defines the term *grace* as "a favour done for someone without being obligated to do so", and *faire grace à quelqu'un* as "to grant that (to someone) which he could not justly request"<sup>860</sup>. A *gratification* is a "gift or liberality which is granted to someone", and the dictionary provides as an example sentence "that which he has been given is not a fixed *pension*, but only a *gratification*". The variants it lists are "*annuelle*", "*ordinaire*", and "*extraordinaire*"<sup>861</sup>, though a fourth one was also used by the *École militaire*, the "*gratification libre*"<sup>862</sup>. The definition of the term "*traitement*" is given specifically in the context of the court, as "certain honours which are bestowed on persons of distinction"<sup>863</sup>; evidently, the *traitements* in the school's gift were not of that order, but served rather as a reflection of its nature as a royal institution, and a mark of the discretion it was granted by royal authority to reward those it saw fit to recognise in that manner. In practice however the term *traitement* was often used as synonymous with those payments of a stipulated and regular nature.

The two most common sorts of statutory payments to individuals were known as "*appointements*" and "*pensions*". The first is defined simply as the salary or *pension*

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<sup>859</sup> Annie Duprat, "Le temps des philanthropes. La philanthropie parisienne des Lumières à la Monarchie de Juillet", *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 285 (1991): 387.

<sup>860</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. I, s.v. "Grace".

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. "Gratification".

<sup>862</sup> Several *gratifications* were also labeled as *charitable*, but this serves more to denote their purpose than their nature; that is, it denotes the reason they were given and not the type of *gratification* they were according to or in addition to the four listed above.

<sup>863</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. II, s.v. "Traitement".

given to someone; however, in familiar usage, it also served to describe “a man who aids by his spending, the maintenance or subsistence of another, who would not be able to exist comfortably by his own means....”<sup>864</sup> A *pension*, over and above the variety of forms which it took, had several fiscal definitions: the first was “the sum of money one gave in order to be lodged and nourished”, which explains why the school’s students were sometimes described as *pensionnaires*<sup>865</sup>, even if they did not pay for their tuition, lodging, or meals. The second meaning was “a certain portion taken each year on the fruits of a *bénéfice*”, which described the school’s income from the abbeys attached to its chapel, and the third “that which a king, prince, or great lord, gives annually to someone, either as a *gratification* or as a reward for services, or to make them party to his interests”<sup>866</sup>. Though the first two meaning applied in different forms to the *École militaire*, it is the last sense which is most applicable in its dealings with former students and members of its faculty and staff. Like a *traitement*, it was given in its function as an extension of the royal administration and authority. The different forms it took, for their part, were termed “*viagère*”, “*reversible*”, “*en survivance*”, “*alimentaire*”, “*charitable*”, and “*de retraite*”. Of these, the most common variant in the *École militaire* was the *pension viagère*, which was awarded to students on their exit from the school and their joining their corps or regiment. The *pension viagère* was conditional on the *Conseil* receiving *certificats de vie* (*certificats de bonne conduite* were later required as well) sent by the students’ superior officers each year<sup>867</sup>.

Two other terms sometimes encountered are interesting in that they escape both the wholly voluntary nature of the first category and the obligatory status of the second. The first is the word “*dédommagement*”, simply the “reparation of a damage” and its variant “*dédommager*”, the action of “repairing the damage, to indemnify”<sup>868</sup>. It is one of the least commonly used terms by the *Conseil*, which is understandable as it conveys

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<sup>864</sup> Ibid., T. I, s.v. “Appointement”.

<sup>865</sup> The term “*pensionnaire*” similarly described students’ whose *pensions* at an institution were paid for by another party’s funds. This was the case after 1776, when the provincial *Écoles royales militaires* were established and their students’ *pensions* were paid for by the *École royale militaire*’s foundation. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 28 March 1776.

<sup>866</sup> *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. II, s.v. “Pension”.

Another term with a subsidiary sense designating payments of an annual nature is ‘*gage*’: “... Salaire, ce que l’on donne aux domestiques par an pour payement de leurs services.... le payement que le roi ordonne par an aux Officiers de sa Maison...”. Its primary sense was “Ce que l’on met entre les mains de quelqu’un pour sûreté d’une dette”. Ibid., 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. I, s.v. “Gage”.

<sup>867</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145 Article XIX, Édité du Roi, 22 January 1751, 9-10; AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau d’administration à St. Germain, 30 April 1777, 73.

<sup>868</sup> *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. I, s.v. “Dédommagement”.

the notion of its liability for actions undertaken by it. The word “*recompense*”, for its part, carries two distinct meanings, the first being “the good done to someone, in recognisance of a service or good action”, and “compensation or *dédommagement*”<sup>869</sup>. Finally, a term that fits into neither of the two general categories above nor carries the implications of repair associated with *dédommagement* and *recompense* is “*réforme*”. Like *pension*, it gathers several definitions in one word, with several being specific to a military context. It firstly signified a reduction in troop numbers at the end of a conflict, and from this use came its subsidiary senses: reformed officers were those who had obtained their *réforme*, that is, when the corps in which they served was reduced, they kept their brevets along with certain *appointements*, but less than those officers still in the ranks. Similarly, it could refer to officers who, though never embodied in any corps, had nevertheless received a lieutenant’s brevet, or a captain’s or colonel’s commission in a certain regiment<sup>870</sup>. This last definition in particular applied to some of students in the *École militaire*, who were commissioned *sous-lieutenants* in a regiment before leaving the school, their acceptance in their corps being conditional on their satisfactorily concluding their studies.

Having established these definitions, the use that the *Conseil* made of its discretionary funds for charitable endeavours by distributing or refusing aid to members of society who may or may not have been dependent on the *hôtel*, but were not students, faculty, or officers, can be examined. Even before it or its administration existed, there was an opportunity to provide aid to a party involved in its construction. A worker in the school’s quarries had suffered an accident requiring the amputation of a leg, and Duverney learning of his case, desired his chief contact Tournehem to “soliciter quelque charité” for the poor worker. Although Tournehem’s decision is unknown, Duverney’s request was supported by the supervisors of the quarries and speaks to his charitable instinct<sup>871</sup>. In the event, the *École militaire* was soon dispensing monetary succour. A widow named Daube was a resident of the town of Vincennes whose husband had been killed on 3 October 1753 while engaged in supplying wood for the company of *Invalides* who guarded the *hôtel*. Her predicament was such that without him, she was

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<sup>869</sup> Ibid., T. II, s.v. “Récompense”.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid., s.v. “Réforme”.

<sup>871</sup> AN O<sup>1</sup> 1602-159 to -162, Letter by Duverney to M. Miquierand, Plaisance, 10 October 1751. In 1771, the school would pay for a stonemason Le Clerc’s treatment in a *maison de la charité* after he was injured. AN MM 669, 17 September 1771, 12.

unable to subsist and provide for her two young children, and she consequently requested some sort of relief from the *École militaire*. The *Conseil* considered her plea, and concluded that her request should be accepted out of regard for the principles of equity. It thus decided to grant her a *pension* of 30 livres per annum during six years, beginning on 1 January 1754<sup>872</sup>. Another widow, surnamed Renard, faced a similar predicament when her husband, the *chef de cuisine* of the school until his death on 5 April 1756, left his wife to care for three young children without any means of support. The *Conseil*, having received her *mémoire* on the matter, decided to accede to her request out of pure commiseration and in recognition of the good services rendered by her late husband. It awarded her not a *pension* but a *gratification charitable* payable at once in the sum of 200 livres<sup>873</sup>. A third widow who called upon the *hôtel* for aid was a lady of advanced age who suffered from numerous infirmities called Desmarthes. She was in the most extreme misery following the death of her husband who had been employed in the *Direction des Cartes*, the administration of the tax on cards which helped fund the *École militaire*, in Belfort. She submitted a *mémoire* requesting 200 livres to the prince de Montbarey who forwarded it to the *Conseil*. It is not known if her request was successful, but her *mémoire* had been submitted together with a letter from the marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre, backing her request<sup>874</sup>. Such support, typical of the patronage current among powerful figures and their clients in the *ancien régime* which went by the term of *protection*, was not in itself enough to guarantee the success of an applicant's cause, but it helped to raise an individual request's profile and possibly make the body deliberating on the case consider it more carefully.

The range of requests which reached the *Conseil*, and the varying levels of urgency and nature of the situations which spurred them on, may be gathered from three examples. First is the case of one washwoman called Madelaine La Simple, who had suffered from illness for a considerable length of time; the costs for her treatments had been covered by the *École militaire* both in Vincennes and at Saint-Maur, where her doctor had sent her to benefit from a change of air. Her health not being re-established, she had requested permission to retire, which was granted. The *Conseil* additionally decided to give her a *gratification charitable* of 100 livres<sup>875</sup>. A completely different

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<sup>872</sup> AN MM 658, f°5 r°, 7 December 1753, 3.

<sup>873</sup> AN MM 658, 17 May 1756, 56; AN MM 664, Conseil d'administration, 19 July 1756, 1.

<sup>874</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil, Marly, 31 May 1778, 150.

<sup>875</sup> AN MM 658, f°41 v<sup>10</sup>, 12 September 1755, 36.

sort of arrangement, providing a private entity with relief by permitting a business contract, was the *hôtel*'s grant of a lease for 3 years on a marsh to a *jardinière-maraîcher* named Ferret. The *hôtel* owned a marsh on the *Gros Caillou* acquired from the owners of the land used as the site of the new buildings of the *École militaire*, and it had granted the right to its exploitation to a party called Salmon with a lease; he had however departed with three years left on that contract. Ferret had taken over the exploitation of the marsh, along with Salmon's debt, which totalled 700 livres for the worth of the produce of that plot. Ferret informed the *Conseil* that he could not face his creditors or meet that liability without being granted the right to the lapsed contract, and requested that he be given the right to take it over. The *Conseil* agreed, and granted Ferret the title and lease on the same conditions previously enjoyed by Salmon<sup>876</sup>. Another sort of request, one which was fairly common, was that submitted by a *Chirurgien-Aide-Major* Calville to the *Conseil*. Calville had obtained the place of *Chirurgien-major* in the regiment d'Eu, and asked the *Conseil* for a *gratification* to permit him to join that regiment. In view of the care, exactitude, and assiduity with which he had performed his role as a doctor's assistant in the *hôtel*, the *Conseil* agreed to his request and granted him the sum of 1,200 livres as a *gratification extraordinaire*<sup>877</sup>.

By 1770, the regularity with which the *Conseil* found itself aiding the domestic employees and workers who were injured in the service of the *hôtel*, forced to retire through old age, or who left their wives and children in indigence by their untimely deaths, led it to establish a charitable fund for their benefit. Beginning on 1 January 1771, it would pay 1,200 livres into the fund, taken from the revenues of the *hôtel*, to be used for charitable gifts to be distributed as the *Conseil* evaluated the needs of different unfortunate subjects<sup>878</sup>. This initiative, along with the nature of the majority of the grants it gave in the above examples, can help explain how the *Conseil* arrived at the decision to aid individual supplicants. Of the five cases considered so far, two of them involve an explicit acknowledgment of services rendered to the *hôtel*, that of the widow Renard and the doctor Calville, while two others implicitly recognise a debt for services

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<sup>876</sup> AN MM 658, Mémoire, f°17 a°, 2 July 1754, 14-15.

<sup>877</sup> AN MM 659, 2 April 1761, 41.

<sup>878</sup> AN MM 659, 10 September 1770, 128-129; AN MM 662, 10 September 1770, 84. This deliberation was approved on 3 April 1771. The *Conseil* labelled it as a fund for the "aumônes de l'hôtel". AN MM 669, 23 July 1771, 2.

rendered to the *hôtel* in the case of the widow Daube and the washwoman La Simple. Even if the aid granted to La Simple by the *Conseil* for the payment of her medical treatment is considered as a straightforward investment in her health in order to recover a worker, and the granting of her request to retire as simply bowing to the circumstances, her *gratification* went beyond a reductionist interpretation of such actions and points to a more philanthropic inclination. As for the explicit acknowledgments of service, these serve to establish some of the parameters which the *Conseil* applied in its consideration of the requests of those in its employ or their dependents, namely the quality of their work. Though not strictly *quid pro quo*, as the *Conseil* always felt that it had the discretion to deny even the best-presented cases, they do serve to illustrate the requests which were most likely to succeed and the elements which the *Conseil* most positively responded to and indeed sought to encourage among the rest of the *hôtel*'s employees. In Renard's case, the key element was her husband's good services for the *hôtel*, while for Calville it was the way he had carried out his functions with care and exactitude. In both cases, it was the quality of the work and the *Conseil*'s satisfaction with it which operated in the petitioner's favour.

This is underlined by comparing cases in which requests were granted to one in which a favour was denied. In 1778, the widow of a former professor of fortification, Lanselles, requested the *reversibilité* of his 800 livres *pension*, awarded to him in 1776<sup>879</sup>. Professor Lanselles had subsequently presented demands for compensation in the amount of 23,000 livres for material, work, and posts he claimed to have held, demands which were squarely rejected as exaggerated and without foundation. He had additionally been ordered to remove his belongings from the *hôtel* and leave his lodgings here, which he had refused to do. On his death and his widow's request for the continuation of his *pension* in her favour, the officially stated reason for the denial was in fact to discourage other widows from soliciting similar grants<sup>880</sup>. The acrimonious nature of his relationship with the *École militaire*'s administration, however, makes it likely that additional reasons for refusing her request, especially considering its other charitable gifts, were the fact of its own previous generosity in awarding him a generous *pension*, and the wish to deny her any grounds for reviving his requests.

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<sup>879</sup> His *pension* was higher than that of most of his colleagues, who were only on 500 livres.

<sup>880</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 28 October 1778, 172.

The most significant example of the lengths the administration was willing to go in the dispensing of charity to those it was favourable disposed to concerns a former worker Mareschal in 1780. Upon retiring after 25 years of working for the *École militaire* due to his age and infirmities, he requested that the *Conseil d'administration* pay for his entry to the hospital of Bicêtre as a “bon pauvre”. The *Conseil* agreed to his request as a reward for his long services, and then proceeded to ascertain in what conditions the poor were received in Bicêtre, “pour qu'ils y soient convenablement”. Learning that Bicêtre lodged, fed, and maintained a man for life on the payment of a one-time sum of 150 livres, and gave him his own bed, the *Conseil* was satisfied that those it received were well-treated and kept there. It thus resolved to request from Montbary the authorisation to pay the sum of 150 livres, and to additionally provide Mareschal with 72 livres per annum on its charitable fund of 1200 livres so that he could procure other emoluments if he wished<sup>881</sup>.

Though the majority of the *Conseil's* dealings with members of its faculty, staff, and officer body were in the form of compensation negotiations, it still had plenty of opportunities for proving its generosity to those in its employ suffering from one kind of misfortune or another. For example, from its establishment, the *École militaire's* unmarried staff, faculty, and officers were ordered to attend communal meals at set times, (a practice which was discontinued before being re-established in 1759) the *table commune* being paid for by the retention of 100 francs per quarter from each professor's *appointements*<sup>882</sup>. However, several officers were excused for divers reasons. At Vincennes, one Gobélius, professor of German, was unable to attend the *table commune* due to illness, and was permitted by the *Conseil* to have his meals in his lodgings until the school moved to the new site of Grenelle. He was additionally awarded a *gratification* of 300 livres as an aid for his sustenance<sup>883</sup>. A decade later, Vivefoy, the *sous-écuyer* of the school, obtained a similar exemption, but for rather different reasons. Due to the nature of his work in the stables and the tasks associated with his post, his schedule did not permit him to join the *table commune* and constrained him to dine alone in his lodgings. He consequently requested that he be freed from the requirement to dine with the rest of the staff and be awarded the *table franche*. The *Conseil* agreed, and granted him not merely a simple *gratification*, but a *gratification annuelle* of 400

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<sup>881</sup> AN MM 660, 4 October 1780, 24.

<sup>882</sup> AN MM 659, f<sup>o</sup> 179 v<sup>10</sup>, 26 November 1759, 6.

<sup>883</sup> AN MM 658, f<sup>o</sup> 40 v<sup>10</sup>, 25 August 1755, 35.

livres for his dining expenses<sup>884</sup>. A different sort of alimentary charity was the exemption granted from the imposed fast during Lent. The fast was instituted and maintained as an essential element of the religious discipline upheld in the *hôtel*, but as its strict observance could be deleterious to those in a state of weakened health, the *Conseil* ordered that communal meals be prepared for those declared to be unfit for a fast by the *hôtel*'s doctor. This *table en gras* was to consist of two meals, one in the morning and one in the evening, and be served only on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays<sup>885</sup>. The *table en gras* was instituted with the agreement of the archbishop of Paris, who was requested, and permitted, the exception to the Lenten fast every year.

Several more examples which demonstrate the *Conseil*'s charity towards those it engaged in the "various branches of its administration" can be presented. One of its *Garde-magasins* by the name of Conte, responsible for the safe keeping of the weapons used by students in their exercises, was given an increase in his *appointements* from 800 to 1,000 livres per annum in order to enable him to better support his large family<sup>886</sup>. An adjunct for German, Gawron, whose employment had been terminated in a general *réforme* of the faculty, was granted 100 livres more than his colleagues' *gratifications* in order to enable him to return home. The *Conseil* specifically remarked that this bonus was a sign of the satisfaction with which it regarded his services<sup>887</sup>. A prospective professor named Bauvin was given a *gratification annuelle* of 200 livres due to the complete indigence he found himself in, with instructions that he was to be employed at the first opportunity by the *Directeur-général des études*<sup>888</sup>. In addition, there are numerous other examples of its charity towards staff members suffering from illness, who were listed as employed but in forced inactivity, as was the case with a professor of German called Weber<sup>889</sup>, or compelled to retire from the school, in the case of the professor of Latin Berthelin. The 600 livres *gratification* given to Berthelin was in

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<sup>884</sup> AN MM 659, 21 January 1765, 80-81. It was granted to his person, not his post. AN MM 679, 23 July 1765, 137.

<sup>885</sup> AN MM 658, 15 February 1754, 5.

<sup>886</sup> AN MM 658, F<sup>o</sup>143 V<sup>10</sup>, 30 April 1759, 120. The funds for de Conte's *gratification*, as another document described it, came from the profits the *hôtel* made on its sale of old students' uniforms and clothes. AN MM 659, 31 March 1760, 16-17.

<sup>887</sup> AN MM 659, 16 June 1760, 20.

<sup>888</sup> AN MM 659, 3 July 1760, 21.

<sup>889</sup> Weber's 500 livres *pension*, awarded in 1761, was continued while he convalesced at Provins and later Chenoise. It was delivered on the sole condition of a *certificat de vie*, and was thereafter paid directly to him, not to the institution where he was interned. AN MM 659, 7 April 1763, 73. He had left the institution where he had been interned by 11 March 1763 due to "le délabrement qui y regne". AN MM 666, Conseil de police, 11 March 1763, 227.



recognition of his 10 and a half years of service, and a mark of the satisfaction with which his conduct, morals, and talents were esteemed<sup>890</sup>. All of these examples signal, to one degree or another, the level of charitable activity that the *Conseil* engaged in, often but not always in response to requests directed to it by those faced with an urgent need for relief. What is interesting to consider, following on from the way it couched the justification for some the aid it gave to its domestic and menial workers or their families, is the terms it chose for the description of its *gratifications* or other benevolent derogations from established practice in the *hôtel*. The requests for relief (not for improved compensation) addressed to the *Conseil* were normally couched in terms of necessity, not merit; however, when the *Conseil* listed any reasons for its award of aid, it presented its magnanimity as a reward for the supplicant's merit (or their relative's merit, in the case of requests by family members), as recognition of their time and labour, as an addition to otherwise standard compensation, and as a charitable gift. A final condition that it commonly attached to its aid was that it was a unique and free-standing grant, which did not establish any precedent and could not form the basis for further or future requests. Any such requests were considered on an individual basis and granted or rejected on their merits.

The negotiations which the *Conseil* engaged in with staff members seeking improved pecuniary returns were of a similar nature, but distinguished from purely charitable entreaties in that the supplicant usually framed his request in either the language of merit, or in terms of compensation for expenses or additional work. A typical example is presented by the *sous-écuyer* Vivefoy, who prior to his exemption from the *table commune* had already obtained a financial grant from the *Conseil*. In the summer of 1760, Vivefoy requested the same *traitement* that the Inspectors of Studies enjoyed, and backed the request by signalling his zeal, attention, good conduct, and the quality of his work. Acknowledging his qualities, the *Conseil* acceded to his demand and granted him a *gratification annuelle* of 500 livres. It did so, however, solely as a personal favour to Vivefoy, and not in his capacity as *sous-écuyer*, so that future holders of the post could not claim the same *traitement*<sup>891</sup>. Some compensation deliberations were evidently of a routine, administrative nature, typically to do with reimbursements or the timing of certain payments (though these too could lead to thorny disagreements).

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<sup>890</sup> AN MM 659, 3 February 1767, 97-98.

<sup>891</sup> "...sans tirer à conséquence pour la place de son écuyer de l'hôtel, mais en faveur dudit S<sup>r</sup>. de Vivefoy personnellement..." AN MM 659, 7 July 1760, 21-22.

As the *École militaire* grew and underwent several changes, it also provided the funds for the staff and students of La Flèche, and then the provincial *écoles royales militaires*. It thus became involved in the occasional resolution of concerns in these schools.

One such case concerned the Abbé Macé, awarded a 500 livres *pension* in March 1777 for his services as professor of philosophy and librarian at La Flèche. He addressed a *Mémoire* to Montbarey requesting it be paid, as it had not been released by the beginning of 1778<sup>892</sup>. Macé had retired on the then Minister of War the maréchal du Muy's orders on 1 August 1775, and had consequently not been included on the *État des professeurs* apportioning the *pension* for all the employees of La Flèche after its closure in February 1776, leaving him without any hope for a *traitement*. The *Conseil* had nonetheless considered that the interests of equity demanded that his 14 years of service in that *collège* should not be without recompense, leading it to request the then-Minister of War, Saint-Germain, to award him a 500 livres *pension*. Saint-Germain agreed, and stated that the *pension* would date from 1 March 1777. However, another letter sent from the Ministry on 21 March stated that the *pension* would date from Macé's retirement in 1775, leading Macé to claim that back payment. The *Conseil* advised him to desist, and he claimed he would no longer solicit the back-payment. However, he then proceeded to write to Montbarey, a move which took the *Conseil* by surprise, given the honesty it had ascribed to his character<sup>893</sup>. Although the outcome of his case is not known, it is likely that the *Conseil* protested to Montbarey against the awarding of the back-payment given both its preference for adherence to Saint-Germain's original decision, and also to prevent Macé's duplicity being rewarded.

If one accounts for unexpected disputes, the majority of reimbursements were straightforward, as in the case of a captain of a company of *Invalides*, Riguae, who had paid for the transportation of several ill subalterns to the infirmary of the *Invalides* from Vincennes<sup>894</sup>, the chevalier de Montagnac, Lieutenant-Colonel of the regiment of Isle-de-France who had given a newly arrived student to the regiment an advance which the *hôtel* repaid<sup>895</sup>, or the cobbler David who had made shoes for all of the students leaving La Flèche in 1776<sup>896</sup>. In some cases, the services rendered in the employ of the *hôtel*

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<sup>892</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil, 26 January 1778, 122.

<sup>893</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 4 February 1778, 124-125.

<sup>894</sup> Riguae was owed 46 livres 10 deniers. AN MM 658, F<sup>o</sup>42 V<sup>10</sup>, 22 September 1755, 36.

<sup>895</sup> Montagnac had advanced the student Reviers 97 livres. AN MM 659, 12 February 1761, 38.

<sup>896</sup> David was repaid 500 livres, as he requested. AN MM 674, Lettre de St. Germain au Bureau, 64.

carried implications for the employees' heirs which may be differentiated from those granted to the next of kin of the *hôtel's* domestics both in degree and scope. This is evidently the case for those awards made by directly by royal intervention, but even those which were not could take on more of the nature of a retirement fund than a simple charitable stop-gap. One such advantageous deal was that which the professor of German Gobélius gained in 1768. He requested the appointment of a *survivancier adjoint* to succeed him in his post, and that he and his wife (blind and more aged than him) be permitted to reside in the *hôtel* after his retirement, as his age and infirmities no longer permitted him to carry out his duties. In recognition of the satisfactory way he had always acquitted himself, the *Conseil* agreed and granted him lodgings and all the other standard emoluments given to active professors. He was already receiving *appointements* of 2,000 livres as the most senior Professor of the school (200 livres more than the rest), from which 600 would be deducted for his *survivancier* on that party's appointment. Furthermore, in case he predeceased his wife, she would be granted a *pension viagère* in consideration of her husband's services in the amount of 700 livres (half of his deducted *appointements*)<sup>897</sup>. The positive memory of a former employee's work, even after their passing, could also continue to serve as an operative credit. Thus, the captain d'Arget of the regiment Boulonnais, son of a former *secrétaire du Conseil*, requested the *réversibilité* of his late father's 1,000 écu *pension* in a letter to Montbarey. The minister then presented d'Arget's case to the king, who, touched by the plight of his destitution and in acknowledgment of his father's services, granted him a 1,500 livres *pension*<sup>898</sup>. Thus, though he received significantly less than the worth of the original *pension*, he still enjoyed a much higher sum than that given to the vast majority of employees of the *hôtel* proper<sup>899</sup>.

Officers who had long service records antedating their employment by the *École militaire*, and who had served reliably in their posts whilst employed by the *hôtel*, made a great deal of their dedication in their requests for continued or improved wages. Antoine Fabre, a *sous-aide-major* in the *École militaire* since 1753, heavily emphasised his service in the regiment of Piémont from 1733 onwards, first as a volunteer and common soldier, and then as a sergeant, in ten campaigns during two wars. He had

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<sup>897</sup> AN MM 659, 1 August 1768, 111.

<sup>898</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, 14 January 1779, 183.

<sup>899</sup> The *Conseil* acknowledged its having received the decision and replied that it intended to conform exactly to the king's wish. AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 28 January 1779, 184.

already been granted the brevet and *pension* of a lieutenant *réformé à la suite* in his old regiment, which carried *appointements* of 240 per annum. However, due to his large family and lack of other resources, he requested the commission of a captain *réformé à la suite* (and its *appointements* of 450 livres)<sup>900</sup>. His request was backed by various other letters from fellow officers, including Croismare who labelled him a subject of distinction<sup>901</sup>. Although the official confirmation of his new brevet has not been traced, it seems that he obtained it, as a fellow *sous-aide-major* used Fabre's success as an example for his own plea. This was one Barbaste, who also had a long record of service as a common soldier and sergeant in the regiment Piédmont, 22 years, followed by 12 years of work on the staff of the *École militaire*; he particularly emphasised the three months of uninterrupted work in the infirmary which he spent with students who fell ill after being inoculated. Croismare also supported his application, and in the letter he wrote to Choiseul, he opined that a reward for Barbaste would redouble *émulation* among the officers of the *hôtel* and would signal that their work there was not simply a sort of retirement, but that they could expect to be honoured by the king's graces if they acquitted themselves well; several had already enjoyed promotions and improved *pensions* after having been granted the cross of Saint-Louis<sup>902</sup>. Barbaste, like Fabre, received his promotion, and indeed went on to be promoted *Capitaine en premier* in 1773 and to receive the cross of Saint-Louis, a more than respectable outcome considering his humble beginnings, and a fitting conclusion to 40 years of service<sup>903</sup>.

These examples would seem to suggest that the *Conseil* considered and appreciated the military service by those petitioning it even when this predated their entry into the *hôtel* when deciding on their request's merits. However, that this was not always or entirely the case is clear from its deliberations on several supplicants that it rejected, despite the petitioners' more-or-less distinguished service records. Its reasons for refusals also serve to describe the nature of some aspects of the institution and of the service carried out in its favour. This was the case with a former captain Valage of a company of *Bas-officiers Invalides*, affected to the sentry and guard-watch duties of the *hôtel* from its establishment at Vincennes. According to the *Conseil*, Valage based his plea for a *pension* on an 18 year record service in the *Garde du corps* and as an officer

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<sup>900</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, À Monseigneur le duc de Choiseul ministre &c., [undated].

<sup>901</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 28 June 1762.

<sup>902</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Lettre écrite par Croismare à Choiseul, 6 December 1768.

<sup>903</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 17 August 1774.

of the *Invalides*, as well as the examples of two officers, Tertre and Martinon, employed as captains of the students' companies who had requested and received *pensions*. However, the *Conseil* stated that it did not consider any claim from the multitude of requests it had recently received as unfounded as Valage's. Specifically, it dismissed out of hand the 12 years he had served in the *Garde du corps*, saying his service therein was foreign to the *hôtel* and that it owed him no recompense for the same<sup>904</sup>, especially as the reward for his time there had been the granting of his retirement to the *Invalides*. He had additionally enjoyed the privilege of commanding a company of *Bas-officiers*, which was not an advantage most of his comrades enjoyed. Furthermore, the comparison between himself and Tertre and Martinon was specious, as they had served directly in the *hôtel*'s employ, while Valage had been sent out from the *Invalides* to command his company for the guard of the *École militaire*, attached to the school, but not serving in it or being employed by it. As a result, he could only be regarded as an officer serving in the garrison of any post, and such officers who were not entitled to demand a *pension* on the revenues of the *place* where they served. Finally, three other captains of companies detached from the *Invalides* with similar or superior service records to Valage had not requested any *pensions*, as their *appointements* were paid directly by the king. It thus strongly urged Saint-Germain to deny Valage's request<sup>905</sup>.

A petitioner called Moissac who, like Tertre and Martinon had served as a captain of a student company in the *hôtel*, was likewise turned down, but on the grounds of his not being sufficiently indigent. Moissac had a service record of 21 years in 1773, dating back to his start as a volunteer in the Brionne regiment in 1744, progressing through the ranks until receiving a lieutenant's commission in 1773. The *Conseil* explicitly reserved judgment on his time in the ranks, stating that it did not feel entitled to opine on the merit of his 21-year career. He had entered the *École militaire* on 19 May 1773, and was commissioned as a captain with a *réforme* of 500 livres. Due to his debts, Timbrune had sought and obtained a *gratification* for Moissac totalling 1,200 livres from the *hotel*. He subsequently enjoyed a promotion to *Capitaine en second* with *appointements* of 900 livres, though this was due principally to the refusal of a more senior officer to take the post, and not to Moissac's merits. In sum, the *Conseil* considered that Moissac had already been very well treated by the *École militaire*, and

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<sup>904</sup> It labelled them "étrangers à l'École royale militaire qui ne lui en doit aucune récompense". AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau d'administration à St. Germain, 17 March 1777, 61.

<sup>905</sup> Ibid., 61-62.

that if he had not found employment there he would most likely have retired as a simple lieutenant; additionally, other officers with his rank had benefited less than he had from its benevolence, and were not given any *graces* following the termination of all the officers' employment in 1776. Finally, Moissac enjoyed a 1,400 livres *pension*, receiving 900 livres from the *École militaire* and 500 from the *réforme* of his last regiment, Berry. If he was indeed suffering from extreme misery, as he claimed, it was due to his having decided to remain and live in Paris instead of retiring to his natal province, as the rest of his colleagues had done on their *réforme*. In view of that fact, the *Conseil* considered that his request ought to be rejected in order to deny him the means of further prolonging his stay there<sup>906</sup>. This case, perhaps better than any, demonstrates the utilitarian and merit-based, even moralistic, view the *Conseil* took of the charity it disbursed, one which was not based solely on absolute standards of the applicant's poverty, but on services rendered specifically to the *École militaire*, moral evaluations of his character and behaviour, and their actual and prospective pecuniary wherewithal.

A different perspective on the *Conseil*'s dealings with the penurious element of its staff and officers is provided by the relief, or lack thereof, it provided for debts. Two examples of its willingness to engage in facilitating the lessening of the burden of debt have already been presented, that of the *jardinière-maraîcher* Ferret and of the captain Moissac. Though not all debts were of the same nature or scale, it seems that this sort of pecuniary handicap was the one most likely to result in an external intervention in the *hôtel*'s affairs by its superiors, either by the king himself or the Minister of War. Though none of the ones considered here rose to the level of an *affaire d'état*<sup>907</sup>, it was still fraught territory for the institution, for beyond implicating it in expensive disputes, it could potentially open it up to involvement in complex, extended legal actions as well as threatening its public image and the stability of the foundation. Thus, the considerable debts that the professor d'Albon had accumulated, their (unexplained) cause, and the deleterious example that they had had in the *hôtel* had led the *Conseil* to request his dismissal, which was duly pronounced by Choiseul on 18 November 1767. The next day, however, Choiseul expressed his desire that d'Albon be granted a *traitement* out of consideration for the number of years he had taught, the despondent state he found himself in, and the backing he had from several persons of stature. The

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<sup>906</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbary, 21 January 1778, 120-121.

<sup>907</sup> The Calzabigy affair was the only one which reached that degree of seriousness.

exact amount of the *traitement* was to be determined by the *Conseil*, but it was decreed that it should be at least enough to enable d'Albon to subsist<sup>908</sup>. Submitting to the ministerial decision, the *Conseil* decided to grant him a *gratification annuelle* of 400 livres, to be paid until it was decreed otherwise<sup>909</sup>. Less fortunate was the former *Garde-magasin* Conte, who had previously enjoyed the *hôtel's* charity. Conte's financial mismanagement led him to be declared bankrupt for a sum of over 100,000 francs, including a sum of 13,000 livres he owed to the *École militaire*. In view of his bankruptcy, the king decided that the 200 livres *pension* he had been awarded as a reward for his former services be annulled, and that any arrears in its payment that the *hôtel* may have owed him be stopped by the school's treasurer, as the school was without any hope of recovering the sums owed to it by Conte<sup>910</sup>. These two different outcomes reflect the degree to which the *Conseil* was without any control of its own resources when its superiors employed it as a tool of royal authority. D'Albon's case, though a possible example of charity, demonstrates only the minister's charity, not the *Conseil's*, but a more plausible explanation would be to view it as reflecting the effect of the patronage exercised on his behalf by powerful sponsors. As for Conte, although the *Conseil* would doubtless have requested the suspension of any payments to him, its decision was taken out of its hands by the king's direct intervention.

There is one case that demonstrates how the *Conseil* tried to negotiate with its superiors. It did not obtain its desired result, but it was reassured that the fears on which its protests were founded would not be realised. A former professor Junker had sent Montbary a *mémoire* requesting a *pension* for 1,000 livres funded by the *École militaire*, which had been granted. He had been successful in obtaining it despite the protests of two of his creditors; the king's apparent concern for the pecuniary distress that Junker found himself in had been enough to grant his *pension*. The *Conseil*, though desirous of conforming to royal orders, expressed its concern that its treasurer Biercourt would be targeted by Junker's creditors if he disbursed the funds, and that he would implicate the *Conseil* by appealing for protection from legal action. The *Conseil* furthermore did not consider that Montbary's letter ordering the payment of the

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<sup>908</sup> AN MM 659, 25 January 1768, 104-105.

<sup>909</sup> AN MM 659, 6 November 1769, 122-123. It was in line with the *pensions of officiers réformés* fixed in 1766 at 500 livres, though many were less than that amount. AN MM 674, Lettre du Bureau d'administration à Montbary, 31 October 1777, 109.

<sup>910</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, 28 January 1778, 123.

*pension* was sufficient guarantee or protection against legal action. It feared that ultimately, as a result of its entanglement in Junker's affairs, it would be liable not only for his *pension* but also for his debts. It consequently suspended any action on its payment in February 1779 until it received further instructions<sup>911</sup>. Montbarey replied some months later, in April, and repeated that the *Conseil* would pay Junker's *pension*. The king, considering the case, decreed that all of the *pensions* granted to former employees for their services could only be considered as *pensions alimentaires*, meaning that they could not be seized or otherwise alienated for any cause, unless it was specifically ordered by the king. If the former professor's creditors caused any difficulties on the account of the *pension*, Montbarey reassured the *Conseil* that they would cease on being informed of the royal decision<sup>912</sup>. This case exemplifies not only the interest that external parties could take in disputes involving the *hôtel*, but also the legal nature of the payments it disbursed; the differences among different sorts of *pensions* were not simply distinctions describing to whom, how, or over what time scale they were paid, unlike the distinctions between *gratifications*, but instead defined the legal characteristics and the statutory attributes inherent to each type of *pension*.

Though in its consideration of payments to alleviate others' debts the *Conseil* was for the most part reduced to reacting to circumstances beyond its control, it was far more proactive in another context. Beyond its charitable work on behalf of the students it admitted, the *hôtel* also engaged in another charitable endeavour for children, entirely overlooked in extant evaluations of this aspect of the institution. This was the dispositions it undertook in favour of the choirboys that served in its new chapel, adopted in anticipation of its completion in 1774. The choirboys numbered four, two aged 8-10 and two 10-12, to serve as acolytes, cross-bearers, and in other elements of the worship services. The chapel's deacon taught them religion and the plain-song, as well as how to read and write; he was furthermore answerable for their conduct. The choirboys were lodged near the deacon in the *hôtel* (the deacon received 1,200 livres *honoraires*, as well as various emoluments in the form of wood, salt, and wine). There, the choirboys were fed by the *hôtel* and clothed at its expense. Additionally, they were to be remunerated by the *École militaire*, the two oldest receiving 500 livres and the

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<sup>911</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 24 February 1779, 187.

<sup>912</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, 10 April 1779, 195.



younger ones 200 as a *gratification annuelle*, from which they paid for their own smallclothes, bedding, paper, pens, and ink<sup>913</sup>.

These measures, although generous and well in line with the provisions for the children that the *École militaire* was created to raise and educate, were subsequently taken further by the *Conseil* in its attempts to see to the choirboys well-being. On 4 July 1775, it described how its deliberation of 1773 had overlooked any provision for the choirboys' well-being in case circumstances no longer permitted them to continue serving in their roles. The *École militaire*'s choirboys already enjoyed some of the best conditions and compensation of any *enfants de choeur* in the large parishes of Paris; it nevertheless saw it as necessary to follow the example of some of the principal churches of the capital and assure the choirboys' *recompenses*, so that those children born into misery would not fall back into it. Specifically, its aim was that its aid would not be subordinated to the needs of the choirboys' families, who, pressed by necessity, could easily dissipate it. Thus, balancing considerations of a humanitarian nature with those of reason and justice, which dictated that the children's rewards be proportionate to the length of their services, it drew up a fifteen-point deliberation. The most relevant articles determined that on reaching the age of 14, the departing choirboy would receive the sum of 100 livres for each year he had spent in the *hôtel*; this also applied to those forced to retire before that age for any legitimate reason. That sum was in turn to pay for an apprenticeship in a trade, or to help them otherwise procure employment. Their parents were to be notified of the sum to be paid their sons, to help them obtain an apprenticeship; on its being obtained, they were to directly join their *maître*, or formalise their employment by a convention to assure the same result. If the child died, his monies were to be assigned to his heirs, but not to his family, as it was intended to his benefit exclusively<sup>914</sup>. That this was a durable initiative which survived the 1776-1777 upheavals is demonstrated by a deliberation of 26 June 1782 which notes the departure of one 15-year old choirboy Thomas le Gaigneur *dit* Morangis, who was consequently granted a *traitement* and replaced by nine-year old Jacques-François Xavier Grandel<sup>915</sup>.

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<sup>913</sup> AN MM 659, 10 March 1773, 156-157. Several others involved in the chapel's services but who were not lodged in the *hôtel* (e.g. the sub-deacon, cantor, or organist), were extended several courtesies (*douceurs* in the *Conseil*'s terminology) in order to facilitate their work there, particularly during winter; the principal one was providing them dinner at its expense.

<sup>914</sup> AN MM 659, 4 July 1775, 167-168.

<sup>915</sup> AN MM 671, 26 June 1782, 84.

## Part II: Charity to students

The *Conseil* was not opposed in principle to directly aiding the families of the other children in its care<sup>916</sup>, lending weight to its assertion that its help for the choirboys was to be protected from any possible detour from its intended purpose. The same resolution could arguably have been further based on a principle of limiting such aid to the families of those children who formed the main target of its philanthropic existence and donative endeavours, namely impoverished provincial nobles, especially those who had lost their heads of household. In any case, the difference between the treatment given to the choirboys' families and the students' families is rather striking, and again demonstrates the lengths that the *École militaire* went to in dispensing charitable help beyond its determined mission. Thus, one M. de Vaucleroy accompanied his son Henry-Antoine Eustache de Vaucleroy, who had been accepted to the school, to Paris; Henry-Antoine however was rejected after nearly a month of medical observation due to physical defects. Vaucleroy consequently represented to the *Conseil* that their journey, and his forced wait in Paris for the outcome of his son's medical evaluation, had exhausted his funds and did not permit them both to return home. The *Conseil* was moved by his situation, and granted him a *gratification charitable* of 200 livres<sup>917</sup>.

At the end of 1764, it informed the parents of four children by the names of Boilnard, Nolles, de la Roche, and Rose, who had been rejected on medical grounds as being unlikely to ever enter the king's service, of the *École militaire*'s resolution of 13 October 1764 that children rejected for reasons of ill-health, and whose families were unable to educate them, were to receive 200 livres per annum until they reached 16 years of age<sup>918</sup>. The father of de la Rose subsequently requested that, as his poverty forced him to wander different provinces seeking the succour of his extended family and he could not take his son with him on his travels, he be granted the 800 livres necessary for his son's admission to a religious house in Poitou as a lump sum. That amount was the total his son would receive over the course of the four years it would take for him to turn 16. The *Conseil* found the request reasonable and decided that the sum would be directly paid to de la Rose *père* when he arrived to collect his son from

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<sup>916</sup> This argument will not take into consideration the help it gave to the families of those employed by it or for its benefit, already evaluated earlier.

<sup>917</sup> AN MM 659, 30 June 1763, 75.

<sup>918</sup> AN MM 659, 3 December 1764, 80. This was, of course, the same sum it annually disbursed to its alumni who were successfully placed in the military on their exit from the *École militaire*.

the *hôtel*<sup>919</sup>. Some months later, Boislinard's father, who was an officer in the *hôtel des Invalides*, had not removed his son from the *École militaire*, despite being requested to do so by the *Conseil*. Boislinard *père* claimed that he was absolutely without the means to send his son to back to Berry, where his wife lived, or even to feed himself, if he did not receive some sort of *grace*. To fulfil both needs, the *Conseil* decided to grant him 150 livres for his son's voyage home, as well as the 200 livres *pension* as an advance on the first year. Furthermore, Boislinard *père* would continue to receive the stipulated 200 livres at the end of each year, conditional simply on a certificate of life for his son<sup>920</sup>, just as for all the other students who proceeded to military posts.

The provision for the education of rejected candidates for the *École militaire* such as Boislinard *fils* shows, just like the fund it created in 1770 for its domestics and their families and the *recompense* for its choirboys, both how it reacted to the demands of circumstance and how it sought to dispense charity as widely as possible within workable parameters. Its shifting provisions concerning its statutory charitable concern, the 200 livres *pension* for all graduates of the school, similarly demonstrates how it sought to adapt that disbursement to best serve the stated goal it sought to achieve. However, unlike most of the other charitable gifts it distributed, with the exception of some of the compensation for its staff and officers, it was also to be utilised to further control or guide its students' careers upon their reception into the military, and to reinforce the moral principles it had sought to inculcate and foster in the *hôtel*, principally *émulation* and subordination. Before considering its use in that role, however, its evolution and the shifts in the regulations governing it need to be considered, in order to better understand how it was actually applied in practice, as well as to compare its use with that of other, non-regulated charitable help that the *hôtel* gave its students. This is not so much in order to evaluate its efficacy, as that would entail an extended analysis of the students' careers and an evaluation of the school's success in that regard, as to consider how it functioned more narrowly in a benevolent role.

The earliest mention of the students' *pension* is in a *mémoire* of 23 April 1750. As the *École militaire*'s students would be drawn from impoverished families, and would consequently likely be without the means to purchase a commission, they were to be placed in posts which were either in the king's gift or not for sale. The 200 livres

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<sup>919</sup> Ibid.

<sup>920</sup> AN MM 659, 22 April 1765, 84-85.

*pension* was to be given to students starting out in the lowest commissioned rank, and to those placed in the *Bureaux des Affaires Étrangères* or with ambassadors abroad, paid annually, and disbursed until the students acquired the wherewithal to live without the *hôtel*'s aid. Duverney acknowledged that there were many more candidates to officer posts than vacancies, but held that that inconvenience was nothing compared to the embarrassment caused by shortages of officers in wartime<sup>921</sup>. The interest of his mind-set as revealed in that statement lies less with the apparent disregard for the difficult entry into an expensive career which faced the majority of the school's students (especially those sent to the cavalry<sup>922</sup>) than in the contradictory assumption that the *pension* was for the students' benefit upon their entry to the military while leaving unaddressed the fate of those unable to access their supposed destination, or who faced delays in taking up their posts. Incorporating elements of the *mémoire*, the edict of 22 January 1751 eliminated the references to the diplomatic service and changed the condition of the *pension*'s duration to an executive decision on the amount of time it was to be paid instead of the original criteria of a period that the students' found themselves in need of that support; it also stipulated that it was to be paid from the *hôtel*'s funds<sup>923</sup>.

The first deliberation in the *École militaire* concerning the *pension* was held in the autumn of 1758, in anticipation of the first cohort which was to leave in 1759. It opened by summarising the contents of the edict and then added that the *hôtel* was not in a state to furnish the necessary monies. For the 41 students it was preparing to send to the military in March 1759, the expense would total 8,200 livres per annum, a sum which would be unobtainable for the *hôtel* unless its resources were strengthened and augmented. Above all, the *Conseil* did not wish to leave its legal and moral obligation unfulfilled, out of consideration for the students' plight. It did not wish to send and place students in the regiments without providing them with the means with which to

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<sup>921</sup> AN K 149, Mémoire 'Collège académique', 22 April 1750

<sup>922</sup> The difficulty in placing the school's students in cavalry regiments was significant when officer vacancies were sought by *sous-lieutenants*, volunteers, and *cornettes réformés* attached to each regiment, even before considering the cost of a cavalry company. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 1768. To partially improve the prospects of the *cadets-gentilshommes* destined for the cavalry, it was proposed that the families of *cadets-gentilshommes* nominated for a place in a cavalry regiment send the Ministry proof that they were sufficiently well-off to maintain themselves in that branch. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Cadets-Gentilshommes Réflexions sur l'Ordonnance du 25 mars 1776 et le Règlement du 20 août, Article V. Then the students were to pass through their regiment's *École d'équitation* and once they were judged sufficiently well instructed by their regiment's commander their horses were to be cared for by one of their company's troopers, who would be paid by the *cadet*. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Article IX, Ordinance of 25 March 1776, 6.

<sup>923</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Édít du roi, January 1751, 10.

sustain themselves; it was feared that their indigence would serve only as a motive for their exclusion by the regiments' colonels<sup>924</sup>. To finance the first set of *pensions* it was to provide, the *Conseil* requested that the king grant the *hôtel* a 10,000 livres *pension* on an abbey<sup>925</sup>. It suggested that, by that measure, the treasurer could fulfil the terms of the edict, and that the king would retain the ability to terminate, or continue, the *pensions* in the event that students' ceased to merit them, or reached a position allowing them to live without them<sup>926</sup>. The *Conseil* thus re-established the notion conditioning the period a *pension* was disbursed with the recipient's need<sup>927</sup>, and inserted an element of conditionality through the addition of a requirement of merit for its continued payment. The advantage of the suggested funding, in the form of a general *pension* from an abbey, lay not only in the ease and swiftness with which it could be obtained, but also in the administrative control it granted the beneficiary institution<sup>928</sup>. The flexibility it provided for the disbursement and retention of *pensions* was vastly superior to an alternative in which students, all potentially chevaliers of Saint-Lazare, would have to give their individual consent to the suppression of their own *pension*, an inconvenient and unworkable outcome<sup>929</sup>.

The *Conseil's* suggestion was not only adopted, but the amount given to the *hôtel* was substantially greater than that which had been requested. Instead of a 10,000 livre *pension*, on 18 May 1759 the king granted the *École militaire* 10,000 écus from the royal treasury for the personal expenses of the students exiting the school, as well as 10,000 francs *sur les bénéfices* to meet the cost of providing the 200 livres *pensions*.

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<sup>924</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire sur la pension de 200 livres à accorder aux élèves à leur sortie de l'hôtel, 16 November 1758, 124. Another document recording the *Conseil's* deliberations earlier that same month presented two possible approaches to dealing with colonels potentially inclined to refuse to accept the *École militaire's* students: one, simply following the traditional path of permitting colonels' to dispose of subaltern posts at will, would facilitate the students' acceptance by their commanders. The other was to place students in regiments on royal authority and notify colonels of the students they were to receive. The second approach was adopted. AN MM 678, Mémoire sur la distribution des élèves dans les régiments, 6 November 1758, 125.

<sup>925</sup> An undated *mémoire* (likely written in the spring of 1759) put the expense for the 40 students leaving the school at 8,000 livres, and requested that 10,000 livres be granted *sur des bénéfices*. AN MM 678, Mémoire sur la pension de 200 livres promise par l'édit de création de l'École Royale Militaire aux élèves qui sortiront de cet hôtel [undated], 141.

<sup>926</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire sur la pension de 200 livres à accorder aux élèves à leur sortie de l'hôtel, 16 November 1758, 124.

<sup>927</sup> Ibid. The precise nature of the students' need, in other words the criteria for cutting off aid, was not specified beyond alluding to the students' progressing through the ranks or receiving an inheritance: "seraient à portée de s'en passer par augmentation de grade, succession ou autrement".

<sup>928</sup> This was in addition to the 20,000 annual *pension* which had already been granted to the chapel of the *École militaire*, endowed by the abbey of Liessies for 20 years beginning in 1755. AN MM 674, Mémoire, 2 July 1777, 85.

<sup>929</sup> Ibid., "... leur consentement pût être nécessaire à la suppression de leur pension".

Finally, the sum of 27,000 livres was advanced to it in anticipation of the same funds which were to result from the union of the abbey of St. Jean de Laon to the chapel<sup>930</sup>. This last amount was specifically to meet the expenses for the students' uniforms, clothes, and equipment, which the *hôtel* was not obligated to provide but which it felt compelled to, describing it as a *traitement* for the students<sup>931</sup>. The cost of furnishing the same to the 40 students leaving the school in 1759 was 30,000 livres, money which the *École militaire* did not have, and which it directly requested be supplied to it by the royal treasury<sup>932</sup>. It had originally calculated the cost of providing full regimentals, clothes, boots, and more at 1,000 livres per student, and consequently resolved to limit its present and future expenditure (it foresaw an annual passing-out of 50 students) to 300 livres for each student to buy his own uniform and only the absolute essentials (a sum which would come to 12,000 livres)<sup>933</sup>. However, by the time of its second deliberation on the subject, it decided to provide the students with a full uniform and some limited essentials, leading to the total of 30,000 livres. In a *mémoire* of 15 March 1760, the *Conseil* explained how the funds had been spent. It had decided to provide the students leaving for the infantry 500 livres, both in equipment and specie, and 650 livres for those headed to the cavalry<sup>934</sup>.

By obtaining the requested sums for both the *pensions* and the students' uniforms, the *Conseil* managed to both meet its stipulated obligation as stated in the edict, and to furthermore provide the essentials necessary for its first students as a charitable gesture to better enable them to begin their careers. It specifically qualified this expense however as *extraordinaire* due to the fact that the first cohort to leave was immediately to take the field, so that such expenses were not envisaged for those who

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<sup>930</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre de Belle Isle à Duverney, 18 May 1759, 140-141.

<sup>931</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire sur le traitement à faire aux élèves à leur sortie de l'hôtel, 16 November 1758, 124.

<sup>932</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire sur les frais à faire pour mettre les 40 élèves qui sont prêts de sortir de l'École Royale Militaire, en état d'aller prendre possession de leurs emplois [undated] 141.

<sup>933</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire sur le traitement à faire aux élèves à leur sortie de l'hôtel, 16 November 1758, 124.

<sup>934</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire, 15 March 1760, 193. Of the 39 students listed in the *État* of 18 May 1759, 10 were destined for the cavalry and 27 for the infantry, which, taking into consideration the sums for each branch mentioned in the *mémoire*, comes to 6,500 for the cavalry and 13,500 for the infantry, or 20,000 all told. This total excludes the two students sent to the artillery and *génie*. AN MM 678, *État des quarante élèves prêts à sortir de l'École royale militaire...*, 136-137.

In 1764, the aid provided to students joining their regiment was: "L'uniforme complet et le chapeau, six chemises, six cols avec la boucle d'argent, six mouchoirs, six paires de chaussons, un bonnet de coton, une paire de bas de fil gris, une paire de souliers, une paire de boucles de jarretières, une paire de boutons de marche, une épée argentée, un ceinturon, et un petit porte manteau, *les frais de leur route* jusqu'au lieu de leur destination (emphasis supplied)". AN MM 666, Conseil de Police, 1 March 1764, 284.

would later be sent to garrisons or other tranquil postings; it also did not desire to set a precedent and give families sufficiently well-off to aid their sons an excuse not to provide them with the essentials by relying on the *École militaire*. In any case, it would only be possible for it to continue said practice if the king assumed the expense, as he had for the first cohort<sup>935</sup>. Once the school reached financial self-sufficiency, it paid the costs for those expenses. On 7 September 1770, a measure in this vein was adopted by statute; it stipulated that the *hôtel* was to pay for all students' travel costs to join their corps, as well as provide them with a full uniform and other clothes<sup>936</sup>; the deliberation approving this payment for one Louis-Nicolas Davout dates from 18 February 1788<sup>937</sup>.

The 1759 crisis is perhaps the clearest example of the *École militaire's* precarious finances impacting its regulated functions as well as its capability to conduct charitable activities, and furthermore of its forced status as a supplicant before the king. Though it was forced to modify and shift, if not abandon, its priorities and initiatives in other contexts, as seen in the case of the study of tactics, it was fortunate to receive the funds it needed to meet its financial obligations to its graduates in the first occasion that it was required to do so, and to furthermore provide them with some basic aid necessary for them to acquire the supplies for their embryonic careers. At this point, the *pensions* were straightforward payments to all graduates who embarked on an "approved career", essentially those who joined the military, conditional only on the annual certificate of life. In 1761, however, another condition was adopted, taking them beyond the definition of a *pension viagère* proper. The payment was henceforth to be made conditional on the furnishing of a certificate reporting the former student's behaviour by his corps' major, and certified by his colonel. The rationale for this was that the *Conseil's* paternal inclinations and its interest in the students' progress after they left the *hôtel* impelled it to choose that method as an ideal mean for reinforcing the conduct of those who behaved themselves well, and of correcting that of those who were less well-behaved, by keeping itself abreast of their conduct in their corps. It simplified the

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<sup>935</sup> AN MM 678, Mémoire, 15 March 1760, 193. The difficulty that the school had in meeting its financial obligations at this date is exemplified by Duverney's report of 18 January 1759, where the payments to be made that month totalled 277,610 livres, while its available funds were only 110,879 livres, leading to a shortfall of 166,730 livres. 143,000 livres were owed to Montmartel in the form of "billets du trésorier", and he was requested to restructure the repayment over a period of ten months. AN MM 664, Conseil de Police, 18 January 1759, 92-95.

<sup>936</sup> Ordonnance du roi, qui règle l'âge auquel les élèves de l'École Militaire pourront entrer au service, &c., Article V, 7 September 1770, *Recueil des Édits ...* T. I (Paris, 1782), 55.

<sup>937</sup> AN MM 672, 18 February 1788, 149. His name is given as "Sieur Davout", and he was given 100 livres 16 sols to join his regiment Royal-Champagne cavalerie at Béthune.

administrative procedure for terminating its payments to any student who left the service, which was accompanied by removing them from the order of Saint-Lazare as well, per the ordinances of 30 January and 4 March 1761. For those in the service who misbehaved, however, the *pension* could be delayed as a punishment or even suspended by royal decision if requested by the *Conseil*<sup>938</sup>. There was a final motive for demanding proof of good conduct, namely to ascertain that the student was not leading a life of dissipation. Such reassurances influenced its decisions with regards to requests such as that of St. Léger de Boiraond, an ensign in the regiment *Royal-les-Vaisseaux* who asked for a 200 livres *gratification* due to the hardship his expenses caused him and whose family could not aid him. On receiving the certificate from his colonel the comte de Cherizey, allowing it to ascertain the truth of de Boiraond's situation, the *Conseil* approved the *gratification*<sup>939</sup>.

The addition of a supplementary condition to the distribution of *pensions* was neither a novel application of paternalism to the *hôtel*'s statutory charitable payments, nor an unprecedented application of ideas of reward and control with regards to the order of Saint-Lazare. It had already been decided in 1758 that students who were judged not to have profited from their studies in the *École militaire* relative to their talents and dispositions, and who were forced to exit due to their age and subsequently employed in the king's service, were to be deprived of their 200 livres *pension*<sup>940</sup>. On the other hand, students placed in a regiment in the normal course of events but who had not applied themselves sufficiently well to their lessons were to temporarily have the *croix de Saint-Lazare* withheld, in order to promote and maintain *émulation*. However, in order that their military service in their corps not be unduly affected, they were still to be permitted their 200 livres *pension*. If they were later proven to be adequately fulfilling their duties, as reported by their colonel, they were to be admitted to the order of Saint-Lazare<sup>941</sup>. Later, Article VI of the royal ordinance of 30 January 1761 in explanation of Article XIX of the edict of January 1751 further refined the conditions attached to the *pension* of those students who left the military. All those who left for any reason except due to their wounds or an equivalent motive which made it impossible to

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<sup>938</sup> AN MM 659, 18 May 1761, 46.

<sup>939</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 17 February 1779, 187-188.

<sup>940</sup> AN MM 678, Extrait d'une Lettre de Belle-Isle à Croismare, 8 March 1758.

<sup>941</sup> AN MM 678, Lettre circulaire qui doit être écrite par le ministre, aux colonels des différents régiments, dans lesquels entrent les élèves qui n'ont pas mérités par leur conduite dans l'hôtel la marque distinctive des bons sujets, 8 March 1758, 197-198.



continue in the service were to be deprived of the *pension*<sup>942</sup>. In some cases, the lapsed time between the wound and an officer's retirement could be substantial. For instance, Jean-Baptiste Cypran de Lauretan requested he be allowed to keep his *pension* and the *croix de Saint-Lazare* in accordance with Article VI of the ordinance, as well as to keep the rank of lieutenant *réformé* in his regiment Normandie despite his forced retirement in 1769. The cause of his retirement was a sabre cut to the head he had suffered at the battle of Kloster Kampen in 1760, a year after being received ensign, a wound which had never properly healed and which he sought to treat by taking the waters as recommended by his doctors. His colonel the marquis d'Hautefeuille and the other officers provided the necessary certificate certifying his good conduct and the state of his health, and de Lauretan's request was granted<sup>943</sup>.

The movement concerning the enforcement of the regulations governing the *pensions* was not all in the direction of stricter control and greater restrictions concerning the same. After the conclusion of the war, the *Conseil*, aware that several students had been dismissed following the end of hostilities, recognised that they were in no condition to furnish a *certificat de service* and good conduct as required by the deliberation of 18 May 1761. It consequently permitted the payment of the final instalment of their *pensions* on the furnishing of a simple *quittance* and the *certificat de vie*<sup>944</sup>. This was to prove a useful measure not only for those former students' whose posts were eliminated at the end of a war, but also those whose positions were lost when their corps were disbanded or reduced as a cause of ministerial reforms. An example of how this functioned in practice can be seen in the case of a former student called Breuvery who joined the *Chevaux-légers de la garde* in 1775, but had later been among the *réformés* following that corps' reductions. His father subsequently wrote Montbarey requesting that his son receive the *pension* until he was replaced<sup>945</sup>; as an *officier réformé* he was still considered to be "attached" to the service, even if he was not on active duty or a member of a unit. The *Conseil*, considering his case and the letters

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<sup>942</sup> Ordonnance du Roi ..., Article VI, 30 January 1761, in *Recueil d'Édits ...* (Paris, 1762), 50-51.

<sup>943</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, March 1769. The dossier containing de Lauretan's request also includes the supporting letter from the regiment's *chirurgien-major* Bressoe describing the nature of his wounds, the treatment administered, and the effects on his health which included occasional spells of unconsciousness. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, 27 January 1769; also included are letters by the *maître en chirurgie* and Hautefeuille, dated 19 February 1769.

<sup>944</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition, T. II, s.v. 'Quittance'. "Déclaration par écrit que l'on donne à quelqu'un, et par laquelle on le tient quitte de quelque somme d'argent, ou de quelque autre redevance"; AN MM 659, 7 March 1764, 77-78.

<sup>945</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil, 26 January 1778, 123.

forwarded to it by Montbarey, stated that the reason Breuvery had not received his *pension* was that he had neglected to furnish the certificates of life and good conduct signed by his superior officers, as well as the *quittance*, despite his being informed, along with all the other students on their exit from the *École militaire*, that the payment of their *pension* required their providing those documents. It stated that as soon as the *hôtel's* treasurer received those documents, it would send him the money he claimed<sup>946</sup>. Later, a measure of 30 April 1789 stipulated that reformed officers who had not taken an active-duty post in 10 years would no longer be eligible to receive the *pension*; individual exceptions were made on a case by case basis by the king<sup>947</sup>.

Wartime exigencies led the *Conseil* to grant not only blocks of funds such as those for the entire cohort of 1759, but also to individuals with particular needs or merits. In one case, a simple delay in the student's joining his regiment was deemed sufficient motive to grant him pecuniary relief. Calonne de Beaufait, who had been breveted as second lieutenant in the regiment of La Marck on 22 April 1759 had not departed with the rest of his comrades in May; the reason was a ministerial decision to await the ultimate destination of his regiment, which was then on the march, a delay which was compounded by his catching a strong fever which at one moment led to concern for his life, and which had prevented him from departing until September 1759. Due to the distinction of his conduct in the *hôtel*, and his mother's reduced condition, the *Conseil* requested a *grace particulière* from Crémilles to make good the *appointments* of his rank which he had not received whilst separated from his regiment, and also to permit him to subsist when he joined it.

Apart from the cohort of 1759 or individual cases such as Calonne de Beaufait's, there seems to be only one other scenario which called for the granting of unstipulated monetary aid to a general category, and that group was those students who were placed in regiments which served overseas in the colonies. Of some 35 students destined for various infantry regiments during the summer of 1775, over a dozen were considered for *sous-lieutenant's* vacancies in 4 battalions earmarked for service overseas<sup>948</sup>.

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<sup>946</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 1 February 1778, 124.

<sup>947</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 160 Letter by M. de Vermandovilliers, Paris, 25 December 1789; for a royal decision to continue the *pension* to two officers who would otherwise have lost it, see SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 160 Letter by Timbrune, Versailles, 24 June 1789 concerning two former captains of the Corps des Dragons, Valon and Du Tertre. Valon was a chevalier de Saint-Louis and Du Tertre a chevalier de Saint-Lazare.

<sup>948</sup> The 4 battalions mentioned belonged to the regiments of Guyenne, La Marine, and Béarn. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 12 August 1775.

Replying to a letter by the maréchal du Muy requesting Timbrune's opinion on those considered best suited for service in the colonies, Timbrune opined that all the school's students were equally fit to serve anywhere the king desired to employ them, and thus abstained from signalling any candidates to particular posts. However, considering that the cost of living abroad was higher than it was in France, Timbrune requested that any students chosen for that genre of service be granted a *traitement particulier* on the *hôtel's* funds in the sum of 500 livres, which would more specifically have the character of a *gratification extraordinaire*<sup>949</sup>. The function of that *gratification* can be better appreciated by considering a request for a former student serving overseas which was rejected. On 5 January 1778 the lieutenant Came de St. Aigue of the regiment du Cap requested a *gratification* of 400 livres, basing his request on the precedent of its granting to all students serving in the colonies<sup>950</sup>. The *Conseil*, however, rejected his request on a number of grounds. It held that it had already provided him with monetary aid to cover the costs of his trip and equipment when he changed regiment (from d'Aunis to du Cap) on 18 August 1773, in addition to his *pension*. Its principal grounds for turning down the request however was that no general law in that respect existed, and that the *gratifications* it dispensed were granted solely to the most impoverished students, whose families were unable to aid them, and who were faced with formidable expenses when they had to undertake unforeseen embarkations. None of those conditions applied to St. Aigue, who had served nearly seven years since leaving the *hôtel*<sup>951</sup>.

The set of regulations which were clearly written and which continued to be defined, in contrast to charitable gifts of a more amorphous nature, were those concerning the 200 livres *pension*. The clearest statement governing the use of the same came with the ordinance of 28 October 1769, which described its mechanisms for control, discipline, charity, and reward. It signalled the final step in the evolution of the requirements for its payment, which had progressed from a suggestion that it be paid as long as the students were in need of it, to a decision reserved for the *Conseil* but which

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<sup>949</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, 5 August 1775. The *Conseil* also requested permission to pay a 300 livre *gratification* for students called to serve in Corsica, which was granted on 6 April 1775. AN MM 681, 51. In 1784, those students destined for Corsica requested and were granted "l'avance de l'année courante de leur pension". AN MM 676, Letter de Ségur à Timbrune, 12 March 1784, 129. The *Conseil* in turn requested the same *grace* for Jean du Buq de Marcussy, who was posted to Martinique. AN MM 675, Mémoire 13 January 1782, 169-170.

<sup>950</sup> AN MM 674, Une autre lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, 5 January 1778, 119.

<sup>951</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 21 January 1778, 121-122.

remained unregulated and thus unspecified, to the condition specified by Article II of the ordinance of 1769. This ordinance finally set the upper limit at which the student could receive a *pension* at 1,200 livres. When they reached a post which provided them with a *traitement* in that amount or superior to it, their names were to be removed from the *État des pensions* at the conclusion of the year that they began to receive their new *traitement*. It also formalised the delivery of the certificates of proof of life and good conduct, which were to be provided by the line regiments' major and certified by their colonel, as previous measures specified, while students in the artillery, engineers, and navy were to furnish a certificate from the officers they served under. These were to be provided together with the *quittance* which was now to list the officer-student's rank, in order that its level of *traitement* could be verified. Finally, all of the ordinance's regulations were to apply as well to the *croix de Saint-Lazare*<sup>952</sup>.

It is clear, by the adoption of this resolution, that an annual income of 1,200 livres is what the *Conseil* considered a living wage, and that it realised it was preferable to have a stipulated cut-off point as a basis for future deliberations concerning students' *pensions* instead of deciding each case on an *ad hoc* basis. The 1,200 livres mark seems, moreover, to also have served as a general limit for decisions on charitable requests more generally. The 1,200 limit was not absolute, as the *Conseil* did not consider it breached if a petitioner's entire personal income surpassed it, but instead was a limit solely based on his military *appointements*. This may be inferred from the *mémoire* addressed to the *Bureau d'administration* by the chevalier de Clugny, colonel of the regiment Beauvoisis and commanding officer of the lieutenant Bourdon de Grammont, who had joined that regiment on 16 July 1769 as a *sous-lieutenant*. Clugny requested a *gratification annuelle et extraordinaire* for Grammont, claiming that he deserved it by the merit of his conduct and zeal for the service, as well as for being supposedly penniless. The *Bureau*, however, was well-informed with regards to Grammont's income, which consisted of 370 livres of *rente*, 900 livres of *appointements* as a lieutenant, and the 200 livres *pension* as an alumnus of the *École militaire*, totalling 1,470 livres<sup>953</sup>. If the limit of 1,200 livres had been based on gross income, his *pension*

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<sup>952</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Ordonnance du roi, 28 October 1769.

<sup>953</sup> AN MM 674, Sentiments de l'administration sur la demande d'une gratification annuelle en faveur dudit de Bourdon de Grammont Lt. au rég[iment] de Beauvoisis, 18 July 1776, 2. The *Bureau* was informed concerning Grammont's personal income thanks to the *état des biens* he had provided as required for his admission to the *École militaire*.

would have been suspended upon his having reached the rank of lieutenant, when he would have received a 1,270 livres income. Instead, it was to continue until he was granted a promotion to a rank with a salary of 1,200, independently of his other sources of income. In the event, the *Bureau* considered Grammont to be substantially better off than most of his colleagues, and denied the *gratification* as it was not judged to be absolutely necessary<sup>954</sup>.

When former students were proven to be impecunious, and their cases were presented for consideration by the Minister of War, the *Conseil* would support their applications and vouch for their veracity. This was the case with three sets of students. The first was that of the brothers La Tour du Mesnil, *sous-lieutenants* in the regiment of Poitou under the comte de Béthisy who solicited a *gratification* for them. The second was the two lieutenants Legge and the chevalier de Lort-Montesquieu, of the regiment Brie under the comte de Podenas. The third was the *sous-lieutenants* Bloy de la Pornerie and de la Mousse, under the marquis d’Avaray in the regiment La Couronne. Béthisy’s letter described the La Tour du Mesnil brothers’ poverty and estimable qualities, which the *Conseil* confirmed as being exactly thus, furthermore describing their love for their duty from their time as students which had always drawn their superiors’ praise and served as an example for their comrades; it considered that few students were as worthy of the king’s goodwill and recommended that they be given a 200 livres *gratification* to serve as a new motive for *émulation* and also to help keep them in the king’s service<sup>955</sup>. Concerning Legge and Lort-Montesquieu, the *Conseil* verified that (thanks to its archived records on those students) their zeal, regularity of conduct, and lack of fortune concurred with their colonel’s report. It described Legge’s future inheritance as consisting of only 100 livres, and Lort-Montesquieu’s of 110 livres. Legge as a student had distinguished himself by his love for his duties and had greatly profited from his education. Lort-Montesquieu had not made as much progress as his natural dispositions were not considered to have been quite so favourable, but he had never given any cause for reproach. It thus seconded their colonel’s request, considering it just that they each receive a *gratification* of 200 livres<sup>956</sup>. D’Avaray, for his part, sent two *mémoires* concerning Bloy de la Pornerie and de la Mousse, backing his assertions with the

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<sup>954</sup> Ibid.

<sup>955</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 4 November 1778, 173-174.

<sup>956</sup> Ibid., 18 November 1778, 174. Legge had already received an earlier *gratification* of 200 livres on 21 May 1775. AN MM 675, Réponse du Conseil à la lettre ci-dessus, 24 January 1781, 84.

opinions of the rest of the superior officers of his regiment. Again, the former students were described as without fortune, of being in need of royal aid in order to maintain themselves in the service, and of being worthy of that help through their conduct. The *Conseil* concurred on every point, and opined that those considerations would doubtless lead Montbarey to grant their request; a concession, however, which it believed that they would not normally be susceptible to given the very short time they had been in the service (slightly over two years)<sup>957</sup>. Approximately a month later, Montbarey, having presented the letters to the king, reported that all the petitioners, the La Tour du Mesnil brothers<sup>958</sup>, Legge and Lort-Montesquieu, and Bloy de la Pornerie and de la Mousse<sup>959</sup>, were to receive the requested *gratifications extraordinaires* of 200 livres.

This was all very well and in keeping with both the *Conseil*'s regulated provisions for the 200 livres *pensions*, as well as with its continuous practice of providing all possible monetary support to the students it deemed in need and deserving thereof. If it felt entitled, in the case of students who had abandoned military service such as the baron de St. Amand<sup>960</sup>, to refuse their supplications outright, or in the case of Bourgoing, to go far beyond the normal expectation of assistance by promoting a non-military career, in his case by paying for his studies in law at Strasbourg and later his expenses at Regensburg as a diplomatic *attaché*<sup>961</sup>, perhaps nothing best encapsulates the possibilities and limits of the *Conseil*'s self-imposed mission as its relationship to students who chose an ecclesiastical career. Given the *École militaire*'s at times difficult relations with ecclesiastical figures and structures, it may seem unusual

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<sup>957</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 18 November 1778, 174-175. These last two students had entered the regiment as *cadets-gentilshommes* on 5 June 1776.

<sup>958</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de Montbarey au Conseil, 30 November 1778, 176.

<sup>959</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, 15 December 1778, 177-178. Some years later, the comte de Podenas requested similar *gratifications* for Legge and two other alumni, d'Aligny and Mejanès. The *Conseil* responded that it did not object to the latter two being aided, but resisted providing any further assistance for Legge. AN MM 675, Letters of 10 and 24 January 1781, 84.

Further aid was later requested for Bloy de la Pornerie and another student Novion, a lieutenant in the regiment Vermandois; it agreed to a *gratification extraordinaire* of 300<sup>h</sup> for Novion due to his falling ill in Corsica, but considered that simple poverty was not enough to aid Bloy de la Pornerie again. AN MM 675, Réponse du Conseil à la lettre ci-dessus, 11 April 1781, 99.

<sup>960</sup> St. Amand's colourful career had him begin as a cornet in the Colonel-Général dragoons in 1759, followed by his abandoning the army upon receiving a substantial inheritance in 1766, after which he became *écuyer* in the *Académie de Perpignan* and inspector of the *Haras du Roussillon*, posts which led to his losing his 200 livres *pension*. He later entered the Spanish army in 1771, before returning to France to marry the niece of the baron de Vioménil, and rejoining the army with the rank of captain. He requested and was refused a renewal of his 200 livres *pension* in 1779. AN MM 674, Lettre du Conseil à Montbarey, 193-194.

<sup>961</sup> At Regensburg, the seat of the Imperial Diet, Bourgoing received an annual *pension* of 2,400 livres from the *hôtel* from 17 July 1768 to 1 January 1771, as well as a 1,800 livres *gratification*. AN MM 659, 26 March 1771, 136-137. More correspondance on Bourgoing is available in AN MM 669, 679, and 680.

that the only regulation for financial support that it was to give to students embarking on a non-military career was for students destined for the Church. As it came during the ministry of Saint-Germain, it may be surmised that said initiative was due principally to him, and not to the *Bureau* of the school he had suppressed. In any case, Article XII of the *Lettres Patentes* of 20 May 1776 provided for the financial support of impoverished gentlemen produced by the *écoles royales militaires* destined for the church during their studies at La Flèche, the funds for those students being drawn from the *École militaire*'s foundation. That monetary support was to consist of an annual *pension* of 700 livres until the candidate obtained the degree of doctor<sup>962</sup>. Unsurprisingly, the aid to be provided to such students came to be the subject of some dispute, as students requested financial support for a period or a position beyond that encompassed by established regulations.

Two case-studies illustrate this phenomenon, and the *Conseil*'s reaction to it. First was the situation presented by a Breton *gentilhomme* d'Héral. He entered the *École militaire* at the age of 11 on 15 October 1766 and left on 14 July 1773, to join the regiment of Flandres as a *sous-lieutenant*. He was described as holding a life-long inclination to the ecclesiastical calling. His family had been opposed to his propensity in that regard, but had finally consented after he had spent four months in the military. His situation was brought to du Muy's attention, who was informed of the purity of his morals and his talents as well as his indigence, which did not permit d'Héral to undertake studies in theology at his own expense. Du Muy agreed to procure him the post of *Sous-Préfet des Études* at La Flèche, which would thus allow him to undertake and complete his studies in philosophy. In order to study theology, however, d'Héral desired to return to Paris, as he was still short of funds at La Flèche<sup>963</sup>. Saint-Germain having come to the Ministry in the meantime, he agreed to d'Héral's request and authorised the *Bureau* to fund his study at a Parisian seminary with the 700 livres *pension*. The *Bureau* submitted, noting that it was indifferent to paying that *pension*

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<sup>962</sup> Déclaration 1 February 1776, *Recueil Général des Anciennes Loix Françaises depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789 – Troisième Race, Branche des Bourbons Règne de Louis XVI*, Tome II du 20 Mai 1776 au 10 May 1777, Paris, 1826, 5.

<sup>963</sup> AN MM 674, Mémoire, 22 September 1776, 11.

either at Paris or La Flèche, and also believing that it had little to fear from similar requests being repeated in the future<sup>964</sup>.

Some short months later, however, in December of 1776, the *Bureau* was informed of another student by the name of Vassal de la Garde, who, through an “irresistible vocation” in Saint-Germain’s own words, had quit the regiment of Royal-Comtois where he was a lieutenant to take up an ecclesiastical career. Given the indigent state of his large family, Saint-Germain was inclined to grant him the aid necessary for him to continue his studies. He first requested the *Bureau*’s opinions on the merits of the case however<sup>965</sup>. In a reply a week later, the *Bureau* described how Vassal de la Garde had joined Royal-Comtois in 1773 and left it in 1775, to take the tonsure in Cahors, his native province. He had joined the community of St. Sulpice, and based his request on the *déclaration* of 1 February 1776 which granted royal succour to impoverished *gentilshommes* destined for the cloth. The *Bureau* acknowledged that, based solely on his indigence and personal merit, his request would be difficult to refuse, as attested by all who knew him ever since his entry to La Flèche in 1765. However, it considered his request to be in breach of the *déclaration* and of the *Lettres patentes*, which were applicable only to students who immediately left for the church or magistrature upon exiting from an *école militaire*. Ever since he had quit Royal-Comtois, Vassal de la Garde was considered detached from the *École militaire*, his 200 livres *pension* having already been suppressed, and if his request was granted the *Bureau* predicted that similar petitions would multiply. It especially feared that *cadets-gentilshommes* would request to be funded at La Flèche at their first displeasing experience in their regiments, and which would produce a drain on the resources the king had provided the *École militaire*<sup>966</sup>. Vassal de la Garde’s request was consequently refused<sup>967</sup>.

The range of charitable initiatives that the *École militaire* undertook and backed were thus much broader than those embedded into its original *raison d’être* and

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<sup>964</sup> Ibid, 12. In 1784, the by now Abbé d’Héral having failed to obtain his doctorate, the *Conseil* requested and was granted the revocation of his *pension*. AN MM 676, Lettre du Conseil à Ségur, 17 May 1784, 150; Lettre de ce ministre au Conseil, Versailles, 9 June 1784, 154.

<sup>965</sup> AN MM 674, Lettre de St. Germain au Bureau d’administration, 19 December 1776, 24. He had for three years (1769-1773) refused to go to the *École militaire* while at La Flèche due to his “intention d’embrasser l’état ecclésiastique”, but was finally compelled to. AN MM 669, 28 January 1772, 29.

<sup>966</sup> AN MM 674, Réponse du Bureau d’administration à la lettre ci-dessus, 28 December 1776, 24-25.

<sup>967</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, 13 January 1777. Several other students wishing to join a seminary were rejected, such as de Lée on 19 June 1778 and the vicomte de la Rochefoucauld on 19 April 1779.



subsequent regulations; even the lottery had its own, specific charitable facet, distinct from its principal purpose of financing the school. This was the dowries that it provided to girls without means. Robert Kruckeberg describes how it functioned: “the lottery attached the name of one girl to a ball in the lottery’s wheel of fortune. The girl had to be at least fourteen years old, and if the ball with her name was drawn, she received the right to a 200 livres dowry to be paid upon her marriage”, and sees it as linking the *École militaire*’s lottery with previous charitable lotteries<sup>968</sup>. The *Conseil de l’hôtel* considered it its duty to always fulfil “d’une manière plus digne d’elle” its “vœu charitable et favorable à la population”. Though it knew that it could benefit from pocketing the dowries left unclaimed by girls who had died before marrying, it instead decided that those considerable sums (77,600 livres in 1772, 72,200 in 1775) would be reassigned to demonstrably impoverished girls between 16 and 30 years of age “prêtes à se marier, dont les noms n’auront point été annexés aux numéros de la loterie”<sup>969</sup>. The payment of these dowries came to 12,000 livres per annum, an amount not included in its annual *états*<sup>970</sup>. Some of the unclaimed monies were still being reassigned years after the expropriation of the school’s lottery. On 19 July 1784, the *Conseil* decided to grant a 200 livre dowry to Aléxandrine-Barbe-Jeanne de Salles, born 18 January 1767, if she furnished them with a certificate of marriage within three months of their decision; she thus replaced the girl whose name had been paired with the number 30 in the lottery drawing of 14 October 1761 but who had died unmarried in 1778<sup>971</sup>.

### Part III: Chapter Five Conclusions

Overall its charitable actions, falling into the three categories of disbursements made voluntarily, as dictated by statutory requirements, and as a result of decisions imposed on the *Conseil* by superior authority, signal the predominantly discretionary nature of much of the charitable money that it disbursed. It is true that the sums it allocated for *pensions charitables* were small when compared to other standing liabilities; for instance, in 1774, the ledger listing the *hôtel*’s income and expenses

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<sup>968</sup> Robert Kruckeberg, “The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France - The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics”, PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2009, 146. Some examples of the *Conseil*’s deliberations on this matter can be seen in the minutes taken on 31 December 1759 and 24 November 1760. AN MM 682, 23; AN MM 662, 6-7.

<sup>969</sup> AN MM 660, 20 October 1772, 108-109. This deliberation was approved on 16 December 1772.

<sup>970</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, État Raisonné des Revenues de l’Hôtel de l’École Royale Militaire, February 1776. This was an extraordinary *état* drawn up as a result of Saint-Germain’s reform, and only counts the school’s revenues, not expenses and thus is not a typical balance sheet.

<sup>971</sup> AN MM 672, 19 July 1784, 2. The deceased girl’s name was Marie-Barbe-Françoise Lecat.

showed only 969.14.8 livres next to the entry for those *pensions* plus 500 livres for *aumônes à l'Hôpital de la Charité*, against 79,314 livres for the students *pensions*. However, when those charitable sums are added to *gratifications* for both students and other parties (10,700 livres), plus *gratifications* for La Flèche (4,601 livres), and the choirboys (1,400 livres), we come to a total of 17,201 livres. If we add the *frais de voyage* for La Flèche's students (1,720 livres) and those for the *École militaire*'s students (4,809 livres) to the 79,314 livres of *pensions*, we come to a total of 85,825 livres. The sums disbursed for charity and as *gratifications* thus come to 20 per cent of the statutory liabilities of aid to students' careers<sup>972</sup>. The end of the *fondation* of the *École militaire* in 1793 for its part did not automatically entail the end of the aid it dispensed; the Convention Nationale awarded the widow Dubois, who had previously enjoyed a 4,000 livres *pension* on the *fondation*, the sum of 500 livres as a "secours provisoire" in its deliberation of 22 Ventôse II (12 March 1794)<sup>973</sup>. In the event, by instituting a charitable fund on a regulated basis in recognition of its commitments to those unfortunate enough to depend on its generosity for their support, the *Conseil* acknowledged a debt, however small, to a wider segment of society than that which it had any fiduciary duty to. Furthermore, by crediting or withholding additional sums to both employees and students, the *Conseil* revealed its constant concern to not only fulfil its standing commitments, but also to foster the qualities which it considered indispensable in those it considered beholden to the king's graces (as a royal foundation charged with the wise administration of the funding it received). It was through this mechanism of moral manipulation that the *Conseil* inserted an element of discretionary consideration into even those payments which it was bound to disburse by statute. Thus, though the urge to spur *émulation* both in the *hôtel* and in the military, to reinforce fidelity and honesty, to reward zeal and merit, and generally to promote faithful service may be seen as paternalistic, to the *Conseil* its charitable and discretionary awards were simply one more tool for furthering the goals it had been explicitly established to accomplish.

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<sup>972</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Bordereau des recettes et dépenses faites par le trésorier de l'École R<sup>l</sup>. militaire, December 1774.

<sup>973</sup> *Collection général des décrets rendus par la Convention Nationale*, T. XLII, No. 525 (Paris, n.d.), 6.

## Thesis Conclusion

“...la Nation ne saurait être trop en garde contre une révolution dont elle a déjà été, et dont elle serait encore la victime pendant des siècles...”

- Migonneau, “Observations relatives à l’ordonnance de 1781...”. London 1788, 190.

If earlier military reverses such as Dettingen, along with perceived structural deficiencies in the military opportunities open to the *noblesse de vieille souche*, were among the factors leading to the creation of the *École militaire*, it was Rossbach which led not only to a new “réveil militaire”<sup>974</sup>, but also to the discredit of the ruling class:

Soubise agira prudemment  
En vendant son hôtel, dont il n’a plus que aire;  
Le roi lui donne un logement  
A son école militaire<sup>975</sup>

Despite its enlightened pedagogical concepts and charitable undertakings, the fact that the *École militaire* never managed to win over a significant element of public opinion or, more importantly, aristocratic support, meant that it was never perfectly consolidated as an institution. That it made a concrete contribution in certain fields, albeit within strict limits, cannot be denied; one may nonetheless still be permitted to express surprise that the effect that its creation had on discourses of reform continues to be ignored. One example may suffice to illustrate the supposed pitfalls as well as benefits inherent in the creation of an institution such as the *École militaire*.

The comte d’Espie believed, along with plenty of other observers, that the establishment of the *École militaire* was both an honour to the nation and a witness to the grandeur of Louis XV<sup>976</sup>. He thus considered it a pity that the great expenses undertaken on its behalf would prove useless to the state, and that the nation would not profit from it as expected. It was true that by creating the new school the king would

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<sup>974</sup> André Corvisier, “La Noblesse Militaire. Aspects militaires de la noblesse française du XV<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: État des questions”, *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 11 (1978): 351. He later cautions on page 355 that “les nobles militaires furent victimes du réveil militaire auquel ils avaient pris une part active”.

<sup>975</sup> Bouffonidor, *Les Fastes de Louis XV, de ses Ministres, Maîtresses, Généraux, et Autres Notables Personnages de Son Règne, Pour servir de suite à la Vie Privée* T. II (Ville-Franche, 1783), 44.

‘Bouffonidor’ was a pseudonym used by Ange Goudar. See Frédéric Bidouze, “Pour une autre historique des parlements au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: discours et représentations, une culture française du politique”, *Parlement[s]*, *Revue d’histoire politique* 15 (2011): 127.

<sup>976</sup> Comte d’Espie, *Réflexion du Comte D..., Officier d’Infanterie, Chevalier de l’Ordre Royal & Militaire de St. Louis sur l’établissement de l’École Militaire* (n.p.: 1756), 3-4.

better open the subaltern ranks of the army to the provincial nobles<sup>977</sup>; however, once in the ranks, an alumnus of the *École militaire* would be surrounded by officers without his education, full of vices, and it was thus to be feared that all of the maxims of his education would quickly be lost in such a milieu. On the other hand, those young officers strong enough to resist such pernicious examples would quit the king's service in disgust and pass instead to serve in a foreign army, flattering themselves that their knowledge, capacity, and merit would be better recognised there<sup>978</sup>. D'Espie's suggested solution, the creation of a *Légion de l'Hôtel-Royal* to educate the children of peasants, artisans, and beggars and provide recruits for a new *Légion Royale* officered by the *École militaire*'s students was never adopted, and considering the social nature of his proposal it is easy to see why; one measure he considered, though, clearly anticipated some of the reforms instituted by Saint-Germain and later the *Conseil de guerre*. This was the creation of *companies royales* in 30 regiments to fund the proposed *Légion Royale*, where officer rank would be sold to court nobles for 10,000 livres and where the proprietor would have to serve at least for four years, and for eight months out of each year with it, before being eligible for promotion to the ranks of *colonel en second* and commanding their own regiment. This would ensure that those born to command did not interfere with the actual administration of their regiments by the lieutenant-colonels, and that they would in the meantime complete their instruction on every detail of discipline and learn to obey before commanding<sup>979</sup>.

The careers of the *École militaire*'s alumni were more varied than commentators such as d'Espie or the school's founders could have envisaged. Even without accounting for the distinguished careers of several of its alumni during the Revolution and subsequent period, they spanned the whole range of possible results, from the ignominious as in the case of the chevalier de Castres, who after stabbing one of his fellow students on 6 March 1760 was expelled from the school and sent to the prison of Saint Lazare<sup>980</sup>, to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the king's service by giving

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<sup>977</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>978</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>979</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

<sup>980</sup> The details of the chevalier de Castres's case are in the several letters sent back and forth from the *Conseil* to Belle-Isle, in AN MM 678, 192-195. After de Castres's exit from Saint Lazare, destitute and penniless, the *Conseil* equipped him with a uniform and the other necessities in order to enable him to join the regiment Royal-dragons, where he had been admitted as a volunteer. The total costs for his imprisonment and later supplies borne by the *hôtel* came to 805 livres 17 sols 12 deniers. His case is also mentioned in AN MM 666 and 679.

up their lives defending their country<sup>981</sup>. Although Louis XV commented to his *maréchaux de France* that “There are here those who will one day become your colleagues, and we will see them”, on the occasion of his visit to the *hôtel* on 18 August 1760<sup>982</sup>, it would in fact take a revolution before any of its alumni reached such exalted posts. The *Conseil* itself, however, always remained modest in its goals and methods. As it believed that “not all of the subjects who enter into the *École Royale Militaire* can exit equally well”, and that it was in the nature of things that the results of the education provided in the *hôtel* have the same results as every other kind of education, whether public or private, its attempts focused not on changing the students, but simply on polishing, modifying, and reforming their nature<sup>983</sup>. No group of students ever exhibited any uniformity, instead consisting of those with good, mediocre, and bad natures; the most that could be done was to improve that which was good, approach to the good that which was mediocre, and make tolerable that which was bad<sup>984</sup>. Although this stance was considerably less ambitious than that outlined in the early *mémoires* or the *Encyclopédie*, it accurately reflects the challenges it had to deal with and adjust to as a result of financial difficulties, student and staff misbehaviour, and curricular insufficiencies among other issues.

Through all the tumults that it endured, however, the *Conseil*'s basic goals, and the *École militaire*'s essential mission, never changed. These were the fostering of moral qualities such as *émulation*, zeal, discipline, and obedience by all the means at its disposal, whether it was rewarding students who acquitted themselves well in their studies, promoting or cashiering professors and other staff based on their performance, or withholding or adding to the *pensions* of students embarked on their careers. Although two of those moral qualities, discipline and obedience, could be imposed and

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<sup>981</sup> This was the case of two students who had left the school as part of the cohort of 1759; the first was the chevalier de Batilly of the Gardes-Lorraines, who fell during the bombardment of Le Havre, the other, James of the regiment Tournaisis, being among the casualties at Minden. See AN MM 678, Copie du Mémoire dont est question dans la lettre précédente [undated but written before 17 October 1759], 175; details of their postings are from Ibid., État des 40 élèves prêts à sortir de l'École royale militaire, et des corps dans lesquels ils peuvent être employés, 136.

<sup>982</sup> “Il y en a là qui deviendront un jour vos collègues, et nous le verrons”. The *maréchaux de France* present were Belle-Isle, then the Minister of War, the prince de Soubise, the duc de Biron, and the comte de Thomond, along with several other high military officers such as the ducs d'Ayen and Choiseul. AN MM 666, 18 August 1760, 28-29.

<sup>983</sup> “On n'a pas du espérer que tous les sujets qui entreraient dans l'École R<sup>le</sup>. M<sup>re</sup>. en sortissent également bons. ... Il n'est donné à personne de changer la nature. On peut à force de soins la dégrossir, la modifier, la réformer”. AN MM 679, Mémoire, 12 November 1761, 37.

<sup>984</sup> “... il l'est possible de rendre meilleur ce qui est bon, de rapprocher du bon ce qui est médiocre, et de rendre supportable ce qui est mauvais...” Ibid.

their effect supervised whilst the student was resident in the *hôtel*, as well as when he had joined the troops, the other two, *émulation* and zeal, could only be promoted and encouraged, not forced upon the individual. This explains the broad range of approaches undertaken to stimulate *émulation* above all, which was perhaps considered easier to measure than other abstract qualities. Thus, students at the provincial *écoles royales militaires* established in 1776 would no longer face the prospect of automatic employment in the troops, as those prior to that reform had, but instead it would be offered on a conditional basis in order to spread *émulation* more widely among the students<sup>985</sup>. Furthermore, after the re-establishment of the *École militaire* in 1777, the choice of the best *gentilshommes* from the provincial *écoles royales militaires* on merit would be the most simple and useful way of stimulating the *émulation générale* of the *maîtres* and students<sup>986</sup>. Finally, the congruence between the moral character of *émulation*, a quality to be internalised and ever active in the student, and with the pedagogical quality of heuristic instruction, such that a student need not obtain a complete mastery of a subject but only enough of its essentials in order that he could perfect his knowledge in it independently, seems a great deal more interesting than the perennial debates on the technical nature of the institution.

Various research questions still remain to be explored concerning the *École militaire* and its affiliated schools. For one, a prosopography of its professors and *maîtres* and their methods would be most welcome, seeing as they were the men who actually taught and mediated the application of the curriculum as adopted by the *Conseil* with suggestions for its improvement based on students' performance. The *manège* led by d'Auvergne is an aspect of the school's role which has too often been neglected, even in studies of the curriculum, while the existing studies of it tend to treat it in isolation from the rest of the institution, as one element in the progress of equine instruction at the time and not as an integral part of the *École militaire*. A prosopography of the students during their time in the school and their lives there would shed much light on the interaction of their quotidian concerns with their academic progress. Other areas of interest include the religious aspects of life in the *hôtel*, disciplinary practices, studies of its legal affairs, a complete analysis of its financial evolution, a thorough comparison of its structures with those of existing *collèges*, its

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<sup>985</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145, Sorèze [undated but post-February 1776].

<sup>986</sup> SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 149, Ordonnance du Roi portant création d'une compagnie de cadets et d'un corps d'instruction à l'Hôtel de l'École Royale-militaire, Article XII, 17 July 1777, 5.

influence on *pensions* and riding *académies*, and more besides. La Flèche would also benefit from its own institutional study, and a comparative study of the provincial *écoles royales militaires*, taking as its basis the various books, theses and articles written on several of them might prove enlightening. Both Louvois and LeBlanc's companies of *cadets-gentilshommes* could use an updated study, the gap concerning the *Maison du Roi* as an educational body still remains, and much work remains to be done on the instruction of officers in camp or their garrisons<sup>987</sup>. Other charitable military schools such as those founded by the chevalier de Pawlet and the duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, either individually or as part of a more general survey of education in the period, ought also to be considered. The potential of exploring such approaches is suggested by works such as the recent article by Emmanuelle Chapron on the textbooks produced for the *École militaire*, demonstrating that they were not simply limited to the institution's captive audience, but instead proved the object of nation-wide interest after 1776<sup>988</sup>.

Whether or not these approaches are pursued, however, it is hoped that this study may serve to elucidate some of the ways that the *École militaire*, a unique royal institution, functioned in its day. If the *École militaire* was not quite a site where "inertia and innovation confront each other", as was the case with the *Académie royale des sciences*, it did come closer to providing a foyer where "theoretical conditions found themselves absorbed by the weight of social and human concerns"<sup>989</sup>. It also succeeded in one of its primary goals: of some 3,000 officers who entered the line regiments (infantry, cavalry, dragoons, plus the artillery) after 1781, 606 or 20% were products of the *École militaire* or the *écoles royales militaires*<sup>990</sup>; the attraction of these schools is in turn revealed when one realises that by 1781 only 10% of applicants were accepted<sup>991</sup>.

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<sup>987</sup> One document, for instance, makes mention of a proposal to provide a professor of mathematics and a drawing master to the *cadets-gentilshommes* in garrison at Metz, the plan foundering due to a lack of funds. SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 146, 2 December 1776.

<sup>988</sup> Emmanuelle Chapron, "Des livres 'pour l'usage de l'École royale militaire': choix pédagogiques et stratégies éditoriales (1751-1788)", in *Histoire, économie & société*, 33 (2014): 13-14. She also states that the consumption and production of books by the *École militaire* resulted in, "la publicité de l'ouvrage auprès d'autres institutions élitistes, pensions privées ou établissements nobiliaires étrangers", 10.

<sup>989</sup> Daniel Roche, "Sciences et pouvoirs dans la France du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle (1666-1803) [note critique]", *Annales: E.S.C.*, 29<sup>e</sup> année, no. 3 (1974): 741.

<sup>990</sup> David Bien, "La réaction aristocratique avant 1789: l'exemple de l'armée", *Annales: E.S.C.*, 29/2 (1974): 516; idem, "Caste, Class and Profession in Old Regime France: the French Army and the Ségur Reform of 1781", *St. Andrews Studies in French History and Culture*, ed. Guy Rowlands (2010): 31.

<sup>991</sup> Two letters show that "les demandes multipliés des familles" meant the king was "forcée de ne nommer pour être admis... que la dixième partie des sujets proposés". SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 160, Letters by M. de la Garde and M. Foureau of 15 and 23 March 1782. My thanks to Gemma Tidman for sharing these letters.

To conclude, no direct link has been established between the role played by the *École militaire* as an institution and any of the causes of the Revolution, only indirect connections as in the case of the decree of 1781<sup>992</sup> or the Royal Lottery (modelled directly on the *École militaire*'s lottery, which it expropriated in 1776)<sup>993</sup>. A final, widespread criticism remains, however, and that is the fact that the overwhelming majority of its alumni emigrated after 1789<sup>994</sup>. If the students' adherence to the person of the king rather than the new national body of the *patrie* can be attributed to their education, then perhaps that constitutes a final flaw in a programme which never conceived, let alone prepared for, the possibility that would the body of the king would undergo a scission from the body politic; one in which attachment to the crown would no longer be the fount of patriotism. In such a world, shaping the legacy of a noble education in a reconstituted polity would require crossing the borders not only of the nation but also of the imagination.

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<sup>992</sup> M. Migonneau provided a strong condemnation of the decree of 1781, calling it both illegal and unconstitutional, providing a number of examples of distinguished commoners who rose to high positions in politics and the military, warning of the dangers of an aristocratic government (exemplified in his mind by Poland), and concluding with his warning on a possible revolution. M. Migonneau, "Observations relatives à l'ordonnance de 1781 qui exclut du service militaire, comme officier, tout Français qui n'est pas gentilhomme...", in *Considérations Intéressantes sur Les Affaires Présentes Par M.\*\*\** (London, 1788), 169-191. Needless to say, his title is something of an exaggeration, as it ignores the non-noble *officiers de fortune*.

<sup>993</sup> Robert Kruckeberg describes how Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord claimed before the National Assembly on 12 December 1789 that, "among the causes of this revolution, there is no doubt that the [Royal] lottery should occupy one of the top ranks". *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860*, eds. M.J. Mavidal and M.E. Laurent, 82 vols. (Paris: 1879-1913), 10: 552, in "The Wheel of Fortune in Eighteenth-Century France – The Lottery, Consumption, and Politics", PhD diss., University of Michigan (2009), 232.

<sup>994</sup> A significant exception was Jean-Baptiste de Nompère de Champagny. A student at La Flèche and the *École militaire*, he went on to distinguish himself in naval combat, being wounded and winning the cross of Saint-Louis. Elected as a representative of the nobility to the *États-Généraux*, he joined the Third Estate on the matter of voting by head rather than by order. He would go on to serve as Minister of the Interior and be created duc de Cadore under Napoleon. *France: Dictionnaire Encyclopédique* T. IV (Paris, 1841).

Monteynard granted him special permission in 1771 to prolong his stay in the *École militaire* and improve his maths before joining the navy, but only "en considération des personnes auxquelles il a l'honneur d'appartenir", namely his maternal uncle the Abbé Terray. AN MM 680, Lettre de Monteynard à Croismare, Versailles, 7 July 1771, 80.



## Appendix A

### Série M

#### Titre II (M 65 à 257 B)

#### Universités et Collèges (Inventaire n° 238)

#### M 251 à 257 A École Militaire

##### M 251 École Militaire

- 1 États de situation de la caisse de l'École Militaire. Année 1777. Un état par mois avec bordereaux des sommes payées à la caisse chaque mois. 12 dossiers.
- 2 États, année 1778. 12 dossiers.
- 3 États, année 1779. 12 dossiers.
- 4 États, année 1780. 13 dossiers.
- 5 États, année 1781. 12 dossiers.
- 6 États, année 1782. 6 dossiers (manquent juin, juillet, août, octobre à décembre)
- 7 États, année 1783. 12 dossiers.
- 8 États, année 1784. 10 dossiers (manquent janvier, et novembre)
- 9 États, année 1785. 12 dossiers.
- 10 États, année 1786. 9 dossiers (manquent juin et décembre; octobre et novembre groupés)
- 11 États, année 1787. 12 dossiers.
- 12 États, année 1788. 11 dossiers (manque février)
- 13 États, année 1789. 1 dossier (juin)

##### M 252 École Militaire

- 1 Inventaire des meubles et effets de l'École Royale Militaire et de l'Hôtel de La Force, fait en 1780, 1781 et 1782. 152 fol.
- 2 Vente des meubles et effets de l'hôtel de La Force et de l'École Royale Militaire, faites en 1780, 1781 et 1782. 329 fol.
- 3<sup>1 à 53</sup> Ordres du roi pour la prisée et la vente des meubles contenus à l'École Militaire après l'ordonnance du 6 novembre 1779. États des logements compris ou exclus de la vente, copie de la correspondance échangée jusqu'en mai 1782. Rescriptions suspendus, contrats à 3 et 5% constitués au profit de l'École militaire, bordereaux, pièces comptables, lettres de l'abbé Terray, 1765-1772. États des contrats à 4%, 1770-1776. Revenus de l'abbaye Saint-Jean de Laon unie à l'École Militaire à sa fondation 1788-1791. Obligation de 20.000 livres due par Pawlet, fondateur de l'École des orphelins militaires, 20 mars 1789.

##### M 253 École Militaire

- 1<sup>10 à 117</sup> Vente des meubles et effets conservés à l'École militaire et à l'hôtel de La Force. Déclarations royales portant règlement de l'École, 24 août 1760, 7 septembre 1770 et 1<sup>er</sup> février 1776, impr. Opérations faites par les

commissaires nommés par arrêt du conseil du 10 mai 1776, description des titres et contrats, note de Gaëtan Lambert Dupont, compte du linge, titres de propriété, notamment ceux de la seigneurie de Grenelle. Copies des lettres du comte de Brienne, décembre 1787-août 1788. 74 états du mobilier de l'École Militaire, lettre de Laurent de Villedeuil, 11 juillet 1788. 23 reconnaissances annexées au procès-verbal, 15 mars au 19 mai 1788. Deux affiches pour les ventes du mobilier les 17 et 31 août 1788. État des meubles et effets restant à vendre, notamment dans la chapelle, septembre 1788.

2<sup>1</sup> à 10<sup>2</sup> Affinages de Lyon et de Paris attribués à l'École Militaire par lettres patentes d'août 1757; État des titres dressé par les commissaires le 24 février 1775. Pièces mentionnées dans la première partie de cet état (il en manque plusieurs) baux des affinages en 1757 et 1759, ratification du maréchal de Belle-Isle, suppression du droit de marque en 1760, bail de 1767. Autres pièces, mémoires sur les affinages de France et leur situation, mémoire pour le sieur Herman, arrêt de la cour des Monnaies du 14 juin 1758, procès-verbal des différentes opérations faites aux affinages de Paris le 24 juillet 1758, autres mémoires, arrêts du Conseil d'État et du Conseil de Dombes en 1760, délibération sur rapport de M. d'Outremont, exécuteur testamentaire du maréchal de Belle-Isle, 1761. Lettre de Paris-Duverney à Choiseul, copie. Lettre de Choiseul du 5 janvier 1767, orig. Pièces mentionnées dans la seconde partie de l'état de 1776: correspondance de Turgot avec le comte du Muy puis avec le comte de Saint-Germain, 1774-1776, puis du Cte de St Germain avec Taboureaux, 1777. Mémoires, arrêts, correspondance 1777-1782.

3<sup>1</sup> à 18 Loterie attribué à l'École Militaire par arrêt du conseil du 15 octobre 1757. Projet d'arrêt, plans d'une loterie viagère, premier projet d'emplacement des bureaux. Mémoires et correspondance 1757-1761. État des comptes de la loterie, 1776. État des baux à loyer des maisons occupées par l'administration de la loterie, 1776. Inventaire des meubles et effets dans les maisons de la loterie, 1776. État des débits des receveurs de la loterie qui se sont retirés ou ont été révoqués, depuis l'établissement de celle-ci jusqu'au 1<sup>er</sup> mars 1776.

4<sup>1</sup> à 6 Régie des cartes à jouer dont le produit a été appliqué à l'École militaire par déclaration du 13 janvier 1751. Mémoire de 156, État des revenus de l'École militaire en ce qui concerne le droit sur les cartes, janvier 1776. État des sommes remises au trésorier de l'École. Inventaire des meubles de la régie, 1776. État des comptes de la régie, de 1751 à 1770.

5<sup>1</sup> à 9 Fraction/de 2 deniers pour livre sur le montant des dépenses des marchés militaires attribuées à l'École militaire par arrêt du conseil du 25 avril 1760. Mémoire, arrêt, attestations de paiements, contrats sur les cuirs. 1760-1769.

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M 254 École Militaire

1 Fragment d'un registre de délibérations du Conseil de l'École Royale Militaire. 15 avril 1773 au 19 décembre 1775.

- 2 État des pensions payées sur les fonds de l'École Militaire aux élèves sortis de l'École depuis mai 1759. Signé du roi et de Choiseul le 26 août 1764.
- 3 État des pensions. 30 juin 1765.
- 4 État des pensions. 1er mai 1769 au 1er mai 1779. 26 mai 1770.
- 5 État des pensions. 1er mai 1779 au 1er mai 1780. Signé de Louis XVI et Montbarey, 30 avril 1780
- 6 État des pensions. 1er mai 1780 au 1er mai 1781. Signé de Louis XVI et Ségur, 23 janvier 1784.
- 7 État des pensions. 1er mai 1784 au 1er mai 1785. Signé de Louis XVI et Ségur, 30 avril 1785.
- 8<sup>1 et 2</sup> Attachement des matériaux de demolition aliénés. Avril 1787.
- 9 Mémoire des ouvrages de maçonnerie pour l'entretien de l'École militaire, année 1780.
- 10 Mémoire des ouvrages de plomberie, année 1779.
- 11 Mémoire des ouvrages de menuiserie, année 1780.
- 12<sup>1 à 117</sup> Travaux divers. Lettre de Gabriel sur la destination des pieces du premier étage du gros pavillon, 7 janvier 1772, avec plan lavé, signé de Gabriel, signé le 12 janvier, une retombe pour entresol. Réparation du bâtiment des quatre puits. Mémoire de maçonnerie, entretien, 1780. Papier de tenture de l'appartement de l'architecte Brongniart, 1783. Arrachage d'arbres. Toisé de couverture des combles de 1774 et projets de soumission pour l'entretien de ces couvertures en 1785. Serrurerie, 1784. Fossé à ouvrir, 1785. Réparations de vitrerie à l'hôtel et au parc de Vaugirard, 1785. Reconstruction d'un mur mitoyen de jardin, 1785. Réparations à différents logements, 1787. Mur d'enceinte. Nouvelles constructions, pavillon parallèle au manège, 1786, Nouveau dortoir, 1788. État récapitulatif. 30 dossiers d'attachements, de 1788 probablement, relatifs à la construction du bâtiment parallèle au manège, au pavillon du corps de garde, au pavillon du suisse, au nouveau dortoir, à la grille d'entrée... Nombreux dessins de maçonnerie, (puits, fondations) de charpente (combles, cloisons, planchers, calotte de paratonnerre)
- 13 Procès-verbal de visite des poutres des planchers des différents bâtiments, attaqués par les champignons. 19 avril 1762. Procédé utilisé pour les récupérer (sciage par le milieu et exposition à l'air, puis ajustement des deux parties inversées)

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M 255 École Militaire

1 à 62 Dossiers des élèves admis aux Écoles militaires. Ces dossiers comprennent généralement: extrait baptistaire, certificat médical, pièces diverses concernant sa famille, sa fortune, d'autres sur son éventuelle admission à La Flèche, un certificat de noblesse.

1790:

- 1 François Gabriel de L'Espinasse
- 2 Joseph-Marie Mignon de La Mignonière
- 3 Pierre-Charles-Joseph Le Sueur de Surville
- 4 Armand-Catherine-Joseph de Faure
- 5 Charles-Eusèbe-Guillaume Helyon de Barbançois
- 6 Nicolas-Léopold de Hennezel de Gemenaincourt
- 7 Jean-René Le Brun de la Messardière
- 8 Honorat-Maur-Alpinien Mieulet de Ricaumont
- 9 Gabriel-Alexandre de Villemoune de la Ribbe
- 10 Jean-Hercule Pinault de Bonnefonds
- 11 Augustin-Henry de Carrey de Bellemare
- 12 Jean-Lubin Chevaleau de Boisragon de la Chesnaye
- 13 Etienne de May de Fontafret
- 14 Annibal-Ange Le Mintier
- 15 Antoine d'Argy
- 16 Antoine de Vitrac de Vandières
- 17 Pierre-Louis-René de Saint-Légier
- 18 Jean-Fidèle-Pierre de Kerusec de Kergaëff de Guelzic

1791:

- 19 Charles-Guillaume de Mergot de Montergon
- 20 Jean-Baptiste-Joseph-Marie-Maurice de Lostende de Reignfort
- 21 Jean-Léonard-Alphonse-François de Paty
- 22 Felix-Jean-Jacques de Constantin
- 23 Guillaume Douzey
- 24 Charles-Jean de Maubeuge
- 25 Eustache-Henry de Beffroy de Germont
- 26 Etienne-Marie Cillart de la Villeneuve
- 27 Nicolas de Lonlay
- 28 Marc de Vaucocour
- 29 Etienne de Boëry
- 30 Joseph de Folzer
- 31 François-Antoine-Philippe de Florinier
- 32 Philippe-Jena de Guillon
- 33 Michel-Joseph-Margeruite de la Grange de Tarnac
- 34 Charles-Amable de la Rothenégly
- 35 Jean-Baptiste de Noyel de Paranges
- 36 Charles-Louis de Brossard
- 37 Jean-Charles-Louis de Lonlay
- 38 Louis-Antoine Pernot
- 39 Louis-Auguste-Angélique-Joseph-Charles de Robert du Châtelet
- 40 Jacques-Marie-Xavier la Chapelle de Morton
- 41 Jean-Pierre-François-César de Truchy
- 42 Claude-Narcis de Berlaymont
- 43 Hercule-Thimoléon-Paul-Vincent de Coquerel

1792:

- 44 François de la Barrière
- 45 Jean-Joseph Lisse de Carbonnié

- 46 Joseph Ansoine de la Roche
- 47 Jean Baderou
- 48 Antoine-Jean-Charles de la Barrière
- 49 Claude Bégon de la Rouzière
- 50 Adrien-Blaise de Bouvrot d'Alenjoy
- 51 Antoine-Joseph Duchanin
- 52 Tropès-Charles-Hyacinthe de Colomiès
- 53 Charles-Anne le Conte de Fontaine-Moreau
- 54 Jean-Baptiste-Camille la Cotte du Mesnil
- 55 François-Henri-Marie-Jean-Cosme-Damien de Fenix de la Combe
- 56 Louis-Marie Magon de Closdoré
- 57 Gilles-Josph de Mayer
- 58 Etienne Peyrony
- 59 Louis-Edme-Pierre du Potet
- 60 Julien-Simon-Ferdinand Puy de Roseil
- 61 Jean-Marc-Antoine Rigoine
- 62 Jean-Henry-Auguste-Alexandre Larrouge

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M 256 École Militaire

- 1<sup>1</sup> à 13 Notes et plans relatifs à un terrain de 14 à 16 arpents à Vaugirard ayant servi de carrière pour bâtir l'École Militaire. Comptes avec l'abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Près et indemnités dues aux fermiers de ce terrain, 1758-1775. Édité créant l'École militaire, janvier 1751, impr. Plan gravé de l'École militaire, par Chambon, 30 octobre 1751.
- 1<sup>14</sup> à 24 Ordonnances, arrêts et règlements concernant les Écoles militaires. 1761-1777. Impr.
- 2 Procès-verbal d'expertise des travaux conduits à l'École Militaire par l'architecte Brongniart et l'entrepreneur Lathuille. 7 juin 1784. 277 p.
- 3<sup>1</sup> à 63 Travaux à l'École militaire 1783-1785. Devis, plans, mémoires et correspondances échangées entre l'architecte Brongniart, les administrateurs et le marquis de Ségur. Brongniart succédait à Boulée. Construction du manège, des écuries, d'un bâtiment parallèle au manège, réparations, démolitions, fossé de la cour d'entrée, corps de garde et logement du suisse. Nombreux plans et élévations lavés. Percement de l'avenue de Ségur (1784).
- 4<sup>1</sup> à 57 Travaux à l'École militaire 1786-1788. Devis, plans, mémoires et correspondance. Nouveau magasin des pompes à incendie, bâtiment parallèle au manège, observatoire, cour d'honneur, pavillons du corps de garde et du suisse, fossés, grille, abreuvoir, glacière, porte du cimetière, petit bâtiment entre les deux corps de logis des professeurs, nouveau dortoir. Nombreux plans et élévations lavés.
- 5<sup>1</sup> à 12 Domerie d'Aubrac. Pension sur cette domerie (droits de justice) attribuée à l'École militaire par arrêt du conseil du 1er avril 1768. Mémoires sur la domerie, sur le projet d'établir une verrerie dans la forêt d'Aubrac. État des revenus en 1760. Bail du 13 janvier 1751, autre du 18 août 1760.

- 1 État général des entrepreneurs et ouvriers employés à l'hôtel de l'École militaire en janvier 1779.
- 2 Relevé des ouvriers employés du 1<sup>er</sup> avril au 12 novembre 1785 aux fortifications, au Champ de Mars et à l'esplanade.
- 3 Relevé des bulletins de quinzaine de janvier à août 1784.
- 4 à 45 Journal des ouvriers employés par économie pour le service de l'hôtel. Feuille hebdomadaires, du 8 mars 1784 au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1785.
- 46 à 94 Journal des ouvriers. Feuilles hebdomadaires, du 2 janvier 1785 au 2 janvier 1786.
- 95 à 146 Journal des ouvriers. Feuilles hebdomadaires, du 3 janvier 1786 au 30 juillet 1787.
- 147 à 176 Journal des ouvriers. Feuilles hebdomadaires, du 2 janvier 1787 au 22 mars 1788.
- 177 à 193 Journal des ouvriers. Feuilles par quinzaines, du 29 juillet 1787 au 22 mars 1788.
- 194 État des arbres à remplacer, 6 octobre 1778.
- 195 Détail du sable de rivière pour la cour des classes, 1780.
- 196 État des ouvriers employés, mars 1784.
- 197 à 249 Ordres du travaux d'entretien par les administrateurs de l'École militaire durant l'année 1784.
- 250 État des arbres morts à remplacer, 1784.
- 251 et 252 États des matériaux entrés en magasin et leur employ. 1785.
- 253 à 256 Fourniture d'un obélisque en fonte. 1786.

## Appendix B

État Raisonné des Revenus 1751-1775, SHD Y<sup>a</sup> 145<sup>995</sup>

<i>Droit sur les cartes</i>		<i>Loterie</i>	
1751-54	1,233,533.10.11		
1755	592,262.9.6		
1756	<u>808,639.9.10</u>		
1757	492,886.10.10		
1758	456,568.5.6	1758	35,360.15.2
1759	443,751.5.6	1759	357,135.1.1
1760	457,082.11.9	1760	353,526.1.2
1761	462,047.2.8	1761	239,870.19.4
1762	503,182.6.10	1762	502,025.7.9
1763	530,145.15.11	1763	478,058.8.7
1764	536,082.11.1	1764	780,030.9.4
1765	648,343.1.10	1765	423,683.13.2
1766	575,480.5.8	1766	1,485,466.13.2
1767	693,677.10.8	1767	1,348,038.4.6
1768	777,034.10.7	1768	1,217,592.16.11
1769	808,249.18.7	1769	1,949,646.5.6
1770	687,865.15.3	1770	1,557,907.13.6
1771	771,855.5.5	1771	2,815,033.19.6
1772	746,632.11.3	1772	2,593,967.6.4
1773	764,447.10.4	1773	1,303,000.12.10
1774	796,742.6.5	1774	2,752,280.5.3
1775	781,335.8.8	1775	1,320,240.2.7
Total	= 14,567,863.13.8	Total	= 21,512,864.15.6

<sup>995</sup> A comment for 1751-1754 notes: “Le Trésorier a compté par un même compte des années 1751-1754”.

On 1756, the *État* notes: “Il est entré dans le produit de 1756 des recouvrements des années précédentes”.

The lottery revenues are the “produit suivant les comptes du caissier déduction fait des frais et des nonvalants”. The *recette* for the lottery is given as 99,595,530 livres, with the sums going to the *École militaire* totalling 21,512,864; the resulting *bénéfice* is 22% of the *recette*.

## Glossary and Abbreviations<sup>996</sup>

Acompte – Partial payments for debt.

AD – Archives Départementales

Aliénation – Sale, setting aside, or granting of a property, asset, or source of income.

Appointements – Salary; aid given by someone for the maintenance or subsistence of another.

AM – Archives Municipales

AN – Archives Nationales

Anspessade – The lowest non-commissioned officer, ranked below corporals.

Anoblissement – The process of legal ennoblement.

Assignation – The payments given to a corporation from another entity's revenue streams, with the attendant administrative constraints such an arrangement implies.

Bail (plural 'baux') – The lease of the right to collect taxes.

Bénéfice – 1. Positive service, resulting in some benefit.

2. Ecclesiastical holding which enjoyed a certain revenue or income.

BnF – Bibliothèque nationale de France

BUP – Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit-lettres, Poitiers

Castrametation – The practice of siting and laying out camps.

CNRS – Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique

Décompte – 1. An enumeration of a given amount.

2. The deduction or withholding which remains to be made from a sum.

Dédommagement – Monetary compensation; literally "un-damaging".

Dérogeance – The loss of nobility through the carrying out of activities prohibited to nobles.

Dot – Dowry.

Dotation – Independent, autonomous financial endowment; in the *École militaire's* case, the basis for its *fondation*.

Douceurs – Courtesies or emoluments to facilitate a salaried employees work; literally "sweeteners".

Droit – 1. Right or permission; can be used in a general, moral sense, or to refer to special concessions, such as a monopoly to collect or benefit from specific measures.

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<sup>996</sup> All terms are found in the main text. Definitions for most, but not all, are given there. Short definitions are given here for reference purposes.



2. The law, as well as the study of the same.

ERM – École royale militaire/École militaire

État – 1. The state, as used in the term ‘nation-state’.

2. List compiled for administrative purposes; it could be used of people, such as students or employees, as well as expenses, goods, or other objects.

3. State of mind or disposition in which a person found themselves.

Externe – Non-resident day-boarders at a *collège* or *pensionnat*.

Ferme – Tax farm in which a syndicate paid a fixed rent or share of revenue for the lease of the right to collect taxes. The verb describing the setting up or assigning of an entity to collect revenue in this form is ‘*affermer*’.

Formation – 1. An organised body of troops, be it for administrative purposes, drill, or combat.

2. Training; to shape through instruction, both in moral and scholastic terms.

Génie – 1. The corps of military engineers, who were all required to pass through Mézières after 1748.

2. Superior mental faculties; spirit, inspiration.

Gentilhomme – A noble with four degree of nobility, which distinguished him from the *anoblis* and granted him certain legal privileges.

Grâce – 1. Non-statutory permission or exception typically granted by a superior entity to a lower one.

2. Exceptional gift or compensation, usually given to departing or retired employees.

3. A certain benefit, whether extraordinary or routine, granted to a designated party, such as admission to a military school.

Gage – 1. Pledge or guarantee given for payment; surety for debt. Widely used in a metaphorical sense as well.

2. The annual salary of domestics.

3. Royal payment to officers of the *Maison du Roi* and other servants of the crown, such as those involved in matters of a legal and financial nature.

Gratification – A gift or liberality which is granted to someone; was given in several variants.

Heuristic – The quality which enables a person to discover or learn something for themselves.

INRP – Institut National pour la Recherche Pédagogique

M. – Monsieur

Mgr. – Monseigneur

n.d. – No date

n.p. – No place/no publisher

Pension – 1. The sum of money one gave in order to be lodged and nourished.

2. A certain portion taken each year on the fruits of a *benefice*.

3. A sum given annually to someone, either as a *gratification* or as a reward for services, or to make them party to the interests of the entity granting it.

Pensionnat – 1. Establishment set-up to educate students who paid a *pension*.

2. The lodging-site for the *pensionnaires* of a *collège*.

Perfection – A quality reflecting good order; the final, highest point of intellectual preparation.

Quittance – Written document authorising the payment of a sum to the bearer of the document; also, the record of that transaction.

Récompense – 1. The good done to someone, in recognisance of a service or good action.

2. Compensation.

Réforme – 1. A reduction in troop numbers at the end of a conflict.

2. Officers who had obtained their *réforme*, that is they kept their brevet along with certain *appointements* on their corps's disbandment.

3. Officers who, though not embodied in a corps, nevertheless received a lieutenant's brevet, or a captain's or colonel's commission in a certain regiment.

Régie – 1. A syndicate whose members were paid some fixed compensation or salary for the collection of taxes; wage-compensated administration.

2. When used as a verb, it can refer both to the setting up of a body to collect revenue in this form, and the administrative effort resulting in the extraction of revenue, and/or the production of said revenue.

Relation – A semi-detached administrative union between two bodies, but without their lands and assets held in common. See 'reunion' below.

Rente – Annual income; can refer to personal, institutional or other revenues, both public and private.

Réunion – The administrative and financial union of two entities, in which the assets and lands of one are assigned to another for its fiscal benefit, and the beneficiary is made responsible for running the attached entity's assets.

RSME – Real Sociedad Matemática Española

Secours – Aid, help, assistance, or succour, both monetary and moral.

SHD – Service Historique de la Défense, fonds de l'Armée de Terre

s.l. – Sans lieu (no place)

S.M. – Sa Majesté

Sr./S. – Sieur

s.v. – Sub verbo

T. – Tome

Traitement – 1. Certain honours which are bestowed on persons of distinction.

2. Payments of a stipulated and regular nature.

V. – Volume

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