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EDITOR'S NOTE

This contribution is part of the proceedings of the symposium 'Bloody Politics: How Princes of the House of France Shaped Political Life' (Trier University, 20–21 June 2024) published in the *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (<https://journals.openedition.org/crcv/43603>).

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This paper covers the main themes of the book *Les Bourbons dans la Révolution. Biographie d'une famille en quête d'unité (1789–1830)*, published in 2025 by Armand Colin.

- 1 In September 1824, Charles X granted the title of Royal Highness and the associated prerogatives of the main branch of the royal family to the princes of the blood: the duc d'Orléans, future King Louis-Philippe, and the last representative of the Condé branch, the duc de Bourbon. Formally, the princes of the blood ceased to exist: their principal claim – to be equal in rank and dignity to the rest of the royal family, distinguished only by the order of primogeniture – was fulfilled.
- 2 This enduring claim, grounded in a long-standing dynastic tradition, was the criterion Arlette Jouanna used to examine these dynastic dynamics in her great posthumous work.¹ Aside from this comprehensive effort, however, historiography on the

revolutionary era has primarily focused on individual branches, if not on specific individuals, with family and dynastic dynamics receiving less scholarly attention.² An important innovation came from Karine Rance, who in 2006 examined the last three Condé princes together, in an article based on their family correspondence.³ Studies on the Orléans branch may have been more prominent, but the dynastic angle, which was much explored in the nineteenth century, has been less popular in recent times – although the figures of Philippe Égalité, the duc d'Orléans, and of Louis-Philippe continue to inspire thought-provoking studies.⁴ Historiography on the main branch of the French Bourbon dynasty has remained focused mainly on the tragic figures of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. Less attention has been devoted to his brothers, Louis XVIII – though Philip Mansel's research has renewed academic interest in him⁵ – and especially the comte d'Artois, the future Charles X, who still inspires apologetic, or even hagiographical, works.

- 3 What seemed lacking was a work that would examine the various branches of the Bourbons during the revolutionary era through a unified familial lens, analyzing the impact that these dynastic dynamics had on both the collapse and later attempted restoration of the monarchy.⁶ To this end, the figure of the comte d'Artois stands out as a key interpretive lens, due to his belonging to the main branch while maintaining close ties with the Condé and the Orléans princes throughout most of his life. To study these relationships, the appealing opportunity arose to gather together a corpus of sources that have never before been brought into dialogue: namely, Louis-Philippe's memoirs; the private journals of the duc de Bourbon and of Maria Amalia; and the dynastic correspondence between the branches, preserved respectively in the Archives Nationales de France and at the Château de Chantilly. On this basis, this article aims to further explore Artois's role as a dynastic strategist, acting as a *trait d'union* between the branches. While external crises pushed the quest for dynastic unity, the Revolution and exile produced conflicting imperatives, forcing the princes into decisions, both political and personal, that simultaneously upheld and destabilized the pursuit of dynastic cohesion.

A cadet among cadets (1774–89)

- 4 The beginning of Louis XVI's reign in 1774 was marked by a certain degree of dynastic harmony. By bringing back the *parlements* that Louis XV, his grandfather, had previously dissolved, the King also made a conciliatory move towards the princes of the blood, who had supported the magistrates' claim. After their birthright to sit in the new collegial body had been threatened, they had publicly protested by declaring that they could only sit in 'a fixed tribunal, composed of irremovable members, who could only be dismissed in cases provided for and under the procedures prescribed by the laws of the kingdom', of which they were, above all, 'members by birth'. Their claim had also explicitly asserted the role they attributed to themselves: that of safeguarding 'the essential rights of the entire nation'⁷ against the abuses of monarchical power and, above all, of 'opening [the King's] eyes to the dangers of the advice given to him'.⁸
- 5 This stance was not confined to the ranks of the princes of the blood. While the comte de Provence, the King's younger brother (born in 1755), had supported the replacement of the former *parlements* with new courts, his junior, the comte d'Artois (born in 1757), had backed their cousins' claims. While the latter was a *fils de France* by birth, his

children seemed destined to establish a new cadet branch – a profile that placed him in a somewhat similar position to another junior *fils de France* in history: François de France, duc d'Alençon and d'Anjou (1555–84). Like Alençon, who sided with Henri de Navarre, later Henri IV, Artois was naturally aligned with the interests of his cousins, whose company and alliance he actively sought.⁹ He was personally close to the duc de Chartres, heir to the Orléans branch, with whom he gambled (along with the Queen), partied and organized horse races. Their closeness was such that, when Chartres and his father, the duc d'Orléans, refused to attend Louis XV's funeral – prior to the restoration of the old *parlements* – Artois threatened to abstain as well, though he ultimately relented.¹⁰

- 6 Despite Artois's proximity to the princes, dynastic unity was constantly on the verge of being compromised by recurring disagreements over rank. In 1775, the princes of the blood refused, unlike Louis XVI's brothers, to visit Archduke Maximilian, Marie Antoinette's brother, during his secret visit to Versailles on the grounds that the Archduke, being incognito, was not entitled to the honours of his title.¹¹ In 1778, a quarrel at a masked ball between the comte d'Artois and the duchesse de Bourbon prompted the prince de Condé, father-in-law of the Duchess, to demand reparation. The verbal reconciliation ordered by Louis XVI was deemed insufficient, and the duc de Bourbon ended up challenging Artois to a duel, which Artois accepted. The duel – which was illegal – served to make a point. For the Condé branch, it was a way of showing that the princes of the blood could not be insulted with impunity by a member of the royal family. For Artois, however, it was a statement that he refused to submit to the rules imposed by his brother, the King, and would act instead according to his own conception of honour – one that acknowledged and paid tribute to that of the princes of the blood.¹² It was no surprise, then, that the affair resulted in a closer relationship between Bourbon and Artois, who, in 1782, departed together for the siege of Gibraltar, where Franco-Spanish troops unsuccessfully laid siege to the Rock against the English.
- 7 Succession issues further deepened the divide between the royal family and the princes of the blood – a situation that did not go unnoticed by either the public or the court.¹³ Artois also enjoyed a distinct advantage over his elder brothers: while Louis XVI and Monsieur, the comte de Provence, had no male heirs until 1781, Artois could already count on a secure lineage with the births of his sons, the duc d'Angoulême (1775) and the duc de Berry (1778). This placed him on an equal footing with the princes de Condé and Orléans, whose own dynastic lines were similarly assured through the births of the duc d'Enghien (1772), the future Louis-Philippe (born duc de Valois, 1773), the duc de Montpensier (1775) and the comte de Beaujolais (1778). Artois and Chartres both chose to celebrate their parental success through paintings. They commissioned two portraits depicting themselves alone with their newborn children, breaking with traditional iconography, which typically portrayed babies alone with their mothers or wet nurses, and included fathers only in larger dynastic portraits. In 1774, Nicolas-Bernard Lépicié painted Chartres watching over his son, the duc de Valois, lying in a cradle.¹⁴ Two years later, Gabriel-Jacques de Saint-Aubin drew Artois in bust form, holding the duc d'Angoulême, born the previous year, in his arms.¹⁵ As further evidence of a circle of artistic influences, Saint-Aubin also depicted the duchesse de Bourbon holding a baby duc d'Enghien.¹⁶ These celebrated heirs had different destinies. While Angoulême and his brother Berry received a traditional education under the supervision of the comte de Sérent, and Enghien's early years were strictly overseen by his grandfather, the prince de Condé, the Orléans children were raised more controversially. In 1782, they

were placed in the care of the comtesse de Genlis, who broke with traditional princely education by introducing them to Rousseauist ideas, including the notion that being born royal was a 'misfortune' and the goal of shaping them into 'honest and virtuous republicans'.¹⁷

- 8 The balance within the dynasty shifted again with the birth of a dauphin in 1781. This not only pushed Artois and his sons further back in the line of succession but also lessened the King's need to keep the princes of the blood in favour. Although they had all ridden in the same carriage as the King to attend the Te Deum at Notre-Dame celebrating the dauphin's birth, they were notably excluded from the formal dinner at the Hôtel de Ville, which led them to refuse to attend over the matter that, 'in such ceremonies, they claimed the right to dine with the royal family, while the latter admitted only the princes who were part of it'.¹⁸
- 9 The sense of exclusion – of being regarded not as part of the royal family but rather as belonging to a separate category – could lead the princes of the blood to privilege alternative forms of kinship over their connection to the royal line. For instance, the Affair of the Necklace, which broke out in 1785, saw the prince de Condé supporting the cardinal de Rohan, his relative by marriage, effectively against Marie Antoinette. The situation could also, quite understandably, foster frustration. The death of the duc d'Orléans in November 1785 placed the title of first prince of the blood in the hands of the former duc de Chartres. His desire for recognition clashed both with Louis XVI's limited willingness to favour him and with the real constraints of a system in which the major offices had already been assigned – for instance, the command of the infantry belonged to Condé, and the office of grand admiral remained firmly in the hands of the duc de Penthièvre,¹⁹ Chartres's father-in-law, despite his having no more male children to pass it on to. Artois also played a significant part in supporting his cousin's ambitions: he actively interceded with the Queen to secure for Chartres the charge of colonel-general of the Hussars in 1778, along with several governorships. His encouragement may have stemmed not only from genuine solidarity with his cousin's aspirations but also from a strategic interest – the possibility of securing the office of grand admiral for his own son, Angoulême, in the future.
- 10 This dynastic precariousness played a key role in the escalation of the monarchy's crisis, depriving the sovereign of internal support and, in fact, multiplying the potential centres of opposition. When Louis XVI sought to impose a new loan on the *parlements* in November 1787, the duc d'Orléans publicly declared the King's attempt to be illegal. He did so in defence of the constitution and against what he saw as the Crown overstepping its authority – much as it had in 1771. The other princes backed him. The Condés, despite the dissolution of Bourbon's marriage to Orléans's sister, spoke out loudly in his favour when he was exiled.²⁰ Artois once again played a key role in maintaining good relations between the main branch and the princes of the blood. One of his favourites, the baron de Besenval, was sent to Villers-Cotterêts, where Orléans was confined, and shortly afterwards, Artois and Orléans arranged a marriage between their children, the duc d'Angoulême and Mademoiselle d'Orléans. Louis XVI finally yielded, and Orléans's exile came to an end in 1788.
- 11 The convocation of the Estates General raised new issues. In December 1788, Artois encouraged the drafting of a manifesto – the *Mémoire des princes* – written by his chancellor and the prince de Condé, which denounced the demands of the Third Estate and reaffirmed the duty of the princes to defend, once again, the 'fundamental laws of

the kingdom'.²¹ Artois signed it, alongside the duc de Bourbon, the duc d'Enghien and the prince de Conti. It was a powerful demonstrative gesture, marking the moment when Artois's understanding with the princes of the blood turned into a formal political alliance, and he plainly aligned himself with them in the name of political self-preservation. The alliance between Artois and the Condés, however, was not meant to be exclusive, as they wanted to involve Orléans as well. They invited him to sign the manifesto, but he declined.²² While he was personally little concerned, his office – tasked, like the others, with determining the methods for convening the Estates General – voted in favour of increasing the number of deputies for the Third Estate. Although not personally close to them, Orléans found himself politically closer to the Queen and the comte de Provence, whose office was the only one to endorse the doubling of the numbers.

- 12 As the Estates General drew near, the princes were invited to sit as representatives. The prince de Condé was elected in Burgundy, as was his son in Provence.²³ The nobles of Provence also asked Artois to represent them, probably deciding to punish the comte de Provence for his openness towards the Third Estate.²⁴ Despite these proposals, Artois and the Condés refused to sit as deputies in the Estates but decided to appear only as princes – unlike Orléans, who was the only one who agreed to sit as a representative. The *Instructions envoyées [...] aux assemblées des bailliages* – a document intended for Orléans's electors, most likely written by Choderlos de Laclos and the abbé Sieyès – outlined both the scope and the limits of his political path. While Orléans's main concern seemed to be the right 'to live wherever one wishes, the right to go, to come, to stay where one pleases' – a principle to which he was obsessively committed but felt did not apply to him – the text went further, emphasizing the need to increase representation for the Third Estate, promoting civil liberties and implementing fiscal reforms, all the while championing Orléans as a radical reformer, a convenient alternative to the royal couple and to Provence.²⁵ Although Orléans was genuinely driven to reform, his attitude did not necessarily reflect a rejection of dynastic loyalty. On the contrary – much like the comte de Provence – it expressed a desire to act as a regenerative force from within the monarchy, following models that preserved, at least in part, continuity with monarchical tradition. He in fact urged his older children, the duc de Chartres and the duc de Montpensier, to sit with the princes in the Estates General and defer to the prince de Condé on all ceremonial matters.²⁶ The marriage between Orléans's daughter and Artois's son was still to be held. As for Artois and the Condés, while far more resistant and strongly opposed to reform, they likewise regarded themselves as legitimate heirs to the past, from which they drew their authority. As a result, although political positions within the dynasty increasingly diverged, common ground did remain: a shared foundation rooted in the obligations of rank, and loyalty to the King that was still expected, but no longer freely given.

Alternative power (1789–93)

- 13 The dynastic break that followed 1789 was neither explicit nor immediate, but resulted from a mix of excitement, initiative, short-sightedness and the unravelling of events. The three distinct political approaches to the Revolution – ambiguous complaisance from the royal couple, acceptance from Orléans, and outright refusal from Artois and the Condés, with Provence shifting from the first to the third – led to a

desynchronization between the interests of the dynasty as a whole and those of its individual branches, ultimately resulting in disunity.

- 14 The first issue was physical distance. Artois was the one who initiated it. He was both outraged and frightened by Louis XVI's moderate reaction to the storming of the Bastille, as was the prince de Condé. Both were partisans of a more energetic repression of the Third Estate's claims and, unpopular, they fled France immediately after 14 July, with a retinue that included a substantial number of princes, including the sons of Artois, the duc de Bourbon, the duc d'Enghien and Louise, princesse de Condé. Without Artois's determination to leave, Condé would not have dared to follow: the emigration first gained strength and legitimacy through Artois's departure, which also determined their common destination. They aimed for the capital of Artois's father-in-law – and Condé's cousin – the king of Sardinia: Turin.
- 15 The emigration of the princes – disguised as a precaution – was an act of protest. By distancing themselves from what they saw as Louis XVI's growing responsibility for the unfolding crisis in France, they were freer to devise a strategy to oppose the Revolution from abroad. To this end, they immediately began seeking the support of foreign powers, urging them to intervene in France. In Turin, at Artois's request, Condé drafted a new manifesto, *Mémoire sur le moment présent*, in which they reiterated 'the duty of the princes and the greatness of sovereigns to save the king of France, even against his will'.²⁷ By that, they effectively undermined Louis XVI's authority and positioned Artois – and, by extension, Condé – as the true holders of monarchical legitimacy. There was also a degree of mutual exaltation. Artois, encouraged by Condé, succumbed to a frenzy, envisioning himself fighting 'for glory or death', a new Henri IV in a France set ablaze by foreign troops.²⁸
- 16 The alliance between Artois and the Condés abroad unsettled Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Back in Paris, this led to the beginning of a delicate double game: publicly, they condemned the émigré princes, their plans to incite civil war and the overruling of the royal will. At the same time, they could not deny their need for help, but they did not fully trust Artois's enthusiasm and were very wary of Condé.²⁹ They were also aware of the price they would have to pay if they indulged Artois and Condé's plan: claiming to have returned the crown to the King, the princes would demand to be more directly involved in State affairs.³⁰
- 17 One of Artois's concerns in Turin was to keep track of the activities of the princes who had remained in Paris. In a play of mirrors, his professed devotion to the monarchical ideal constantly risked being revealed as insubordination, and of being confused with the equally ambiguous, though different, attitudes towards Louis XVI of his brother Provence or their Orléans cousin. They both oscillated between professing loyalty to the King and to the new revolutionary order from which they hoped to benefit. Although these two aspects were not formally in contradiction within the nascent constitutional monarchy, both were suspected of seeking to harm Louis XVI or to replace him. In February 1790, Provence was accused of having fomented a conspiracy led by a certain marquis de Favras, aimed at removing the King from Paris and entrusting Provence with the government. Provence went to the Hôtel de Ville and publicly expressed his distance from the events, although his commitment to the widow of Favras – who was sentenced to death – seems to tell another story. He also took this opportunity to declare his loyalty to the Revolution, consolidating his reputation as a liberal prince. For Artois, this was outrageous, but convenient, as it

reinforced his place as the true defender of the monarchy and allowed him to rebuke his older brother for his 'weakness'.³¹ As for Orléans, the question was a little more delicate, as his conflict with Louis XVI was somewhat more explicit. His bust had been carried in triumph on the day of the storming of the Bastille – and he was also accused (although later acquitted) of having provoked the violent demonstrations of the October Days (5–6 October 1789), which violently brought the King and his family from Versailles to Paris. For Artois, it was more urgent to distance himself from Orléans's bad reputation and to distinguish his own 'good' rebellion (which was for the good of the monarchy) from Orléans's, whose implication in the Revolution was exaggerated on purpose. In a symbolic parallel, the more Orléans's supposed conspiracy grew – and he was depicted as the one who 'controls everything and sets everything in motion'³² in France – the more the émigré princes could present themselves as being as important as him, thus legitimizing their activity.

- 18 While Louis XVI did not act against Provence, he did try to manage Orléans, who was urged to accept an ambiguous diplomatic mission to London. For the King, it was a means of removing a turbulent cousin without explicitly humiliating him; for Orléans, however, it represented a genuine opportunity to rehabilitate his reputation. He pushed to promote trade between England and France, and wished to speak on behalf of the Crown regarding the turmoil in the Low Countries – a situation that could turn in his favour, promoting his candidacy for the Brabant crown in the event of the formation of a new state. For Artois, Orléans's mission was potentially another, more dangerous, opposite emigration, which explains the frequency with which his actions were commented on. When it became clear that Louis XVI had no intention of granting Orléans full diplomatic powers in London or of favouring his standing, and that Orléans resented him and had decided to return to Paris, Artois was extremely alarmed.³³ It seems, however, that this distrust did not extend to Orléans in the same way. In fact, Orléans was probably aiming to re-establish his alliance with Artois when he defended his right to the crown and invited him to return to France from Turin. In a statement published in London, he wrote:

I like to believe that, by drawing closer to a king whom he cherishes and by whom he [Artois] is so tenderly loved and drawing closer to a people whose affection he so justly deserves through his many endearing qualities, this prince will return to enjoy the most precious part of his inheritance.³⁴

- 19 In June 1791, Louis XVI left Paris and headed to the border to join and take command of troops stationed near Luxembourg – possibly with the idea of marching back on Paris, which would have forced Artois and the Condés to support him. Instead, he was arrested in Varennes and brought back to Paris with his family. The comte de Provence, however, succeeded in reaching Artois in Koblenz, where he had settled after being expelled from Turin. Provence quickly forgot all his professions of loyalty to the Revolution and attempted to impose himself as the new leader of the émigrés – without fully succeeding, as his delay in joining the cause was remembered and emphasized by those who still preferred Artois. Even so, the counter-revolutionary activity of the princes gained new momentum, and Provence, Artois and the three Condés issued a public letter denouncing Louis XVI's acceptance of the constitution. The King's brothers accused him directly:

How could you, Sire, give sincere and valid approval to the so-called constitution, which has caused so many ills? As the usufruct holder of the throne you inherited

from your ancestors, you cannot alienate its fundamental rights, nor destroy the very foundation on which it is build.³⁵

- 20 The separate postscript, signed by the prince de Condé, the duc de Bourbon and the duc d'Enghien, was no more appeasing. Not only did they openly disregard the King by candidly admitting that they answered only to Artois and Provence, but they concluded by characterizing Louis XVI's actions as no less than the 'degradation of the throne and the overthrow of the monarchy'.³⁶
- 21 For the princes, the rejection of the constitution was paramount, as it eliminated the category of princes of the blood, recognizing only the King's first direct male heir as the legitimate successor. The King's other relatives had a right only to the title of *prince français*, without *apanage* or privileges, and this status itself was tied to their presence on French soil – implicitly designed to exclude all Bourbons abroad, who had joined foreign armies that posed a military threat.
- 22 This became more evident when, in April 1792, war was finally declared between France and the Empire. Three armies of émigrés led by the princes joined the operations of the First Coalition, hoping to enter Paris as avengers, fully embracing the intentions of the duke of Brunswick, who, with his manifesto, vowed 'an exemplary and forever memorable revenge' upon Paris.³⁷ Guilty of having subscribed to the princes' political annihilation, Louis XVI – though still cited by them as the symbolic justification for their actions – became more and more criticized both publicly and privately.
- 23 For Artois, by then, a separation had taken place between the symbolic king, now a figure of blame, and the brother, the sister-in-law and the sister whose fate could still be mourned. The concern for Louis XVI's fate and the sorrow over his execution – which there is no reason to consider insincere – were, however, mingled with the excitement of a journey to Russia, where Artois, lavishly honoured by Catherine II, travelled in the spring of 1793 in search of military aid.³⁸ The wish to see Marie Antoinette safe was intertwined with the fear that she might claim the regency for the young Louis XVII.³⁹ When he received news of her death in October 1793, his feelings were a mix of blame and nostalgia. He wrote to Vaudreuil: 'You know the wrongs I might have had to reproach that most unfortunate woman for; but at this moment I have forgotten everything, and my heart has suffered more than I can express.'⁴⁰ Initially, the death of Louis XVI made it easier for the princes abroad to assert their role as the custodians of the true France. Recognizing his brother's popularity among the émigrés, Provence appointed Artois lieutenant general of the kingdom, while he proclaimed himself regent for the young Louis XVII, still languishing in prison. Despite this, the émigré army had meanwhile already been reduced to Condé's own corps, granting the cadet branch the recognition it had hoped to gain from its alliance with Artois, who, although he did not disavow it, was also afraid that this would make them too 'independent from us'.⁴¹
- 24 Proud of their prestige, the Condés did instrumentalize their military role to strengthen their position within the nobility. When the 'horrible news of the execution of our unfortunate king' reached the Condé army, the Prince announced to the nobility the death of the King and proclaimed the advent of Louis XVII 'according to the ancient and solemn custom, a right that is attached to the office of *grand maître [de la maison de France]*',⁴² which he held before the Revolution. To honour the Condés' commitment, with whom he remained personally close yet wary of granting too much autonomy to,

Artois chose his long-time companion, the duc de Bourbon, to join him in his one and only military venture in Brittany: the so-called Île d'Yeu expedition in October 1795.⁴³ The operation saw Artois, Bourbon and a small contingent of British troops attempt a landing on the Vendée coast to aid the counter-revolutionary insurgents. The effort ended in failure, and Artois and Bourbon were forced to retreat – Artois to Edinburgh, Bourbon to London.

- 25 In this dynastic framework, one branch remained outside the picture: the Orléans. While Artois and the émigré princes presented themselves on the European stage as guarantors of the Old Regime, the Orléans branch experimented with new ways of embodying the role of a French prince. In Paris, the duc d'Orléans and his son, the duc de Chartres, had seats at the Jacobin Club and identified as good patriots. As long as Louis XVI gave the impression of endorsing the Revolution, the issue, at least officially, did not arise – they considered themselves more loyal princes and subjects than Artois and the Condés. The duc de Chartres and the duc de Montpensier actively served in the ranks of the national army in what they considered the rightful defence of the borders. However, associating with royalty became increasingly dangerous for them. After Varennes, when a regency was being considered, Orléans showed modesty (or, more likely, caution) and published a letter in which he renounced his prerogatives.⁴⁴ The fall of the monarchy in August 1792 complicated matters. The duc d'Orléans was paradoxically given the name *Égalité* when he wished to vote for the Convention, to which he was elected but where he was also increasingly isolated. His republican commitment, which stemmed proportionally from the disappointment in his monarchical ideal, culminated in one, emblematic act. When the King was put on trial in January 1793, Orléans voted for death, a gesture that forever marked him as a regicide. However, it was more likely the result of a desperate attempt to dispel the growing suspicion that the Convention harboured towards the remaining Bourbons. Within a few months, the attempt proved futile. In April 1793, Orléans, his younger children, the duc de Montpensier and the comte de Beaujolais, his sister, the duchesse de Bourbon, and the prince de Conti were imprisoned at the Fort Saint-Jean in Marseille. The duc de Chartres and his sister, Adélaïde, managed to leave France – the first by deserting the republican army and both repairing to Switzerland.

Agent of reconciliation (1793–1814)

- 26 Upon ascending the throne in June 1795, Louis XVIII was unacknowledged by foreign powers. Even within France, the remaining monarchists did not necessarily view him as the only potential sovereign. Artois, his son Angoulême, the new duc d'Orléans: all three were possible candidates for the crown, as expressed by Mallet Du Pan: 'all opinions branch out infinitely, but the first who is in a position to make himself king [...] will absorb them all.'⁴⁵ The new King's personal hold over the princes was no stronger than that which Louis XVI had had. While Artois and the Condés officially acknowledged his authority, the situation was different in reality. When he became king, Louis XVIII lived in Verona, without any other prince present. Always travelling under the name of 'comte d'Isle', he was forced to change residences several times depending on the geopolitical developments of the continent and the advancing republican armies. Expelled to modern-day Latvia, he eventually managed to obtain custody of the only surviving daughter of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI, Marie-

Thérèse-Charlotte de France, Madame Royale (1778–1851), recently freed from the Temple. In June 1799, he wed her to Angoulême, the eldest son of Artois, hoping to see the main branch of the family revived around him. The control of this couple was crucial, as Louis XVIII had parted ways with his true heir, Artois, in 1793, with Artois embarking on an independent course that led him first to Russia and later to England. Condé too remained something of a loose cannon, as his army – in which Bourbon, Enghien, Angoulême and his brother Berry also served – was stationed on the Rhine and answered to the various powers that employed them. As for the Orléans, they remained estranged from the rest of the family.

- 27 The declaration of Verona, published by Louis XVIII after his ascension to the throne, condemned the regicides, including the former duc d'Orléans, which gave his son and heir a perfect reason to wander obscurely across Northern Europe. Even when Louis XVIII and Artois did send embassies to invite him to join their cause and the Condé army, the future Louis-Philippe twice refused a public reconciliation that would jeopardize his reputation as a patriotic prince and, more importantly, the safety of his siblings, Montpensier and Beaujolais, still imprisoned in Marseille and exposed to the threat of reprisals. Only in 1797 did the Directory agree to release them, on the condition that they exile themselves to North America along with their brother.
- 28 Three years later, the conditions for the Orléans princes' return to Europe – and to the dynasty – materialized. They had met the duke of Kent, George III's third son, in Halifax, a meeting that helped to foster the British government's willingness to grant them asylum. Great Britain also offered an additional advantage: Artois and Bourbon's simultaneous presence in London at the end of 1799.
- 29 This provided the Orléans with a convenient path towards reconciliation that suited their intentions, namely to finally – and safely – draw closer to their relatives without fully assimilating into the unpatriotic tradition of the Condé army, nor sharing in the uncomfortable exile of Louis XVIII. As for Artois, the fact that it was he – and not the King – who welcomed the prodigal cousins allowed him to act as the principal agent of reconciliation, to shape its terms and to ensure its success. He showed sympathy, displayed affection and understanding, and considered the Orléans' princely birth as a guarantee of their loyalty to the monarchy – a quality he himself possessed and that he saw as a bond between them.⁴⁶ The constitutional sympathies of the Orléans were skilfully downplayed by Artois, thus facilitating the dialogue. For instance, the faults of Louis-Philippe and Montpensier were limited to errors of judgement and reduced to an essentially military nature: they were guilty of having 'served both under the flag of the Revolution and in the armies of the Republic'.⁴⁷ Louis XVIII remained excluded from this process. From Mittau, where he was in 1800, he did bless the reconciliation: he sent Montpensier and Beaujolais the insignia of the Holy Spirit, to be worn as if they had been received at Versailles, and acted as godfather to Beaujolais at his baptism, something the Revolution had delayed. However, it was Artois who distributed the honours in London, and the name chosen by Beaujolais – Louis, like the King, and Charles, like Artois – perhaps testified to this dual deference.
- 30 The Orléans' arrival in London was soon followed by others, creating an alternative centre of power around Artois. Condé joined them in 1801 – after the final disbandment of his army – and Berry, Artois's younger son, in 1802. While in Britain, the princes tended to neutralize any lingering internal conflicts and foster a sense of solidarity, strengthened by their shared exile and by the rise of Bonaparte, who presented a

convenient common enemy. Artois aimed to promote social interaction and a shared perspective: he established a new dynastic model in which he was at the centre, spending time with the princes frequently, enquiring about their personal and political concerns and including them in a grand discourse on their shared efforts towards the Restoration. As for the Orléans and the Condés, they sought in different ways to influence the politics of the dynasty in Britain. Notably, they both criticized Artois and his entourage's somewhat clumsy manners with the British government, periodically proposing better ways to promote counter-revolutionary activity in France. Orléans bragged about his links to the British royal family, while the prince de Condé exploited his friendship with the bishop of Arras, one of Artois's favourites, to influence Artois's behaviour.

- 31 These quarrels, however, receded into the background whenever defending their shared rights was at stake. From their English exile, Artois and the princes of the blood united their voices from afar only when the threat to the Crown became explicit. In 1803, at Artois's initiative, they joined in the protest in which Louis XVIII rejected Napoleon's proposal that he renounce his rights to the crown in exchange for a pension – a manoeuvre that supported the King but also asserted the individual rights to the crown that each prince held. As in 1788 and 1789, it was again Condé who drafted the manifesto, with Artois's imprimatur. However, unlike in 1791 – when there were two letters, one from the King's brothers, and a separate postscript from the princes of the blood – here the claim was once again a shared one, a sign of Artois's policy of involving his cousins:

We, the undersigned princes, brothers, nephews and cousins of His Majesty Louis XVIII, king of France and Navarre, imbued with the same sentiments as our sovereign, lord and king, who has shown himself so dignified in his response to the proposal made to him to renounce the throne of France, and to require all the princes of his house to renounce their inalienable rights of succession to the same throne, declare that our attachment to our duties and honour can never allow us to compromise on our rights.⁴⁸

- 32 New bereavements helped to strengthen the sense of reconciliation. In March 1804, the duc d'Enghien was captured in Ettenheim, brought to Paris and executed on Napoleon's orders. The reaction of the dynasty was collective. It consecrated the Condés as a 'martyr' branch of the Counter-Revolution, fostering the belief that their loss justified increased consideration. On 12 April 1804, the abbé de Bouvens, a courtier of Artois, carefully honoured the Condés' sacrifice – and, by extension, their alliance with Artois: 'posterity will speak of these three princes, who, with arms in hand, fixed the eyes of Europe by defending the world's oldest monarchy.'⁴⁹ Enghien's death also provided the duc d'Orléans with a new opportunity to express his renewed closeness to the dynasty, itself an indirect result of Artois's family policy: 'this painful event will at least serve to bring all our branches closer together.'⁵⁰ Finally, it gave Artois the opportunity to promote this image of dynastic unity by orchestrating the funeral masses, in which he personally participated.
- 33 Louis XVIII did try to claim precedence over his brother. A few months after Enghien's execution, and after Bonaparte had declared himself emperor, Louis XVIII invited the princes to join him in Calmar, Sweden, to discuss the course of action to take. They declined, officially for reasons of prudence. After much hesitation (and an unsuccessful attempt to send Condé in his place), Artois was the only one who set off, reuniting with his brother after years for a meeting that already showed signs of their political

divergence. Regarding the statement that Louis XVIII issued, which surprised many with its conciliatory tone, Artois approved of the form but not of the substance. From London, the concessions made by the King – many of which aligned with the constitution of 1791 – unsettled the princes, whose dignity had been threatened by that very constitution. The figure of Louis XVIII then overlapped with the discredited figure of Louis XVI, and, behind the concern for the possible abandonment by the sovereign of the ‘splendour of his rank’, there was a desire to protect their own position and to discredit the King’s moderate political programme:

It is the abandonment that the unfortunate Louis XVI made, which gradually brought the red cap onto that royal head, whose crown had already disappeared. No obedience without respect; no respect if the man always erases the king, in the eyes of the people.⁵¹

- 34 Disturbed, among other things, by the liberty that Artois and the princes enjoyed in Great Britain and deprived of refuge on the continent, Louis XVIII decided to join them at the end of 1807. In the process, he attempted to exploit the former revolutionary duc d’Orléans, asking him to discreetly intercede on his behalf with the British government, bypassing Artois in a divide-and-rule manoeuvre. However, when Louis XVIII disembarked on his own in Yarmouth, the dynastic situation before him was more solid than he had expected. Orléans was touched that Artois had shown the same respect to his brother Montpensier, who died in May 1807 after having served under the tricolour, as he had shown to Enghien, the hero of the Counter-Revolution: he oversaw the organization of the funeral and attended it. The duc de Bourbon, the deceased’s uncle by marriage, led the mourning at the funeral ceremony, further strengthening ties between the cadet branches. Overall, the princes did not rush to Louis XVIII’s feet. The King and his small court – including his wife, Marie-Joséphine de Savoie, and the duc and duchesse d’Angoulême – established themselves first at Gosfield Hall, then at Hartwell. Though welcome, the princes did not leave their comfortable residences in London or the countryside, limiting themselves to courteous visits.
- 35 A few months after the family reunion, the duc d’Orléans departed for Malta in a failed attempt to save Beaujolais from tuberculosis. He then travelled to Sicily, where, in November 1809, he married Maria Amalia of Bourbon-Naples, daughter of Ferdinand IV. Their union produced a male heir the following year. If this pained the Condé branch, heirless after Enghien’s death, for the main branch – marked by Louis XVIII’s and the Angoulêmes’ childless marriages, by Artois’s widowhood and by the bachelorhood of the duc de Berry – this bittersweet news raised direct, troubling questions about the succession. Orléans’s usefulness, however, was not limited to ensuring dynastic continuity. In a further attempt to control the princes, Louis XVIII saw in him a valuable tool for securing a French presence in the revolt of the Spanish Cortes, which in 1808 and 1810 rose up against Joseph Bonaparte. Orléans could have been a good alternative to Artois, whose departure would have raised questions: being nearly the same age as the King, ‘one would rightly ask why [he] does not speak for himself.’⁵² Louis XVIII had also considered the seventy-year-old Condé, who politely declined the offer, as well as his son, the duc de Bourbon, who, tired and disillusioned, likewise refused. Orléans, younger and eager to prove himself worthy of his ambition, took on the challenge. Following his new Sicilian brother-in-law, Prince Leopold, Louis-Philippe travelled first to Gibraltar, and later, on his own, to Cádiz. Both expeditions failed, and, with them, the ‘double restoration’ – of the Spanish and French branches of the Bourbons. Louis-Philippe stayed in Sicily, alongside his wife, who continued to give

birth to Orléans princes, while in Russia Napoleon's campaign began to pave the way for the Restoration.

The princes' champion (1814–30)

- 36 The return of the monarchy, which brought the princes once again to Paris and reinstated the main branch on the throne, marked a new chapter in dynastic relations. The princes of the blood had high expectations regarding the role they might play within the re-established monarchy after having shared the sufferings of emigration and exile. Yet they were critical of both Louis XVIII's politics and his unresponsiveness to their demands. Once again, it was Artois who, one step away from the throne, continued to pursue a policy of dialogue and inclusion with them. He claimed a prominent role from the outset. It was him, and not the King, who entered Paris with the allied forces the day after Napoleon Bonaparte signed his abdication at Fontainebleau on 11 April 1814. Artois and his son were granted entry to the State Council; he was steadfastly allied with the former émigré aristocracy, who carried political weight that resisted the Crown's attempts to present itself as conciliatory with the revolutionary legacy. While he seemed to have achieved the influence he sought, the princes of the blood were less satisfied. The Condés, worn-down representatives of the old counter-revolutionary heroism, were granted entry to Paris in the same carriage as Louis XVIII and the duchesse d'Angoulême. This sign of favour, however, was soon overshadowed by a new reality that did not fulfil their aspirations. Like the duc d'Orléans, they were denied entry to the State Council, and their efforts to regain full possession of their properties – the Chamber of Deputies still occupied the grounds of the Palais-Bourbon, the Condés' Parisian residence, and the Palais-Royal was also heavily divided – were not backed up by royal support. Nonetheless, the King demanded allegiance. Less than a year after the first Restoration, Napoleon's return forced Louis XVIII to mobilize the princes – except Condé, who was too old – sending them to various regions to inspire loyalty to the Bourbons in the army. Artois and his sons departed, as did the duc d'Orléans and duc de Bourbon – though with different statuses. Bourbon, whose popularity Louis XVIII did not fear, was sent to Brittany alone, while Orléans, whose patriotic past was not forgotten, was ordered to join Artois in Lyon. Napoleon's arrival in Paris shattered any prospects for resistance, and the princes left France as and when they could.
- 37 Neither Bourbon nor Orléans hid, publicly or privately, their dissatisfaction with how the King had managed the crisis and the conditions of the first Restoration. From Santander, where Bourbon sought passage to England, he wrote to his father: 'I was expecting misfortunes, betrayals... I have never trusted this new order of things.'⁵³ He returned to London and refused to go back to Paris after the second Restoration. Always a supporter, like Artois, of foreign intervention in France, he was outraged not by the occupation, but by the concessions made by Louis XVIII that compromised the return to the Old Regime: 'Will they return our properties?' he asked impatiently. 'Will one be able to be boldly an honest man? That, however, is what we need in order to hope for permanent tranquillity.'⁵⁴ He also refused the Holy Spirit insignia sent to him in London, and bitterly compared the attentions the main branch showed towards the old Condé, who was in exile in Brussels, to the neglect of the first Restoration – as if the main branch had shown gratitude during times of trouble, only to forget it once

fortune was restored.⁵⁵ But, politically speaking, Bourbon trusted Artois to promote their shared vision of the Restoration. At the Tuileries, the King's brother energetically took advantage of the White Terror to stoke reactionary feelings against the government.

- 38 The duc d'Orléans was a different matter. Also back in London, he loudly denounced, through the publication of a diary and correspondence, what he painted as his efforts to prevent Napoleon's return and the deafness of Louis XVIII to his advice. Less explicit than Condé's manifestos against Louis XVI's actions, Orléans's manoeuvre fitted into the same leitmotif: to flaunt the loyalty and righteousness of the princely initiative and punish the indifferent sovereign by exposing the troubles into which his distrust had plunged him. In its political substance, Orléans's opposition to the King was opposite to Bourbon's. Confident in the consistency of his past as a patriot, he candidly reproached Louis XVIII for relying too heavily on foreign armies and did not hesitate to use the past counter-revolutionary actions of his cousins as a negative example: 'We must not [...] fall again, in 1815, into the same illusions that were so disastrous for us in 1791 and 1792.'⁵⁶ But, like Bourbon, he – more directly – reproached the King for refusing to grant the princes of the blood a status that they deemed appropriate, finally bringing them in line with the rest of the royal family. He wrote in a letter of 17 May 1815:

It was not difficult for me to realize, from the moment of my return to France, that it was not in Your Majesty's intentions to admit me to your intimate confidence, I could almost say to your court, where the perpetual distinctions between the princes of your family and those of your house constantly created labels which, by almost reducing the princes of your blood to the level of private individuals, separated them from your family in the eyes of the public, and necessarily placed them [...] in a position of inferiority.⁵⁷

- 39 Artois agreed with him. During Louis XVIII's exile in Ghent, Artois proposed that Orléans be granted the title of Royal Highness – which was denied.⁵⁸ When Orléans and Bourbon decided to return to France, the conduct of Louis XVIII towards them did not change. The funeral of the prince de Condé, who died in May 1818, was a blow. While the King allowed the hero of the Counter-Revolution to be buried at Saint-Denis, the necropolis of the kings of France, he specified that this honour was granted to him not as a prince, but just 'as a notable figure'.⁵⁹ The princes of the blood were invited to attend the funeral, but separated from the royal family, which led the wife, mother and sister of the duc d'Orléans to refuse to attend. This humiliation was overcome only through personal devotion. The duc and duchesse de Bourbon complied, and Orléans also did so 'out of respect for the memory of the prince de Condé and out of affection for the duc de Bourbon, to whom he yielded precedence on this occasion'.⁶⁰ Artois further criticized the distinction between two classes, which was also evident during the visit of Tsar Alexander I and the king of Prussia in October of the same year and in September 1819, when the firstborn child of the duc and duchesse de Berry was christened.⁶¹ At the moment of signing the certificate, Louis XVIII prevented the *grand aumônier* of France from handing the pen to the Orléans, forcing them to wait until a lower-ranking prelate did so. This situation repeated itself in May 1821, when the duc de Bordeaux, the long-awaited heir to the main branch and posthumous son of the duc de Berry, who was assassinated in February 1820, was born. The duc d'Orléans and duc de Bourbon sent a memorandum to the King, protesting their condition and, again, demanding equal treatment:

We place great importance, Sire, [...] on a perfect union between all the members and branches of your house or family, as [...] the difference that has been sought to

establish between these two words seems to us as unintelligible as it is unjust, and we believe it to be dangerous for the State both in its principles and in its consequences.⁶²

- 40 The motion was supported by a historical reflection. Louis XVIII's error, according to Orléans and Bourbon, lay in his pretended adherence to the views of Louis XIV, whose desire to elevate his own (legitimized) children above the princes of the blood had, after all, been contradicted by an act of the Paris Parlement at the dawn of the Regency. There was also a bitter, though implicit, note of comparison with the times of exile:

It is in France (and Your Majesty will no doubt not be surprised that this is even more sensitive to us) that there is an ongoing effort, at every opportunity, to present us to the Nation as belonging to a class inferior to that of our elders.⁶³

- 41 The reference to the difference between the treatment received in France and that received abroad did not resonate with Louis XVIII. After all, the former comte de Provence was never close to the princes of the blood. He did not share the enthusiasm of the early emigration with the Condés, nor the years of British appeasement with Orléans and his brothers. In an attempt to solemnize a restored monarchy, and perhaps to highlight the difference with the part of the family that had always remained by his side – namely, the duc and duchesse d'Angoulême – Louis XVIII ultimately failed to gather all the branches around him. This setback is all the more evident when contrasted with the determination of his successor to act differently.

- 42 While Louis XVIII's body was still warm, Artois, now Charles X, took matters into his own hands. He ordered that the aspergillum used to sprinkle water on him be brought to the princes of the blood, just as it had been for the Angoulêmes and the duchesse de Berry. Only the order of succession was observed. On 20 September 1824, a terse but unquestionable ordinance granted Orléans and Bourbon the title of Royal Highness, an act that recognized the shared royalty among the branches of the house of France and put an end to decades of protest. The next day, a postscript clarified that the titles were not nominal but extended to all the Orléans sons and daughters and to his sister, establishing a new practice. Since the duc de Bourbon was the last of his branch, it was unnecessary to include the Condé family in this clarification. The princes also benefited from the politics of the reign particularly through the so-called 'billion to the émigrés' law, by which in 1825 the government committed to compensating those who had lost property sold as national assets during the Revolution.

- 43 Under Charles X, the princes of the blood enjoyed a level of intimacy with the royal family that was rare in the history of France.⁶⁴ The new King remained as close to them as he had been before his ascension. The proximity between the duchesse d'Angoulême, now the Dauphine, and her cousin, the duchesse d'Orléans – who was also the paternal aunt of the duchesse de Berry – also contributed to family cohesion marked by visits that went beyond what was imposed by mere courtesy. This union was also sought in a more tangible way. The duc de Bourbon became the godfather of the duc d'Aumale (born in 1822), the fourth son of the duc d'Orléans, which played to his advantage when he was selected as the heir to the Condé fortune. This occurred at the end of 1829, after a long deliberation due to the delicacy of appointing a successor to the duc d'Enghien and the clumsy interference of Bourbon's mistress, the baronesse de Fauchères – yet it met with the clear approval of the King and the entire main branch.⁶⁵ The dynasty also presented a united front in public: at the coronation of Charles X in May 1825, but also, and perhaps most notably, just before the July Revolution. In May 1830, the visit of the Neapolitan royals – among them Francis I, brother of the duchesse d'Orléans, and

father of the duchesse de Berry – provided the perfect opportunity to highlight the difference compared to the visit of the allies in 1818: the attendance of the princes of the blood was prominent, and, on 31 May, Charles X honoured the duc d'Orléans's fête at the Palais-Royal with his presence.

- 44 However, the favour that the princes of the blood enjoyed was not political. Charles X's ear remained exclusively attuned to the ultra-conservative party. The liberal views of Orléans failed to influence the King, whose reactionary turn, following the elections, led, on 25 July 1830, to the signing of the fateful July Ordinances, resulting in the suppression of freedom of the press, the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the amendment of electoral law in favour of the landed aristocracy.
- 45 The reaction turned into chaos, and chaos into revolution. In a whirlwind of weeks, the temptation of the princes of the blood to play a decisive role by exploiting the weakness of the sovereign took on a new dimension. Charles X fled to Saint-Cloud, then to Rambouillet, where he signed his abdication and forced the Dauphin to do the same – a senseless move intended to have the eight-year-old duc de Bordeaux proclaimed king. The duc d'Orléans then stepped out of the shadows to reap the fruits of the disaster and prevent the proclamation of the Republic. The human affinity he had with Charles X did not imply loyalty to a principle – the reactionary one – in which he had never believed and that had become obsolete. Once it became clear that establishing the duc de Bordeaux was impossible due to the main branch's unpopularity and his mother's and grandfather's refusal to separate from him, the duc d'Orléans accepted the lieutenancy of the kingdom from the chambers and finally, on 9 August, the crown as king of the French. It was under his newly established reign that, on 27 August, the duc de Bourbon was found dead, mysteriously hanged from a window in the castle of Saint-Leu – the victim either of self-inflicted fatal indecision or perhaps of a sexual practice a little too extreme for a seventy-year-old man. In the previous days, he had congratulated Louis-Philippe on his ascension to the throne, while perhaps contemplating following Charles X into exile.
- 46 With the death of the last of the Condés, the only remaining princes in France were now designated as *princes d'Orléans*, with no distinction except for the eldest, who bore the title of *prince royal*. The princes of the blood, as such, had ceased to exist – their assimilation into the Crown ultimately imposed by circumstance. Yet this historical outcome was not merely the result of external necessity: it also intersected with the long-term effects of Artois's own dynastic policy, defined by his consistent efforts at rapprochement with the princes of the blood. Grounded in shared lineage and succession rights, and capable of transcending temporary political divisions, this alliance evolved over decades: it began as a form of proximity among *cadets*, developed into a joint stance of opposition to the King, and survived through Artois's transformation from younger son to heir, and ultimately to king himself.
- 47 In the first part of his life, as a prince among princes, Artois cultivated a sense of affinity with the junior branches that was unusual for a *fil de France*. Shared experiences, frustrations and matrimonial perspectives reinforced this connection and shaped his early conciliatory approach towards the other princes, including Orléans, during the first years of the Revolution. When the Revolution erupted, paths diverged. The Condés became Artois's chosen companions in emigration, strengthening both the military and the dynastic dimension of counter-revolutionary activity abroad, in contrast to Louis XVI's more conciliatory policy towards the revolutionary

government. In this respect, Artois enjoyed an advantage over his brother Louis XVIII, who remained largely excluded from the princes' personal and political alliance, as his connection with them had not developed before the Revolution and had been weakened by long periods of separation.

- 48 If the Orléans branch temporarily escaped Artois's influence due to its adherence to the Revolution, such alienation proved short-lived. Once they were reunited in British exile, Artois extended to them the same inclusive and familiar politics he had pursued with the Condés. Although he failed to convert the young Louis-Philippe to his conservative vision of monarchy, he nonetheless sought to integrate these divergent perspectives into a shared dynastic purpose and narrative, positioning himself as the de facto head of the family in Britain. The fruits of this dynastic policy became visible during the Restoration. The princes of the blood invoked the recognition they had enjoyed under Artois during exile, and repeatedly protested against Louis XVIII's policy of distancing the royal family from the junior branches. Artois, who did not share this exclusionary view, would ultimately bring his dynastic project to completion once he ascended the throne, honouring the princes of the blood explicitly and inaugurating an unprecedented phase of harmony among the branches of the house of France. Although he failed to integrate the liberal tendencies of the future Louis-Philippe – a gesture that might have altered the fate of his reign – Artois's posture towards his cousins reflects the coherence of a dynastic vision: that the integration of the princes into the royal framework was to be seen not as a liability, but as a strategic asset to the monarchy – and to those who aspired to it.

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NOTES

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3. RANCE, 2006.
4. ANTONETTI, 1994; MARGADANT, 2007; PRICE, 2009; BROWN, 2012; FRANCONIE, 2017, 2021.
5. MANSEL, 1981.
6. MORMILE, 2022, 2025.
7. BOURBON et al., 1771, pp. 8-9, 11: 'un tribunal fixe, composé de Membres inamovibles, qui ne puisse être destitué que dans les cas prévus, & dans les formes prescrites par les Loix du Royaume', 'Membres nés', 'les droits essentiels de toute la Nation'.
8. Ibid., p. 6: 'en lui ouvrant les yeux sur le danger des conseils qui lui sont donné'.
9. JOUANNA et al., 1998, p. 1015; JOUANNA, 2007, p. 276.

10. Turin, Archivio di Stato, Lettere ministri Francia, box 216, no. 22, comte de Viry, report from 25 July 1774.
11. MARIE-THÉRÈSE, MARIE ANTOINETTE and MERCY-ARGENTEAU, 1874, p. 307, Marie Antoinette to Maria Theresa of Austria, 17 March 1775.
12. BESEVAL, 1821, vol. 2, pp. 63–71; CROÏ, 1907, pp. 68–71.
13. BACHAUMONT, MOUFLE D'ANGERVILLE and PIDANSAT DE MAIROBERT, 1780–9, vol. 8, p. 155, 6 August 1775; MERRICK, 1998; FERRET, 2013.
14. Collections of the Château de Versailles, V.2015.30 (<https://collections.chateauversailles.fr?queryid=5231f25a-0522-4a27-b248-fbd42a1568dc>).
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16. Chantilly, Archives de la Maison Condé (thereafter AMC), H. 570; L. 440
17. LOUIS-PHILIPPE I^{er}, 1973–4, vol. 1, pp. 24–25: 'fardeau', 'des républicains honnêtes et vertueux'.
18. BACHAUMONT, MOUFLE D'ANGERVILLE and PIDANSAT DE MAIROBERT, 1780–9, vol. 20, pp. 43–44, 21 January 1782, and *Ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 103, 27 October 1781: 'dans ces cérémonies, ils prétendent devoir manger avec la famille royale, et que celle-ci n'admet que les princes qui la composent'.
19. Son of the comte de Toulouse. See Pierre Le Bot's article in this issue: <https://journals.openedition.org/crcv/45338>.
20. LOUIS-PHILIPPE I^{er}, 1973–4, vol. 1, p. 37.
21. CONDÉ and SEVELINGES, 1820, vol. 2, p. 171: 'les droits fondamentaux du royaume'; PANNEKOUCKE, 2010, p. 219.
22. BROWNING, 1909–10, vol. 2, p. 128, Dorset to Carmarthen, 18 December 1788.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–4, Dorset to Carmarthen, 19 March 1789.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 163, Dorset to Carmarthen, 26 February 1789.
25. Quoted in KELLY, 1979, p. 679: 'de vivre où l'on veut; celle d'aller, de venir, de demeurer où il plaît'.
26. JULIA, 2019, p. 106.
27. CONDÉ and SEVELINGES, 1820, vol. 2, p. 179: 'il est du devoir des princes et de la grandeur des souverains de sauver le Roi de France, même malgré lui'; see PRICE, 2002, pp. 94–5.
28. ARTOIS and VAUDREUIL, 1889, vol. 1, pp. 316–17, the comte de Vaudreuil to the comte d'Artois, 6 October 1790: 'pour la gloire ou la mort'.
29. MARIE ANTOINETTE, 1895–6, vol. 2, pp. 225–6; BOMBELLES, 1977–2013, vol. 3, p. 172.
30. CAMPAN, 1823, vol. 2, p. 109. See BOMBELLES, 1977–2013, vol. 3, p. 144; MARIE ANTOINETTE, 1895–6, vol. 2, p. 307.
31. ARTOIS and VAUDREUIL, 1889, vol. 1, pp. 85–6, Vaudreuil to Artois: 'faiblesse'.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 224, Vaudreuil to Artois, 3 July 1790: 'dirige tout et donne le mouvement à tout'.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 232, Vaudreuil to Artois, 12 July 1791.
34. ORLÉANS, 1791, p. 26: 'J'aime à croire que se rapprochant d'un Roi qu'il chérit & dont il est si tendrement aimé, se rapprochent d'un peuple à l'affection duquel tant de qualités aimables lui donnent de si justes droits, ce Prince reviendra jouir de la partie la plus précieuse de son héritage'.
35. ARTOIS et. al., 1791, pp. 18–19: 'Comment pourriez-vous, Sire, donner une approbation sincère & valide à la prétendue Constitution qui a produit tant de maux? Dépositaire usufruitier du Trône que vous avez hérité de vos aïeux, vous ne pouvez ni aliéner les droits primordiaux, ni détruire la base constitutive sur laquelle il est assis'. See BOUTRY, 2003, p. 242; MARTIN, 1998, pp. 117–18.
36. ARTOIS et. al., 1791, p. 24: 'l'avisement du Trône et le renversement de la monarchie'.
37. JOMINI, 1820, p. 365: 'une vengeance exemplaire et à jamais mémorable'.
38. ARTOIS and VAUDREUIL, 1889, vol. 2, p. 119 and *passim*, Artois to Vaudreuil, 9 January 1793.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 137 n. 2 and 146, Artois to Vaudreuil, 17 July 1793.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 154, Artois to Vaudreuil: 'Tu sais les torts que je pouvais avoir à reprocher à cette trop malheureuse femme; mais dans ce moment-ci j'ai tout oublié et mon cœur a plus souffert que je ne puis te l'exprimer'.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 124, Artois to Vaudreuil, 25 March 1793: 'indépendant de nous'.
42. Chantilly, AMC, 1 ZR 21, 'Journal du duc de Bourbon', 1 February 1793, fol. 128: 'l'horrible nouvelle de l'exécution de notre malheureux roi [...] selon l'usage antique et solennel, droit qui est annexé à la charge de grand maître'.
43. SUTHERLAND, 1973, pp. 54–5; HUTT, 1983, p. 261 and passim; MORMILE, 2021, pp. 84–6.
44. MOUSSET, 1924, p. 290, Fernan Nuñez to the count of Floridablanca, 9 July 1791.
45. MALLET DU PAN, 1851, vol. 2, p. 223: 'toutes les opinions se ramifient à l'infini, mais le premier qui sera en état de se faire roi [...] les absorbera toutes'.
46. MORMILE, 2024, pp. 123–6.
47. LOUIS-PHILIPPE I^{er}, 1973–4, vol. 2, p. 445: 'servi tous les deux, sous le drapeau de la Révolution, et dans les armées de la République'.
48. Paris, Archives Nationales (thereafter AN), 300/AP(III)/15, no. 232, 'Publication faite par Monsieur, frère du roi de France': 'Nous princes soussignées, frères, neveux et cousins de Sa Majesté Louis XVIII, roi de France et de Navarre, pénétrés des mêmes sentiments dont notre Souverains Seigneur et Roi se montre si dignement animé dans sa réponse à la proposition que lui a été faite de renoncer au trône de France, et d'exiger de tous les princes de Sa Maison, une renonciations à leurs droits imprescriptibles de succession à ce même trône, déclarons que notre attachement à nos devoirs et notre honneur ne pouvant jamais nous permettre de transiger sur nos droits'.
49. BOUVENS, 1804, p. 13: 'La Postérité parlera de ces trois Princes, qui, les armes à la main, ont fixés les regards de l'Europe, en défendant la plus ancienne Monarchie du monde'.
50. AMC, Série Z, V. CXXVIII, p. 102, the duc d'Orléans to an unknown recipient, 13 April 1804: 'ce douloureux événement aurait au moins l'avantage de rapprocher toutes nos branches'.
51. AMC, Série Z, Supplément CXXVIII, pp. 43–6, 'Mémoire sur la situation de Louis XVIII', 26 February 1806: 'l'éclat de son rang'; 'c'est l'abandon que le malheureux Louis 16 en a fait, qui a porté par degrés le bonnet rouge sur cette tête royale, dont la couronne avait déjà disparu. Point d'obéissance, sans respect; point de respect, si l'homme efface toujours le Roi, aux yeux du peuple.' MANSEL, 2013, pp. 124–5; WARESQUIEL, 2015, p. 38.
52. AN, 34AP/6, no. 19, Louis XVIII to Condé, 18 October 1808; See MANSEL, 2013, p. 170: 'on me demanderait avec raison pourquoi [il] ne parle pas lui-même'.
53. AN, 34/AP/4, no. 32, The duc de Bourbon to the prince de Condé, 8 April 1815: 'je m'attendais bien à des malheurs, des trahisons [...] je n'ai jamais eu de confiance à tout ce nouvel ordre de choses'.
54. AN, 34/AP/4, no. 34, The duc de Bourbon to the chevalier de Contye, 2 October 1815: 'nous rendra-t-on nos propriétés, rétablira-t-on la Religion sur le pied où elle doit être, pourra-t-on être hardiment honnête homme? Voilà cependant ce qu'il nous faut pour espérer une tranquillité permanente'.
55. AN, 34/AP/4, no. 36, The duc de Bourbon to the baron Jacques, 19 October 1815; *ibid.*, no. 33, the duc de Bourbon to the prince de Condé, 1 May 1815.
56. LOUIS-PHILIPPE I^{er}, 1849, vol. 2, p. 11, the duc d'Orléans to Louis XVIII, 25 April 1815: 'il ne faut pas [...] retomber en 1815 dans les mêmes illusions qui nous ont été si funestes en 1791 et 1792'.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 41, the duc d'Orléans to Louis XVIII, 17 May 1815: 'Il ne m'a pas été difficile de m'apercevoir, dès le moment de mon retour en France, qu'il n'entraît pas dans les vues de Votre Majesté de m'admettre à sa confiance intime, je pourrais Presque dire à sa cour, où les distinctions perpétuelles entre les princes de sa famille et ceux de sa maison produisaient sans cesse des étiquettes qui, en ravalant les princes de votre sang presque au niveau des particuliers,

les séparaient de votre famille aux yeux du public et les plaçait nécessairement [...] dans une position d'infériorité'. Also see MARGADANT, 2007.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–3, the comte de Lally-Tolendal to Orléans, 16 May 1815.

59. Quoted in MORMILE, 2025, p. 244: 'Journal de Marie-Amélie, 26 May 1818': 'comme personnage de marque'.

60. *Ibid.*: 'pour la mémoire du Prince de Condé et par affection pour le Duc de Bourbon, auquel il a cédé le pas en cette circonstance'.

61. ANTONETTI, 1994, pp. 491–2; PRICE, 2009, p. 120.

62. AMC, Série Z, Supplément CXXVIII, 'Mémoire adressé à Louis XVIII par les princes des branches cadettes', fols 118–24: 'Nous mettons surtout un grand prix, Sire, [...] une union parfaite entre tous les Membres, et toutes les branches de Votre Maison ou de votre famille, car [...] la différence qu'on a cherché à établir entre ces deux mots, nous paraît aussi inintelligible qu'injuste, et nous la croyons dangereuse pour l'État dans son principe et dans ses conséquences'. See TRÉTOU, 2009, pp. 121–2.

63. *Ibid.*: 'c'est en France (et Votre Majesté ne sera sans doute pas étonnée que cela ne nous soit encore plus sensible), qu'on s'efforce dans toutes les occasions, de nous montrer à la Nation comme étant d'une classe inférieure à celle de nos aînés'.

64. TRÉTOU, 2009, p. 123.

65. MORMILE, 2025, pp. 261–4.

ABSTRACTS

This article examines the role of the comte d'Artois, later Charles X, as a unifying figure between the branches of the Bourbon family during the Revolution, exile and Restoration. It aims to demonstrate that, from his youth, Artois shared a desire with the princes of the blood to assert a degree of autonomy from the Crown and actively sought their alliance to support these ambitions and foster dynastic cooperation. Upon becoming heir to Louis XVIII, and despite the temporary alienation of the Orléans branch, he worked to maintain this mediating role, striving to integrate – and oversee – the junior princes in a relationship that strengthened family cohesion while aligning their interests with those of the monarchy. Drawing on detailed analysis of family correspondence and private writings, this study shows how Artois navigated conflicts, ambitions and cooperation, revealing the complexity of dynastic relations and the strategic value of incorporating the princes of the blood into the royal framework – a project he ultimately realized in 1824 by granting them the title of Royal Highness, once he became Charles X.

Cet article examine le rôle du comte d'Artois, futur Charles X, en tant que trait d'union entre les branches de la maison de Bourbon pendant la Révolution, l'exil et la Restauration. Il vise à démontrer que, dès sa jeunesse, Artois partageait avec les princes du sang la volonté d'affirmer une certaine autonomie vis-à-vis de la Couronne et cherchait activement leur alliance pour soutenir ses ambitions et favoriser la coopération dynastique. Devenu héritier de Louis XVIII et malgré la temporaire aliénation de la branche d'Orléans, il s'efforça de conserver ce rôle de médiateur en intégrant – et en surveillant – les princes cadets dans une relation qui renforçait la cohésion familiale tout en alignant leurs intérêts sur ceux de la monarchie. S'appuyant sur une analyse détaillée de la correspondance familiale et des écrits privés, cette contribution montre comment Artois a su naviguer entre conflits, ambitions et coopérations. Elle révèle ainsi la

complexité des rapports dynastiques et la valeur stratégique de l'intégration des princes du sang dans le cadre royal, ce qu'il concrétisera en 1824, une fois devenu Charles X, en les honorant du titre d'« altesse royale ».

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