
La chose publique de notre royaume

From the late thirteenth century onward, Philip IV and Edward I of England sought greater resources from their subjects to carry on wars. They convened assemblies of the most powerful members of their societies: archbishops, bishops, abbots, and cathedral chapters; members of the royal family, aristocrats, and leading nobles; merchants and legal men from the “good towns” [walled]. Some of the assemblies called by Philip IV and Philip V had representatives from scores of towns, many of them scarcely more than *bourgs*.¹ The mid-fourteenth-century meetings involved far fewer towns, and, with one exception, met in two regional assemblies: Languedoil and Langue d’Oc.² In the north, these assemblies primarily consisted of deputies from demesne holdings of the king and his immediate family.

Such assemblies took place all over Europe, and they shared many key characteristics, such as the recognition of the authority of a given prince to call the assembly, the creation of normative places and times of convocation, and the establishment of powers of representation for those called to the assembly. Michel Hébert stresses these assemblies as places of negotiation, but they were also places used for publicity – for making known a given princely policy that affected all – and for implementation: the deputies often came from the ranks of local officers who would have to carry out the policy in question.³

At the same time that the men invited to the general assemblies constituted a civic society,⁴ as a social fact, scholars and lawyers alike sought theoretical

¹ Philip V convoked over 100 towns to the March 1317 southern assembly at Bourges. A “town” [*ville*] had walls; a *bourg*, in common parlance, did not. Royal legislation used the term “villes closes.”

² Southern assemblies sometimes included regions like Poitou or Berry. Périgord, Quercy, Bigorre, Agenois, and Rouergue passed into the hands of Edward III via the Treaty of Calais, so they did not contribute to John II’s ransom: Devic and Vaissette, *Histoire de Languedoc*, IV, 308.

³ M. Hébert, *Parlementer. Assemblées représentatives et échange politique en Europe occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: De Boccard, 2014), 1.

⁴ The political community of citizens theoretically excluded women; in practice, some of them participated.

justifications for collective actions. The rise of Aristotelianism, solidified by William of Moerbeke's translation (c. 1270) of *The Politics* into Latin, deeply affected European political theories of the time, as we can easily see in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Marsiglio of Padua, Giles of Rome, Guillaume Durand and his eponymous nephew, William of Ockham, and many others.⁵ In France, one trail ran from Ockham to his student Jean Buridan, on to Buridan's younger colleague Nicole Oresme, thence to Oresme's acolytes like Jean Gerson.⁶ In the second half of the fourteenth century, the Collège de Navarre – founded by Jeanne de Navarre in 1305 – would play a fundamental role in the rise of a specifically French ideology of the “public good,” in part because of Oresme's central role in creating that ideology.⁷

Jeanne de Navarre, wife of Philip IV, in founding her Collège, relied on two figures deeply implicated in the critical dynastic events of 1314–1318: Raoul des Presles and Gilles I Aycelin.⁸ They founded this institution specifically to train royal officials in the liberal arts, **not** in the law or medicine, but the “royal” element of the Collège remained more rhetorical than real prior to the reign of Charles V. From his reign forward, the Collège de Navarre became and long remained the intellectual nexus of commonwealth ideology.

In the split between scholars and lawyers that Jacques Krynen has so rightly emphasized at the French Court from the late fourteenth century, the Collège de Navarre trained the scholarly wing.⁹ Alumni of the Collège in key roles included Jean Gerson, Jean de Montreuil, Nicolas de Clamanges, Michel Creney (preceptor of Charles VI), and Pierre d'Ailly.¹⁰ That elite encountered,

⁵ Krynen, *L'empire du roi*; C. Fasolt, *Council and Hierarchy: The Political Thought of William Durant the Younger* (Cambridge; New York: CUP, 1991) and *Past Sense – Studies in Medieval and Early Modern European History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); J. Ryan, *The Apostolic Conciliarism of Jean Gerson* (Oxford and NY: OUP, 2012); and M. Randall, *The Gargantuan Polity: On the Individual and the Community in the French Renaissance* (Toronto: UT Press, 2009).

⁶ Buridan belonged to the Picard “nation” and Oresme to the Norman one, so Oresme was not his student.

⁷ N. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre, de sa fondation (1305) au début du XV^e siècle (1418). Histoire de l'institution, de sa vie intellectuelle et de son recrutement* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1997), says that Buridan was not a member of the Collège's faculty.

⁸ Gorochov, *Collège de Navarre*. On the Aycelin family, J. Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1980). Gilles became chancellor under Philip V; his eponymous nephew was also chancellor, and a chief negotiator between John II and Edward III. Charles V mandated (1373) that the royal confessor would have final say on admissions to the Collège.

⁹ In addition to his broader works, see J. Krynen, “Les légistes ‘idiots politiques’. Sur l'hostilité des théologiens à l'égard des juristes, en France, au temps de Charles V,” in *Théologie et droit dans la science politique de L'État moderne* (Rome: Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, 1991): 171–198.

¹⁰ Autrand, *Christine de Pizan*, 121. When Jean sans Peur's forces seized Paris in 1418, they sacked the Collège and murdered some of its key figures, like Jean de Montreuil, whom they associated with the Armagnac party.

in the highest ranks of royal officialdom, Krynen's conflicting legal elite, educated at Orléans (civil) and Paris (canon).¹¹ The Collège's former students long played a major role in monarchical administration: Cardinal Richelieu offers a seventeenth-century example.¹²

Philippe de Beaumanoir, a royal *bailli* from Clermont-en-Beauvaisis, in his extremely influential *Customs of the Beauvaisis* (1283), shows how such principles affected practical politics: in his list of ten virtues a *bailli* must possess, he began with "sapience," the virtue that enables all the others, and only then turned to "the love of God." Yet Beaumanoir also shows us the limits: he may have given primacy to practical reason, but he knew little or nothing of Aristotle's political categories. His famous description of the corrupted town governments of northern France, in which he (rightly) claimed the rich excluded the poor and middling and passed the administration from one family member to another, makes no mention of the obvious term, oligarchy, because it did not yet exist in French.¹³ The process took place in a world bristling with paradoxes, which they embraced. In periods of contested power relations in particular, the participants often prefer ambiguity, both practical and legal.¹⁴

We need go no further than Giles of Rome to seek evidence of apparent contradiction.¹⁵ Although his *De ecclesiastica potestate* provided justification for Boniface VIII's power grab, Giles' *De regimine principum* (1279), written for the young prince soon to become Philip IV, became a fundamental text in the education of generations of French [and other] kings. Philip III had Henri de Gauchi create a French translation and abridgement (1282), and a certain "Guillaume" created for Guillaum de Beles Voies, "citoyen" and royal judge at Orléans, a full French translation in 1330.¹⁶ Noëlle-Laetitia Perret and others

¹¹ Many students from Orléans attended either Bologna or Padua. Buridan attended the Collège de Lemoine and remained a Master of Arts, not a theologian.

¹² All three principals of the War of the League – Henry, duke of Guise, Henry III, and Henry IV – attended classes there together. Throughout the text, readers will notice the remarkably high number of former students of the Collège de Navarre among the *dramatis personnae*.

¹³ Beaumanoir, *Costumes*, II, 267. Oresme's 1373 glossary is the first known French usage of "olygarchie."

¹⁴ On the dangers of such "simplification," see Jouanna, *Le pouvoir absolu*, 14.

¹⁵ On Giles of Rome, see Blythe, *Ideal Government*, ch. 4; Krynen, *L'empire du roi*; and K. Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 1200–1600: Sovereignty and Rights in the Western Legal Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). The 1502 Venice printing of *De regimine* is available at: <https://archive.org/details/hin-wel-all-00000256-001> On image 16–17, in the proem, Giles is discussing hereditary monarchy, and specifically the succession of the later Philip IV to his father, Philip III: "nullum uiolentum cons[is]tet esse perpetuu[m]." The fourteenth-century manuscript version at the BNF-Arsenal (M. 744) reads "violentu[m] ce[] p[er]petuum fere via nat[ur]alia" in the context of lineal succession. More than 500 manuscript copies of *De regimine* survive.

¹⁶ N.-L. Perret, *Les traductions françaises du De regimine principum de Gilles de Rome: Parcours matériel, culturel et intellectuel d'un discours sur l'éducation* (Leiden: Brill, 2011),

have emphasized the aristocratic ownership of most of the surviving manuscripts of Giles' work, either in Latin or in translation, yet this full French translation belonged to a royal judge, and the town government of Poitiers demanded, in June 1453, that M^e Denis Dusserre return "a volume named Giles of Rome" that he had borrowed from the University's library.¹⁷ Dusserre regularly served as Poitier's main lawyer: in 1461, they charged him with writing up their proposals to Louis XI, who was supposed to make an official royal entry, which he subsequently cancelled.¹⁸ Anyone dealing with a French king from Charles V onward was well advised to be familiar with Giles' arguments, because Charles VI, Charles VII, and Louis XI had all read the work as part of their education into the responsibilities of kingship.¹⁹

Charles V commissioned a translation in 1372 (Besançon Manuscrit 434): this unknown translator clearly had access to Guillaume's 1330 version but did not simply recopy it. Charles owned four Latin copies of *De regimine*, but this work was clearly part of his extensive translation campaign of 1370–1373. He signed books for which he had a special affection – Oresme's translation of the *Ethics*, the *Songe du Vergier*, and both the Latin and this French version of *De regimine*.²⁰ "En ce livre roman sont conteneus plusieurs notables et bons livres et est a nous Charles le Ve de notre nom roy de France et fimes escrire et parfere l'an M CCC. LXXII. Charles."²¹

Its opening words stated that:²²

68–71, and the review by Silvère Menegaldo in *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* (2011): <http://journals.openedition.org/crm/12686> Gauchi's version was published by S. P. Molenaer, *Li Livres du Gouvernement des Rois* (New York: Macmillan, 1899). <https://archive.org/details/lilivresdugouver00colorich/page/n7>

¹⁷ Favreau, ed., *Poitiers (...) registres des délibérations du corps de ville*, II, 59. See C. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De Regimine Principum. Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, ca 1275 – ca 1525* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), ch. 5, on the use of Giles as a university textbook from the early fourteenth century at Paris.

¹⁸ Favreau, ed., *Poitiers (...) registres des délibérations du corps de ville*, II, 164.

¹⁹ Briggs, *Reading and Writing Politics*, 50, mentions that key figures of what I am calling commonwealth ideology – Gerson, Christine de Pizan, and Philippe de Mezières – all drew material from Giles.

²⁰ Perret, *Les traductions*, 75, citing Leopold Delisle's work on inventories of the royal library. See below, ch. 3.

²¹ Perret, *Les traductions*, 72.

²² Gallica, municipal library of Besançon, Manuscript 434, f. 103r. Gallica gives the compilation date of this group of manuscripts ("*Traité philosophiques et moraux*") as 1372, and misleadingly says they are in Latin. It **must** be searched by this title. Buridan paraphrased Giles, arguing that tyrant is not a prince because he relies on violence, which is not natural. Giles' debt to Aquinas on this point is clear. "Or dit aussi le ph[il]osophe que chose qui est violent et p[ar] force n'est point p[er]petuel, ne ne puet longuement durer. Mais ce est p[er]petuel et dure longuement qui est selonc nature. Donc q[ui] veult la seigneurie faire durer no[n] pas et pou de temps un an ou a la vie – mais p[er]petuelme[n]t si se estude que son governem[en]t ne soit par viole[n]t mais soit selonc nature. Lequel ne puet estre naturel se il n'est selonc raison." The Latin of *De regimine* differs

the philosopher [Aristotle] said that something done by force and violence is not perpetual and cannot last long. But that which is according to nature is perpetual and can last long. Thus he who wishes to make his lordship [*seigneurie*] last [can do so] by studying that his governing not be violent but by nature. [Government] can only be natural if it is according to reason.

De regimine, in Latin and in French translations, belonged to many royal family libraries, including those of such key women as Clémence of Hungary (second wife of Louis X) and Blanche of Navarre (second wife of Philip VI). In the fifteenth century, Jean Gerson – preceptor to the Dauphin – would insist it should be the basic text for educating all heirs to the throne.²³

The various authorities – Pope, Emperor, king of France – each developed the usage of a vocabulary of political supremacy. French royal documents, starting at least in 1297, made regular use of the Latin phrase “plenitudo potestatis” already used by the Pope to define the range of his power: French charters used “pleine puissance.”²⁴ For French royal lawyers, the king of France, just like the Pope or the Emperor, had the power to act without reference to an earthly superior: he was, in the phrase promulgated by Philip IV’s lawyers, and made popular under Charles V, “emperor in his own kingdom.”²⁵

French legists, both in the secular and the ecclesiastical dimension, fiercely defended the **king of France’s** “puissance absolue,” which we must not confuse with the power of the specific, living king.²⁶ All of these texts – whether Giles of Rome’s *De regimine*, or Beaumanoir’s *Customs*, or Oresme’s translations of Aristotle – agreed with the fictional Arthur of Chrestien de Troyes: the king

considerably in detail, if not in the general sentiment. The opening phrases, about the young Philip, are relatively close, and the text moves on to a discussion of “violence,” but does not here delve into Aristotle.

²³ Briggs, *Reading and Writing Politics*; Jean Gerson wrote [c. 1410] a treatise on educating Dauphins of France [initially for Louis, duke of Guyenne, who died in 1415], in which he recommended Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics*, and Giles of Rome. His friend Jean Majoris would later be the tutor of Louis XI. A. Thomas, *Jean Gerson et l’éducation des dauphins de France* (Paris, 1930).

²⁴ O. Guillot, A. Rigaudière, and Y. Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions dans la France médiévale. T. 2, Des temps féodaux aux temps de l’État* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1994, 1999), 110. The papal adoption of this concept owed much to the Frenchman Guillaume Durand the Elder. K. Pennington, *Popes and Bishops. The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), emphasizes the permanence of this concept from Innocent III onward; Fasolt, *Council and Hierarchy*, 67, on Durand’s influence.

²⁵ On the debt of secular debates to disputes about papal authority, see the summary assessment of Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 1200–1600*.

²⁶ J. Canning, *Ideas of Power*, ch. 1, which focuses not on power, as I am defining it here, but on “legitimate power, that is, authority.” (11) French kings did not make law based on *puissance absolue*, but on their “science certaine, pleine puissance et autorité royale.”

had to “govern according to the statutes and laws and ordinances left to him,” as Oresme put it. Beaumanoir preferred a different phrasing: the king “is held to guard and to have guarded the customs of his kingdom.”²⁷

Thirteenth-century French kings sought to claim broader regalian rights, on matters such as coinage, taxation, and jurisdiction.²⁸ With respect to serfs, the king sought to establish limited rights, above all the right to tax.²⁹ As for jurisdiction, Beaumanoir emphasized that any fief over which the king of France had “ressort,” was, by definition, in the kingdom: “all *ressort* in the kingdom is held of the king, in fief or *arrière-fief*.”³⁰ Royal ordinances – and the Parlement of Paris – emphasized “ressort” in almost all cases.³¹

Unlike “souveraineté” [for the Latin “superior”], *ressort* rarely appeared in the plural: the king held multiple sovereignties, but only one *ressort* within the kingdom.³² The charters of the town of Abbeville show the mayor and *échevins* recognized [1320] the “ressort” and “souveraineté” of the count of Ponthieu, except in cases in which the count [Edward II of England] had a lawsuit against the town government, in which case the king of France, or his Parlement, had *ressort*.³³

²⁷ Cited in S. Petit-Renaud, “Le roi, les légistes et le parlement de Paris aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles: contradictions dans la perception du pouvoir de ‘faire loy’ ?”, *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 7 (2000), consulted online, April 2011. Religious belief reinforced this principle (see below). Oresme here followed closely the arguments of Jean Buridan, *Quæstiones super octo libros politicorum Aristotelis* (Paris: Jean Petit, 1524), particularly his questions to Book III of Aristotle. Available on Gallica.

²⁸ W. C. Jordan, “Jews, Regalian Rights, and the Constitution of Medieval France,” *AJS Review*, 23, n. 1 (1998): 1–16, and *The French Monarchy and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), calls the king of France’s efforts to assert his unique jurisdiction over Jews a radical departure in royal praxis.

²⁹ J. Vallejo, “Power Hierarchies in Medieval Political Juridical Thought: An Essay in Reinterpretation,” in *Ius Commune* (1992), accessed through academia.edu, follows Pietro Costa, *Iurisdiction. Semantica del potere politico nella pubblicistica medievale (1100–1433)* (Milan, 1969), in his rightful emphasis on jurisdiction (*ressort*, in French), and the “judicial vision of political power” (Vallejo, 5) in this period.

³⁰ Beaumanoir, a royal judge, specifically ties this principle to the right of appeal to the king in case of false judgment. Beaumanoir, *Coutûmes*, I, 163.

³¹ Beaumanoir oversimplified here; he likely referred to fiefs having rights of justice, because as a royal *bailli* he would have had a vested interest in the principle that the judgments of such courts could be appealed to a royal one. In real life, that principle took centuries to establish.

³² “*Ressorts*” could appear when referring to multiple territories, each of which would have a “*ressort*.” In the kingdom of France, the king and his Parlement claimed to have *ressort* over everyone. Dauphant, *Royaume des quatre rivières*, shows how limited the Parlement’s writ could be, but also how it expanded over time. Aristotle was, in one of the French versions of the proem to Giles of Rome, “the sovereign philosopher,” a typical use of the term.

³³ Thierry, *Recueil des monuments inédits de l’histoire du Tiers Etat [. . .] Abbeville*, IV, 108.

The regalian right of pardon provided the main manifestation of “ressort”; in most documents, the king coupled the words “jurisdiction” and “ressort” to cover both his right (and that of Parlement) to hear appeals and his right, his alone, to issue letters of remission and pardons. Kings sometimes specifically granted feudatories, such as the dukes of Brittany or Burgundy, the right to pardon; in both cases, the duke/duchess would use regalian powers – coining money, issuing pardons – to demonstrate a level of independent action. Ducal rulers in Burgundy and Brittany regularly issued their own coins and both levied taxes voted by local estates, without benefit of specific royal letters, although the monarchy always covered its tracks by calling their ability to do so a grant from the king.³⁴

By the fifteenth century, as in the Treaty of Arras (1435), the word “ressort” meant both sorts of jurisdiction: the operative words had become “ressort et souveraineté du Roy et de sa court de parlement,” which were reserved, in separate articles, for the counties of Macon and Auxerre, granted as fiefs to Philip of Burgundy and his heirs, female or male.³⁵ The duke got the right to nominate all officers, but they received royal letters of “commission and institution” and acted in the king’s name. Philip and his “heir” [singular] were also granted [art. 16] all the tax revenues for the county of Auxerre: *gabelles*, taxes on wine and other goods, *tailles*, *fouages*, and all other “aides.” Article 29 specifically mandated that Philip had to recognize, in written documents and orally, Charles VII as his “souverain seigneur,” without in any way prejudicing the exemptions from homage, *ressort*, and *souveraineté* he personally had been granted in the treaty, with respect to the person of Charles VII. Those exemptions did not apply to **either** of their successors, so that Philip would owe – and did perform – homage to Louis XI in 1461. Charles the Bold in Burgundy even insisted his subjects call him their “souverain seigneur.”³⁶

Philip IV’s disastrous efforts to debase his coinage, in the name of the “common good,” both emphasized a key regalian right (minting money), and recognized the civic society’s right to a say in the matter.³⁷ The many assemblies called by Philip IV, his sons, and the first two Valois kings often focused on coinage issues: the royal perspective that coinage was proprietary, so that the king had a right to profit from it, conflicted sharply with the perspective of his subjects that sound coinage underpinned what from the 1350s onward they called the “chose publique,” so that it was a public not a particular matter. This philosophical conflict over coinage led directly to the

³⁴ B. Schnerb, *L'état bourguignon* (Paris: Perrin, 2005).

³⁵ Cosneau, *Grandes Traités*, 131, art. 11 of the Treaty of Arras.

³⁶ Garnier, ed., *Correspondance de la mairie de Dijon*, I, contains multiple examples.

³⁷ Many of the pennies (*deniers*) were minted by local lords: J. Belmon, “La monnaie de Rodez: la mort d’un monnayage seigneurial (vers 1270–1340),” *Revue numismatique* 6 (2003): 355–418. Philip and his sons did make significant progress in reducing the number of seigneurial mints.

adoption of the “bien de la chose publique” vocabulary in the 1350s. Coinage issues long remained a central issue for representative assemblies: in 1484, the Third Estate’s grievances began with articles on coinage, and even the meeting of 1576 took up currency matters.³⁸

By virtue of being a legitimate king, as Giles of Rome had pointed out to Prince Philip, the king of France had to rule according to law and reason, the highest combination of which was God’s law.³⁹ The coronation ceremony itself made that clear: the king took an oath, which God’s law mandated that he observe. He swore to protect the privileges of the French church, prevent evildoing, render justice, and show clemency. From Charles V’s coronation (1364) onward French people also believed the king swore to be an inviolable custodian of the French crown (*corone francie*) and not to transfer or alienate either the Crown or any of its rights or properties.⁴⁰ The principle appeared, loosely, in a 1318 edict of Philip V about rescinding the “excessive” alienations of royal rights, lands, and prerogatives that had taken place since the death of Saint Louis (1270), but Charles V would issue the key legislation touching on this vital point in the rules he laid down for apanages, which from his time forward reverted to the Crown, absent a legitimate son (or grandson, in case of predecease of the son).

While French kings emphasized their legitimacy as monarchs, they also emphasized their special relationship to the Church. The canonization of Louis IX (1297) transformed the French monarchy’s image. The Christian king had to live according to God’s law: from the late fourteenth century onward, the king of France, as the papally recognized *rex Christianissimus*, had even more

³⁸ J. B. Henneman, *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth-Century France: The Development of War Financing, 1322–1356* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1971) and *Royal Taxation in Fourteenth-Century France: The Captivity and Ransom of John II, 1356–1370* (Philadelphia: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 1976). The *Charte aux Normands* begins with two articles about sound money, and the other provincial charter movements of 1314–1315 also did. After completing the manuscript, I became aware of Adam Woodhouse’s article in *Speculum* 92, n. 1 (2017): “Who Owns the Money? Currency, Property, and Popular Sovereignty in Nicole Oresme’s *De Moneta*”; I do not really agree about the popular sovereignty element he attributes to Oresme [“one of the most radically populist works of medieval political thought”], but I certainly agree – as will become apparent – that Oresme emphasizes the rights of the political community with respect to coinage.

³⁹ E. Grant, *God & Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), speaks of the “new professionalism” produced by universities by the end of the twelfth century. Grant emphasizes the importance of reason, particularly Aristotelian logic, in changing medieval society in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. “Civil and canon law were transformed . . . [into] disciplines where reason was systematically applied to laws that were now intended to be universal in scope, while also attempting to meet the needs of the new merchant class and guilds . . .” (81–82).

⁴⁰ G. Leyte, *Domaine et domanialité publique dans la France médiévale (XII^e – XV^e siècles)* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg), part II, ch. 2.

pressure to rule according to God's law, reason, and justice.⁴¹ In the well-ordered Christian kingdom, these three elements were inseparable. Christine de Pizan, in founding her community of female citizens, the *Cité des Dames*, relied precisely on three "dames": Reason, Rightfulness (*Droiture*), and Justice. In her *Book of Peace*, Christine de Pizan began with praise to God, for having granted peace. She listed God's attributes, among which were that He was "our good pastor, very just judge, our wise master, our very powerful supporter (*aideur*), our helpful physician, our clear light."⁴² The third part of her book would explain to the young Dauphin (Louis, duke of Guyenne, then about fifteen) how to "well govern the people and the chose publique."⁴³

Charles V began his 1374 ordinance on the royal wardship/*tutelle* (should he die without an adult heir) making precisely the point that kings must set an example:⁴⁴

Kings, who by their sense, honest life and good government, must give to their subjects form and example of life, all the more so as God has given them greater authority and seignury

Charles V here glossed the 1372 French translation of Giles of Rome, which argued that the king needed to use his reason to restrain his passions, and then those of others. The Besançon manuscript attributes to Aristotle the sentiment that "he who wishes to govern his seignury according to the passions and by will alone is not a natural seigneur but a serf by nature."⁴⁵ Throughout the

⁴¹ John of Salisbury, in *Policraticus*: "A commonwealth, according to Plutarch, is a certain body which is endowed with life by the benefit of divine favor, which acts at the prompting of the highest equity, and is ruled by what may be called the moderating power of reason." The title *rex Christianissimus* came into informal use around 1400 but achieved official recognition only under Louis XI. J. Krynen, "Rex Christianissimus: A medieval theme at the roots of French absolutism," *History and Anthropology* (1989), which, in my view, offers an anachronistic analysis.

⁴² BNF, M Fr 1182, f. 5v.

⁴³ BNF, M Fr 1182, f. 3v, "bien gouverner le peuple et la chose publique". Her image of the king as pastor offers an early example of one of the key attributes leading to the later governmentality, analyzed by M. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, trans. G. Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007). The French original was published by Éditions du Seuil in 2004.

⁴⁴ *Ordonnances*, VI, 49. Archbishop Hincmar of Reims made this point in a letter to Louis III in 882. French customary law often divided responsibility between the widow and the senior male member of the deceased husband's family, leading to innumerable lawsuits.

⁴⁵ Gallica, municipal library of Besançon, Manuscript 434, f. 103r "c'il qui veult seignourie gouverner selo[n]c les passions et de volente tant seulem[en]t n'est pas seigneur naturel ains serf par nature." In the Besançon manuscript, the translation of "de l'enseignement des princes" precedes "le livre du gouvernement des roys et des princes," which starts on f. 103r. Jean Golein translated this text: Équipe Golein, "Remarques sur la traduction de Jean Golein du 'De Informacione principum,'" *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 95, n. 1 (1994): 19–30, which the Golein group of researchers identify as a separate late thirteenth-century text, and not, as catalogues claim, a version of *De regimine*.

period here, political discourse took as a given that reason had to constrain simple will, lest it be governed by appetite.

The gendered dichotomy male:rational/female:emotional meant the greater emphasis on reason controlling emotion and appetite – an emphasis powerfully reinforced by Humanism – had practical implications for the many women who played key roles in French politics. One particularly active line of political women ran from Jeanne de Penthièvre, who claimed the duchy of Brittany from her uncle (Duke Jean III), to her daughter, Marie de Blois, to Marie's daughter-in-law, Yolande of Aragon, to her daughter, Marie d'Anjou. Jeanne led one of the two sides in the Breton civil war – Jeanne of Flanders, wife of Jean de Montfort, who claimed succession through his father, Duke Arthur II, led the other – and her daughter Marie, left a widow with a two-year-old son [Louis II d'Anjou], had to defend the family's political and economic interests for decades.⁴⁶ Yolande, mother-in-law of Charles VII, led one of the factions at his court and almost certainly provided the key sponsorship for Joan of Arc. All these women had great reputations as patrons of learning: Yolande passed this trait to her son, René d'Anjou, who was both a patron and poet. Whether it was the women directing the “war of the two Jeannes” [Penthièvre and Flanders], the fiscal wizardry of Marie de Blois, or the political acumen of Yolande d'Aragon, their contemporaries invariably insisted on their “male” qualities being “unusual” in a woman.⁴⁷

This term “seigneur naturel,” soon inverted (*naturel seigneur*) became one of the most important new elements of French royal discourse in the second half of the fourteenth century, precisely because the monarchy drew on this connection between “nature” and “justice.” The monarchy thus built on the premise of Giles of Rome and Jean Buridan: “natural” polities rested on justice, not on violence. Speakers from the fourteenth century to the early seventeenth

⁴⁶ The Breton succession, like the successions to the throne of France (1316), to the county of Artois (1316), to the duchy of Burgundy (1360), revolved around gender. Jean de Montfort was the son of duke Arthur's second wife; by his first marriage, Arthur had three sons, the eldest of whom, Jean III, succeeded him as duke. The second son, Guy, predeceased his brother, and left as heir a daughter, Jeanne de Penthièvre. Philip VI recognized her claim, and that of her husband, Charles of Blois, Philip's nephew. Edward III recognized Jean de Montfort, who died in 1345, leaving his wife, Jeanne of Flanders, to lead their party. Charles spent nine years in an English prison and died at the 1364 Battle of Auray.

⁴⁷ Z. Rohr, *Yolande of Aragon (1381–1442). Family and Power* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2016); M. Kekewich, *The Good King: René of Anjou and Fifteenth Century Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2008); T. Adams, *The Life and Afterlife of Isabeau of Bavaria* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2010); E. Maëlan Graham-Goering, “Negotiating princely power in late medieval France: Jeanne de Penthièvre, duchess of Brittany (c. 1325–1384),” Ph.D. thesis, University of York, 2014. My thanks to Dr. Graham-Goering for sharing her thesis, which has recently been published by CUP (2020), *Princely Power in Late Medieval France: Jeanne de Penthièvre and the War for Brittany*. Jeanne de Penthièvre's great-granddaughter, Jeanne de Laval, was René d'Anjou's second wife. They had no children.

century invariably reminded kings/listeners of Aristotle's point that a kingdom without justice is simply brigandage.⁴⁸

Oresme's definition of the kingdom as a *cit * operated another dramatic definitional shift: if we look at the assemblies discussing the kingship in July 1316 and in 1328, we can see why. Beaumanoir focused on the relationship between fiefs and the kingdom, which consisted of the fiefs held by the king's vassals (and sub-vassals). In July 1316, when Philip of Poitiers convoked an assembly to discuss the succession of Louis X, and in 1328, when Philip of Valois convoked an assembly to rule on the succession of Charles IV, the chronicles say that they summoned **barons**, among whose number we would have to place the six ecclesiastical peers.⁴⁹ The composition of these two assemblies, specifically called to deal with the succession to the dignity [*dignitas*] of the king of France, indicates that contemporaries thought of the kingdom precisely as the collection of fiefs, and the king as the highest lord (*souverain seigneur*), holding a high office [*dignitas*].⁵⁰ In contrast to the assembly of February 1317, when chronicles cite the presence of bourgeois of Paris, or those of March 1317, when deputies arrived from more than thirty towns, no evidence survives of townsmen at the assemblies of either July 1316 or 1328.⁵¹ During the crisis of the late 1350s, when King John II was a prisoner in England, the assemblies called by the regent, Charles (later Charles V), included urban deputies, who by then had a say in the fate of the kingdom. In 1328, elites, including royal lawyers, believed the kingdom of France was a collection of fiefs; in 1359, those same groups held that the kingdom of France was a commonwealth of citizens. In both cases, however, the assemblies agreed on the fundamental principle that the kingdom of France could not be divided.

⁴⁸ Pennington, *The Prince and the Law*, has a detailed discussion of the role of natural law in emerging royalist [and papalist] discourse. The Florentine Agnolo Pandolfini, in 1411, argued that justice alone keeps the poor, so more numerous, from devouring the rich. "Quia si iusticia cessaret, omnia periclitarentur." Cited in G. Brucker, *The Civic World of Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1977), 330. Florentine political ideas deeply influenced French discourse in the early fifteenth century (see Chapter 3). The connection of reason and justice to political legitimacy could be found in innumerable Classical and Christian sources.

⁴⁹ In 1316, the bishop-peers included Robert de Courtenay (Reims), a member of the royal family. The *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, ed. S. Luce (Paris, 1862), 1, says that Philip seized the kingdom of France with the "accord and will of the princes of the said kingdom."

⁵⁰ P. Lehugeur, *Histoire de Philippe le Long* (Paris, 1897), 37, cites the presence in 1316 of Mahaut d'Artois and Blanche de Bretagne, daughter of Duke Jean II of Brittany, and widow of Philip, count of Artois.

⁵¹ Dauphant, *Royaume*, Map 44, illustrates the names of towns called to three assemblies of towns called for early 1316 by Louis X. Philip V called thirty-two large southern towns to meet at Bourges in March 1317. C. H. Taylor, "Assemblies of French Towns in 1316," *Speculum* XIV, n. 3 (1939): 275–299.

From 1356 onward “la chose publique” (*res publica*) became the term for the political society corresponding to the kingdom, in the regions tied to the Estates General of Languedoil, among which we may place Brittany, due to the role of Charles of Blois, the Valois-recognized duke. “La chose publique” described both a civic society, the one made up of its citizens, and a civil society, all those born in the kingdom (the *regnicoles*, those who were *de regni*, in Philip IV’s usage) and all its legitimate inhabitants (those who were *in regno*). Its political citizens had a special duty to those not of “sufficient reason” to rule themselves: women, children, and, in the eyeâs of most of the elite, those who worked with their hands. In the body politic image in which artisans and peasants were the legs and the feet, the cleric in Évraud de Trémaugon’s *Songe du Vergier* (1378), simply asked whether one wished the head or the feet to make decisions for the body. On into the seventeenth century, elites would regularly insist that “gens mécaniques” should have no part in political decision making.⁵²

This local citizenship and the political system built upon it had several characteristics worthy of note:

- In the countryside, nobles holding rights of high justice invariably referred to their peasants as their “subjects.”⁵³
- In a town, local rules usually defined a “droit de bourgeoisie.”⁵⁴ By the fourteenth century, this designation – the legal rights and privileges of a “bourgeois” of the town – had been extended to all permanent legal inhabitants, but not to transients.
- Residents who were *regnicoles* had legal citizenship – the protection of the town’s laws and privileges – but not political citizenship.
- Municipal politics, and thus systems of representation, often focused on groups – nobles, clergy, merchants, guilds, residents of a district – and not on individuals.⁵⁵

⁵² Christine de Pizan’s many political writings make clear her concerns about such people making political decisions: her contemporaries looked to the urban revolts of the 1380s and the Cabochien Uprising of 1413 as examples of the nefarious consequences of popular political participation.

⁵³ *Choix des pièces inédites relatives au règne de Charles VI*, 80–81: documents XL and XLI offer examples.

⁵⁴ A concept similar to the “freedom of the town” in England: P. Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth. Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005). Hébert, *Parlementer*, ch. 7, on the remarkably diverse methods of selecting local deputies throughout Europe.

⁵⁵ Rouen’s city government lay in the hands of the “100 Peers,” the families with the sole right to hold office; in Dijon, however, even ordinary *vignerons* could vote. The Crown regularly changed such rules in the aftermath of revolts. The rules for Paris, laid down by the king in 1554, basically excluded “gens mécaniques” and set up a political framework tied to geography, but not solely determined by it. M. Demonet and R. Descimon, “L’exercice politique de la bourgeoisie: les assemblées de Ville de Paris de 1528 à 1679,”

- Great lords, lay and ecclesiastical, still controlled major towns.⁵⁶

The traditional vocabulary of the municipal layer of this system appeared in their royal charters, which granted or conceded (*concedimus*) “customs and liberties” (*consuetudines et libertates*) to the citizens (*civium Rothomagi*, the citizens of Rouen, to quote from one of the most widely copied charters).⁵⁷ At Rouen, as in so many cases, any adult male who had lived in the city for a year and a day had to take an oath to the city, in front of the aldermen (*échevins*), and then became a citizen (*bourgeois*), subject to the town’s jurisdiction (*ban*). Those failing to do so could be clapped in irons, and, if recalcitrant, forced to leave the town.

In the fourteenth century, three changes took place in this vocabulary. First, the monarchy regularly added a new term: privileges. The renewal of the “franchises, liberties, usages and customs” of Macon in 1346, gave way to charters like that of Angoulême, issued by Charles V in 1372, which granted them “privileges, franchises, and liberties.”⁵⁸ This new word – “privileges” – long proved contentious: citizens invariably referred to their “droits, libertés et franchises”; the king might use some or all of these terms in his reply, but added “privileges,” a term that became standard two-way usage in many towns in the fifteenth century: some towns held out until the late sixteenth century. When the future Charles V came to Normandy in 1350, to be instituted as duke, the Norman spokesman, the canon Simon Baudry, presented to Charles “the franchises and the liberties of Normandy”; he asked Charles “to guard and have guarded them well and truly, the which he well and willingly swore.”⁵⁹ Godefroy de Harcourt supposedly brought the original copy of the Charte aux Normands with him: he told Charles, “my natural lord, here is the charter of the Normans. In the form that is contained within it, if you are pleased to swear and keep it, I am completely ready to do homage to you.”⁶⁰ Harcourt here

in C. Dolan, ed., *Les pratiques politiques dans les villes françaises d’Ancien Régime* (Rennes: PUR, 2018), 113–163.

⁵⁶ The duke of Brittany was direct lord of twenty-five of the sixty walled towns in his duchy: the other lords including the Laval (8), Rohan (7), and Rieux (4) families, and the high clergy (6). J.-P. Leguay, *Vivre dans les villes bretonnes au Moyen Âge* (Rennes: PUR, 2009), 194–195.

⁵⁷ Towns in the Southwest, like Saint-Jean d’Angély, copied the Rouen system.

⁵⁸ Macon: *Ordonnances*, II, 348. Angoulême: *Ordonnances*, V, 677. G. Marlot, *Histoire de la ville, cité et université de Reims*, t. IV (Reims, 1846), IV, 62, royal letters of December 1345 about the new tax of 4d/l, which was not to prejudice the city’s “privileges, liberties, and franchises” nor to imply the king had obtained a new right [*droict nouvel*]. On citizenship, see G. Lurie, “Citizenship in late medieval Champagne: the towns of Châlons, Reims, and Troyes, 1417 – c. 1435,” *French Historical Studies* 38, n. 3 (2015): 365–390.

⁵⁹ F. Michel, ed., *Chronique des abbés de Saint-Ouen de Rouen* (Rouen, 1840), 89.

⁶⁰ *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, 34. “Mon seigneur naturel, vecy la charter des Normans. En la fourme qu’il est contenu dedens s’il vous plaist à jurer et tenir, je suy tout prest de vous faire hommaige.” He was the uncle of Jean de Harcourt, executed at Rouen;

repeated a demand he had made in 1337, to Philip VI, who sought money from the Estates of Normandy, to fight Edward III. Harcourt insisted that the king “maintain them in their liberties and franchises,” as laid out in the Charter. Philip and his son John, then duke of Normandy, had sworn to uphold the Charter, but then levied new, unvoted taxes and issued “feeble money.” To the Normans, the “strong money of Saint Louis” was one of their liberties.⁶¹ Harcourt refused to allow the taxes to be collected on his lands and fled to England when the king sent troops to do so.

This episode ties together the larger concern of civil society for sound money, with the personal quarrels of the powerful. Harcourt’s quarrel with Philip VI and then John II had much to do with the preeminence of the Melun family at Court: they had intermarried, and gained the inheritance of, the house of Tancarville, which had engaged in a private war against the Harcourt in 1300. Through marriages and royal service, the Melun had gained the upper hand in Normandy: John II made Tancarville a county, and Jean II de Melun, through marriage to Jeanne Crespin, became hereditary constable of Normandy, adding to his office as grand chamberlain of the king. Jean II’s brother, Guillaume, was archbishop of Sens, thus metropolitan of Paris.⁶² Jean II de Melun’s second wife was Isabelle d’Antoign, mother of Charles de La Cerda, whose murder by the Navarre family (1/1354) precipitated a fatal rupture between John II and Charles of Navarre, and Navarre’s ally, the Harcourt family. Godefroy de Harcourt may have cited the “liberties and franchises” enshrined in the Charte aux Normands to defend his position, but it would be folly to ignore the deeply personal grievances involving the Valois, the Navarre-Évreux family, and the Melun and Harcourt clans in Normandy.⁶³

In the urban perspective, the king recognized the legitimacy of rights, liberties, usages, and customs; he **granted** privileges. What the king granted, he had every right to take away; any attempt to abrogate liberties and customs,

the *Chronique* claims he tried to warn Jean to get away, but that Robert de Lorris prevented Jean’s escape. Harcourt refused to turn over the original, which he returned to the abbey of Notre Dame; he urged Charles to have a copy made and to take the oath to uphold it. Harcourt left without doing homage.

⁶¹ *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, 5–9. Harcourt helped lead the English army at Crécy. His brother Jean died on the French side; sources of the time claim Godefroy was so shaken by his brother’s death that he immediately switched allegiances.

⁶² Guillaume and Jean II were both captured at Poitiers.

⁶³ In Latin, the charter reads “libertates, usus & consuetudines antiquas” and begins with Louis X lamenting the prejudice done to Normans “contra patriæ solitam consuetudinem, contra jura, & libertates eorum.” No version of it mentions “privileges,” but the eighteenth-century editor of the *Ordonnances*, in his title for the document, refers to Louis X confirming the “privileges” of the Normans, a fine example of the vocabulary shift. *Ordonnances* I, 588 ff. French translations used the phrase “contre la coutume du pays & contre les droits et franchises d’icelui.”

however, was certain to undermine the political system. Princely entries into towns show the elaborate ritual of exchange: the town officials would meet the prince/king **outside** the town. They would offer him the keys to the city; he would promise to uphold their rights, liberties, usages (and, of course, sneak in “privileges”). Only **after** he had done so, did he enter the town, invariably after returning the keys to the municipal officers, with instructions to maintain order in the town in his (or her) name.⁶⁴

The documents related to the transfer of Dauphiné to young Prince Charles, in 1349–1350, offer an ideal example of the vocabulary common at that precise moment.⁶⁵ Young Charles promised, in a document drawn up by French royal lawyers, to protect the “privileges, liberties, franchises, and immunities” of the inhabitants of Dauphiné. Just prior to the transfer, the last independent Dauphin, Humbert II, had issued a clear statement of the “liberties, franchises, graces, concessions, declarations, and privileges” of his subjects. One notices the word order: Humbert adds “privileges” at the end; Charles puts it in first place. Humbert’s declaration then laid out the “usages, customs, liberties, and privileges” in a series of articles, which treated matters like military service obligations, the levying of taxes, and the promise of “*moneta certa & durabilis*.” Only this article (XI) on sure and durable coinage mentioned the “*utilitate patriæ*.”

The actual act of donation between the living, from Humbert II to Charles, stated that Humbert “thought of the utility of our commonwealth” [*pensata nostræ reipublicæ utilitate*] in taking his action.⁶⁶ The Estates of Dauphiné ratified the agreement prior to Charles actually taking possession. They mentioned that Charles would receive the sceptre and ring of the Dauphin of Viennois, and would henceforth have the rights, nobilities, vassals and homages, and high and low jurisdictions attached to Humbert’s lands and seigneuries.⁶⁷ The young prince promised to make no “novations” in existing agreements [*convenances*]. The Estates’ document does not use the word “privileges.” In the list of those who would take the oath of loyalty to Charles, the Estates made specific reference to nobles and town officials and inhabitants, but then reverted to “other subjects.”

A second vocabulary shift applied to this litany of terms: in the central areas of the kingdom and in Brittany, documents like charters shifted in the late 1350s to add the phrase “bien de la chose publique.” The phrase burst into prominence in Paris in 1356–1357, during the Estates General of Languedoc, and appears to have become important in towns like Reims in 1358–1359. In

⁶⁴ Details in Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*.

⁶⁵ J.-P. Valbonnais, *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de Dauphiné* (Grenoble, 1711), 669, for Charles’ oath; 639ff for Humbert II’s charter. Article XI made specific reference to the fineness of the alloy.

⁶⁶ Valbonnais, *Mémoires*, 649. He later mentioned the “*felicis regiminis nostræ Reipublicæ*”

⁶⁷ Valbonnais, *Mémoires*, 658–659.

the southwest, places like Bergerac, Bordeaux, Poitiers, and Saint-Jean d'Angély avoided this vocabulary and typically used the phrase "the king, our *sire*," rather than "souverain seigneur." In the 1360s and 1370s, this locution made a great deal of sense, because the king of England, as duke of Guyenne or lord [*Dominus*] of Aquitaine – the latter the title to which he had right according to the 1360 Treaty of Calais – was not their "souverain seigneur": much safer to call him, "le roy nostre sire" and to use the same term with respect to Charles V, when he retook cities like La Rochelle (1372), Poitiers (1372), and Bergerac (1377).⁶⁸

Third, local practice in the towns led to significant social and political conflicts as urban elites sought to discourage democratization. In the early fourteenth century, the royal documents invariably contrasted citizens and inhabitants. By the 1350s, the matter was far less clear. The June 1351 levy of an aide in bailiwick of Amiens had been approved by a meeting of "prelates, barons, other nobles, & *civibus bonarum villarum*" [citizens of walled towns] from the bailiwick of Amiens and other places in the kingdom. Next door, in the Vermandois and Beauvaisis, a local assembly of prelates, cathedral chapters, other ecclesiastics, nobles, "*communes*" (self-governing towns), aldermen, and other men (*autres gens*) of the towns had voted the local tax. "Autres gens" were not at all the same as "*civibus*"; more and more of the documents suggest that broader social groups participated in the political process. After all, they had to pay too, and the principle of *quod omnes tangit* (all those most concerned with the topic had to discuss it) applied to them.⁶⁹ The local assemblies who chose deputies to the Estates General, in contrast to the central body, **did** contain large numbers of merchants and, in some towns, representatives of major guilds.⁷⁰ In 1351, the king convoked an assembly of Norman "towns" to vote on a new tax: 163 deputies from 63 "towns" participated. The presence of so many villages show that at the bailiwick level ploughmen could participate.⁷¹ Most towns had a small oligarchic council running the city, but a much larger assembly that had to vote on vital issues, like new taxation. Conflict between the mercantile elite running the former and the artisans

⁶⁸ The English captured Bergerac in 1345; they received La Rochelle and Poitiers as a result of the Treaty of Calais. Poor Bergerac passed from English to French back to English and back to French between 1372 and 1377. The English recaptured it in 1435, lost it back to the French in 1442, retook it, and lost it again in 1450. In the second period, Henry VI claimed to be king of France, so the legal situation differed from that of the 1370s.

⁶⁹ *Ordonnances*, III, lxxiii–lxxv gives the details of a tax strike in Forez over this principle.

⁷⁰ On rapidly changing social dynamics, see D. Barthélemy, *La société dans le comté de Vendôme: de l'an mil au XIV^e siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1992).

⁷¹ A. Coville, *États de Normandie: leurs origines et leur développement au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1894), 264ff gives the list of "towns" that participated in fourteenth-century meetings. The bailiwick of Rouen had 25, Gisors 10, Caux 27, Caen 9, and Cotentin 8. The suffix "ville" is common for Norman villages.

numerically dominating the latter broke out all over France, and Europe, in the late fourteenth century.⁷²

1.1 The “bien de la chose publique”

What was the right term for the larger political community? The pre-eminent thirteenth-century professor of law at the University of Orléans, Jacques de Révigny, whose work provided the basis for fourteenth-century instruction in law, made the distinction between the *res publica clericorum* and the *res publica laicorum*, so trained lawyers working for the central administration formed their fundamental ideas about the government of the kingdom precisely within the framework of the “*res publica*.”⁷³ A theoretical justification of the unity view existed, the *Practica Aurea Libellorum* of Pierre Jacobi, composed between 1311 and 1331, widely used in his own time, and renowned among sixteenth-century French jurists in its 1492 French printed translation. Jacobi uses the term “*res publica totius regni*” (the commonwealth of the whole kingdom): he regularly writes of *necessitas rei publicæ* and *utilitas res publicæ*.⁷⁴ In the transfer of Dauphiné, Humbert II used the terms *res publica* and *patria* to refer to Dauphiné, and the Norman Charter spoke of the Norman “*patria*,” translated into French as “*pays*,” so clearly not meaning the kingdom as a whole. With respect to usage by John II and Charles V, the key figures surely included a former student and professor at Orléans, Pierre de la Forest, chancellor of France in the 1350s and one of Charles’ chief advisors during his

⁷² *Les établissements de Rouen*, ed. A. Giry (Paris: BEC, 1883–1885), t. 2, pp. 56ff, confirmation of charter of Rouen by Philip Augustus, 1207, article 6. On the thirteenth-century roots in Italian towns: E. Crouzet-Pavan, *Enfers et paradis. L’Italie de Dante et de Giotto* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), ch. 5 and 6. On the Florentine 1378 revolt of the Ciompi, see *Il Tumulto dei Ciompi: un momento di storia fiorentina ed europea* (Florence: Olschki, 1981); J. Najemy, “Audiant omnes artes’: Corporate Origins of the Ciompi Revolution,” as its title suggests, stresses the corporate nature of politics. A. Stella, *La révolte des Ciompi: Les hommes, les lieux, le travail* (Paris: EHESS, 1993), shows the remarkable social and economic divisions **among** and even within the textile workers’ different trades. Brucker, *The Civic World of Renaissance Florence*, emphasizes the shift to an elitist politics c. 1400.

⁷³ K. Bezemer, “The Law School of Orleans as School of Public Administration,” *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* (1998): 247–278. On Durand’s role, Fasolt, *Council and Hierarchy*.

⁷⁴ A. Rigaudière, *Penser et construire l’État au Moyen Age* (Paris: CHEFF, 2003), ch. XI. As Rigaudière points out, twelfth- and thirteenth-century writers had extensively mulled over the terms *regnum* and *civitas*. Kempshall, *Common Good*, rightly insists that the emphasis on the “common good” over the “public utility” often implied the superiority of the spiritual power, the Church, over the temporal one, because the “life of virtue,” in a Christian community, was, by definition, within the purview of the former. By Charles V’s time, I would argue such was no longer the case.

regency, and Robert le Coq, bishop of Laon, who also attended Orléans, and the so-called legal reformers of Charles V's time, like the Dormans brothers.⁷⁵

Fourteenth-century political actors were not quite sure what term to use, in part because political discourse was shifting from Latin to French, at least in the *langue d'oïl*: Serge Lusignan shows that ninety-one percent of Philip VI's acts for that region were in French after 1330 (as against only four percent of Philip IV's acts). John II returned to Latin, ninety-eight percent of all royal acts of the chancery, but Charles V restored French. Henceforth, the king would use Latin only for letters of nobility and legitimacy, for towns with consulates, and for most acts related to the Church.⁷⁶ The shift from Latin to French reflected to a large degree a desire for a political vocabulary better suited to the reality of French politics circa 1370 – that is, to a politics in which people who did not read Latin played important roles. Oresme, in the proem to his translation of the *Ethics*, had made precisely that point about the king's counselors.

The king would invariably refer to “nous et nostre royaume” or to “us and the Crown of France.” King John II's 1358 letters to “the mayor, échevins, bourgeois, inhabitants, and all the commune of the town of St-Omer,” about the “treason” of the local *bailli*, spelled out the usual royal formula:⁷⁷

The sire of Beaulo, our liege man and subject and our sworn *bailli* of the bailiwick of our said town of St-Omer, has made himself and makes himself our enemy and put himself in rebellion against us and our kingdom [. . . allied with Charles of Navarre . . .] going against his faith, loyalty, and oath, and incurring the crime of lèse-majesté and treason notoriously against us and the crown of France.

This formula left a key gap: the kingdom and its political society were not coterminous. The composer Guillaume de Machaut, in his motet 22, likely written after Reims resisted an English siege (1359–1360), wrote: “Plange! Regni republica” (Weep, commonwealth of the kingdom!).⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Nephew of a bishop of Le Mans, de la Forest supposedly got his license at twelve and was a doctor of both canon and civil law. “The light of his brilliance shining even into the inner reaches of John's house” (Du Chesne). John, then duke of Normandy, made him chancellor of Normandy, later of France.

⁷⁶ Lusignan, *La langue des rois au Moyen Âge*.

⁷⁷ Pagart d'Hermansart, *Histoire du bailliage de St-Omer, 1193–1790* (St. Omer, 1898), II, 365. “se est rendu et fait nostre ennemy et mis en rébellion contre nous et nostre royaume [. . .] en venant contre sa foy, loyauté et serrement, et en encourant crime de lèse majesté et trayson notoirement contre nous et la couronne de France.”

⁷⁸ A. Walters Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims. Context and Meaning in his Musical Works* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), gives two different translations on p. 202 (Weep! You, commonwealth of the kingdom) and in an appendix that gives the Latin text and her translation of it (cited in the text above).

De Machaut here uses the same language as the mayor and *jurés* of Noyon, writing to the town government of Reims on behalf of an assembly of twenty-four northern towns, which had met with major members of the clergy and some leading nobles, to draw up grievances (above all about troop pillaging) to present to the regent. They asked the Rémois to join them at an assembly to be held on September 1, 1359 at Compiègne, and urged them to include local clergy in their town assembly: “This matter and all the facts regard each one, and all of the ‘chose publique.’”⁷⁹ The “treaties” of alliance between Reims and Rethel and Châlons-en-Champagne in 1358, in contrast, had spoken of the “honor of God, the profit, guard, and surety of all the kingdom of our lord [*sire*] the king” and then of the “enemies of the kingdom”; they made no mention of the *chose publique*.⁸⁰ Yet the town government of Reims, in late 1358, used the new vocabulary in writing to the Dauphin to seek his support to force ecclesiastics to pay their share of “the aide of the king, of the kingdom and of all the chose publique, as is done in the other bonnes villes.”⁸¹

These documents offer a hint as to the critical vocabulary shift taking place in the crisis years 1356–1360. The 1356 Estates of Languedoc, meeting after John II’s capture, had referred to the need to act for the “honor of God, the profit and deliverance of the king, for the kingdom, for Monsieur the duke [Charles], and ‘la chose publique.’” The *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, likely written in Rouen at the end of the fourteenth century, shows a general familiarity with this wording: the author tells us that Le Coq said that the “three estates of the kingdom, the estate of the Church, the estate of the nobles, and the estate of the bourgeois” offered Charles advice “on the state of the bien commun and the deliverance of the king your father, our true and sovereign seigneur.”⁸² The *Chronique* offers another telling detail: “the above said estates deliberated that there should be strong money in your lands of Normandy and Dauphiné and in the kingdom of the king your father.” If the duke minted

⁷⁹ Varin, *Archives administratives*, III, 144, letter of August 22, 1359: “les en prions comme la chose et tous li fais regarde un chacun, et toute la chose publique.”

⁸⁰ Varin, *Correspondance administrative*, t. III, 123ff, document DCXCIV (Rethel); Marlot, *Histoire de Reims*, IV, 626, document XXIV (Châlons). “Ad l’onneur de Dieu, et au proffit, garde, et seureté de tout le royaume du roy notre sire, de M. le régent.” And later, “afin de résister plus puissamment contre les ennemis dudit royaume.”

⁸¹ Varin, *Archives administratives*, III, 116, note, quoting from the seventeenth-century compiler Rogier, who was citing documents no longer in existence in Varin’s time. “T’ayde du roy, du royaume et de toute la chose publicque, comme il se faisoit aux aultres bonnes villes.” Charles, as Regent, was regulating this dispute between the clergy and the town government in September 1358.

⁸² *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, 58–59. “les trois estats du royaume, l’estat de l’eglise, l’estat des nobles et l’estat des bourgoiz ont eu adviz sur l’estat du bien commun et de la deliverance du roy vostre pere, nostre droit et souverain seigneur.” The chronicler comments on these proposals, in a classic statement of the gap between good intentions and results, “Bon commencement ourent, mais mal finerent.”

strong money, they would pay for the support of 30,000 men-at-arms. He goes so far as to say that the estates, “on their own authority,” minted sound money, of good alloy.⁸³ In 1357, when, under pressure from the Parisians, Charles had to criticize certain royal councilors, he accused them of acting not for the profit of “*la chose publique* but for their *profit singulier* and that of their friends,” a contrast that became proverbial in political discourse.⁸⁴

Kings seemed reticent to use a term other than kingdom. In French, *res publica* appeared most often in royal documents as “*la chose publique de nostre royaume*.” Anne Robertson suggests that, after the king’s capture at Poitiers, “In the absence of the ruler, the concept of ‘commonwealth of the kingdom’ was all that remained, especially in view of the fact that the young Duke of Normandy had not yet found his voice.” Robertson emphasizes that Charles, as Dauphin, in his grand *arrêt* of 1363 spoke often of the *res publica*, as in the royal takeover of the defense of the city of Reims, on the grounds that “the power of the people, by their own wish and assent, was thereafter transferred to the prince or emperor for the better ordering of the commonwealth” (*reipublice*).⁸⁵

The key shift, however, took place in Paris between 1356 and 1358. Charles did not initiate this change, which seems to have taken over political discourse in the aftermath of speeches given by Robert le Coq, drawing on the ideas of Oresme and Buridan, in November 1356 and March 1357. The vocabulary of the “*bien de la chose publique*” became standard political speech in the period between the meeting of the Estates General of Languedoc in October 1356 and the coronation of Charles V in 1364. Le Coq’s choice of “*chose publique*,” a purely vernacular translation of *res publica*, rather than “*republique*,” a more learned possible choice, tells us how important it was to find a language that could achieve political ends with the audience of citizens – in that case, many urban deputies almost certainly unfamiliar with Latin. Let us examine that process in detail.

1.2 The Crisis of 1356–1358 and the New Vocabulary of Politics

The small elite at the core of the French government in 1356 included families from the high Parisian bourgeoisie, the titled nobility, and branches of the royal house. Just as John II, his son-in-law Charles of Navarre, and Edward III contested the inheritance of Philip IV, so, too, the brothers-in-law Robert de Lorris and Étienne Marcel contested the inheritance of their father-in-law,

⁸³ No such minting took place in 1356; in fact, the Estates protested – and got withdrawn – the new silver coins, of weak money, being produced while the Dauphin was visiting his uncle Emperor Charles IV in Metz.

⁸⁴ Isambert, IV, 775–780.

⁸⁵ Robertson, *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims*, 212. Robertson translates *reipublice* as “state.”

Pierre des Essarts, and the Harcourt and Melun families jostled in Normandy. These family quarrels had a decisive impact on the events of 1356–1358. Charles of Navarre failed in his attempt to claim the French throne; Navarre's ally, Marcel, lost his life as a direct result of his inheritance quarrel. These events took place at a time in which it was far from obvious that the kingdom of France would remain a coherent entity: both Charles of Navarre and Edward III made it clear they would settle for portions of the kingdom they believed belonged to them. John II suspected his son Charles, the last real duke of Normandy, of wanting to establish an unacceptable level of independence in that vital province – claimed as well both by Edward and, in part, by Charles of Navarre.⁸⁶

Before looking at the key meetings of October 1356 and March 1357, however, we need to re-examine the nature of assemblies at that time, so we can get a clear sense of precisely who was using this new vocabulary. The term “Estates General” is certainly misleading because the term implies broad, implicitly universal geographic participation within the two regions: not so. The collection of great fiefs within the kingdom of France belonged mainly to members of the royal family, who had both personal and collective interests. Without the permission of the duke of Burgundy or duke of Brittany, no Burgundian or Breton deputies would go to an “Estates General.”⁸⁷ The counties of Artois and Flanders did not send general delegations, although some major towns (Lille, Arras, Douai, Tournai) came to certain meetings.⁸⁸ If the king of France wanted money from the county of Artois, he had to ask the local estates for it.⁸⁹

The same principle held even with the new, smaller peerage fiefs. The county of Évreux, which belonged to Charles of Navarre, and that of Alençon, held by John II's cousin, did not send deputies to the “Estates of Normandy.” Even within the five Norman bailiwicks at the Estates of 1352, representatives of the duke of Orléans (John's brother), for the county of Beaumont-le-Roger, and of the king of Navarre, for his county of Longueville, declared that they could not

⁸⁶ Navarre inherited the county of Évreux from his father, Philip, nephew of Philip IV. Charles' brother, Philip, inherited the counties of Longueville; by agreement with John II, Charles obtained Beaumont-le-Roger, Pont-Audemer, and most of the Cotentin peninsula.

⁸⁷ Houses like the Montfort line in Brittany, the Bourbons, the dukes of Burgundy (both Capetian and Valois), the dukes of Anjou and of Orléans [in successive lines], all descended in the male line from kings of France and were in the line of succession to the throne throughout this period.

⁸⁸ Tournai long remained a royal enclave in the north, and regularly participated; it housed a royal mint.

⁸⁹ *Ordonnances*, IV, 589, grant of August 1365, for the “great desire and affection they have to Us, and to the bien commun de nostre royaume,” is a typical example. Lille cut its own deal on the ransom aides (*Ordonnances*, III, 504), paying 3,000 gold florins over six years to be exempt from the aides created in 1360.

approve the tax voted by the Estates because they did not have the permission of their lords to do so. This tactic, claiming that one needed the permission of one's lord (including the king) before taking a given action, provided an ironclad excuse for a wide range of resistance, from towns seeking to avoid paying royal taxation in the fourteenth century to Burgundian serfs refusing to borrow money to pay royal direct taxes in the mid-seventeenth century.

We have a list of the thirty-six towns⁹⁰ who got a copy of the actions taken at the December 1355 meeting of the Estates of Languedoil: from outside the regions of Paris, Champagne, and the north, deputies came only from the Seine valley in Normandy (Rouen, Harfleur, Honfleur), the main Loire towns (Angers, Tours, Saumur, Chinon, Orléans), Bourges, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Limoges, and Lyon.⁹¹ The absence of Norman deputies from the Estates General of Languedoil led to Navarre and his allies, the Harcourt family, organizing effective Norman resistance to the levying of these taxes.⁹² John II viewed this refusal, in a duchy nominally in the authority of his oldest son, Charles, duke of Normandy, as the final insult, after Navarre's murder of John's favorite, Charles d'Espagne.⁹³ John stormed into the dinner party of his son, Charles of Navarre, and Jean V de Harcourt at Rouen. He had Jean V de Harcourt decapitated the next day (April 6, 1356), without trial. This episode led to civil war in Normandy.⁹⁴ (See Illustration 1.1.) As the *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* put it, "greatly was king John blamed for the murder of the said seigneurs and great [due to it] was the malevolence of the nobles and of his people, especially those of Normandy."⁹⁵

⁹⁰ In addition to those listed in the text: Amiens, Doullens, Montdidier, St-Quentin, Laon, Beauvais, Senlis, Compiègne, Vertus, Louvres, Corbeil, Troyes, Provins, Mélnun, Meaux, Sens, Montlhéry, Chartres, Joigny, Pontoise, and Poissy – all towns within the royal demesne. The helpful map and list in Burgière and Revel, eds., *Histoire de France*, 138–139, contains minor inconsistencies.

⁹¹ No deputies from the Auvergne were present, but the Estates of the Auvergne soon approved the new taxes, with the proviso that they collect and spend the money. In October 1356, six deputies from the Auvergne were present, and the local estates voted taxes on the clergy, nobility, and commoners. Secousse, "Préface," *Ordonnances* III.

⁹² Peasants, too, resisted these new taxes and the frequent requisition of food, forage, and animals. B. Chevalier, ed., *Les pays de la Loire moyenne dans le Trésor des chartes* (Paris: Archives nationales, 1993), #275, in March 1361, for example, gives remission to Guillaume des Barres, chevalier, who murdered four armed peasants resisting royal requisition orders. #276 gave him remission for other "acts of war."

⁹³ Charles de la Cerda was the great-great-grandson of Louis IX. John was close to Charles and named him Constable in 1350, after executing Constable Raoul, count of Eu. Charles of Navarre objected to la Cerda receiving the county of Angoulême.

⁹⁴ Coville, *États de Normandie*, 79–80. Charles apparently felt mortified at his father seizing and executing one of his guests; he later pardoned Harcourt and restored most of his possessions to the count's son, Jean VI de Harcourt, who married Charles' sister-in-law.

⁹⁵ *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois*, 157.

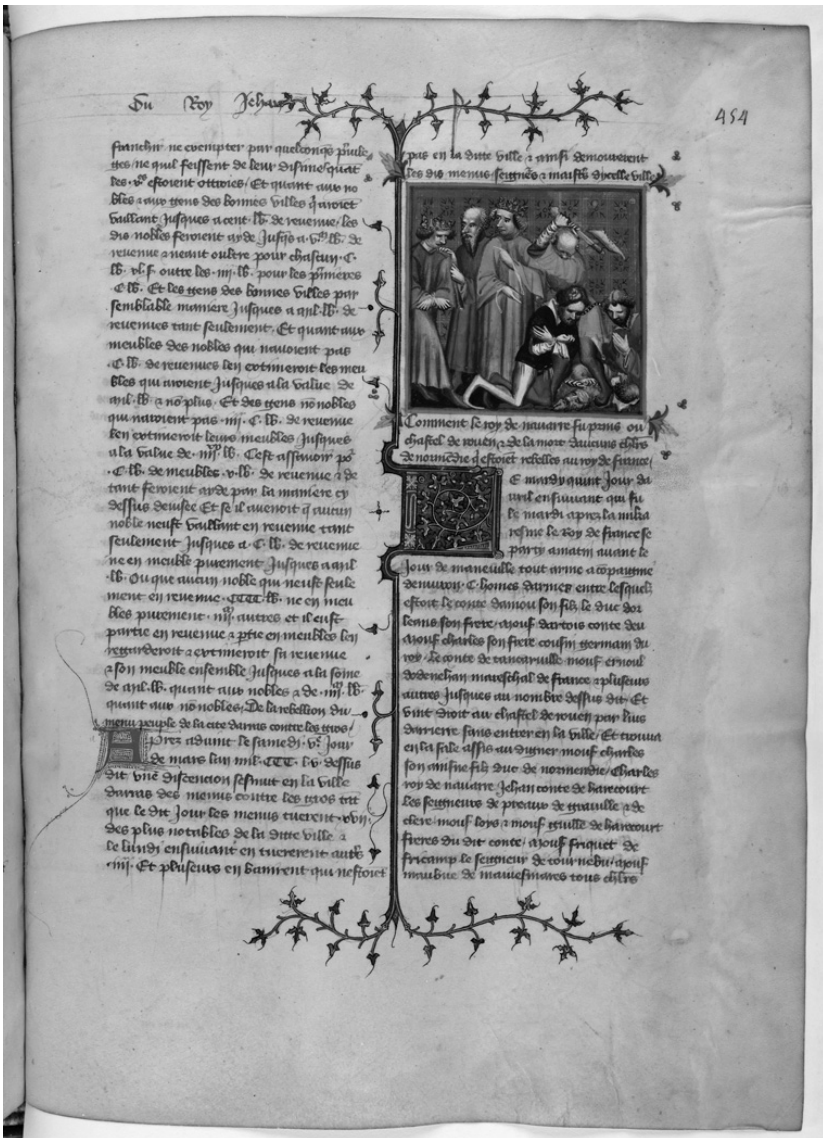


Illustration 1.1 Execution of Norman nobles, 1356: *Grandes Chroniques de France*, M Fr 2608, fol. 454r. Permission BNF

The town deputies for the December 1355 meeting came only from the royal demesne, from areas controlled by the Dauphin Charles, by the king’s brother Philippe, duke of Orléans, by the king’s sons Louis (count

of Anjou), Jean (count of Poitou), and Philip (count of Touraine), by the king's wife (Jeanne d'Auvergne), and from towns under royal safeguard like Limoges and Lyon. In contrast with the earlier assemblies, such as that of February 1317 in Paris, we see the disappearance of almost all Norman towns, those from Artois and southern Flanders, and Burgundy.⁹⁶ The list also excludes Blois, and parts of central France, like the Auvergne, that often did send deputies to the northern estates. As Raymond Cazelles pointed out, "the great fiefs did not consider themselves concerned by the Estates General."⁹⁷

The March 1356 meeting had virtually no one from Normandy. Three other documents from 1356 to 1358 add nine more towns known to have participated to some degree: Reims, Châlons-en-Champagne, Abbeville, Noyon, Tournai, Douai, Lille, Arras, and Auxerre.⁹⁸ If we take the three lists combined, we get forty-five towns, but by October 1356, Limoges, Poitiers, La Rochelle, and the four Loire towns joined the Normans among the missing. Aside from the metropolitan *cités* – Reims, Lyon, Bourges, and Rouen – towns outside the immediate region of Paris and of areas north and east in close connection with Paris had disappeared.⁹⁹ In an immediate sense, the vocabulary of the "bien de la chose publique" took root precisely in the geographic regions represented at the Estates of Languedoil, with Brittany added in. Charles of Blois, Valois-recognized duke of Brittany, led the Second Estate, while Jean de Craon, archbishop of Reims, led the clergy.

Aside from Craon, three other archbishops played important roles in 1356–1357: Guillaume de Melun (archbishop of Sens); Pierre de la Forest (Rouen), chancellor of France; and Raymond Saquet (Lyon). Saquet, a former councilor of the Parlement whom Cazelles identifies as pro-Navarre, attended the October 1356 meeting, but stayed in Lyon after that; Innocent VI used him as one of his three legates to Paris in 1358. De la Forest was a target of the Estates, but after he became a cardinal in December 1356, and stepped down as chancellor, he conveniently left for Bordeaux, to return the seals to John II (Jan. 1357).

⁹⁶ Northern towns present in 1317 but absent in 1355–1356 included: Calais (in 1355, an English possession), St-Omer, Aire, and Théroutanne. From Normandy, no deputies came from Dieppe, Caen, Coutances, Avranches, Évreux, Verneuil, Bayeux, and Lisieux – Charles of Navarre controlled most of these towns. Dijon and Autun attended in 1317, but not in the 1350s. Langres, site of a peerage bishopric, was missing in 1355; Macon attended in 1317, but might have gone to the southern assembly in 1355.

⁹⁷ R. Cazelles, *Société politique, noblesse et royauté sous Jean II et Charles V* (Geneva: Droz, 1982), 208. The absence of the town of Blois is striking: Louis III, count of Blois, was a close relative of Gaucher de Châtillon, spokesman of the nobility at the Estates.

⁹⁸ Étienne Marcel also wrote to Ghent, Ypres, Courtrai, and Bruges.

⁹⁹ The seat of an archbishopric was always under royal safeguard. A. Collas, "Aperçu sur le clergé du diocèse de Tours au XIV^e siècle," *Annales de Bretagne* 87 (1980): 612–613.

Guillaume de Melun was one of the three dominant royal councilors of the early 1350s, closely associated with John II's failed effort at reform. Melun's mother, Jeanne de Tancarville, brought not only her family's estates, but its quarrel with the Harcourt, complicated by the fact that the Melun family, with its ties to Enguerrand de Marigny, were clients of the house of Navarre. Philippe de Melun, uncle of Guillaume, and archbishop of Sens from 1338 to 1345,¹⁰⁰ was even chancellor of Navarre and its governor. Guillaume and his brother Jean, count of Tancarville, were captured at Poitiers, but obtained quick release; he participated in royal councils of the fall of 1356, but then went to Bordeaux, where he was part of the French team negotiating the truce of March 1357. The other negotiators included his brother Jean, Simon de Bucy, de la Forest, and Robert de Lorris – that is, in the case of the final three, precisely the men the Estates General of Languedoil demanded be removed from royal office in October 1356, after the Poitiers disaster. When the Melun brothers, and their brother-in-law, Jean d'Artois, count of Eu, returned to Paris in early April, hostile public reception forced them to flee.¹⁰¹

The Melun brothers spent a good part of the next two years in prison in England, their large ransoms (48,000 *écus* for Guillaume alone) unpaid.¹⁰² When John II stood surety for the brothers, they returned to France: the Dauphin stayed in the archbishop's *hôtel* in Paris in 1360, while Jean II de Melun acted as one of the two main French negotiators at Brétigny. When the negotiators sent the draft treaty back to Paris, the Dauphin heard it read in Guillaume de Melun's *hôtel*, by the royal lawyer Jean des Mares, whom we will encounter in key episodes later. As for the other archbishops, the only one regularly to attend the royal council in 1357 was Jean de Craon, who was very active from March through May, during and immediately after the time of the renewed "Estates General" of Languedoil.¹⁰³

The regional and local assemblies played as important a role as the "national" ones in the 1350s: in terms of collecting taxes, they played

¹⁰⁰ Another uncle had been archbishop of Sens from 1315 to 1329. Philippe de Melun seems to have fallen out with Jeanne de Navarre, and thus lost his position in 1345. This split may explain the Navarre-Melun division of 1356.

¹⁰¹ Jean d'Artois, count of Eu, son of the Robert III d'Artois who caused so many problems in 1313–1317, as a direct, male-line descendant of Louis VIII, was in the line of succession. He married Isabelle de Melun, half-sister of Guillaume and Jean, in 1352; he had received (1351) the county of Eu, confiscated from Constable Raoul de Brienne, who had been executed (without trial) for treason in 1350. Like his brother and brother-in-law, he had been captured at Poitiers. King John II was Jean d'Artois's first cousin.

¹⁰² John II finally made payments for both brothers in 1360. Cazelles, *Société politique Jean II*, 372–373.

¹⁰³ Cazelles, *Société politique Jean II*, 265: Craon attended four meetings of the royal council in March, ten in April, three in May, none in June.

a greater role. Unsurprisingly, given the long *civitas* tradition of the southern towns, the earliest evidence of the “public good” vocabulary appears in the south at the 1343 estates of the seneschalsy of Carcassonne, which agreed to levy a sales tax of 1.66% in return for the restoration of the “strong money” of Saint Louis: the king said he restored it “for the good of the republic of all our subjects” [*pro bono republicæ omnium subditorum nostrorum*].¹⁰⁴ The “republic” in question was not France, but the Langue d’Oc.¹⁰⁵ Three years later, the count of Armagnac, the king’s lieutenant, again used the term “pro bono publico” with respect to the discussions about coinage at the Estates of Langue d’Oc, but the letters for the local assembly in the seneschalsy of Carcassonne spoke only of the king’s desire to “govern and nourish his people in tranquility and freedom (*franchise*)” and the convocation letters for Estates Generals of Langue d’Oc did not use commonwealth vocabulary.

In April 1356, meeting simultaneously with the “Estates General” held at Paris, the southern assembly acted for “republican and private honor and utility.”¹⁰⁶ We see here a more traditional term, utility, and the distinction between personal [private/individual/particular] and public that would play so large a role in the northern assemblies. Oddly enough, the southern assemblies, despite the strong *civitas* tradition in their urban governments, moved away from the discourse of the public good or “chose publique.” It played virtually no role in their discussions after 1356; they preferred the language of “liberties, rights, and freedoms,” which held sway everywhere in the south and, until the fifteenth century, in Flanders.¹⁰⁷ In the north, the tumultuous events of 1355–1358 brought the use of the discourse of the public good into the mainstream of French political life.

The process began, in many ways, with the meetings of the Estates General of Languedoïl in November 1355 and March 1356, in Paris. John II convinced

¹⁰⁴ Devic et Vaissette, *Histoire de Languedoc*, VII, *Preuves*, 470; in their discussion of this assembly, Devic and Vaissette suggest that the “third estate” dominated it (VII, 194ff). The king did not share the Estates’ sentiments: in January 1347, in letters sent to the seneschal of Beaucaire, he claimed that he alone had the right to mint and to determine the value of the currency in money of account (*Ordonnances*, II, 254).

¹⁰⁵ The consuls of Saint-Flour still used the old locution “went into France” for crossing the Loire River. *Registres consulaires de Saint-Flour (1376–1405)*, ed. M. Boudet (Paris and Riom: Champion; Jouvot, 1900).

¹⁰⁶ Devic et Vaissette, *Histoire de Languedoc*, VII, *Preuves*, document LII (495ff): “ad ipsius honorem utilitatem que reipublicæ et privatæ.” Further along the king specifies “reipublicæ Linguæ Occitanæ” as the region of his son Charles’ commission, and Jean, count of Armagnac, royal lieutenant, in 1357 (499) referred as well to the “patriæ” and the “regimine et statu Linguæ Occitanæ.”

¹⁰⁷ *Ordonnances*, III, 99ff has the text of the ordinance. Cazelles, *Société politique Jean II*, 235, rightly points out the revolutionary implications of this assertion. Devic and Vaissette, *Histoire de Languedoc*, VII, *Preuves*, 507, for Jean de Berry’s 1359 letters calling an assembly for the defense of the *patria* of the kingdom of Linguæ Occitanæ.

the November 1355 Estates to vote a tax package [3.33% on sales other than land; a *gabelle* on salt] to be collected and overseen by commissioners named by the Estates; in March, after finding out that the taxes voted in November were insufficient (and wildly unpopular), the new assembly created a tax on incomes and capital, including the income of clergy and nobles.¹⁰⁸ Matteo Villani tells us both that John promised, in return for the taxes, to issue sound gold and silver coinage, and that the sales tax was so unpopular that merchants abandoned France, and many towns refused to receive the royal officials charged with the collection.¹⁰⁹

This shift in the tax mix incontestably responded to urban demands: the introduction of sales taxes invariably touched off urban revolts, whether at Rouen in the 1290's, Arras in 1356, or throughout the kingdom, in 1380–1382. The urban victory on the tax issue makes one suspect that the assembly included a substantial number of deputies from the world of commerce.¹¹⁰ In Normandy, Jean V de Harcourt reportedly stated that “By God’s blood, the blood of God, this King is a bad man, and is not a good King,” during the February 1356 meeting of the Estates of Normandy that approved the collection of the sale tax and *gabelle* in Normandy.¹¹¹

The three spokesmen for the Estates were Jean de Craon, his cousin, Gauthier de Brienne, constable of France, and Étienne Marcel, merchants’ provost of Paris. The terms of this grant showed the usual effort by elites to share real power. The Estates named three supervisors from each order to oversee the collection and to make sure that money got spent only on troops, and to the extent possible, on local troops: each “*cité*” was to have one overseer from each order, a receiver, and a clerk. All officials were to answer to assemblies.¹¹² These provisions resembled those followed in local assemblies

¹⁰⁸ Isambert, *Recueil général*, IV, 734ff. At Arras, on 6–8 March 1356, a rebellion of the poor against the sales taxes killed twenty of the leading citizens; Marshal Audenham, in reprisal, beheaded twenty “leaders” of the rebellion, and imprisoned eighty more. The Estates of the Auvergne approved the fifteen percent tax on income of clergy and nobles, and hearth tax on free and serf hearths, with the latter paying half rate.

¹⁰⁹ M. Villani, *Cronica di Matteo Villani*, ed. F. Dragomanni, 2 vols. (Florence, 1846), II, 191–192.

¹¹⁰ The harsh comments about popular political participation in Buridan’s *Questiones* and Oresme’s exclusion of merchants and artisan masters from full political citizenship both have their roots in the broad participation of such men in the assemblies of 1356–1358, in my view. For that reason, I have a different reading of *De Moneta* than Woodhouse, “Who Owns the Money?” Oresme was speaking on behalf of the right of the “citizens” as against the prince, but his later writings make clear his suspicion of too broad a definition of citizen.

¹¹¹ R. Delachenal, *Histoire de Charles V*, I (Paris: A. Picard, 1909–1931), 139.

¹¹² The December 1355 ordinance had the same clauses about control by the Estates, but they had voted a sales tax and a *gabelle* on salt. In that ordinance, John cited the “clamour de nostre peuple, & de noz subgiez” about currency fluctuations, and promised to maintain sound money henceforth, even as he decried the ill effects of “tres fort

of the 1340s and 1350s, such as the estates in Normandy, the Auvergne, and in Vermandois.¹¹³

The assemblies of November–December 1355 and March 1356 showed a marked suspicion of those running the royal finances.¹¹⁴ One of the primary grievances, particularly of the merchants, was incessant manipulation of the coinage: quite apart from legal manipulation of the ratio of money of account (*livres*) to actual coins, Philip VI, John, II and the Dauphin Charles reminted almost all of the kingdom's coinage in 1349 and 1355, and large parts of it in 1356, 1357, and 1359.¹¹⁵ Philip VI had stated (January 1347) unequivocally that the right to issue ordinances about coinage belonged solely to the “royal majesty,” but the tradition of the king supervising the coinage on behalf of the community remained strong. Philip IV's lawyers had admitted as much in 1309: contesting the right of the count of Nevers to debase coinage, they insisted that the king alone had the right to “debase and reduce coinage” as a “royal right,” but he could only do so “in one case, necessity,” and could not convert it into “special profit,” but only do it for the “profit and defense of the common.”¹¹⁶ The charters granted to the Normans and Burgundians in 1315 had both made a return to the sound money of Saint Louis one of the main demands, and Louis X promised them both to return to the sound money of good alloy, and further promised that neither he nor his successors would debase the coinage again. Coinage, which brought together the political and economic elements of the “chose publique,” proved to be the key issue in the birth of the new rhetoric of politics.

Monnoye” during the war. [*Ordonnances*, III, 26–27]. The follow-up ordinance of May 26, 1356 gave serfs (“taillables haut & bas à volonté”) a fifty percent reduction, but specified that nobles and clergy (if not paying the tenth voted in December 1355) had to pay. He further stipulated that copies with “our aucthetical seals” would be given to each “Ville” to give faith (*foy*) as if they were the “true Original.” [p. 55]

¹¹³ Henneman, *Royal Taxation and The Captivity and Ransom of John II. Ordonnances*, II, 393, on Norman taxes.

¹¹⁴ Philip VI and John II had each created commissions to “reform” finances and minting.

¹¹⁵ The royal treasury accounts show a minting profit in 1349 that implies re-minting of about 53,000kg of silver. The 1355 re-minting involved 27,700 kg of silver; from 1356–1358, the mints produced a steady average of just over 18,000 kg, dropping to about 15,000 kg in 1359 and 1360. In the entire reign of Charles V (1364–1380), in contrast, the mints produced only 11,000 kg of silver. Gold coin output peaked between 1360 and 1365, mainly new *écus* for John's ransom, but the average amount of 1355–1359 – 1500 kg – was about equal in value to the silver coinage. H. Miskimin, “L'or, l'argent, la guerre dans la France médiévale,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* (Jan.–Feb. 1985): 171–184. Henneman, *The Development of War Financing*, 331–344, argues that the nobles, in particular, wanted “strong” money, to preserve their incomes. The re-mintings of 1349 and 1355 responded in part to their demand.

¹¹⁶ S. Piron, “Monnaie et majesté royale dans la France du XIVe siècle,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 51, n. 2 (1996): 325–354. Buridan and Oresme also took this position.

Poitiers transformed the French political scene because so much of the military and political leadership was either killed or, like John II, taken prisoner.¹¹⁷ The two discredited adolescents who straggled into Paris on September 29 – duke Charles, and John II's young brother, Philippe, duke of Orléans – did not provide much legitimacy or real leadership.¹¹⁸ The main leadership group left intact in October 1356 was the legal men – chancellor Pierre de la Forest, former chancellor Guillaume Flote (seigneur de Revel), First President of the Parlement Simon de Bucy, and future chancellor Pierre d'Orgemont – and the financiers. With the assistance of a few major nobles, such as Charles of Blois, and ecclesiastics like Jean de Craon, they surely made the key decisions.¹¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, the Estates demanded the ouster of la Forest, Bucy, Flote, Bucy, and d'Orgemont, whom they held responsible for the catastrophe, “the worst ever to befall the kingdom of France.”

On the day the Dauphin Charles got back to Paris, he and the royal council called a meeting of the northern Estates, for October 15, 1356, at Paris, and a similar meeting, for the Langue d'Oc, at Toulouse. The Paris meeting was a vast gathering of 800 deputies, of whom 400 came from the towns: given fourteenth-century logistics, almost all of these urban deputies had to have come from towns near Paris, although we know that at least six deputies came from the distant Auvergne.¹²⁰ The nobles and clergymen, like the urban deputies, on the “commission” created by the Estates came overwhelmingly from Champagne, Picardy, and other regions in the north and northeast: many of them were open partisans of Charles, king of Navarre, who was then in prison. Navarre hoped to become king of France, or at least to regain his mother's lost fiefs, above all Champagne, and to consolidate his hold on Normandy.¹²¹

The slight evidence we have about the urban deputies implies a strong presence of the world of commerce and production. The March 1356 meeting not only overturned the sales tax; they voted a fifteen percent levy on noble and clergy incomes and a hearth tax on lay commoners, without the customary

¹¹⁷ Cazelles, *Société politique, noblesse et royauté sous Jean II et Charles V*, 230, for a list of dead and captured.

¹¹⁸ The chronicles disagree about Charles' behavior, but all agree that Philippe's cowardly flight played a major role in the French defeat. Villani, *Cronica di Matteo Villani*, II, 182ff, says 5,000 knights fled with them.

¹¹⁹ Charles of Blois took the place of his deceased relative Gauthier de Châtillon as spokesman of the nobility. Craon and Marcel remained the spokesmen of the other two orders.

¹²⁰ Dauphant, *Royaume*, map 5, indicates that a message could reach Limoges or Clermont in six days, Lyon in eight. John II's second wife, Jeanne d'Auvergne, ruling Burgundy on behalf of her son, duke Philippe de Rouvre, then a minor, clearly coordinated her actions with those of the Dauphin.

¹²¹ Normandy then produced roughly twenty-five percent of French tax revenue.

distinction between urban and rural hearths.¹²² The October 1356 delegation from Soissons included Regnaud, *cabaretier*, and Jean Tatini, draper, both “citizens” of Soissons. When they returned to Soissons, some of their fellow citizens maltreated them – Regnaud received fourteen separate wounds – as punishment for their intemperate remarks about royal councilors, “made under the pretext of the ‘bonum publicum.’”¹²³ In 1363, the documents from Reims indicate that the Estates of Languedoil meeting at Amiens in December had voted a hearth tax to pay for troops because the aides created in 1360 for the ransom meant “the merchants of the kingdom are burdened, and commerce reduced throughout the kingdom [. . .] so we are advised that a double tax or any surtax would not be good.” The deputies chose a hearth tax; on the advice of the Regent Charles, the assembly ruled that 100 urban hearths would pay the same as 150 rural ones.¹²⁴

The “pretext of the public good” takes us to the heart of our interest in the meetings of 1356 to 1358. If we are to pick one moment for the decisive entry of the “la chose publique” into the evolving political discourse of the French monarchy, it would be this meeting of the Estates of Languedoil in October 1356, and the follow-up sessions of February–March 1357.¹²⁵ The proposed commissioners of the October 1356 Estates were to take an oath in front of the Dauphin that they would act for the good government of the kingdom “and of la chose publique,” and not for their “singular profit or for their friends.”

Jean Buridan’s likely key role as a representative to the Estates in 1356, make his *Quæstiones* an intriguing look at the arguments in play.¹²⁶ He begins the *Quæstiones* on Aristotle’s *Politics* with a clear statement that the common good must be preferred over the particular good: Buridan takes this characteristic to be the essence of any legitimate polity [*policia*]. No manuscript of Buridan’s

¹²² In both north and south, the final tax distinguished between serfs – “*taillables*” – and free men: serfs paid one-half the tax levied on free people. In Normandy, the early hearth taxes levied one man-at-arms per seventy urban hearths, and one per 100 rural ones. Ordonnances, III, 24, note (c).

¹²³ Secousse, *Charles de Navarre*, v. III, xlvi, note * At least four of the eighteen urban deputies on the commission of October 1356 were lawyers and four others masters of theology. The three Parisians were merchants.

¹²⁴ Varin, *Archives administratives*, III, 274ff. The tax called for a levy of 3 francs/hearth, with a range from 1 franc – “which is not even a penny a day” – to 9 francs for the wealthiest. They made the urban/rural distinction because in many dioceses the countryside had been ruined by troops.

¹²⁵ Insofar as I can tell, he issued only letters recalling the deputies for the February–March 1357 meeting.

¹²⁶ Buridan’s *Quæstiones* on Aristotle’s *Politics* may have a direct connection to these events. Oresme and Buridan had financial responsibilities within the university, so they had practical experience. Buridan regularly uses the term “*bonum commune*.” J. Kaye, *Economy and Nature in the Fourteenth Century: Money, Market Exchange, and the Emergence of Scientific Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 30–31.

work survives, but he constantly refers to issues at play in 1356–1358, like currency reform and the need to limit political decision making to a more aristocratic element, in the Aristotelian sense of the word.

The single person most responsible within the Estates for the prominent reference to the “chose publique” appears to have been Robert Le Coq, trained in both canon and customary law (at Orléans), and former *avocat* for John II.¹²⁷ Le Coq delivered two key speeches: on November 3, to a rump final session of the Estates that opened on October 17, 1356, which the Dauphin seems to have prorogued on November 2;¹²⁸ and on March 3, 1357, to the deputies of the Estates in full session, with the Dauphin in attendance. The Dauphin sent letters recalling the Estates on January 25, 1357, to meet in Paris on February 5: once again, the short notice meant that only those very close to Paris, or deputies already present, could attend. A small group, led by Marcel, visited Charles when he got back to Paris; they continued to fight about the manipulation of the coinage. The deputies seem to have held just a brief meeting, and then gone back to meet with their local constituents. They returned once more, in early March, claiming the propositions they had sent back had been “read and approved by those of the *pays*, men of the Church as well as nobles, bourgeois of the good towns, and others.”¹²⁹ The uprising at Arras suggests that the artisans blamed the wealthy [the GCF calls them the “gros”, the big ones] for the Estates’ inability to replace the sales tax with a levy on incomes.¹³⁰

The *procès-verbal* of the October meeting, which exists in a copy prepared by the royal librarian in 1647, shows that Charles and the royal council immediately lost control. Le Coq’s speech of November 3 raised the issue of a Pope removing a tyrannical king. In a famous anecdote, one of his friends supposedly kicked him after this intemperate remark, and Le Coq corrected himself: he meant to say that the Pope had deposed a king (the last Merovingian) at the **request** of the three Estates. The accusation against Le Coq, probably prepared by royal council officials in October–November 1356,

¹²⁷ Douët-d’Arcq, “Acte d’accusation contre Robert le Coq, évêque de Laon,” *BEC*, v. 2 (1841): 350–388. A. Funk, “Robert Le Coq and Etienne Marcel,” *Speculum*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Oct. 1944): 470–487. Le Coq had been an *avocat* at the Parlement, then replaced Pierre de la Forest as Philip VI’s *avocat* there. In 1347, he became chancellor of John, duke of Normandy (John II). Under John II, he held positions as a master of requests, as royal chamberlain, as *avocat du roi*, and a president of the Parlement.

¹²⁸ This session did not meet in the hall of the Parlement, as the official ones had done, but at the convent of the Cordeliers, on the Left Bank, close to the Sorbonne, far from the regular sites of royal political power.

¹²⁹ The Estates in October had suggested just such a course of action: BNF, Dupuy 646; citation here from f. 66v. Numbers in parenthesis below are the folio numbers of this document. Isambert, *Recueil*, IV, 771ff has the text.

¹³⁰ There were also disturbances in Norman towns. Viard, ed., *Chronique de Jean II et Charles V*, I, 62.

cites this phrase as proof that he was disloyal to King John, the Crown, and the Dauphin.¹³¹

He reprised many of his main points in a speech given to the full Estates, the Dauphin present, in March 1357. (See Illustration 1.2.) In November, on behalf of the deputies, he had proposed that eighty of their number be a commission, which would swear on the Holy Gospels to act for “honor of God and profit of the King our lord (*sire*) of his deliverance, of the crown of France, of monsieur the duke, and *la chose publique*.” He criticized certain royal councilors, who had at heart only their “singular [*particulier*] interest” not “fear of God and the honor of king and profit of the kingdom.” These men had not looked out for the “public profit and utility.” (45) Reprising these themes in March, Le Coq demanded, on behalf of the Estates, not simply the dismissal and investigation of the eight councilors mentioned in November, but of twenty-two men in all. The Estates further demanded a purge of the Parlement and of the Chamber of Accounts, as well as a temporary suspension of all royal officials (this last not approved by the Dauphin). The Dauphin, as lieutenant of King John, removed the twenty-two men and issued letters criticizing counselors who did not think of “*la chose publique* but of their singular profit and that of their friends.”¹³² The deputies, from October through March, consistently claimed that they acted for the “profit of *la chose publique*.” Their constituents, like the good citizens of Soissons, were fully aware of their claim to have done so.

1.3 Buridan, Oresme, and Le Coq: The Rhetorical Triumph of the *chose publique*

Let us stop for a moment to consider these extraordinary events, in terms of the main actors and their war of words. The use of the term “bonum publicum,” as at Soissons, was not unprecedented – the southerners used the phrase in a discussion of coinage in 1343 or 1346 – but it was unusual. The massive ordinance on the privileges and rights of mint workers, issued by Philip VI in 1337 and re-issued by John II in 1350, illustrates the connection of money to the public good, even though neither king used the phrase in that document. Its absence, unusual in an ordinance on coinage after 1361, was common prior to 1356. The great police ordinance issued by Jean II in 1350, made no mention of the “bien public” or “chose publique,” with respect to a subject for which those terms would become obligatory by the 1360s.¹³³ Philip VI used the standard terminology when he renewed the privileges of the fairs of

¹³¹ BNF, Dupuy 646, fols. 51v and ff.; Douët d’Arcq, “Acte d’accusation.”

¹³² Isambert, *Recueil*, IV, 814–15, March 3, 1357.

¹³³ *Ordonnances*, II, 339 (minters) and 350 (police).



Illustration 1.2 Robert Le Coq addresses the Estates General of Languedoil, March 3, 1357, at the Palais du Parlement; the accused officials look on in fear: BNF, M Français 2813, *Grandes Chroniques de France* fol. 402v. Permission BNF

Champagne and Brie in 1349: the “good, honor, and profit of our Kingdom, and *du commun* of all *pays*, as they say.”¹³⁴ Le Coq’s verbal assault on the royal government, in the name of the “chose publique,” seems to have been the turning point in the shift to this vocabulary, and it had a direct connection to a topic widely believed to belong to the collective citizenry: the coinage.

Unsurprisingly, the royal government, which defended the king’s right to control the coinage for his own benefit,¹³⁵ took slowly to the discourse of the “chose publique.” When the Dauphin regained control, after the murder of Marcel on July 31, 1358 and the execution of key allies the next day, he continued to manipulate the currency. He issued a blizzard of edicts about coinage in late 1358 and 1359: these edicts do not refer to the “bien public” or the “chose publique,” but instead speak of the “profit and *bien* of the kingdom” or the “*bien* and profit of all the common people,” as he put it on August 5, 1358.¹³⁶ The ordinance on coinage of October 30, 1358 made it clear that the Dauphin thought of the revenue from coinage as part of the royal “*demesne*.”¹³⁷ Even so, the Dauphin could not ignore the “common people’s” views: after issuing letters about minting new coins at Paris in November 1358, three months later he had to back down, due to popular resistance: he had heard people were unhappy with new coins, “and We, who do not wish in any manner to give displeasure to the said people,” therefore would limit the issue of the new coins to the 700 *l.p.* worth already produced.¹³⁸ In December 1360, in the act that created the aides for his ransom, John II re-established sound money, wanting to act “in the praise of and for the pleasure of God. And for the profit and *bien commun* of all the people of our kingdom.”¹³⁹

¹³⁴ *Ordonnances*, II, 319.

¹³⁵ Letters sent to the seneschals of Beaucaire in 1346: *Ordonnances*, II, 254. See R. Cazelles, “Quelques réflexions à propos des mutations de la monnaie royale française (1295–1360),” *Le Moyen Age* (1966) and Henneman, *The Development of War Financing*.

¹³⁶ *Ordonnances*, III, 242ff.

¹³⁷ *Ordonnances*, III, 266.

¹³⁸ *Ordonnances*, III, 308. In Dijon, a crowd set fire to churches and sacked the office of the royal official in charge of the aides in 1359; at Châtillon-sur-Seine, a crowd murdered the royal provost charged with collection the taxes. Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne*, IX, cites local sources that the bishop of Langres, Guillaume de Poitiers, urged his officers to prevent the levy of these taxes. The repression at Dijon included the burning of Adeline the hatmaker and the execution of Laurent, the painter [149]. Villani mentions the Dijon riots (II, 210) as a rising by the poor (*populo minute*) against the better (*maggiori*) and richest (*piu ricchi*) citizens (*cittadini*).

¹³⁹ *Ordonnances*, III, 439–40. Delachenal, *Charles V*, v. II, 265, sees the hand of Oresme in the monetary policy. E. Bridrey, *La théorie de la monnaie au XIV^e siècle*. Nicole Oresme (Paris, 1906), 12, claims that for twenty-five years (1356–1380) the French government followed Oresme’s theories, but the evidence suggests that prior to November 1359, when we know he was a “secrétaire du roi,” he was one voice among many, and that only from December 1360 did Oresme’s ideas take over.

This phrase came from Nicole Oresme's treatise, *De moneta*, which stressed that money existed "for the common utility" [*pro utilitate communi*] or "is greatly useful and necessary for the good of the public community" [*est moult utile et necessaire pour le bien de la communaulté publique*],¹⁴⁰ as he put it in the French version he created, "petit traicté de la premiere invention des monnoies," which exists in two manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.¹⁴¹ Oresme expressed the hope that his work "could profit princes, subjects, even all of the chose publique." [*quod principibus et subiectis, ymo toti rei publice, proficiat in futurum/ aux princes, aux subgetz, voire et à toute la chose publique, puisse profiter*] In the French version, Oresme continued his poem: he claimed merchants now bargained longer over the value of coins than over the value of the merchandise being sold, to the total confusion of the "universal good of his [the prince's] kingdom and pays."

The prince put his image on the money for the "common utility" [*utilité commune/utilitate communi*] and not because the money belonged to him [*non tamen ipse est dominus seu proprietaries monete/ Il ne s'ensine pas que celluy seigneur et prince soit et doibve estre propriétaire et seigneur de la monnoie courant en sa principaulté et seigneurie*]. Money "belonged to the community and singular persons" [*a la communaulté et aux personnes singuliers/ singularitatis et singularium personarum*]: he cited Aristotle and Cicero as authorities on this point.¹⁴² Here in Chapter 6 we read about money's use to pay the "tribute" to the one who "fights and combats for the chose publique and for the defense of the kingdom and public utility."¹⁴³ Money was public, and the prince, as the "most public of individuals and with the greatest authority" [*personne la plus publique et de plus grande auctorité/ magis publica et maioris auctoritatis*], therefore had a special responsibility for it, not property rights to it.¹⁴⁴

And what about Le Coq, who was he, and why did he use the vocabulary of the public good? Why did the Estates focus so much on the contrast between "singular" or "particular" interest and the good of the "chose publique?" The work of Noël Valois and Raymond Cazelles enables us to see precisely the "singular" interest of the key players in this "pièce de théâtre." As Valois rightly

¹⁴⁰ De Moneta of Nicholas Oresme, trans. C. Johnson (London, 1956; Auburn, AL, 2009), ch. VI, 10–11, the prince coins money "pro utilitate communi."

¹⁴¹ H. Omont, *Catalogue général des manuscrits français* (Paris, 1902), II, 213. M Français 23926 (sixteenth-century copy) and 23927 (fifteenth-century text). L. Wolowski published an edition of the former: *Traictie des la premiere invention des monnoies de Nicole Oresme* (Paris, 1864). The original is also available on Gallica. M Fr 23,927 later belonged to the de Thou family, who sold it to Cardinal Richelieu.

¹⁴² Oresme, *De moneta*, ch. VI, 9–11; BNF, M Fr 23926, fols. 12r–13v.

¹⁴³ BNF, M Fr 23926, f. 13r. In the Latin, "qui pro re publica militabat"; the "kingdom" phrase is an addition to the French text.

¹⁴⁴ BNF, M Fr 23296, f. 12r [Wolowski, xix]; Oresme, *De moneta*, 10.

said, the grievances of the Estates combined genuine desire for reform of the kingdom – hardly surprising considering what contemporaries considered to be an unprecedented disaster – and personal vendetta.

Le Coq's disgrace generated a highly unusual document that helps us understand his ideas: a list of the manuscripts he owned, which were confiscated by the government. Le Coq owned seventy-six manuscripts, mainly in law; the two booksellers estimated the value at 354 *l.p.* Aside from law books like the *Digest*, we see our old friend Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (at 50 *s.*, one of the most expensive of the "books"). Le Coq owned several works of theology and philosophy, from Boethius' *Consolations* to commentaries of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. He had a copy of Barthélemy l'Anglais' *Liber de proprietatibus rerum* [70 *s.*], a work soon to be rendered into French by one of Charles V's scholars, Jean de Corbuchon. One manuscript carried the title of extracts of the books of "Tullius" (Cicero) and Le Coq owned Augustine's *De Perfectione Iustitiae Homini*s and Aquinas on the *Ethics* of Aristotle.¹⁴⁵ Cicero, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Gilles of Rome, Barthélemy l'Anglais – Le Coq got the rhetorical universe for his political ideas from familiar sources.¹⁴⁶

Yet he surely turned as well to a new source, Nicole Oresme's *De Moneta*, likely written at precisely this moment.¹⁴⁷ Oresme picked up on principles enumerated in Philip VI's 1337 renewal of the privileges of the mint workers, reissued by John II in November 1350. The said minters had been created, the ordinance tells us, for the "common profit of all the people, because without money the world cannot be well governed, nor is it possible to do just equality to each of what is his."¹⁴⁸ This last point springs right out of Aristotle, a connection that soon

¹⁴⁵ He had commentaries on the *Sentences* by both Jean de Galles and Aquinas. R Delachenal, "La bibliothèque d'un avocat au XIV^e siècle," *Nouvelle revue historique de droit français et étranger* (1887): 524–537.

¹⁴⁶ M. Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) and Kempshall, *Common Good* explain the special importance of Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle for the rise of the "common good" as a unifying theme of fourteenth-century political theory. The library of Blanche de Navarre, widow of Philip VI, contained many of the same books: M. Keane, *Material Culture and Queenship in Fourteenth-Century France: The Testament of Blanche of Navarre* (Leiden: Brill, 2016). Léopold Deslisle, *Testament de Blanche de Navarre, reine de France* (Paris: SHF, 1885) item 207, for example, is a book of "government of princes according to theology" [Giles of Rome], bound with a chess manual, given to Louis II, duke of Bourbon, brother-in-law of Charles V and key councilor of Charles VI.

¹⁴⁷ Oresme's specific criticism of the *gabelle* on salt, and his failure to mention the king's capture, seem to situate the text between December 1355 and September 1356. The consonance of vocabulary of the coinage edict of December 1355 and of *De moneta*, and the prominence of the coinage manipulation debate in spring 1356, also suggest a composition in that period. His discussion of currency reveals a strong nominalist background.

¹⁴⁸ *Ordonnances*, II, 339–340: "pour le commun prouffit de tout le peuple, car sans monnaie ne pourroit le monde bonnement estre gouverné, ne faire droite éégalité à chascun de ce qui est sien." Princes like the duke of Brittany simply copied royal language in their

became fundamental in the royal shift to the vocabulary of the public good. The royal ordinances on money in 1358–1359 used a variation of Oresme’s precise phrase: the “profit of all the common people” or, in some cases, spoke of the “common profit and good” or the “profit and good of all the people.”¹⁴⁹

The public outrage about coinage manipulation, and its connection to “la chose publique,” and the obvious profits made by those in charge of the minting, was absolutely genuine: Oresme touched a nerve. His Aristotelian argument that the currency belonged to the commonwealth helped make commonwealth language part of mainstream political discourse. Buridan may have played a similar role, given that his *Questiones* on the *Politics* included comments denouncing currency manipulation. Question 11 to Book 1 asked whether it was licit in a well-ordered polity [*policia bona recta*] to manipulate the currency. The first response stated it was illicit to do so if it led to “seditions,” which was certainly the case in France in the 1350s. The second response claimed it was illicit if it was done for a particular good, rather than the *bonum commune*. Manipulating currency for the “utility of the lord” was noxious. Buridan concluded that “in no case is mutation of currency licit for private individual gain.” These positions agree entirely with the arguments Oresme made in *De moneta*. Given that both men had financial responsibilities within the University of Paris, and that, as Bridrey has suggested, they probably belonged to the University’s actual delegation to the assembly, we can be virtually certain that they set forth, as the University’s official position, the idea that currency belonged to the *bonum commune*.

Oresme’s claim that the stamp on a coin was merely the issuing authority’s attestation to the fineness of the alloy in the coin, so that the institution of fixed value coins was a matter of the community’s good [*pro bono communitatis*], and not of seigneurial profit [*non tamen ipse est dominus seu proprietarius monete currentis in suo principatu*], found ready takers among French elites.¹⁵⁰ Buridan admitted that the prince alone could change the value of the coinage, but he was to do so only on the advice of “all who govern the polity.”¹⁵¹ Oresme

ordinances, such as Jean V of Brittany’s 1420 renewal of the “liberties, franchises and exemptions” of the minters of Nantes and Rennes: they had been given these “privileges” for the “proffit commun de tout l’universel peuple, à ouvrir et faire monnoye, pour ce que entierement le monde ne pouvoit bonnement estre gouverné, ne droicte egalité à un chascun de ce que est sien estre faite.” *Lettres et mandemens de Jean V*, #1444.

¹⁴⁹ *Ordonnances*, III, 321 (February 1359, for Languedoc), 343 (May 1359), both use the “all the people” phrase.

¹⁵⁰ The prince stamped the coins for the common utility (*utilitate commune*): ch. 5–6. In chapter 7, he adds that “moneta igitur non est solius principis,” money does not belong to the prince alone. He cites Aristotle and Cicero as his authorities on this point. Oresme, *De Moneta*.

¹⁵¹ “capitulum ibi princeps non per uno homine solum, pro omnibus qui habent policiam regere.” Buridan’s next sentence states unequivocally that in no case can mutation of the coinage be licit if done for private gain.

was unequivocal: any prince who manipulated the currency for his own “vile” profit was a tyrant, because his profit was the community’s loss (ch. XV). Carried to the extreme, as it would inevitably be in time in Oresme’s view, because of human greed, it was “*perfecta tyrannis*.” A prince changing the value of his money is “detestable,” for he should not call gold, what is not gold, and a pound, what is not a pound: “woe unto them that call evil good and good evil.” {*I Kings* xiv, 27 and *Isaiah* v, 20}¹⁵² Oresme’s point about calling things by their proper name would be repeated endlessly in later speeches, including Jean Gerson’s 1405 sermon *Vivat rex*, one of the fundamental texts of commonwealth ideology.

Given the obvious influence of Oresme’s ideas on the Estates General of Languedoil of December 1355, and on the coinage policy and theories of the estates from October 1356 through March 1357, there can be little doubt that Le Coq took his public good vocabulary right out of Oresme’s arguments about coinage as a “necessary” part of the public good, belonging to all the citizens. Émile Bridrey’s suggestion that Oresme was likely one of the two “masters of divinity” identified as accompanying the Parisian delegation to the Estates, and advising their commission, gets striking confirmation from the consonant language of Le Coq’s speeches and Oresme’s arguments with respect to coinage.¹⁵³ In the February 1357 meeting, the procès-verbal identifies these two masters as among the official orators for the Estates. Given Oresme’s promotion to grand master of the Collège of Navarre in October 1356, it is entirely possible he was even one of these orators.

Oresme’s arguments bring forward many of Aristotle’s key points. A king, he tells us, prefers the public utility to his own; a **tyrant** prefers “*proprium commodum*.” A kingdom or a *res publica* is like a human body (*Politics*, V).¹⁵⁴ Those claiming that to deny coinage is a prince’s right are not denying his

¹⁵² French orators regularly used this biblical verse. Buridan, *Quaestiones*, Book I, question 11, argued that if coinage were not made of rare material, and of stated weight and value, then it was not legitimate (*recte*). Like Oresme and the king, Buridan believed “money is necessary in the polity.” The prince could modify the coinage only in cases – such as inaccurate weight – mandated by public necessity or the utility of the commonwealth [*utilitatem reipublice*].

¹⁵³ E. Bridrey, *La théorie de la monnaie*, 476–477; on 467, he calls the University of Paris’ role in the reform movement a “virtuous conspiracy for the *bien public*” led by Oresme and Jean Buridan. Oresme was grand master of the Collège de Navarre in 1356. Buridan was actively involved from 1356–1358 in a jurisdictional dispute between the Picard and English “nations” at the university. Charles of Navarre had extensive Picard support, and one must wonder about Buridan’s relationship to Navarre’s faction in 1357–1358. Buridan was not a master of divinity, so if that description is accurate, he cannot be the second person.

¹⁵⁴ Oresme draw here upon the body politic of John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*. The *Avis au roy* (c. 1347–1350) contains an image of the body politic, with the parts identified: Morgan Library, Ms 456, f. 5r, image on the Morgan’s website. The *Avis* does not use the “chose publique” vocabulary. See Chapter 3, below.

majesty or power, and those so accusing them are “*rei publice proditores*” [traitors to the republic]. Moneychangers, “bankers” [*mercatores monete*], and dealers in bullion – i.e., precisely the people criticized by Le Coq – were unwanted by the *res publica*. Both the Dauphin (in 1359) and John II (when he returned) issued new legislation regulating the money changers. Money belonged to the community [*moneta sit communitatis*] and existed for the utility and good of the “civil community” and the “necessity” of the “*rei publice*.” In the *Accusation* against Le Coq, the author claimed that witnesses “worthy of faith” had said that Le Coq claimed John II was unworthy to be king, was of tainted blood: just as would be the case at the time of the assassinations of Henry III and Henry IV, the legitimacy of violent resistance to a “tyrant,” as opposed to a king, undergirded royal foes. Jean V de Harcourt and, if the *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* is to be believed, the nobles and people of Normandy took a similarly negative view of King John.

Like Oresme, the deputies wondered who could trust a prince who would alter the weight of silver in his coins, without changing their official value? John II’s August 1356 edict, changing the number of coins struck per mark of bullion, contributed mightily to the discontent of the fall of 1356: Marcel and the Parisians got it rescinded in December 1356, by Louis, duke of Anjou, the young prince acting for his father during the Dauphin’s absence.¹⁵⁵ Oresme cited Solomon, Deuteronomy, and Cicero against modifying measures or changing the alloy of coins without changing their face value. Given that John had taken precisely that step in August, Le Coq’s defense of the “*chose publique*” and his attack against the very men responsible for the currency had powerful resonance. The mint-making profits of Jean Poilevilain and the Braque brothers surely fell within the objections of Buridan and Oresme to coinage modification carried out for private gain.¹⁵⁶

The Dauphin, in his letters of remission for Parisians, after the fall of Marcel, admitted as much: poor Guillaume le Fèvre, a fish seller, had, like many Parisians, been misled by Marcel and his allies, whom they believed wanted to ransom the king and serve the “*le bien public*.” King John’s general letters of remission for Paris made the same claim: some had sought to remove Paris

¹⁵⁵ In chapter 9, Oresme warns of the “scandal and murmuring” among the people if the money is altered. Later, he states specifically that a *gabelle* on salt is unjust and that setting an unfair price for coins is tyranny. He cites *Isaiah* x, 1, and its curse on princes who issue “unrighteous decrees.” Buridan, in his first objection to modifying currency, cites modifications that lead to sedition; the coincidence between this objection and the events of December 1356 strongly suggests that Buridan was writing precisely in this moment or soon after.

¹⁵⁶ Parisians called the objectionable pennies “*poillevillains*” after Jean, master of the mint from 1359. The Braque brothers – Nicolas, maître d’hôtel du roi, and Aumary, treasurer of France – were involved in many sleazy deals and covered up some of their malfeasance through authorized murders: R. Cazelles, “Mouvements révolutionnaires au milieu du XIV siècle,” *Revue Historique*, 229 (1962): 279–312.

from John's "government and Seigneury," and those doing so "feigned by their great malice that they did it for a good end for the *bien public*." The king claims that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Parisians saw through the ruse, overthrew Marcel, and so acquitted their loyalty to John II, Charles, and the Crown of France.¹⁵⁷

The leadership of the Estates split in the summer of 1357. Jean de Craon, who mysteriously lurks in the background of many key events of the period 1356–1371, went over to the side of the Dauphin. He had close family ties to the powerful Châtillon family; in December 1359, those ties enabled the royal chamberlain Gaucher de Châtillon to mediate a compromise between Craon and the town government of Reims, which suspected the archbishop of treasonous ties to his "relative," Edward III.¹⁵⁸ Craon seems to have played a critical role in the events of the summer of 1357 in Paris, because of his shift to the Dauphin's party. He later crowned Charles V and participated in the special session of the Parlement of Paris that stripped Edward III of his rights in Aquitaine in 1369; in 1371, he baptized the king's son, Louis. One aspect of his beliefs deserves mention: contemporaries held him to be a major proponent of strong money, an issue that lay at the heart of the new use of the vocabulary of commonwealth.

Given Craon's reputation as a proponent of sound money, can we see at this moment a shift of the sound money group, led politically by Craon but intellectually by Oresme and Buridan, moving away from the hardliners like Marcel and Le Coq?¹⁵⁹ The pro-royal Estates meeting at Compiègne in February 1358 – a meeting surely attended by Craon – kept many of the key elements of the Estates' policies of 1357, such as direct control of receipt and disbursement of taxes, and an emphasis on sound money.¹⁶⁰ Desperate for revenue in 1358–1359, Charles went back to the bad old ways, but the return of peace ushered in an era of unprecedented monetary stability, built on a royalist

¹⁵⁷ Secousse, *Recueil des pièces*, 87ff., reproduces the letters. The Dauphin made the same argument when, in 1359, he restored the offices (and lost wages and pensions) of the officers excluded in 1357. (*Ordonnances*, III, 28 May 1359.) John's letter spoke of the "fausses paroles, inductions et prédications" and "autres voies malicieuses et décevables, à vous traire" and they "feissent à bon fin pour le bien publique."

¹⁵⁸ Edward III and Jean de Craon both descended from Isabelle de la Marche. A. W. Robinson, *Guillaume Machault and Reims: Context and Meaning in his Musical Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 210–211. Varin, *Archives administratives*, III, documents DCCIII, DCCXIX, etc. At one point, Craon, pike in hand, and his armed retainers faced off with the "common people"; Châtillon stepped between the parties and restored order. Marlot, *Histoire de Reims*, t. IV, 79, n. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Le Coq, as bishop of Laon, was in the ecclesiastical province of Reims, so Craon was his direct superior.

¹⁶⁰ Picot, *États-Généraux*, I, 160, rightly emphasizes that the Compiègne assembly took a harder line on coinage than even Marcel and the Parisians.

version of Oresme's ideas, expressed in the ordinance creating the ransom aids in December 1360.¹⁶¹

1.4 Public Good and Private Revenge

Those using commonwealth vocabulary invariably blended personal agendas with legitimate defense of the public good. Le Coq put this vocabulary to work to advance his personal agenda, and, to some degree, that of Charles of Navarre. The October assembly, both in its delegation and through the mouth of Le Coq on November 3, voiced strong grievances against chancellor Pierre de la Forest, First President Simon de Bucy, and the six most powerful financial officials, starting with Nicolas Braque, *maitre d'hôtel du roi*, and his brother Aumary, *trésorier de France*. Noel de Valois called them "the veritable type of the odious minter," stopping at nothing – including murder – to hide their malfeasance.¹⁶² Yet Nicolas Braque remained in Charles's good graces for decades: he was among the group of France's "wisest men" – along with Simon de Bucy, Pierre d'Orgemont, and Jean des Mares – chosen to judge the merits of the Armagnac appeal of 1368–1369, which set in motion Charles V's confiscation of Guyenne.¹⁶³ In the 1370s, he was one of the French negotiators at Bruges.

The other men singled out included Enguerrand du Petit Celier, *trésorier de France*; Bernart Fermant, *trésorier de France*; Jean Chauveau, war treasurer;¹⁶⁴ and Jean Poilevilain.¹⁶⁵ Poilevilain, who was married to Étienne Marcel's cousin, Agnès, spent "a long time" in prison under Philip VI, for both civil and criminal charges, later dropped, in part because of entreaties from those of the king's "lineage."¹⁶⁶ When the

¹⁶¹ Piron, "Monnaie et majesté royale dans la France du XIVe siècle," rightly points out that these ordinances do **not** accept Oresme's idea of the community's right, but they do use his vocabulary.

¹⁶² N. de Valois, "Notes sur la révolution parisienne de 1356–1358: la revanche des frères Braque," *Bulletin de la société historiques de Paris et d'Ile-de-France* X (1883): 100–126. Mint investigator Michel de Saint-Germain, brought to the Châtelet, on their orders, was drowned in the Seine, without trial. John II's letters of remission stated that the Dauphin told him the murder took place at his orders, for "just cause." Braque lent Charles 2,000 *moutons d'or* for his urgent trip to Metz in November 1356.

¹⁶³ Delachenal, *Charles V*, v. IV, 138–139. The group included the Dormans brother and Jean des Mares.

¹⁶⁴ R. Cazelles, "Mouvements révolutionnaires," 279–312, shows that the three men most commonly present at council meetings in 1353–1356 were in fact Bucy, Forest, and Jean Chauveau's brother, Regnaud, bishop of Châlons-en-Champagne; Regnaud had been killed at Poitiers, reportedly by an irate peasant, so he was beyond Le Coq's reach. Le Coq fought with all three.

¹⁶⁵ Cazelles, "Quelques réflexions," 83–105; 251–278. Marcel had been involved in silver coinage up to 1352

¹⁶⁶ Shortly after his release, Poilevilain became "sovereign master" of the mint: J. Viard, *Documents parisiens du règne de Philippe de Valois*, 2 vols (P, 1899, 1902). #

Dauphin created a *gabelle* on salt in 1359, among those he consulted were Poilevilain, Simon de Bucy, and Jean des Mares.¹⁶⁷

Complaints about these men mixed the genuine public outrage about the dilapidation of the kingdom's finances and the constant manipulation of the coinage, with private score settling by Étienne Marcel, against Robert de Lorris.¹⁶⁸ As for Le Coq, he had a longstanding quarrel with Bucy – Le Coq's brother received a royal pardon for murdering one of Bucy's clerks on the president's own doorstep in 1352 – and had contested the bishopric of Laon with Regnaud Chauveau, Jean's brother: the royal emissary arguing Regnaud's case to the Pope had been none other than Bucy himself.¹⁶⁹ The political upheaval in Paris in the 1350s owed as much to a family quarrel between Lorris and Marcel and to the rivalry of Le Coq and the Bucy-Chauveau-la Forest alliance, as it did to the family quarrel of John II, Charles of Navarre, and Edward III.¹⁷⁰ When Marcel fell murdered in the streets of Paris, those leading the assault were his wife's relatives: Martin and Pepin des Essarts, Jean de Charny, and Jean Maillart.¹⁷¹

What did Parisians make of this carnage in the streets, and the impunity of those tied to the financial elite? In the grand ordinance of March 3, 1357, the Dauphin specifically stated that he would no longer grant remission for “murder or dismemberment [. . .] perpetrated with ill intent and by deliberation, or for rape of women [. . .] or for burning of churches or other places by ill intent.”¹⁷²

CCCLXXXIV. Marcel's father-in-law, Pierre des Essarts, was Poilevilain's partner in the 1340s.

¹⁶⁷ *Ordonnances*, III, 358. By April 1359, Poilevilain oversaw all French minting; *Ordonnances*, III, 335. Unable to provide sufficient gold to mint the coins for John's ransom, he lost favor.

¹⁶⁸ Viard, *Documents*, #CCCLXXV, blanket letters of remission [1346] for Lorris, to protect him from the charge that he had “defrauded and exploited” Philip VI and young duke John by taking “excessive gifts” from the latter, without the king's knowledge.

¹⁶⁹ Viard, *Documents*, CCCXLVIII, CCCLIV, royal pardons for murders committed by Petit-Celier's brother. The first pardon comes from John, then only duke of Normandy, a highly unusual situation.

¹⁷⁰ See R. Cazelles, “Étienne Marcel au sein de la haute bourgeoisie d'affaires,” *Journal des Savants* 1, n. 1 (1963): 413–427 and *Société politique*, 196ff on Lorris and Marcel; and “La Jacquerie fut-elle un mouvement paysan?” *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 122, n. 3 (1978): 654–666, points out the obvious collaboration of various town governments and the Jacques, in terms of their chosen targets, usually tied to Lorris, des Essarts, et al. F. Autrand, *Charles V* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 87, on the innovative presence of specialists on the royal council. On intermarriages among the Parisian elite, see B. Bove, *Dominer la ville. Prévôts des marchands et échevins parisiens de 1260 à 1350* (Paris, 2004).

¹⁷¹ Cazelle, “Étienne Marcel,” on the tangled genealogy of all the principals, who were cousins, brothers-in-law, nephews, etc. In the 1360s, in a fitting example of how these families found ways to reconcile, Robert le Coq's nephew, Jean, married Maillart's daughter Jacqueline.

¹⁷² *Ordonnances*, III, 128. See ch. 1 of C. Gauvard, “De grace especial” *Crime, état et société en France à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: PU Sorbonne, 1991, 2010).

The Estates meeting at Compiègne in 1358, supposedly under the control of the Dauphin and the nobility, got the Dauphin to agree (articles 11 and 13), to end abuse of letters of remissions, issued by the king, queen, Dauphin, constable, captains, “and others who claim to have that power,” for unspecified crimes.¹⁷³

In spring 1358, when the Dauphin had left Paris and called a meeting of Estates of Languedoil to meet at Compiègne, we can see how the nature of political discourse had shifted. The historiography cites the domination of the nobility at this assembly, and their hostility to the Parisians – Le Coq, who came to the meeting, apparently fled for his life – but that assertion is contradicted by the actions taken by the assembly.¹⁷⁴ Quite apart from their demand about the abuse of royal pardons, the deputies followed many of the same principles as their predecessors of 1357, perhaps because key early reformers, like Jean de Craon, pushed the original agenda. They relied on a direct tax, not a sales tax; they insisted that qualified men-at-arms from towns had to be accepted into the army; they wanted reformers to look into the conduct of royal officers and that of the mints; they maintained local control of receipt and disbursement of money; they insisted on the local creation of three-member commissions to counsel military captains, who were forbidden to spend tax money without the unanimous consent of the commissioners.¹⁷⁵

The Dauphin’s rehabilitation (May 28, 1359) of the twenty-two officers further reveals the extent to which political discourse had changed. He first claimed that the Estates of March 1357 had many deputies “innocent and of good faith” who naively believed the leaders, who had claimed to be acting for deliverance of king and honor and *bon estat* of king, Dauphin, and the whole kingdom. These leaders turned out to be “traitors and conspirators against the Majesty of king and Dauphin, honor and *bien* of Crown and kingdom of France.” These officers – Bucy, Forest, Braque, d’Orgemont, Poilevilain – had been dispossessed not for “good intention nor for the *bien* of justice, but by ill courage, by hatred, envy and unjust and angry vengeance.” The procedure had not followed any order of Law (*Droit*) or Custom. The Dauphin took the decision to rehabilitate the counselors after great and full deliberation, with

¹⁷³ *Ordonnances*, III, 219ff. Chevalier, ed., *Les pays de la Loire moyenne*, shows that one document after another (JJ 80–235) is a letter of remission, often for a murder: #2, for Jean Florat, a day laborer, #3 for the Munier brothers.

¹⁷⁴ Picot, *États-Généraux*, I, 77, cites a passage in the GCF, in which the discontent of Parisians about the shift to Compiègne contrasts with the “great joy” of those of other towns. Picot does not stress any sort of “noble domination,” but instead the deep loyalty of the assembly to Charles. B. Bove, *Le temps de la Guerre de Cent Ans, 1328–1453* (Paris: Belin, 2009), 107, oddly refers to the Compiègne meeting as an assembly of nobles, but otherwise his chapters III and IV offer a superior introduction to the events of the period, with some particularly spectacular illustrations.

¹⁷⁵ *Ordonnances*, III, 319ff. The changes they made – separate categories for hearths in towns and for free and serf country dwellers – reflected social reality and were in line with standard local practice.

the Grand Conseil, in the chamber of Parlement, with men of his lineage, dukes, counts, barons, prelates and other churchmen, nobles and townsmen of the kingdom in great number. He had acted not at the urging of anyone, but from “pure and noble office to which it belongs to recall and correct both our acts and those of others.” To highlight the public nature of his action, he sent notification to the Pope, the College of Cardinals, the Emperor, all prelates, nobles, and good towns, especially those where confiscation had been publicized.¹⁷⁶

The royal government thus accepted the distinction between “singular” profit and some sort of public or common profit: they turned Le Coq’s accusation on its head, saying that he, not the counselors, had acted out of hatred and envy, the most personal of motives. A thousand kilometers away, in Florence, Matteo Villani knew about the importance of this distinction in French politics. He tells us that the Dauphin revealed secret letters from Charles of Navarre, which showed that Navarre “sought more his singular profit than the common good.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ *Ordonnances*, III, 345ff, 28 May 1359.

¹⁷⁷ *Cronica di Matteo Villani*, II, 123, “più a singulare profitto che a comune bene.”