The Crown and the Community: Communal Woodlands and State Forestry in the Landes during the Eighteenth Century

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They were rather obscure men who left little detailed information about themselves. Some were like Arnaud Poysegur, who signed his name with the sort of self-confident flourish that was common among judicial office-holders in the eighteenth century, while others were apparently less demonstrative. A few seemed keen to show off their artistic skills, and at least one was frequently misidentified even by his professional colleagues: various clerks and other officials right up to the provincial master of the royal forest administration, the Eaux et Forêts, recorded this man's surname as "Kin," and in a 1778 petition some villagers called him "Sieur Cain."[1] According to his own signature, however, he was Sieur Jean t'Kint, whose origins were in the Habsburg Netherlands: a handwritten note in 1761 identified him as "former deputy-director of the Austrian military academy." In south-western France t'Kint served the Bordeaux forestry officials as a surveyor (*arpenteur*) around Saint-Sever in the Landes, although he sometimes gave his profession as cartographer (*géographe*).[2] Men like t'Kint and Poysegur were on the

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[1] Paris, Archives Nationales, Q1 420, Fonds des Domaines. Département des Landes, Eaux et forêts, "Mémoire des habitants de Béga[a]r" (n.d. [1778?]).

[2] Bordeaux, Archives départementales de la Gironde [hereafter ADG], 8B 537, Eaux et Forêts de Guyenne. Forêts et cours d'eau, Dossiers relatifs aux bois de diverses communautés, St Sever, *Procès-verbal de visite* (19 février 1761).

front line of the state's efforts to regulate the management and exploitation of important forests in the South-West.

The notion that cartography played a crucial role in enhancing the power of states is by no means new. Historians have long been aware of the extraordinary mapmaking activity undertaken during the early modern period and their studies usually highlight the ways in which Europeans charted their encounters with the non-European world, or demonstrate the military and strategic application of maps, both for the construction and capture of fortifications and to safeguard coastal or frontier regions.[3] The woodland maps made by t'Kint, Poysegur and others were much less elaborate and, perhaps for that reason, have been rather neglected by historians of cartography—even though (as I shall argue) their ultimate purpose was not so different. Moreover maps were only one means by which early modern Europeans aimed to expand their horizons, knowledge and power. The mapmaking carried out by forest surveyors in Old Regime France represented the culmination of work by various royal bureaucracies who were authorized to ensure that the kingdom's woodlands served the interests of the state.

This essay aims to contribute to a revision of the commonly expressed view that state-initiated schemes for resource management came to prominence only in the nineteenth century. When he set out to catalogue the muddle-headed and oppressive schemes by which "modernist" policy-makers aimed to "improve the human condition," James C. Scott started with the development of "scientific forestry" in Enlightenment Germany. However more recent work on Renaissance Venice and early modern Württemberg suggests that governments had long taken an interest in regulating natural resources and that it was precisely the elaboration and implementation of forestry policies that helped to create the modern state.[4]

After working for some time on one part of south-western France—the Périgord—where substantial forest resources were all private property in the eighteenth century, I am now in the process of examining comparable attempts by the Old Regime state to regulate the management and exploitation of forests in the Landes, a region where many woodlands belonged to rural communities. This was especially the case in the Pays de l'Adour, the southern part of the present-day department of the Landes. Although the Landes is now by far the most heavily timbered department in France—where forests cover more than 60 per cent of the land—virtually all the famous pine plantations date from the second half of the nineteenth century.[5] The present discussion therefore aims to outline the French crown's reasons for official involvement in forest management during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and some of the mechanisms that were developed to pursue the state's interests. This necessarily requires consideration of the

[3] Christine Marie Petto, *When France Was King of Cartography: The Patronage and Production of Maps in Early Modern France* (Lanham, Md., 2007); Josef W. Konvitz, *Cartography in France, 1660-1848: Science, Engineering, and Statecraft* (Chicago, Ill., 1987); David Buisseret, ed., *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: The Emergence of Cartography as a Tool of Government in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago, Ill., 1992).

[4] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, Conn., 1998), esp. 11-22. Compare Karl Appuhn, "Inventing Nature: Forests, Forestry and State Power in Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000): 861-89; Paul Warde, *Ecology, Economy and State Formation in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 2006).

[5] Jacques Sargos, *Histoire de la forêt landaise. Du désert à l'âge d'or* (Bordeaux, 1997).

relationship between rural inhabitants, their communal properties and the demands placed on them by the central state.

To ensure that French forests were managed and exploited in line with official priorities, Louis XIV's famous 1669 Ordinance of Waterways and Forests envisaged a two-step process. First there would be a survey (*arpentement*) to establish a woodland's boundaries, which were duly inscribed on the ground, preferably with stone markers planted firmly in the soil. The second stage was to draw up a management plan (*aménagement*) setting out the property's internal divisions: one quarter of the area (the *quart de réserve*) was designated in the part where soils, drainage and aspect looked most promising; all the trees there were to be set aside and allowed to attain full maturity. The remaining woodland was divided into a number of *coupes*, areas of land where trees could be harvested on a regular basis. Usually one *coupe* was cut each year, with the proviso that sixteen of the best trees were reserved for every *arpent* (about half a hectare) of woodland. These reserve trees would grow to maturity to provide both construction-quality timber and the seeds to produce seedlings. The number of *coupes* and their timing thus corresponded to the woodland's overall cycle (*révolution*) of exploitation and regeneration, not less than ten years according to the Ordinance and usually twenty or twenty-five years.[6]

These features were clearly set out on the forest maps drawn up by surveyors like Poysegur and t'Kint. At the initial stage of *arpentement*, a woodland's limits were precisely indicated, usually by identifying nearby physical features such as streams and by naming the landowners whose properties shared its boundaries. Then at the second stage of *aménagement*, the *quart de réserve* was carefully designated with its total area noted and the separate *coupes* were mapped out in numbered sequence, again with details of their roughly equal areas.[7] In the formulaic phrases of the forestry officials' reports (*procès-verbaux*), the prescribed order of the *coupes* must be observed on pain of a fine of 300 *livres*, the designated number of reserve trees must be retained from each *coupe*, and careful policing of the woodland was mandated to ensure that reserve trees remained untouched, while young trees were protected from damage by animals, fire, or human exploitation.[8]

This style of woodland management was designed to increase the number of mature deciduous hardwoods, especially oaks and elms that were so essential for construction purposes. From the crown's point of view in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the most pressing construction need was the royal navy. Between the 1660s, when Colbert oversaw the introduction of this regulatory system, and the 1690s the French fleet expanded from about 40 vessels to over 150. A second burst of shipbuilding began with the War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s and after the Seven Years War (1756–63) French naval bases consistently stockpiled timber and other supplies. The result was a doubling of ship numbers between 1748 and 1780, from about 50 vessels to

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[6] "Édit portant règlement général pour les Eaux et Forêts, août 1669" (Titres XXIV, XXV), in *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789*, ed. Isambert, Decrusy, and Taillandier, 29 vols. (Paris, 1821-33), 18:277-84. Also in Baudrillart, *Recueil chronologique des règlements forestiers*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1821), 1:73-78.

[7] Several examples of these maps can be found in ADG 8B 537; 8B 538; 8B 539; & 8B 540, Eaux et Forêts. Dossiers relatifs aux bois de diverses communautés.

[8] See for example ADG 8B 540, Eaux et Forêts. Dossiers relatifs aux bois de diverses communautés, Tilh, *Procès-verbal d'aménagement* (22 mai 1756).

over 100.[9] Compared with Louis XIV's navy, these eighteenth-century ships were not only more heavily armed but also much larger: for a first- or second-rate battleship with 90–120 guns, the hull alone was estimated to require about 4,500 cubic meters of wood, almost all of it oak.[10] Across two centuries from 1650 to 1850, according to one calculation, the French navy consumed over two million mature oak trees.[11]

We know that the ideal specifications for ship-timbers were very exacting, which meant that the naval dockyards were extremely selective: in terms of overall volume, recent research suggests that only about 1 percent of all trees that were felled actually went into shipbuilding—in that era of renewable energy, most wood was used as fuel, for both domestic and industrial purposes.[12] Yet against that must be set the record of wastefulness in the processes of felling, transporting, seasoning and stockpiling naval timbers: one historian of the eighteenth-century British navy reported contemporary assessments that as much as three-fifths of all timbers delivered to the dockyards were rejected as damaged or otherwise unsuitable.[13] It is also worth considering that the navy's preference for large, heavy and often curved pieces of hardwood targeted the rarest resources that were the result of long maturation: the 1669 Ordinance regarded oaks as ideally aged when they were about 120 years old.

In their efforts to secure supplies of these scarce timbers the French king's agents were empowered to search out potential resources. The initial focus for Colbert's "reform" agenda in the 1660s were the forests of the royal domain, where officers of the Eaux et Forêts were responsible for carrying out both *arpentements* and *aménagements*, which were recorded in the form of written reports produced on the spot and complemented by detailed plans drawn up by surveyors. The 1669 Ordinance envisaged that private woodlands would be exempt from having to create a reserve quarter, although reserve trees did need to set aside from each *coupe*. During the early decades of the eighteenth century, moreover, forest owners across the kingdom were increasingly brought into a regulatory regime that required them to file a "declaration" to report mature trees that they planned to cut on their estates. The purpose was to give naval officials an opportunity to visit and assess the trees for likely ship-timbers (that would be compulsorily purchased by the navy) and to provide the forestry service with more detailed information about the kingdom's forest resources.

As measured by both the numbers and distribution of these declarations in the South-West, the expansion of the crown's authority was noticeable. One of the few published studies to analyze the declarations lodged by woodland proprietors elsewhere in France was Georges Pichard's summary of his work on Provence. By comparison with Pichard's findings, landowners in the South-West complied with this reporting regime at an increasing rate that seems astonishing: from a comparable basis of about 300

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[9] Jean Meyer and Martine Acerra, *Histoire de la Marine française des origines à nos jours* (Rennes, 1994), 48-50, 109, 114-15, 137.

[10] Paul W. Bamford, *Forests and French Sea Power, 1660-1789* (Toronto, 1956), 11. Compare Louis Badré, *Histoire de la forêt française* (Paris, 1983), 76.

[11] Jean Boudriot, "Chênes et vaisseaux royaux," in *Forêt et Marine*, ed. Andrée Corvol (Paris, 1999), 346-47.

[12] Paul Warde, "Fear of Wood Shortage and the Reality of the Woodland in Europe, *c*. 1450-1850," *History Workshop Journal* no. 62 (2006): 40-41.

[13] Roger Morriss, *The Royal Dockyards During the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (Leicester, 1983), 93.

declarations over a two-year period early in the 1740s, the number of declarations lodged in Provence had increased by around 80 percent by the early 1780s, whereas the increase in south-western France during the same decades was over 1,000 percent.[14]

In addition to their concern to find out about mature forests on private lands, eighteenth-century forestry officials in France were increasingly involved in adapting the management practices that were developed for the royal domain and applying them to ecclesiastical forests and the woodlands belonging to rural communities.[15]

We know—particularly from the work of historians like Nadine Vivier—that communal property and collective use rights were a major topic of concern among government officials, landowners and expert commentators in France from the 1750s onwards.[16] "Enlightened" opinion focused on the need to enhance the kingdom's agricultural productivity, which resulted in legislation that encouraged landowners to drain swamps, clear and cultivate "wastelands," partition and enclose commons, and eliminate customary access rights on private land. Although by no means fulfilled, these Old Regime initiatives to transform French agriculture were given added impetus by the reform agenda of revolutionary legislators in the 1790s. The result was that nineteenth-century governments were able to deal conclusively with most of the remaining obstacles to "agrarian individualism" in France, despite widespread if intermittent resistance from some rural inhabitants.[17]

However, woodlands were supposed to be treated quite differently. Amid all the rhetoric about the need to bring about major changes in the French countryside, Old Regime decision-makers did not attempt to impose the same "reforms" on communal woodland properties and collective forest rights. "No one thought of attacking the woods," Vivier remarked, "on the contrary: people were more concerned about their preservation."[18] Admittedly the 1669 Ordinance did announce an end to outsiders' use rights in royal forests and allowed some seigneurs to privatize their share of the common woodland (usually one third); sheep and goats were also banned from grazing in any forest and strict controls were to be applied to cattle and pigs. However, there were no comparable efforts to abolish the communal ownership of woodlands and the Ordinance sanctioned the persistence of many customary access rights.

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[14] Georges Pichard, "'La consommation de bois en Provence. Une pesée socio-économique globale (1783-1791)," in *Révolution et espaces forestiers*, ed. Denis Woronoff (Paris, 1988), 73-94. Compare Hamish Graham, "Greedy or Needy? Forest Administration and Landowners' Attitudes in South-Western France During the Eighteenth Century," *Rural History* 16 (2005): 6.

[15] "Ordonnance des Eaux et Forêts" (Titres XXIV, XXV), in *Recueil général*, eds. Isambert, Decrusy and Taillandier, 18:277-84; Baudrillart, *Recueil chronologique*, 1:73-78.

[16] Nadine Vivier, "Une question délaissée: les biens communaux aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles," *Revue historique* 118a., t.290 (1994): 143-60; Vivier, *Propriété collective et identité communale. Les biens communaux en France, 1750-1914* (Paris, 1998); André Bourde, *Agronomie et agronomes en France au XVIIIe siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1967); Noelle Plack, "Agrarian Reform and Ecological Change During the Ancien Régime: Land Clearance, Peasants, and Viticulture in the Province of Languedoc," *French History* 19 (2005): 189-210.

[17] Vivier, *Propriété collective*, 5-42; Noelle L. Plack, "Agrarian Individualism, Collective Practices, and the French Revolution: The Law of 10 June 1793 and the Partition of Common Land in the Department of the Gard," *European History Quarterly* 35 (2005): 39-62; Peter McPhee, *Revolution and Environment in Southern France: Peasants, Lords, and Murder in the Corbières, 1780-1830* (Oxford, 1999).

[18] Vivier, *Propriété collective*, 22.

Above all the 1669 law explicitly acknowledged that the lands held by rural communities came in many forms—not just woods, but also meadows, marshes, moors (*landes*) and "wastelands" for rough grazing (*pâtis*)—whose resources and uses were essential for the survival of many rural inhabitants. The provisions of the 1669 Ordinance that applied to the properties of the crown, the clergy and private landowners were concerned only with woodlands, yet the legislation dealing with communal property covered various forms of vegetation and land use. According to several historians of French forests and forestry it was the Bourbon Restoration's Forest Code of 1827—rather than the 1669 Ordinance—that succeeded in imposing the most far-reaching and durable changes to communal woodland property and (especially) to collective access rights in forests: rights that were decried by the minister responsible for the 1827 Code as "all-consuming," and whose curtailment provoked sustained and sometimes violent opposition during the nineteenth century.[19]

By contrast much of the historical literature about common woodland property and forest rights in the eighteenth century seems to confirm a central tenet in Hilton L. Root's *Peasants and King in Burgundy* (1987), a much-cited study that challenged many prevailing wisdoms about the foundations of French "absolutism" and the nature of rural grievances in 1789.[20] Historians had long debated the nature of the Old Regime's absolute monarchy and whether it had a "social" basis—a new class of "bourgeois" professionals, entrepreneurs and office-holders (according to Roland Mousnier), or the "traditional" aristocracy (as David Parker argued).[21] Root's interpretation offered a new perspective summed up in the subtitle of his book: the "agrarian foundations of French absolutism." Using evidence from the provincial administration of Burgundy, Root argued that the Old Regime succeeded in extending its authority by preserving and promoting the communal institutions and collective property rights of French peasants. The relationship between the monarchy and rural communities was mutually advantageous, according to Root: royal intendants safeguarded the crown's tax base and ensured a measure of peace and plenty in the countryside, while poor villagers continued to enjoy the communal fuelwood allocations and customary grazing rights that were so necessary for their survival.[22]

Such forms of land ownership and access were well established in various parts of the Landes during the eighteenth century. The monumental research undertaken by Anne Zink revealed not only the complexity of these collective rights in south-western France, but also their significance for people's wellbeing in a region where soil quality was generally poor. In the village of Saugnac an eighteenth-century copy of the community's "statutes" identified the different forms of their collective property near Dax:

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[19] Quoted in Arlette Brosselin, "Pour une histoire de la forêt française au XIXe siècle," *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 55 (1977), 96. Compare Peter Sahlins, *Forest Rites: The War of the Demoiselles in Nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994) and Tamara L. Whited, *Forests and Peasant Politics in Modern France* (New Haven, Conn., 2000).

[20] Hilton L. Root, *Peasants and King in Burgundy: Agrarian Foundations of French Absolutism* (Berkeley, Cal., 1987).

[21] Roland Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789*, trans. Brian Pearce and Arthur Goldhammer, 2 vols. (Chicago, Ill., 1979-84); David Parker, *The Making of French Absolutism* (London, 1983).

[22] Root, *Peasants and King*, 112-23, 177-83.

> The woods (*bois*) are common lands that are planted in oaks; the *barthes* are common lands [beside the river] where vine-props are produced from alder and willow; the moors (*landes*) are common lands where heath and bracken are grown for fertilizer; the *devantieux* are the common groves of trees that stand in front of or around the houses; the word *padouen* is a generic term that comes from *padouir* meaning "to graze", and generally includes all the common [pastoral] lands that are closest to the houses.[23]

Elsewhere in the Landes local people gave prominence to other forms of communal property, each with their distinctive products and benefits: ponds and lakes for fishing, or pinewoods (*pignadars*) grown for both timber and resin. Everywhere, however, these were multiple-use resources. Moorlands offered rough grazing for community members' livestock, while the less nourishing undergrowth (*soutrage*) was routinely mowed and collected to be used as barn litter that could later be spread as fertilizer. Low-lying *barthes* provided an ideal environment for the production of softwood timbers (much sought-after in vine-growing regions like the Chalosse and Tursan), while some remained sufficiently marshy to allow fishing and the cutting of dense swamp vegetation to use as fertilizer. Once drained and enclosed by ditches and mounds however, these areas could offer rich soils for growing maize and other crops. In fact some riverside *barthes* had been protected from inundation for so long that they developed very fine stands of hardwood trees like oaks and elms.

These were precisely the resources that were of greatest interest to the central state and its agents. The most immediate impact in the South-West was from men like Pierre Train and Gilles-François Segondat, who were naval shipwrights. Together with their teams of foremen-carpenters, these men not only built warships but also traveled across large parts of the countryside in order to assess and acquire trees that could be suitable for use in the naval dockyards of Bayonne and (especially) Rochefort. Unfortunately the surviving copies of their first-hand forest reports are very patchy: a total of less than 100 reports concentrated in six years during the period 1765-1778.[24] We cannot be sure, therefore, if the existing reports represent a very complete or typical record of the naval inspectors' work, but a few points stand out.

First of all the navy's cumulative claims on the woodlands of this province were far from insignificant. In the winter of 1765-66, for instance, Segondat was busy in and around the subdelegation of Dax. His inspection team visited sixteen properties and filed sixteen requisition orders as a result of twenty-five days' work over a two-month period.[25] During that time they inspected forests that were said to contain a total of nearly 23,000 trees, some owned by great nobles who were absentees, some by humble widows; several concerned the communal property of small towns and villages. Overall Segondat marked more than 1,600 trees (or just over 7 percent of the total), all bound for the

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[23] Anne Zink, *Clochers et troupeaux. Les communautés rurales des Landes et du Sud-Ouest avant la Révolution* (Talence [Gir.], 1997), 51.

[24] ADG 8B 806, Eaux et Forêts de Guienne. Procès-verbaux de visite par les Commissaires de la Marine.

[25] ADG 8B 806, Procès-verbaux des Commissaires de la Marine (17-18, 18, 19, 20, 30 décembre 1765; 9-11, 15, 16-17, 18, 20-22, 23, 27 janvier 1766; 30 janvier-1er février 1766; 3-4, 14, 15 février 1766). Of the twenty-two inspection reports that survive for 1765 and 1766, only three did not deal with woodlands situated in the subdelegations of Dax, Aire [sur-l'Adour], and Bayonne (Pyrénées-Atlantiques). It is unclear whether this concentration is merely a product of the documents' survival.

dockyards of Bayonne. These two months' work yielded the navy over 1,200 cubic meters of construction material. Not enough to build a ship-of-the-line, but quite enough for a smaller vessel (such as a thirty-gun frigate), or for repairs to warships in need of a significant refit.[26]

Beyond the resources of royal and ecclesiastical forests the hierarchy of priorities elaborated in the 1669 Ordinance saw the crown's agents turn their attention increasingly towards communal property. Inspecting and assessing communal woodlands across the South-West was one of the forest administration's leading tasks.[27] Between 1715 and 1789 officers of the Eaux et Forêts solicited and recorded intermittent details about the woodlands belonging to at least thirty-three communities, of which all but five were in the Landes. More than twenty of these reports were initiated during the 1750s and most applied to communal woodlands in and around the subdelegation of Dax.[28] Later, when France's involvement in the American War of Independence brought additional pressures—as much to naval supplies as to state finances—instructions came from Versailles to gather further data about likely timber reserves in the same areas.[29] These reports on communal forests compiled by and for the Bordeaux foresters allowed naval inspection teams to seek out the best shipbuilding timbers.

Of course the naval inspectors were also guided by information from the declarations lodged by the owners of private woodlands, so many of the trees they acquired came from individual estates. But those they requisitioned in communal woodlands were significantly larger—for Segondat's 1765-66 visit, the pieces marked by the navy averaged 0.89 cubic meters each, as compared with an average of just 0.57 cubic meters for each of the trees taken from private landowners.[30] The communal forests also contained many trees that could supply more than a single piece of timber. To eighteenth-century shipwrights these were both extremely desirable features.

Unlike the estates of private landowners, moreover, the region's communal woodlands seem to have been visited repeatedly by the crown's agents. Thus for three days in September 1766 Segondat brought his naval carpenters back to the communal forest of Bégaar (near Tartas), which they had visited eight months earlier: having requisitioned 215 trees at the time of that visit, this second inspection netted the royal navy an additional 400 cubic meters of construction timber.[31] The nearby community of Mées was likewise subjected to repeated visits by the naval inspectors.[32] This pattern recurred in subsequent years, which suggests that it was a matter of deliberate policy.

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[26] At mid-century, some 9,720 *pieds cubes* [333 cubic meters] of timber (almost all of it oak) were required to build the hull of a thirty-gun frigate like the *Renommée*: Duhamel du Monceau, *Élemens de l'architecture navale, ou Traité pratique de la construction des vaisseaux* (Paris, 1758; rpt., Grenoble, 1970), 335.

[27] Under the Old Regime, forestry and naval officials had joint responsibility for marking trees in "public" woodlands such as state and communal forests: Henri de Coincy, *Les Bois de marine sous le premier Empire* (Besançon, 1914), 5.

[28] ADG 8B 537; 8B 538; 8B 539; & 8B 540, Eaux et Forêts. Dossiers relatifs aux bois de diverses communautés.

[29] ADG 8B 536, Eaux et Forêts. Tableaux de renseignements demandés par le Contrôleur-Général au sujet des bois et vacants des communautés et particuliers (1783-84).

[30] ADG 8B 806, Procès-verbaux des Commissaires de la Marine (30 décembre 1765; 15, 16-17, 18, 20-22, & 23 janvier 1766; 14 & 15 février 1766).

[31] ADG 8B 806, Procès-verbaux des Commissaires de la Marine (23-25 septembre 1766).

[32] ADG 8B 806, Procès-verbaux des Commissaires de la Marine (30 décembre 1765; 15 février 1766).

The state's interest in the communal woodlands of this province remained strong. In 1789 a senior official of the Bordeaux Eaux et Forêts lamented the poor quality of the few royal forests and church woodlands in the South-West and he deplored the "egotism" and short-sightedness of private landowners who cut down their mature trees. But communal woodlands were identified as crucial to the province's future: particularly in the valleys of the Adour and its tributaries, he reported, there remained "huge resources" that contained the "germ" of richly-populated mature forests.[33]

Then, after more than a decade of political upheavals and international conflicts in the wake of the 1789 Revolution, the Napoleonic regime reached an identical conclusion. In 1801 departmental prefects were ordered to conduct a survey of "forests belonging to the state and communal woodlands."[34] With France once more at war in 1810 the Empire sought to update its information about resources deemed suitable for naval construction. Besides the forests of annexed territories (especially parts of what later became Belgium, Germany and Italy), most of the huge amounts of timber requisitioned by Bonaparte's navy came from Lorraine and Alsace. The only major contribution from the southern half of France was the department of the Landes, which was to supply the dockyards of Bayonne and Rochefort with 3,650 pieces of oak timber, totaling 1,349 cubic meters.[35] These pieces averaged only 0.37 cubic meters each, however, which was far smaller than those marked by Segondat two generations earlier. Yet the fact that the Napoleonic administrators were able to identify and extract any ship-timbers from this department was due in part to the information-gathering procedures developed by the Eaux et Forêts during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Above all, though, the documentation generated by naval inspections and forest management plans highlighted the proprietorial interest that the French state took in the woodland properties of rural communities. This is where the forest maps made by men like Poysegur and t'Kint repay a closer look.

In essence these were "estate maps" of the kind that emerged in England around the 1570s and continued to enjoy some prominence in Britain until supplanted by Ordnance Survey maps from the 1840s.[36] Historians of European mapmaking insist that estate maps represented "an entirely new cartography" in the late sixteenth century, quite unlike the "textual registers" such as *terriers*, or (to take a much earlier example) William the Conqueror's Domesday Book. Estate maps had several distinctive features. First of all they were manuscript maps. Some were very large and a few were lavishly produced, but they were all intended for a restricted audience, most commonly the person(s) who commissioned them. Second, they were drawn on a fairly large scale, frequently around 1:5,000. This meant they were capable of displaying detailed information. Third, estate maps focused on a single economic unit, usually depicted in isolation from its neighbors.

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[33] [Dufort], *Discours du Procureur du Roi de la Maîtrise particulière des Eaux et Forêts de Guienne* (Bordeaux, 1789), 37.

[34] Lucien Brenac, "Les instructions sur la fourniture des bois de Marine du début du XIXe siècle," in *[Actes du] Symposium international d'histoire forestière. Nancy, 24-28 septembre 1979*, 2 vols. (Nancy, 1982), 2:81.

[35] "État approximatif des bois propres aux constructions navales (1810)," cited in Coincy, *Bois de marine*, 12-22.

[36] David Buisseret, *The Mapmaker's Quest: Depicting New Worlds in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2003), 152-57; David Fletcher, *The Emergence of Estate Maps: Christ Church, Oxford, 1600 to 1840* (Oxford, 1995).

Estate maps in Tudor and Stuart England were not so much about areas of land that were in dispute and in that sense were different from the mapping of military, political, or colonial frontiers. Rather they were primarily concerned with documenting "good husbandry"—in other words they aimed to portray economic productivity. They were essentially "administrative tools," although they could also be "celebratory" by allowing landowners to parade their achievements. Above all, though, estate maps were about what David Fletcher called the "clarification of ownership."[37]

The defining characteristics of estate maps are evident in French forest maps that were produced in the 1660s for royal and apanage woodlands in Normandy and the Ile-de-France.[38] The same features appear in the maps drawn up by men like t'Kint and Poysegur for the Eaux et Forêts in the eighteenth century. When the royal forestry officials created maps and management plans for the communal woodlands of the South-West, it seems clear that this was not merely an attempt to ensure the renewable exploitation of sought-after resources. The French state's agents were effectively claiming "ownership" of woodlands that were previously owned and managed by village communities.

Such an assessment of the crown's motives was not lost on Landais villagers in the eighteenth century. The *cahier* drawn up in 1789 by the parish of Onard demanded that use of their communal woodlands be regulated by the community's "statutes," as agreed among themselves and ratified by the Parlement, rather than by officials of the Eaux et Forêts whose authorizations were "too expensive." The people of nearby Gousse and Vicq demanded that the 1669 Ordinance be reformed, given that its effects on their communities' resources were "destructive" and likely to leave their forests in "total devastation."[39] These and similar complaints elsewhere in the Landes crystallized the frustrations of generations of rural inhabitants. When he stood accused of illegally cutting and selling communal timber in the parishes of Hinx and Téthieu in 1764, seventy-one year-old Timothée Condom defiantly informed his judicial interrogators about the damage that was being caused by the state's forestry policies:

> The inhabitants have always cut timber on their common lands with the permission of their community headman (*syndic*), both for fuel or for repairs to their houses, because it's the inhabitant who planted these trees, as they are required to do under their statutes [as] ratified by the Parlement… [O]nly in the last four or five years has it been forbidden for the inhabitants of Hinx to cut their mature trees, [ever] since Madame la Baronne de Hinx [their *seigneur*] obtained this prohibition from the officers of the Eaux et Forêts on the pretext that one third of the commons belongs to her. This is greatly prejudicial to the [general] public and the inhabitants of Hinx, because the moment they heard about this prohibition, they planted no more trees on the commons.[40]

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[37] Fletcher, *Estate Maps*, chap. 2, cited in Buisseret, *Mapmaker's Quest*, 155.
[38] Monique Pelletier, "De nouveaux plans de forêt à la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 28 (1988): 56-62.
[39] Maurice de Chauton, "Cahiers de doléances des paroisses de la sénéchaussée de Tartas en 1789," *Bulletin de la Société de Borda*, 31a. (1906), 34, 36, 41, 42.
[40] ADG 8B 169, Eaux et Forêts. Procédure: Auditions, informations et divers, *Audition* (20 juin 1764).

In contrast to Root's characterization of an absolute state that worked hand-in-glove to sustain rural communities and their collective property, therefore, evidence from the woodlands of south-western France suggests that the crown's interest in communal forest resources was self-centered, oppressive and short-sighted.