

François Michel Le Tellier

Secretary of State of War

François Michel Le Tellier, known as Louvois, was the son of one of the wealthiest and most powerful French officials - the secretary of war. His father, Michel, created the royal army which was critical for Louis to impose his absolute rule. In 1666 François joined his father as war minister, working on increasing the army's numbers after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. As father and son, they increased the army to 340,000 soldiers. His father is a powerful official who has the ear of the king and controls many men, and is very devoted to educating and disciplining Louvois.

Hugues de Lionne

Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs

Hugues de Lionne was the French secretary of state for foreign affairs from 1663 to 1671, helping facilitate the wars against the Spanish, which subsequently lead to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. He has close connections to Louis XIV's mother as her former secretary, appointed in 1646. He also is in Louis's exclusive inner council (Conseil d'en Haut) and a trusted minister. He arranged the marriage between Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse, so he was in King Phillip IV of Spain's good graces. After the King's death in 1663, de Lionne easily controlled the sickly young king, Charles II of Spain.

Henri de Guenegaud

Secretary of State for the Royal Household

Henri de Guenegaud was a French scholar and minister. He held many posts, including the Treasurer of Savings, succeeding his father who died, and Secretary of State for the royal household, Paris, and the Navy. During the Fronde, he supported Anne d'Autriche, Louis XIV's mother, who deeply values his loyalty and appointed him the keeper of the seals in 1656. He and his wife held a famous salon at their home, launching the careers of many artists, including Jean Racine, and bringing them many friends, including Simon Arnauld. In 1661, the treasury is verging on bankruptcy because of a vast trade deficit with the Dutch Republic.

Nicolas Fouquet

First Controller-General of Finances

Nicolas Fouquet, born 1615 in Paris, was born into a wealthy and well-connected family. His father was a shipowner and wealthy administrator. Fouquet has always stood by the royal regime: during the civil wars of 1648-53, called the Turmoil of the Fronde, he supported the royal's, Cardinal Mazarin. He and Mazarin became allies. Fouquet purchased the seat of procurer general (1650), and in 1653, he was appointed superintendent des finances. He used this position as superintendent to aid Mazarin, and yet he made some rather suspicious financial moves that let him become richer.

Jean-Baptiste Colbert

Second Controller-General of Finances

Jean-Baptiste Colbert was born into a trading family: his father was a cloth merchant. Colbert, however, had political aspirations. He became a close ally and student of Mazarin while Mazarin was taking refuge outside of Paris. Not only that, he was always sympathetic towards financial and fiscal reformations, targeting royal embezzlers and those who sought to evade taxation. In his role as the controller general of finances, he extended his reach to all financial branches of the royal court, serving as the unifying voice of many disparate economic interests. All in all, under Louis XIV, Colbert aided the modernization of Paris via developing trade, sciences, and the merchant Navy—he believed in the power of the corporation system and sought firmly to improve France’s productive capacities.

Louis II de Bourbon

Military General

A military fortress genius, all of Louis II de Bourbon's notions of fortress making were upheld until the end of Napoléon’s reign. Louis II de Bourbon was the fourth prince of the Condé who made up the heads of the House of Bourbon. He became well-educated at the Royal Academy in Paris. In 1643 He won his first battle against the Spaniards in Rocroi as the head of the royal army. He went on to have many military successes, including the campaign in Flanders (1646). The same year as his battles in Flanders, the prince’s father died, leaving him rich and powerful. During the Fronde, he stood by the government and led the siege of Paris. However, he soon turned and found an alliance with Spain to protect his personal interests. Upon defeat, the ever-clever Prince saved himself by offering his expertise up to the new Sun King, and by 1660 he was in the good graces of Louis XIV—given military power and making friends in the royal courts.

Henri de la Tour D’auvergne, Viscount of Turenne

Marshal General of France

Better known as simply Turenne, he was a brilliant French general, one of the few to have been promoted to Marshal General of France. As a child, he was already interested in war—looking up to the likes of Alexander the Great and Caesar. However, a speech impediment and physical weakness hampered him in his youth. After his father’s death, he applied himself to exercise and study. This soon proved fruitful, and by the age of 15 he’d taken on the role of a Captain in Fredrick Henry of Nassau’s army—the beginning of what would be an illustrious military career. Under Louis XIV, his strategic cunning and triumph over the Spanish army at Arras in 1654 and Dunkirk in 1658 led the king to appoint him the Marshal General of France, giving him great military influence and a close connection with the domestic and foreign policy aims of Louis himself.

Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban

Military Advisor and Engineer

Widely considered the greatest engineer of his time, Vauban was born to a family of minor nobility, although legal battles over familial property would soon leave his family's finances in ruin. Undeterred, Vauban soon entered the Carmelite college in Semur-enAuxois, where he learned mathematics, science, and geometry —the beginning of an education which would see him take on the art of design and engineering. During the Fronde, Vauban came to side against Louis XIV's mother and the Cardinal, leading to his exile in Spain. By 1653, after he was captured by a Royalist Patrol, he once again switched allegiances. His ingenious ability to build fortifications and his aptitude for military engineering made him an indispensable asset, and he was appointed Royal Engineer in 1655. Under Louis XIV, Vauban was placed in charge of various key projects to protect French territory and help them in conquest.

Anne of Austria

The Queen Mother of Louis XIV

Betrothed to King Louis XIII of France at the age of eleven, Anne of Austria renounced all succession rights she had for herself and her descendants to the Spanish Throne. Despite this, her relationship with Louis XIII was fractious. Louis XIII often ignored her, with his mother Marie de Medici, conducting herself as if she was the queen of France while Anne was left to her entourage of Spanish ladies-in-waiting, and lived according to Spanish etiquette. After Louis XIII's death in 1643, Anne assumed the duties of regent, and revoked the will of Louis XII, nullifying his attempts to keep her power in check. She worked with Cardinal Maxarin, and ruled France with an iron fist, overcoming aristocratic revolt and other internal unrest. Even after Louis XIV came of age, she held much influence over the court and over his opinion. She also was a liaison for painters and artists who wanted more independence from guilds and professional organizations.

Maria Theresa

Wife of Louis XIV

Married to King Louis XIV, Maria Theresa of Spain was a princess of Spain and Portugal. She was married in order to establish a union between the two royal families and secure peace between the nations. She arrived in Paris on August 1660, and was fortunate to befriend her mother-in-law. She spent most of her free time playing cards and gambling, holding little interest in politics and literature. She was pregnant at the beginning of 1661 and was expected to deliver by the end of the year.

Philippe I, the Duke of Orleans

Brother to Louis XIV

Philippe I is Louis XIV's younger brother and the father of Marie Louise d'Orleans. Originally the Duke of Anjou, he became the duke of Orleans after his uncle passed in 1660. In 1661, he also became the duke of Valois and Chartres, putting him on equal standing with the Parlement. He founded the House of Orleans as a branch of the House of Bourbon, and built its wealth through careful personal administration, despite having no meaningful financial freedom from the Crown. Thus, Philippe has a great amount of land and power, but his financial situation often puts him in the pocket of his older brother.

Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon

Mistress to Louis XIV

Madame de Maintenon was the King's mistress as well as one of his closest advisors. She grew up in a Catholic convent, where she had a limited education and limited freedom. She married an accomplished poet who introduced her to the higher echelons of Parisian society. After her husband's death, she worked her way up and eventually became the royal governess, a position from which she caught the attention of Louis XIV. She had a strong influence over Louis XIV, and tended to use her power to patronize those she cared about, such as her former charges (as royal governess) and family members.

Jacques-Benigne Bossuet

Court Bishop and Tutor of the Dauphin

Born in Dijon, he came from a family of lawyers with a storied tradition. He was ordained a priest in 1652 and became the Archdeacon of Sarrebourg. In 1657 he received the title of Councelor and Preacher to the King after preaching to Anne of Austria. Later in the year, he left the city to move to Paris and focus on preaching. By 1660, he had developed the reputation of a great preacher and was regularly preaching for the court in the Royal Chappel. One of his greatest objectives was the reconciliation of the Protestants with the Catholic Church.

Simon Arnauld, Marquis de Pomponne

Diplomat and Ambassador

Simon Arnauld de Pomponne is a French diplomat and minister. He was born the son of a governor, and his education exposed him to many important writers. He also became friends with many important members of Louis XIV's court: Nicolas Fouquet, Michel Le Tellier, and Hugues de Lionne. These relationships helped him to secure the ambassadorship to Sweden, where his goal was to stop Sweden from entering the Triple Alliance. Thus, Pomponne has a lot of connections both in France and Sweden.

Louis Le Vau

Royal Architect

Born as Louis Le Veau, Le Vau is an architect who began his career by designing hotels and townhouses. However, by the time Louis XIV sat on the throne, Le Vau had long become renowned for his architectural genius. In 1654, he was officially named the first architect to the king, undertaking a series of renovations of different Chateaux. By the 1660s, he was the head of many royal building projects, from the Tuileries Palace to the Louvre. Trusted by the art loving Louis XIV, Le Vau commandeered royal finances, money and connections for the sake of his architectural projects. He knows the ins and outs of the royal residences, especially once Louis XIV began to hold court in Versailles. He has the king's ear and favour—for now as Louis leaves him in charge of the grandest of royal architectural marvels.

Jean Racine

Writer and Court Historian

A writer born into a family of administrators, Racine decided to forge his own path as a dramatist after studying classic literature at the convent of Port-Royal des Champs. Going against the Roman Catholic Reformist Education he received there, Racine dedicated himself to the mission of becoming the greatest literary figure of his time. In Paris, he began by pleasing important figures with his wit and writing, composing sonnets which praised Mazarin himself, and then later, turning to the broader theatrical arts. He soon earned the approval of the public with his masterful writing —mostly in tragedy—and later, caught the eye of King Louis through his grace and elegance. In court, he maintained popularity amongst the people as his plays circulated, while also entertaining the royals—including the King’s own family, seeing as he often wrote plays at their request. In addition, Racine took on the role of a royal historiographer, shaping how the world would come to see Louis XIV forever.

Pierre Corneille

Writer and Dramatist

Whereas Racine never managed to find favour amongst the clergy, Corneille established himself as one of France’s leading playwrights by earning Cardinal Richelieu’s patronage through his classical tragedies. He quarreled with the cardinal later, over *Le Cid*, a play about a Spanish military figure, which the clergy found immoral. Corneille competed with Molière and Racine for popularity in the French cultural consciousness, and despite walking away from theatre and writing multiple times, he still commandeered public attention. Compared to the other two, he also had more support of the ecclesiastical powers, as well as the favour of the king. Ultimately, Corneille seeks to establish himself and out compete his fellow writers, as well as to revolutionize the then strict classical dramatic rules.

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin

Dramatist

Better known as Molière to his compatriots, Poquelin was an playwright, actor, and poet who was born into a prosperous family and eventually found himself in the King’s favour. First patronized by Philippe I, Louis XIV’s brother, Molière soon was put in charge of writing, staging and performing for the aristocracy and the court as the official author of court entertainments. He was granted access to the Palais Royal, the Louvre, and Versailles, and was close enough to the king to have been anecdotally invited to a private supper, and Louis XIV even performed in one of his *comédie ballets*. With Royal backing, Poquelin often satirised court figures in his dramas, but the clergy bore the main brunt of his comedy —earning him much ire from the ecclesiastical powers.

Jean-Baptiste Lully

Dancer and Musician

Born Giovanni Battista Lulli, Lully’s skill in instruments —particularly the violin—as well as his graceful dancing quickly drew him aristocratic and royal favour. As a fourteen-year-old. He caught the attention of Roger de Lorraine, the *chevalier of Guise*, and entered his household service —nominally as a chamber boy, but in reality, he was given the space and teaching necessary to hone his musical talents. This allowed him to attract the attention of a young Louis XIV in 1653, eventually becoming the royal composer for instrumental music. Once Louis XIV took power for himself, Lully was named the superintendent of royal music and music master of the royal family. He had close contacts with the king, and was popular amongst the royals for his performances and his innovation in music. He

had control over most of the court musicians, and wanted to expand his own practice, with a close eye to the king's sympathies.

Marie Louise d'Orleans

Niece to Louis XIV

Born to Phillipe I, the Duke of Orleans, Marie Louise called Louix XIV her uncle. She was favoured by her father out of all his children for being charming, pretty and graceful, and as a Petite-Fille de France, she wielded her charm in the royal court to reach her own ends. The queen mother, Anne of Austria doted on her, leaving her a substantial fortune and often taking her side in court intrigue. Importantly, her position as the niece of Louis XIV made her uniquely posed to forge international relationships, and many suitors were arranged for her to strengthen the foreign policy of France. Although her heart was not in these relationships, it lent her sway and power in court and abroad.

Henriette-Marie

Sister of Louis XIII, Aunt to Louis XIV

Henrietta Maria was the sister of King Louis XIII, Louis XIV's father, and the wife of King Charles I of England. While married to King Charles I, despite her connection to France, Henrietta remained loyal to the English nation. Despite this loyalty toward England, due to her religion of Roman Catholicism, the majority of English citizens did not trust her. Eventually, the English civil war broke out, and Henrietta supported her husband by selling her jewelry and reaching out to the papacy in hope of gaining money. In May 1643 her title of the queen was taken away and in April 1644 she fled to safety with her youngest child Henrietta Anne Stuart. She then went to France and while there, in order to help send military aid to England, she built relationships with Cardinal Mazarin, foreign monarchs, aristocrats, and the pope. It's useful to note that she was known to be interested in the arts and particularly enjoyed plays and masques.

Henriette-Anne Stuart

Sister in Law to Louis XIV

Henrietta Anne Stuart was the youngest child of King Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France, the cousin of King Louis XIV, and the wife of Philippe I, Duke of Orleans. As a baby, she was born in England and cared for by Lady Dalkeith. In June 1646 Henrietta moved to France and added the name Anne in honor of her aunt, Queen Anne of Austria. During her marriage with the Duke of Orleans, she had intimate relationships with the King and with Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche. She was also known to be friends with Moliere, Racine, La Fontaine, and Bussy who were all active in the arts.

Andre Charles Boulle

Royal Cabinetmaker

Boulle studied monograms, bronze and mosaics, architecture, drawing, painting, and sculpture throughout his life, but became known as a famous cabinetmaker throughout Europe. Not only did his talent earn him the title of master cabinetmaker, but it also earned him the position as the royal cabinetmaker in Versailles where he was allowed to execute private commissions for royals and nonroyals alike. Two of his notable clients include King Philip V of Spain and the Duke of Bourbon.

Jean de la Fontaine

Poet

La Fontaine was a famous fabulist who was a close friend of Nicolas Fouquet, the superintendent of finances for Louis XIV. When Fouquet was arrested under the King's orders, La Fontaine remained loyal to Fouquet and continued to write elegies for support. At this time the King punished La Fontaine; however, La Fontaine managed to find favor in the Duchess of Bouillon and Marie Anne Mancini who helped him reduce his punishment. This favor helped Fontaine build friendships among the nobility, leading to Fontaine not only having influence among writers and the general public but also having a level of influence over nobility.

Marin Marais

Composer

Marin Marais was a viol player that studied composition with Jean-Baptiste Lully. He was acknowledged as a master of viol and worked as a court musician at the royal court of Versailles and played in the French royal orchestra. Most of his influence at this time was directed towards musicians since he also directed the orchestra of the royal academy of music and published viol music.

Charles le Brun

Painter

Charles Le Brun was a court painter for Louis XIV and was thought to be one of the greatest French artists of his time. At 11 years old Le Brun met Chancellor Seguier and began training in Simon Vouet's, first painter for King Louis XIII, studio. In 1648 he became a founding member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculptures and in 1664 Le Brun was promoted to the position of First Painter for King Louis XIV. These promotions and positions improved his reputation in the art across France and Europe as a whole. As an artist with a great reputation, he was able to have influence over artists, the general public, and the nobles.

Charles Perrault

Author

Charles Perrault basically created the fairytale genre, writing the pre-Grimm versions of Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty. He was born to a wealthy family and studied law. As a member of the Academie Francaise, Perrault has many contacts in the French writing world. As secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, Perrault worked under Jean Baptiste Colbert and was his administrative aide. In addition to his incredible writing skills, Perrault has many connections in the political and writing worlds. On council, he is close with Colbert and his brother, Claude Perrault.

Claude Perrault

Architect

Claude Perrault, brother of Charles Perrault, was a French architect. He also has experience as a physician, anatomist, and author. Thus, Perrault has many connections through the French Academy of Sciences. Despite Claude's lack of practical experience, Charles got him appointed to Petit Conseil with Louis Le Vau and Charles Le Brun, through which he designed the east facade of the Louvre. This brought him into Louis XIV's court, where he now completes various architecture projects and designs devices like a pendulum-controlled water clock.

Robert Nanteuil

Artist

A portrait artist, Robert Nanteuil served as an engraver, draughtsman, and pastellist in Louis XIV's court. His studies in these fields earned him many connections, such as Nicolas Regnesson, Philippe de Champaigne, Claude Mellan, Jean Morin, and Abraham Bosse. Nanteuil had many distinguished clients, such as Richelieu, the Duchesse de Nemours, and Queen Christina of Sweden. It was Nanteuil who painted Louis XIV's portrait.