

Maritime power and the power of money in Louis XIV's France

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Résumé ou extrait : Although Louis XIV's navy did not "win" in any recognisable sense during the wars of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was nevertheless one of the largest military institutions of the entire early modern world at a key moment in the evolution of the modern state and modern warfare. This book examines how Louis XIV's navy was financed, arguing that the way the state spends money, and the relative efficiency and accountability of that spending, is fundamental to understanding the effectiveness of a military system. It outlines how the French crown depended on fiscal intermediaries and private suppliers, explores how its failure to control the spending and activities of its contractors fundamentally limited France's strategic possibilities at sea, and discusses how these structural problems were progressively and disastrously exposed as the state's financial situation deteriorated. The book sets the activities of the French navy in the wider context of the wars of the period, showing that France necessarily had to give precedence to the funding of its army. Overall, the book highlights the limitations of the contractor state, demonstrating that early modern navies were both too complex and investment-heavy to be entirely outsourced.

Sujet - Nom commun : Histoire maritime -- France -- 17e siècle
Politique et gouvernement -- France -- 1643-1715