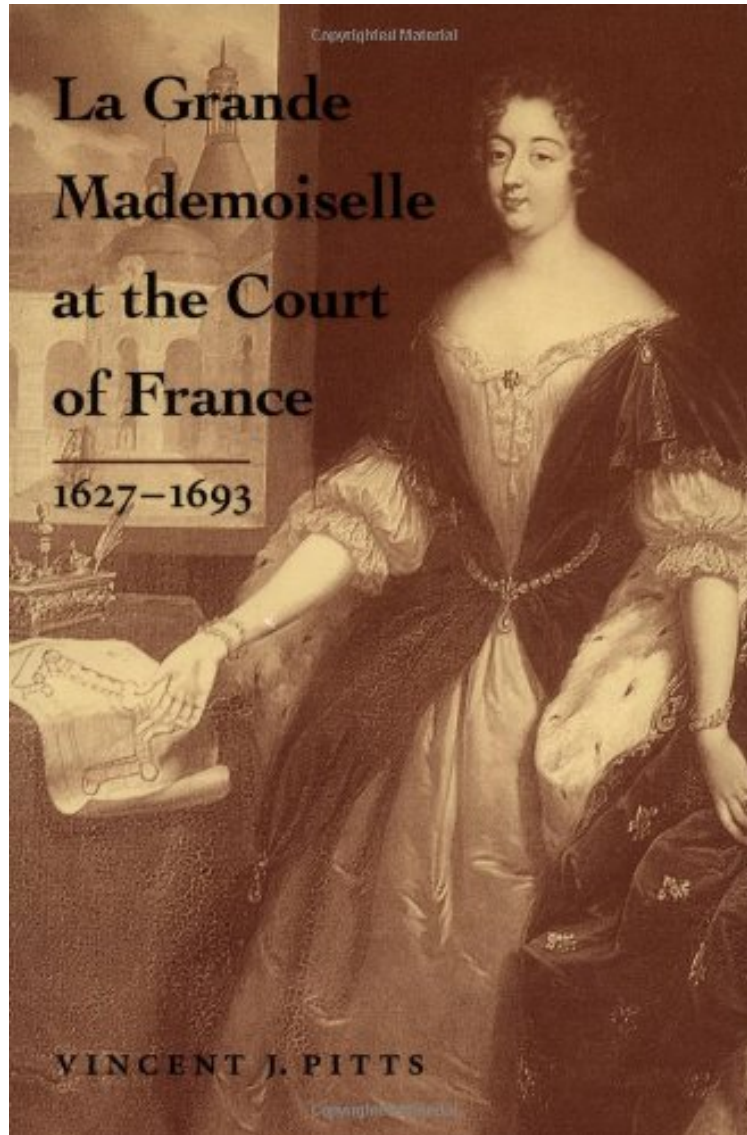


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La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France: 16271693

Vincent J. Pitts

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Vincent J. Pitts : La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France: 16271693 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France: 16271693:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Its a good book, enjoyed itBy David DohertyinterestingHelped bring the period of Louis XIII Louis XIV into view.I had check it out at the local librarylike it enough to buy it.13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. The Rebel PrincessBy K. MaxwellAnne-Marie-Louise d'Orleans, duchess de Montpensier, who was always called "La Grande Mademoiselle", has been a figure who has facinated French

historians for centuries - unfortunately, there have not been many books in English about her eventful life. Born in 1627, Mademoiselle was the first grandchild born in the royal family of France for several centuries. She was destined to be a matrimonial pawn for her family because of her closeness to the throne and the immense fortune she inherited from her mother. She was in her time, the richest woman in France and its greatest heiress. We have been fortunate that Mademoiselle thought to write her memoirs during her lifetime. These have been used as the basis for this book. However all her assertions and omissions have been cross-checked. The author presents a fairly straightforward accounting of the princess's life. From her early years and the inattention of her father, Gaston (to whom she owed her royal position) and her conflicts with the court, to her later disgrace and exile and grand love of the Sun King's courtier Lauzun. At the end of the book are three lengthy appendices (or essays more correctly) dealing with Mademoiselle's writings and her much-coveted fortune. The only complaint I have about this book is that despite lengthy sections dealing with Mademoiselle's writings we actually hear very little of her voice in it. We are given a fairly objective view of her life by the author, but it could possibly have been enhanced by at least one section which let Mademoiselle speak for herself. One earlier English work on Mademoiselle "La Grande Mademoiselle" by Francis Steegmuller, 1956 reproduces her written "self-portrait" and this book is worth looking up for that alone. Aside from the text it is nice to see such a well-bound and produced book as this with nice study covers and acid-free paper - designed to last the test of time. A timely review of this very active princess's life.

Anne-Marie-Louise d'Orléans, cousin to Louis XIV and known in her time and to posterity as "La Grande Mademoiselle" is still remembered in France today for her unconventional life and heroic deeds. A participant in the factional struggles known as the Fronde, which nearly consumed France during the minority of Louis XIV, Mademoiselle ultimately sided with a coalition of princes and great noblemen who sought to depose the king's prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin, and seize control of the state. During the fiercest fighting in Paris, she ordered the cannons of the Bastille to be turned on the king's troops, saving the rebel army a deed that cost her five years of internal exile and the lasting mistrust of Louis XIV. Late in her life, she again shocked the court with her attempt to marry an officer of the king's guard, a proposed misalliance that provoked an enormous public outcry and greatly embarrassed the king. In addition, she was a privileged chronicler of court life, a witness to the ministries of Richelieu and Mazarin and to the most successful decades of Louis XIV's reign. Her *Mmoires*, first published in 1718 and initially suppressed in France, remains a major source of information on the period's political and social events as well as a page-turning melodrama of court intrigue. Mademoiselle also left behind a number of other works: literary portraits of the prominent personalities of her day, letters, satirical short stories, and two essays on religion which, together with her memoirs, stand as an unusual achievement for any seventeenth-century woman, let alone one so high-born and wealthy. In *La Grande Mademoiselle at the Court of France*, Vincent Pitts presents a comprehensive and engaging biography of this remarkable woman which draws upon Mademoiselle's writings and his own impressive command of her times. Viewed through her writings, the events of Mademoiselle's life offer a unique perspective on several aspects of seventeenth-century France: the evolution of the Bourbon monarchy over the course of the century, the dynamics of aristocratic resistance to the centralizing power of the state, and the debate over the role of women in public and private life. As both an active participant in and a keen observer of the great events of her time, La Grande Mademoiselle helped define her age even as she challenged the limitations it placed upon her, as Pitts's rich and rigorous account of her life makes clear.

Pitts's well-written and meticulously researched biography of La Grande Mademoiselle provides real insight into the contradictory status of a fascinating early modern woman. (Lianne McTavish *Canadian Journal of History*) Vincent J. Pitts has certainly provided a most readable account of this familiar figure in French history, and gives a clear explanation of the manoeuvres and conspiracies of leading families during her years of adolescence... For readers who are encountering Mademoiselle for the first time, this book is an admirable and accessible introduction. (Roger Mettam *English Historical*) Pitts's lively retelling and his exquisite sense of appropriate context are remarkably effective in bringing out key insights Mademoiselle's narrative has to offer... Vincent Pitts has given us a page-turner, a wonderfully written, intimate acquaintance with one exceptional woman's character. (Carolyn Lougee Chappell *H-France*) The text is at one and the same time a pleasure to read and is supported by a wealth of bibliographical references that give it scholarly depth and credibility. (Ellen J. Chapco *French*) As Pitts puts forward Mademoiselle's point of view and explains why her life and what she says about it is of exceptional interest, her story becomes open to different interpretations: political, religious, and feminist. (Benedetta Craveri *New York of Books*) Greatly helped by the excesses of his heroine, impeccably verified and sustained by the most rigorous scholarship, Vincent Pitts makes us better understand the paradoxes which constituted the essence of the Grand Sicle. The neatness and precision of the narrative make for a pleasant and fluid reading. This is an impressive work of research and *mise-en-cadre* about such a spectacular Romantic figure, who, along with the fictitious women in Dumas's novels and Madame de Svign, remains a popular female character in the collective memory of the French. The richness of the information it contains seems to me fundamental for an accurate understanding of France in the seventeenth century. (Jacques Guicharnaud, Yale

University) Vincent Pitts is a very careful, thorough researcher and a sensitive, creative writer. I have genuine admiration for his biography of La Grande Mademoiselle, his control of the facts, and the historical atmosphere. There is just the right balance between her personality and the cultural-political milieu in which she lived. (Orest Ranum, The Johns Hopkins University) Vincent Pitts's account of La Grande Mademoiselle is surely the fullest, the soundest, and the richest yet written. The scholarship is remarkable and the writing excellent, making fresh a complicated story. This is an incredibly sound piece of work. (Raymond Kierstead, Reed College) About the Author Vincent J. Pitts is an independent scholar in New Haven, Connecticut. He is the author of *The Man Who Sacked Rome: Charles de Bourbon, Constable of France, 1490-1527*, and *France and the German Problem: Politics and Economics in the Locarno Period, 1924-1929*. He received his doctorate in European History from Harvard University.