

We Render Services, We Endure Pains, We Receive Praise:

Eléazar Mauvillon, Charles-Joseph de Ligne,

and the Literary History of Prince Eugene of Savoy

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1809 the *Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy* was published in Vienna. The book was written by Charles-Joseph de Ligne, a Flemish prince who lived seventy years after Eugene of Savoy, the general who commanded the army of the Holy Roman Empire in the War of the Spanish Succession. Eugene's military career spanned fifty years and five wars, yet he is less known than his English counterpart, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. The memoirs were only attributed to Eugene for a short period and then tossed aside as the creative musings of a cultured prince who left quite the written legacy. Though attributed to the prince, a contemporary reader would not have thought that the manuscript had been penned by Eugene. The memoirs were heavily inspired by a biography by Eléazar Mauvillon, which was published only six years after Eugene's death. Few of Eugene's own letters survived his death, and he never wrote the memoirs of his own campaigns. Marlborough, by contrast, was a prolific letter writer, and the two generals spent some of the major campaigns of the war together with the result that Eugene has featured in much of the research done on Marlborough as a secondary character. Charles-Joseph de Ligne desired to be as good a writer as he was a soldier. His legacy included his own memoirs, which reflected the desire to be as successful as Eugene and to raise Eugene to the proper level of acknowledgement in military history. This thesis explores the historical memory of Eugene as perpetuated by Ligne's literary creation as well as the historical context in which Eugene rose to fame for his military genius and proves the historical accuracy of Ligne's mystification of Mauvillon's biography.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Prince Eugene of Savoy and the Memoirs of Prince Eugene.....	5
2 BE YOU OF THE BLOOD OF HEROES: CHARLES-JOSEPH DE LIGNE AND EUGENE OF SAVOY	9
The Princes de Ligne	10
Charles-Joseph and the Holy Roman Empire	18
Memoirs and Eugene of Savoy	26
3 LORDS OF THE FIRST QUALITY: THE HISTORY AND MEMOIRS OF PRINCE EUGENE.....	37
The Hôtel de Soissons, Paris	39
The House of Habsburg, Vienna	42
The Question of the Spanish Succession	49
The Death of Eugene	66
4 A SHARE OF LAURELS: JOHN CHURCHILL AND THE ALLIED ARMY.....	71
The Duke of Marlborough and the Battle of Blenheim, 1704.....	72
Funding the War, 1708-1709.....	79
The End of the War of the Spanish Succession	93
5 CONCLUSION	96
REFERENCES	100

APPENDIX

I THE SPANISH SUCCESSION	102
II CHRONOLOGY	104

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Europe of the early modern period was embroiled in wars over rights to crowns.¹ European monarchs were mindful of the political climate of a changing Europe, and armies were built up to fight wars on multiple fronts. The War of the Spanish Succession, fought from 1701 to 1714, was the result of multiple claims to the Spanish throne. Emperor Leopold I of the Holy Roman Empire sought to assert a Habsburg claim, and King Louis XIV wished to unite France and Spain under the House of Bourbon. The Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties were the main competitors for Spain's holdings, but the rest of Europe was concerned as well: a Spain allied with either France or the Holy Roman Empire would hold a monopoly in Europe.²

Prince Eugene of Savoy found Vienna enmeshed in decades of political intrigue when he defected from the French court and took a position in the Imperial army, and the European theatre gave him the opportunity to become one of history's great commanders. With the death of Charles II of Spain, Eugene found himself fighting to keep France and Spain from uniting. The war ended with a Frenchman sitting on the Spanish throne, but King Philip V of Spain renounced any claim he had to the French succession, and the Empire gained land holdings throughout Europe.

¹ Nicholas Henderson, *Prince Eugen of Savoy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 12.

² John P. Spielman, *Leopold I of Austria* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1977), 44-45.

While the War of the Spanish Succession lasted fourteen years, it was based on two generations of political uncertainty. Philip IV's inability to name an heir and Charles II's questionable health left Leopold I and Louis XIV in a constant state of anticipation; the Spanish court's changing loyalties between France and the Holy Roman Empire meant that conditions were perfect for Leopold and Louis to lobby for their own interests. The varying degrees to which the Spanish court was influenced by Imperial and French interests meant that Europe was constantly in flux over the issue of succession, culminating in the deathbed change of Charles's will that replaced Leopold's grandson with Louis's. Because Charles died before the will was made public, Leopold and his supporters who did not wish to see Spain and France ruled by the same king had no time to sway the opinion of the Spanish court, which led to a continental war.

Eugene's choice of the Holy Roman Empire and his loyalty to the Habsburg monarchy epitomized the changing climate of Europe where a man born of an Italian mother and Savoyard father might eschew his birthplace of Paris in order to travel to Vienna. The French were one of the main enemies of Emperor Leopold I. Leopold had ascended the throne of the Habsburg Empire during Cardinal Giulio Mazarin's attempt to reassert French authority in the Spanish Netherlands and the parts of Germany ruled by the Habsburgs; Habsburg fortresses lined the "Spanish Road" leading from northern Italy to the Netherlands, and France feared an invasion.³ Mazarin and King Louis XIV hoped

³ Ibid., 41.

to fracture the Empire and perhaps destroy the Habsburg influence in Spain, assuring a Bourbon ruler on the Spanish throne.⁴

In spite of his war record, little has been written about Eugene of Savoy. The most notable source attributed to him is an eighteenth-century “memoir” that was not written by him at all but by a Flemish prince, Charles-Joseph de Ligne, who was imitating a 1742 biography by Eléazar Mauvillon. Eugene’s estate was destroyed, and what is left of his writings is limited to his short dispatches and military notes from five wars. Two substantial biographies of Eugene exist, both in German, one written by Alfred von Arneth in 1858 and the other by Max Braubach in 1963. A few smaller biographies were published in English, notably by Nicholas Henderson and Derek McKay, but none of these biographies address Ligne’s memoirs, his reasons for writing them, or his inspiration from Mauvillon’s eighteenth-century biography.

Eugene most often makes appearances in history books involving John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough who became a great general when England could only boast of a great navy. The two men commanded an allied army at the battles of Blenheim, Oudenaarde, and Malplaquet, as well as at the Siege of Lille during the War of the Spanish Succession. Since Marlborough’s personal letters and military dispatches are available, Eugene’s military career is often overshadowed by that of the prolific and charismatic Marlborough, but both

⁴ Ibid.

generals were great commanders and fought valiantly throughout the course of their lives.

Eugene's life is not as well documented as Marlborough's precisely because his personal letters have not survived. His legacy was destroyed upon his death. His one heir, his niece Maria Anna Victoria, had more desire for ready currency than she did for the items in her uncle's estate. As a result Eugene has been relegated to a historical limbo where his existence is irrefutable but his character mysterious. By piecing together the research from the state archives that appear in the more modern biographies with the revelations from Marlborough's letters, the episodes in Ligne's memoirs and Mauvillon's history begin to gain some historical premise. Mauvillon is obviously enamored with his subject, and Ligne must have shared an affinity for Eugene to attempt such a project; his memoirs reveal his motivations and the reasons he regarded Eugene as a personal hero.

Eugene was not the only notable general of the War of the Spanish Succession, nor was he the only man who was not Austro-Hungarian to serve in the Imperial army. The multiethnic nature of the Holy Roman Empire and the multinational influence of the Habsburg monarchy meant that Vienna was a city of many languages ruled over by an Emperor with claims to many crowns. Eugene's influence spread throughout Europe to a French prince who had planned to accompany him to the Imperial army; his influence also spread through generations to a Flemish prince who wished to emulate him. *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy* by Eléazar Mauvillon and the *Memoirs of*

Prince Eugene, of Savoy by Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne were influential pieces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but unknown today, whether the information contained therein was historically accurate or creatively dramatic.

Prince Eugene of Savoy and the Memoirs of Prince Eugene

“There are few figures in history about whom greater errors have been spread, and whose character more mischief has been made, and in whose name more wretched fabrications have been invented.”⁵ Though Eugene is not as famous as the Emperors for whom he fought, or even the generals with whom he commanded armies, he has not fallen into complete obscurity. The three-volume Imperial biography by Alfred von Arneth firmly placed him as a glorious hero of the Holy Roman Empire, which had dissolved in the Napoleonic era upon the abdication of Emperor Francis II. Arneth’s Eugene was “essentially a servant of the House of Habsburg but one conscious of the monarchy’s German character and a champion of the civilizing effects of German culture.”⁶ Max Braubach’s five-volume biography set Eugene as a Germanic folk hero as well as a brilliant and loyal soldier. Braubach emphasized his involvement with Italian and French culture while maintaining his loyalty to the Holy Roman Emperor, whoever he may be.⁷

⁵ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, x. Attributed to A. Arneth.

⁶ Derek McKay, *Prince Eugene of Savoy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 265.

⁷ Ibid.

The English works, however, leave something to be desired. As Nicholas Henderson noted in the introduction to his work on Eugene, “no serious foreign work on him has ever been translated into English. No full-scale biography has ever been published in the English language.”⁸ In the canon of English history, Eugene is rarely overlooked, but he is overshadowed by the striking figure of John Churchill, the duke who was partially responsible for the great English victories at Blenheim, Oudenaarde, and Malplaquet. Henderson’s work certainly does something for raising the veil of obscurity from the Imperial general, but it is hardly a comprehensive analysis of the prince’s life on the scale of Arneth’s or Braubach’s. Derek McKay’s work, published after Braubach’s final volume, seeks to say something about Eugene as a statesman, not just as a patron of the arts and a soldier, which McKay saw as the limitations of Henderson’s book.⁹ McKay certainly gave more attention to the politics of the War of the Spanish Succession, not just the strategies and outcomes.

What both the German and English biographers were missing were those “wretched fabrications”. *The Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy* to this day are not always published with Charles-Joseph de Ligne’s name attached, nor does Ligne’s work merit a mention in sections involving how Eugene was perceived throughout Europe, the stories and rumors that surrounded him. How has this work, so derivative of Eléazar Mauvillon’s *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy*, considered by McKay as “a near contemporary biography, which

⁸ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, x.

⁹ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 7.

has withstood time and modern research well,” escaped historical mention?¹⁰

Mauvillon’s was one of the first biographies; certainly a mystification of it must have been well received.

The issue in question is the historical realism of Charles-Joseph de Ligne’s *The Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy*. Whether they had been perceived as written by Eugene or another party, the *Memoirs* was certainly intended to be treated as biographical. They portray a man who is good at war but one who is firmly entrenched in the methods of a previous century. Because Ligne’s work was inspired by Eléazar Mauvillon, it is as good a contemporary source as any since it was based on a work that was published so soon after Eugene’s death, and the symmetry of the writing styles proves that Ligne’s *Memoirs* were meant to be perceived as a mystification and not as an original piece of work written by Eugene or someone else.

Eugene of Savoy and Charles-Joseph de Ligne shared an allegiance to an Empire that was based not on birth but on tradition and opportunism. Eugene desired nothing but a military commission, and when he could not fight in the army of the country in which he was born, he sought another army and enjoyed a successful career that brought with it enough income to make himself comfortable. Charles-Joseph also wanted a military career, but he did not desire to just live an occupied and comfortable life; he wished to go down in history as a soldier-prince who left as much of a legacy in court as he did on the battlefield.

¹⁰ Ibid., 265. The English version is “largely a translation” of Mauvillon’s five-volume *Histoire du Prince François Eugène de Savoye* (1740).

That required emulating a hero as well as creating a new kind of noble heroism that involved a written legacy.

By comparing the texts of Mauvillon's biography and Ligne's mock autobiography, the character and career of Eugene become known, substantiated by the archival work of both the English and German historians. Charles-Joseph de Ligne was no aspiring writer; he was a prince, a member of the court of the Holy Roman Empire and a confidant of the Emperor, much as Eugene was. His life certainly influenced his choice of Eugene as a literary muse. Ligne's memoirs of Eugene are not fabrications though its authorship may have been; the information within can often be corroborated by contemporary and modern writers, but there is also a personal tone that is lacking in the other works. John Churchill's letters about his time with Eugene are evidence of Eugene as he actually was while in the field, where he spent much of his life. The culmination of these sources creates a Eugene who has often been hidden away by uncertainty. He was a fearless fighter and loyal servant, but above all he was a man who was driven by success in war. The work of Charles-Joseph de Ligne is not the memoirs of Eugene of Savoy, but it depicts the life of Eugene with historical accuracy.

Chapter 2

BE YOU OF THE BLOOD OF HEROES: CHARLES-JOSEPH DE LIGNE AND EUGENE OF SAVOY

Generations of intermarriage had left the great houses of Europe with claims, some legitimate and some tenuous, to the thrones of neighboring countries, and Europe in the eighteenth century was embroiled in war: the Great Northern War (1700-1721), the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1738), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) all dominated the first half of the century. It was in this Europe that two men with multinational identities became Imperial field marshals: Prince Eugene of Savoy and Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne.

François-Eugène, Prince of Savoy-Carignan (1663-1736), was born to a French father and Italian mother, and he was brought up at the French court under King Louis XIV. Denied a post in the French army, Eugene traveled to Vienna, where he would spend six decades serving three Holy Roman Emperors: Leopold I, Joseph I, and Charles VI. His service in the Great Turkish War and the Nine Years' War earned him promotions and accolades, and he became a commander in the War of the Spanish Succession and President of the Imperial War Council. He continued to fight and serve on behalf of the Holy Roman Empire until six months before he died.

Charles-Joseph François Lamoral Alexis, Prince de Ligne (1735-1814), served an Austria under Empress Maria Theresia, who was ruling over lands only

ever held by men. He distinguished himself during the Seven Years' War but retired to a life at court until he was called into active service during the War of the Bavarian Succession in 1778. Charles-Joseph spent his life both fighting and writing, and he left behind a legacy of history and commentary in his memoirs.

Eugene's legacy, however, was dependent on what people wrote about him, and Charles-Joseph considered him a hero worthy of emulation. As a small child, Charles-Joseph wished to become another Eugene, and as a young man living in Vienna, he had the lineage and the upbringing that allowed him to become a military success. Though Charles-Joseph had retired from the military at the turn of the nineteenth century, his hero-worship did not wane: he wrote the memoirs that Eugene had not written, perhaps as an exercise or as a commentary.

Charles-Joseph was both a product of his time and of a time past. His education allowed him to study the careers of great generals, his family's service to the great houses of Europe provided a military tradition, and the nature of Europe meant that sooner or later there would be a war in which he could fight. He put Eugene on a pedestal as the personification of how a man could become as glorious as the wars he fought, and Charles-Joseph crafted both his literary and military careers on the glorification of war. By using both pen and sword, Charles-Joseph de Ligne sought to become an artist of war, and Eugene of Savoy was his muse.

The Princes de Ligne

The chateau of Beloeil has been the home of the Princes de Ligne since the eleventh century. Situated in modern Belgium, it is surrounded by the English

Channel, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, acting as a fitting metaphor for the family's European connections. Originally titled landowners in Hainaut, the Princes de Ligne served any number of monarchs in crusades and coups that defined European history.¹¹ Foreign rulers—such as the Dukes of Burgundy, the Habsburg kings, and later the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperors—had control of the southern Netherlands, including Hainaut, through inheritances and treaties. By the seventeenth century, the members of the family de Ligne were not only princes in the Netherlands but also peers of Hainaut, Artois, and Flanders, grandees of Spain, and princes of the Holy Roman Empire.¹²

In making European history, the Princes de Ligne were not merely pawns of other aristocrats and monarchs. Either as part of a strategy or because no neighboring aristocracy was deemed worthy, the Princes de Ligne married more foreign princesses—from Aragon, Liechtenstein, Lorraine, Luxembourg, and Nassau—than any other noble family in the province.¹³ These marriages allowed for advantageous connections, and by the eighteenth century they were seventh or

¹¹ Philip Mansel, *Prince of Europe: The Life of Charles-Joseph de Ligne 1735-1814* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 1. The family de Ligne fought in the Third Crusade with Richard I and Philip II and aided in Isabella of France's overthrow of Edward II in 1326.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

eighth cousins of the Holy Roman Emperor; the Kings of Spain, France, England, Prussia, and Poland; the Electoral Prince of Bavaria; and the Prince of Orange.¹⁴

While the Princes de Ligne were proud of their Flemish identity and centered their world on Hainaut and Beloeil, they were also proud of their multinational roots. Charles-Joseph was raised in a Netherlands controlled by a popular ruler, Charles Alexander of Lorraine, cousin of the Princes de Ligne and brother-in-law to Empress Maria Theresia, who had married the last Duke of Lorraine before the duchy was absorbed by France.¹⁵ The Holy Roman Empire conducted its affairs differently from the centralized European states: its 294 principalities, free cities, and ecclesiastical states stretching from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Adriatic in the south and from Flanders in the west to Silesia in the east were all loyal to the Holy Roman Emperor in Austria while also retaining some semblance of local sovereignty, and so a Flemish identity existed in conjunction with Austrian loyalty.¹⁶

The family de Ligne became princes of the Holy Roman Empire in 1602, and they held a title that was sought after by the Polish, Hungarian, Russian, and German nobility. The gift of sovereignty allowed the Princes de Ligne access to a

¹⁴ Félicien Leuridant, *Une education de Prince au XVIIIe siècle* (Brussels: 1923), 14n; cf. *Annales Prince De Ligne* (Brussels, 1920-1938), V, 1924, Frederick William III of Prussia to Ligne, 19 August 1819, beginning *Cher cousin*; *ibid.*, XIII, 1932, 82, Charles-Theodore Elector of Bavaria to *Monsieur mon Cousin!*, 11 August 1783. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 1.

¹⁵ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

larger marriage pool and new sovereign territories.¹⁷ Charles-Joseph was baptized as the seventh Prince de Ligne on 23 January 1735 in Brussels.¹⁸ His mother, who died when he was only five years old, epitomized the practice of the Princes de Ligne marrying foreign royalty: she was a princess of an enclave of the Holy Roman Empire in eastern France, and only her adherence to the Catholic faith prohibited her from staking a better claim to the English throne than King George II.¹⁹ Charles-Joseph's very name was a testament to the international nature of the Empire and the Emperors' "gratitude for the zeal and fidelity of his family" as he was named Charles after his godfather, Emperor Charles VI, and Joseph after the previous Emperor.²⁰

Charles-Joseph idolized his ancestors who had "always been brave, from father to son; even the bastards, who glorified in being called so, and had the rank of nobles. I have seen a tomb with this inscription: 'Bastard of Ligne, killed in Africa'."²¹ His great-grandfather, president of the war council in Castile, viceroy of Sicily, and governor-general in Milan, had been imprisoned in Spain. Even his

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ Charles-Joseph de Ligne, *Fragments de l'histoire de ma vie* (1928), II, 349. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 3. Charles-Joseph's mother was a descendant of a Catholic son while George II descended from a Protestant daughter of Charles I's sister, Queen Elizabeth of Bohemia.

²⁰ Leuridan, *Une education*, 7; Ligne, *Fragments*, I, 49n. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 14.

²¹ Charles-Joseph de Ligne, *The Prince de Ligne: His Memoirs, Letters, and Miscellaneous Papers*, trans. Katharine Prescott Wormeley (Boston: Hardy, Pratt & Company, 1899), I, 52.

great-grandmother and his grandfather had been killed hunting boar.²² Charles-Joseph's home in Hainaut was within the "cockpit of Europe," where, he wrote, "there has always been war," and many cities in the Netherlands gave names to famous battles: Rocroi (part of the Thirty Years' War in 1643), Ramillies and Malplaquet (part of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1706 and 1709), and Fontenoy (part of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1745).²³

Charles-Joseph's father, Claude Lamoral II (1685-1766), was the gentleman Charles-Joseph wished to become: Claude was just as intimidating in the drawing room as he was on the battlefield, and his bravery had been particularly noted in the War of the Spanish Succession.²⁴ When forced to surrender at Antwerp, he had said, "The enemy shall not have my flags, at any rate," and he hid them from the conquering forces.²⁵ Charles-Joseph's uncle, Field Marshal Prince Ferdinand de Ligne, had fought in battles at Ramillies, Oudenaarde, and Malplaquet, and he nurtured his nephew's love of war by having him spend time with the Ligne Dragoons.²⁶

Charles-Joseph's romantic fascination with war was justified by a life spent preparing for, fighting in, and writing about war. France was often the

²² Ibid.

²³ Ligne, *Nouveau Recueil de Lettres*, ed. Henri Lebasteur (Paris: 1926), 144. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 5.

²⁴ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 3.

²⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 53.

²⁶ Ibid.

enemy: as the largest country in Europe, France outnumbered the Holy Roman Empire by 5 million people; England by 19 million; and the southern Netherlands by 23 million.²⁷ Charles-Joseph's first experience with war was when he was five: the War of the Austrian Succession pitted France against Maria Theresia and her claim to the Habsburg inheritance, which included the southern Netherlands. In another five years Charles-Joseph would have lived through four local sieges, one of which ended with his father and uncle held prisoner by the French, and he heard the victory cannons in Fontenoy when the French triumphed over the Habsburgs and their British allies. Because of Hainaut's military history, Charles-Joseph and Europe shared an opinion about France: it was a country always in search of war.²⁸ This opinion was fostered by his uncle Ferdinand, who had spent so much of his life fighting the French, and Charles-Joseph wrote that he started and ended his life by hating France.²⁹

Though Charles-Joseph was expected to be a soldier and desired such an occupation, his childhood tutors also fostered in him a desire to be a great writer. As much as he studied and wished to emulate the great generals of the past, he also studied his own varied ancestry.³⁰ He was taught that his family was "one of the oldest, most illustrious and most generous in Europe, a race of heroes and

²⁷ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ Ligne, *Fragments*, I, 91. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 6.

³⁰ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 7.

generals descended from Charlemagne.”³¹ The antiquity of his ancestry was proven by the simplicity of the Ligne coat of arms: one diagonal pink *ligne* across a yellow background. The family motto, *Que res cumque cadunt, stat semper linea recta*, explicitly exemplified the family’s unflagging loyalty and implied devotion to the Empire.³² Charles-Joseph took what he learned and distilled it into his writings, impressing one of his tutors: “[Charles-Joseph] gave me some of his writings to read, above all a parallel between [Henri de la Tour d’Auvergne, Vicomte de] Turenne and Eugène [of Savoy]; one cannot conceive the vivacity, the talent and the audacity there was in them and it was startling how well written it was when it was done so casually.”³³

Charles-Joseph’s education was later entrusted to two of Claude’s pages, who were both staff-officers. Thus a noble education turned into a military one with yet another tutor having returned from wars in Bohemia and Bavaria imparting his knowledge of military matters. His father’s court included many veteran officers who had retired to estates in the Ligne provinces, and thus Charles-Joseph took an academic interest in the military careers of his father’s contemporaries as well as those of classical generals such as Alexander the Great

³¹ Leuridant, *Une education*, 40-42. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 7-8.

³² Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 8, 14. “When other things fall, the Ligne always stands straight.”

³³ Bibliothèque de l’Institut Mss 1651, Journal du Duc de Croÿ, November 1753, 20 September 1754, 15 November 1754. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 9.

and Julius Caesar.³⁴ He described himself as being “mad for heroism. Charles XII. [of Sweden] and [Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de] Condé kept me from sleeping. I even fancied I could do better than they.”³⁵ In spite of his ambition, he was denied a military position because his father wanted him educated, and he wrote a “Treatise on Arms” at the age of fifteen to prove that he was worthy of his family’s regiments:

No man was ever born who did not receive from Nature some dominant inclination which will lead him to success in one way or another. Unhappy he who allows it to escape him! He who was made, perhaps, to defend the Honour or the life of citizens is lost to the Country he was born to defend [...] The glory of arms sheds so dazzling a radiance that it conquers the soul at first glance [...] I find that glory to be that we *render services*, we *endure pains*, we *receive praise*. And what are the objects on which the Warrior’s eye is fixed as he renders service? His Prince, his Country, Justice.

It is impossible to utter that word “Country” without remembering what the ancient Romans, filled with the most sublime Virtue, did for theirs. [...] Heroes who sacrificed themselves for her good have left, no doubt, a great example to be followed, but do we need it? Is not love of Country innate within us? Does not the same bond that binds us to another attach us, each and all to the good of our common Mother?³⁶

The young prince already considered himself a part of the army, even if he had no formal appointment, because of his familiarity with his uncle’s dragoons. Even his young age was not a detriment: Turenne, who became a marshal general of France, “slept on a gun-carriage when he was ten; Hannibal swore eternal hatred to the Romans when he was nine.” Following the example of Hannibal, Charles-

³⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 55, 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 60.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 60-61.

Joseph swore eternal hatred to the French and made the Holy Roman Empire his mother.³⁷

Charles-Joseph and the Holy Roman Empire

Charles-Joseph was as aware of his Austrian allegiance as he was his European inheritance. He often referred to Austria as *nous* or *chez nous*, and his home stretched from Flanders through Austria to the French borders, including the modern countries of Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and western Romania.³⁸ The Holy Roman Empire's desire to expand rivaled that of France, and the Empire's ambition coupled with an inherent hatred of France provided Charles-Joseph with the opportunity to pursue his own dreams of military glory. Though Charles-Joseph himself primarily spoke French, he noted that his friend, who later became Emperor Joseph II, spoke French, German, Italian, Hungarian, Czech, and Latin, which typified the multinational nature of the Empire and its justification for expansion; Charles-Joseph would witness the acquisition of new German, Polish, Italian, and Moldavian provinces. Unlike France, Prussia, or Russia, who were bound by linguistic borders, the Holy Roman Empire was defined by its lack of national identity, and Germans, Czechs, Croats, and Hungarians declared their loyalty to

³⁷ Ibid., I, 61.

³⁸ Ligne, *En marge des reveries du maréchal de Saxe* (1919), 5, 65; Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires, Littéraires et Sentimentales* (Dresden: 1795-1811), X, 230. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 13.

Vienna rather than voiced nationalist sentiments.³⁹ The Princes de Ligne also embraced this cosmopolitan identity.

Charles-Joseph's allegiance to the Empire would be partially defined by Prussia and Austria's struggle for control of German provinces, starting with Frederick II's conquering of Silesia in 1741. Frederick had sought to gain the service of Charles-Joseph's father by soliciting a sign of allegiance in return for an estate in Westphalia, but Claude had retained his familial loyalty to Austria: "The house of the Prince de Ligne is accustomed to make still greater sacrifices to the august House of Austria, considering the inviolable fidelity which his ancestors have shown it for almost three centuries."⁴⁰ Like his father, Charles-Joseph would fight with Austria against both Prussia and France.

Charles-Joseph first arrived in Vienna with his father in 1751 and was immediately made a chamberlain by Emperor Francis I.⁴¹ He was very proud of this title—all chamberlains had to have eight noble ancestors on their father's side—and he signed everything he wrote with "Charles de Ligne, chamberlain."⁴² His position at court acquainted him with many of the Empire's great nobles, but he also befriended the many foreigners who came to Vienna. Because of the international make-up of the Empire, the Emperor had a great pool from which he

³⁹ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 14.

⁴⁰ M. Gauchard, *Etudes et Notices historiques concernant les Pays-Bas* (Brussels: 1890), III, 348-349; Leuridant, *Une education*, 16. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 14.

⁴¹ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 63.

⁴² Ligne, *Fragments*, I, 60. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 12.

could attract talent; perhaps the Holy Roman Empire's greatest jewel had been the half-French, half-Italian Prince Eugene of Savoy.⁴³

Four years after his arrival in Vienna, Charles-Joseph followed the family pattern of matrimony: he was married to Princess Francisca Xaviera of Liechtenstein. The Liechtensteins had been Austrian and Bohemian landowners for as long as the family de Ligne had owned land in Hainaut, and the arrangement provided Charles-Joseph a third connection to Austria after his status and his court appointment.⁴⁴ The Liechtenstein family also nurtured Charles-Joseph's interest in the military. Prince Joseph Wenzel, his wife's uncle, had spent much of his own money in developing the Austrian artillery, and he was known for the presents he made to sovereigns, his love for Austria, and his generous hospitality.⁴⁵ He was very much like Charles-Joseph's father in that way, conducting his affairs both on and off the battlefield with the same magnificence. He also made gifts of his military manuscripts and was more than willing to discuss military matters.⁴⁶

Serving in the court of Maria Theresia, Charles-Joseph developed much respect for the Empress and her preoccupation with the army, and it was "the only branch of state administration for which [Maria Theresia] harboured a real

⁴³ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 29.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁴⁵ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, V, vi. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 20.

⁴⁶ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, XXVIII, *passim*. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 20.

personal interest.”⁴⁷ She was called “mother of the camps”, and she in turn called the soldiers “my children.”⁴⁸ As much as she wished to consolidate her power over the nobles, she also wished to honor her soldiers, and in 1751 she allowed all army officers to attend court receptions regardless of their birth; the following year saw the foundation of the Wiener Neustadt Military Academy.⁴⁹ Austria had changed since the day of Charles-Joseph’s hero, Prince Eugene: the Austrian army boasted almost 250,000 soldiers, matching France and outnumbering Prussia.⁵⁰

As a young man, Charles-Joseph believed that “private interest, ambition, vengeance, the feelings of logic or resentment of the man or woman in favour which often affect decisions” were often mistaken for “profound political calculation. It is almost always personal factors which have started wars.”⁵¹ These were the “great causes of events throughout the centuries.”⁵² He in turn was forced to bite back his own childhood animosity when Austria formed an unprecedented alliance with France. Maria Theresa wished to recover Silesia, and

⁴⁷ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 22.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

⁴⁹ Christopher Duffy, *The Army of Maria Theresa* (London: 1977), 43-44; cf. A. von Arneth, ed., *Maria Theresia und Joseph II. Ihre correspondenz* (Vienna: 1867), II, 104, Joseph to Leopold, 1 January 1776. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 22.

⁵⁰ M.S. Anderson, *War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime 1618-1789* (London: 1988), 160. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 22.

⁵¹ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, II, 42-43. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 22.

⁵² Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, XIX, 28. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 22.

Louis XV harbored much hostility against Frederick II because, as Charles-Joseph believed, Frederick had made some impolitic remarks about Louis's mistress, Madame de Pompadour.⁵³ Thus personal hatred united two common enemies, and the Seven Years' War began with Frederick's refusal to wait for war to be brought to him: the Prussian army promptly invaded Saxony in 1756. Though he had had no formal military training, Charles-Joseph became a captain in his father's regiment, the Ligne Infantry.⁵⁴ He kept a diary during the war, which was published forty years later.⁵⁵

The army was just as international as the Holy Roman Empire: "No other army of the time could have produced a column of regiments chattering variously in German, Czech, French, Flemish, Raeto-Romance, Italian, Magyar and Serbo-Croatian, and all passing in review under the eyes of a general who was cursing to himself in Gaelic."⁵⁶ Within the Ligne Infantry, Charles-Joseph would find himself commanding a mixture of Belgians, Germans, and Hungarians.⁵⁷

⁵³ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 23.

⁵⁴ Vicomte Charles Terlinden, 'Le Prince de Ligne et les grandes guerres de son temps,' *Annales Prince de Ligne* (Brussels: 1920-1938), XVI, 1935, 183. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 23.

⁵⁵ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, IV, 215-216; Pierre Mouriau de Meulenaker, "Le prince de Ligne et les memoires du Comte de Bussy Rabutin," *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne* (Brussels: 1986), IX, 86, 98. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24.

⁵⁶ Duffy, *Army of Maria Theresa*, 13. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24. Duffy trusts Charles-Joseph's works as the best contemporary sources on the army of Maria Theresa.

⁵⁷ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, XIV, 59. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24.

Charles-Joseph found that the excitement of war and the passion he felt for the military was superior to what he felt for his many love affairs, and he thought victory was a woman who needed to be abducted.⁵⁸ He quoted poetry while fighting battles, and when there were no battles, he would fire his cannons into the midst of the enemy.⁵⁹ His actions in war mirrored the passion he showed in his writings about war. He saw no point to being a soldier if one did not read books on war and venerate the soldiers who had passed before him; it was dishonorable to wear the uniform of a soldier if the desire to see war was not the most consuming feeling one had ever felt. Anyone who was not excited to travel to new fields of battles, anyone who was not disappointed that rain canceled practice maneuvers, should resign his commission “to some young man such as I wish him to be,—a young man mad for the art of [...] Eugène; one who will ever be convinced that he must do his duty trebly to do it passably.”⁶⁰

Charles-Joseph’s Austria was as triumphant as the Holy Roman Empire of Prince Eugene. In 1757 Charles-Joseph fought at the Battle of Kolin where Frederick II was defeated and Bohemia saved from Prussian occupation. The Ligne Dragoons, the regiment of Charles-Joseph’s uncle Prince Ferdinand, charged the Prussian infantry and defeated them, leaving Frederick to plead to his

⁵⁸ Ligne, *Mélanges Militaires*, XIV, 23, 47, ‘Mon Journal de la Guerre de Sept Ans, Campagne de 1757 et 1758.’ Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24.

⁵⁹ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 71.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 66.

own generals, “But my generals, do you not wish to attack?”⁶¹ This did little to rally the defeated soldiers, and Frederick fled the battlefield. Charles-Joseph’s cousin, Charles Alexander of Lorraine, was later defeated at the Battle of Leuthen, but Charles-Joseph took command when two superior officers were too busy fighting over precedence. This ability to command garnered him a promotion to lieutenant colonel.⁶² The next year he was promoted to colonel and put in command of the Ligne Infantry.⁶³

While looking back on his first campaigns, Charles-Joseph believed that he could not have been prouder of himself if he had been the sole winner of his battles rather than a contributor to the victories.⁶⁴ He exhorted newcomers to war to “be you of the blood of heroes, be you of the race of demigods, if glory does not intoxicate you continually do not stand beneath her banners. Say not that you have a liking for your profession; if that cold word suffices you, embrace another [...] Love the profession of arms before all else; love it with passion—yes, passion is the word.”⁶⁵

Charles-Joseph had very particular opinions on the ideal soldier: no matter how hard he worked, how loyally he served, how blamelessly he performed his duties, or how much he might know about the art of war, he was only a copy, not

⁶¹ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 25.

⁶² Terlinden, ‘Le prince de Ligne,’ 184. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 25.

⁶³ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 25.

⁶⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 61.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 66.

an artist like Charles-Joseph's heroes. The perfect soldier was always aspiring to a new ideal. Soldiering was not merely a necessary duty in times of war; it was a vocation, a life-long occupation, a dream. Charles-Joseph was disgusted by "lukewarm" soldiers who served only to gain favor and blinded sovereigns to the scars of honorable veterans: "True consideration belongs to the truly brave, and not to those who, pretending to serve, rob the real soldier of his recompense."⁶⁶

Charles-Joseph's longing for war bordered on obsession: "enthusiasm must go to our heads, honour must electrify our hearts, the fire of victory must shine in our eyes, our souls must be lifted up as we uplift the banner of glory."⁶⁷ In a century of wars that would wipe out a greater percentage of the European population than would be wiped out in the next century, one might find Charles-Joseph's words over-romanticized, exaggerated, and immature. He ignored the horrors of war and the dangers, even worshiping his father's bravery instead of fearing for his safety when he was a young child. Careful consideration must be made for the environment and the atmosphere in which he was raised where the hated French were more glorified than a beloved Austria, a monarchy that rivaled that of any other European ruler.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Memoirs and Eugene of Savoy

Charles-Joseph began to regret a day that passed without reading or writing.⁶⁸ As much as he desired to serve Austria with his sword, his pen could do just as much for Austrian greatness. He mocked the French for their perpetual self-aggrandizement: “There is not one little success in the French Armies which does not have thirty Historians... our Emperors do not have Historiographers.” It was for this reason that Austrian generals such as Eugene of Savoy were little-known in comparison to French generals like Turenne and Condé; French defeats were more celebrated than Austrian victories.⁶⁹ Charles-Joseph vowed to give Austria a voice in the annals of military history.

In his memoirs, Charles-Joseph related that his first memory was a desire to become a second Prince Eugene of Savoy, who was denied a military commission in France and so became a general in the army of the Holy Roman Empire. His second thought was that “a war was being fought; and it turned my head.”⁷⁰ Though Charles-Joseph idolized Eugene, he was not so far removed from Eugene’s glorious past: Eugene had died only a year after Charles-Joseph’s birth, and indeed it was Eugene’s victories over the French armies during the War of the Spanish Succession that had contributed to the southern Netherlands staying

⁶⁸ Château d’Antoing, manuscripts, *Mes Livres rouges*, IX (4). Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24.

⁶⁹ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 24.

⁷⁰ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 51.

under Austrian rule.⁷¹ Charles-Joseph also idolized other generals such as Condé, known as *le grand Condé* for his exploits in the Thirty Years' War, and Charles XII of Sweden, who was both a skilled king and a skilled strategist. The young Charles-Joseph's dreams of war were reflected in his first portrait where the seven-year-old prince stands before Beloeil dressed for war in an eastern-European uniform; he carries a sword and gun.⁷²

Eugene of Savoy was not unworthy of Charles-Joseph's hero worship. He was credited with stopping the westward expansion of the Ottomans, saving the Holy Roman Empire from French conquest, and being a great patron of the arts.⁷³ No personal writings of Eugene survived even in Charles-Joseph's time, and an official biographer was not appointed until one hundred years after the prince's death. Thus only Eugene's public life, as seen through records of his military conquests and artistic patronage, was known to Charles-Joseph and other Austrian subjects.

Eugene, like Charles-Joseph and many other nobles in Vienna, had a mixed European heritage. Eugene's mother, Olympia Mancini, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, was brought from Rome to make a good marriage in France; his father,

⁷¹ Basil Guy, 'Le Prince et le Maréchal: Ligne et les Rêveries du Maréchal de Saxe,' *Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne* (Brussels, 1986), I, 20. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 5.

⁷² Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 5.

⁷³ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, ix.

Eugene Maurice, was the Prince of Savoy-Carignan.⁷⁴ The House of Savoy encompassed the areas of the western Alps, southeast France, and northwest Italy. In spite of the mix of ethnicities, its loyalty stood with the Holy Roman Empire, and the Emperor had given Eugene Maurice the dukedom of Savoy and an Imperial curate over Piedmont.⁷⁵ Olympia had been brought up with Louis XIV, and they were inseparable; some even urged the young king to marry her.⁷⁶ Once Louis and Olympia were married, each to other people, she solidified her position at court and sought to retain her influence over the king, resorting to fabricating rumors and even involving herself with astrology and black magic, a scandal that led to her banishment from France.⁷⁷

Eugene had been groomed for a life spent in the church by the choice of Louis XIV, but he desired a military career. Having been denied that because he was considered weak, he fled to Vienna in the company of Prince Louis Armand Conti, son-in-law to Louis XIV and a nephew of Louis de Bourbon, the Grand Condé, France's great general. Eugene's brother, Louis Julius, had been serving in the Imperial army for a year, commanding a regiment of dragoons, but he had been killed in a battle against the Turks. In order to avenge his brother's death and defy Louis, Eugene sought to take command of his brother's regiment, and he and

⁷⁴ Max Braubach, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Biographie* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1963), I, 27-28.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 21-22.

⁷⁶ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 2-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

Louis Armand left Paris.⁷⁸ Eugene's desertion of the French court would have gone unnoticed, but Louis could not let his son-in-law serve the Habsburgs. The two princes were caught in Frankfurt. Louis Armand was convinced to return to Paris, and Eugene went to Passau, where Leopold I had fled to escape the Turkish siege in Vienna.⁷⁹

The command of Louis Julius's regiment had already been passed to another, so Eugene had to be satisfied with another position in the Imperial army. The Duchy of Lorraine linked Charles-Joseph with the dead general he had spent his life studying: Eugene's first position was in a regiment under the command of Duke Charles IV of Lorraine while Charles-Joseph fought under a grandson, Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine, statholder of the Netherlands, a title Eugene had once held.

Many of the Holy Roman Empire's great military leaders were not Austrian by birth but by allegiance. Eugene became one of the many cosmopolitan men of whom Leopold I could boast. Eugene's request to become a subject of the Holy Roman Empire reflected his unhappy upbringing in France and appealed to Leopold's desire for allegiance:

I confess frankly to have reached this decision only after having tried to follow my ancestor's example of serving my country and the Bourbon Court with all my heart, and only after having sought service in vain many times under the French Crown. But my mother's fate prevented me having a career in the French Army although nothing could ever be proved against her or me. I assure you, most merciful Emperor, of my constant loyalty, and that I will devote all my strength, all my courage, and

⁷⁸ Braubach, *Prinz Eugen*, I, 91.

⁷⁹ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 12. See also McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 11.

if need be, my last drop of blood, to the service of your Imperial Majesty, and to the welfare and development of your great House.⁸⁰

Eugene gained the command of his brother's dragoons after he had defended Vienna from the Turks. After earning accolades and promotions in the War of the Spanish Succession, Eugene also fought in another war against the Ottomans and in the War of the Polish Succession. He rose through the ranks of the army, became president of the war council in 1703, viceroy of Milan in 1707, and governor of the southern Netherlands from 1716 to 1724.⁸¹ He fought in seventeen campaigns and was wounded nine times; he fought in the Balkans and in Hungary against the Turks, and he fought the French in Italy, France, and the Netherlands.⁸² He was in the field until six months before his death, and on 21 April 1736 Emperor Charles VI made an entry in his diary: "About eight-thirty [in the morning] news that Prince Eugen of Savoy, who has been in the employ of my house since '83, since '97 has achieved great exploits as commander in the field, in 1703 became president of the war council, since 1711 has been most useful to me in everything, has been found dead in his bed after a long illness. God be merciful to his soul."⁸³

Unlike Eugene, who did not leave a written legacy, Charles-Joseph published his papers in 34 volumes from 1795 to 1811, titling them *Mélanges*

⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁸¹ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 67-73, 101-102, 180-187.

⁸² Friedrich Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), 228.

⁸³ Ibid., 231.

Militaires, Littéraires et Sentimentales, and he followed with the *New Collection of Letters* by Field Marshal the Prince de Ligne in 1812; many other collections were published in his lifetime. One catalogue mentions six volumes of the *Posthumous Works of the Prince de Ligne* printed in Vienna in 1817, yet none of these volumes seem to exist.⁸⁴ Charles-Joseph's *Mélanges*, however, indicates that they had been written for and, as part of an ancient tradition, bequeathed to his regiment with the stipulation that they should not be published until those mentioned had died. It was not until 1845 that Charles-Joseph's grandson published two volumes, "Fragments of the History of My Life" and "My Posthumous Scattered Thoughts".⁸⁵

Charles-Joseph's published works were not restricted to his own memoirs. In 1809, a work was published that harkened back to his early fascination with famous generals, *The Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy: Written by Himself*, which at first glance appears to be Eugene's own work. The preface begins with the provenance of the alleged manuscript with this princess giving that count a manuscript, which reached the hands of a bookseller. The prince's own preface follows: "There are, as I have been told, many Italian and German manuscripts

⁸⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs, Letters, Miscellaneous Papers*, I, 39-40.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 40-41.

respecting me, which I have neither read nor written.”⁸⁶ The very manuscript this prefaced is one that was not written by the Prince of Savoy.

The fake memoirs cover the major points of Eugene’s military career from the 1680s through the 1730s. One translator’s preface about the manuscript in “the Prince’s own hand” leads the reader to believe that the manuscript had been found in the 1750s, some twenty years after Eugene’s death, and had been circulating among family and acquaintances for fifty years before finding its way to George Conrad Waldeburg, a bookseller and printer at Klagenfurt in Austria. It is the acknowledgement of Waldeburg that validates the origin and the existence of Eugene’s memoirs, but the translator himself believes them to be real:

There is perceptible, however, in the style of the Prince, a military air which coincides well with his actions and character. Another proof of the authenticity of this manuscript, is the tautologies of an old man; the repetitions, which an author could not commit; the negligences, which do not belong to a man of letters: while there is nothing which does not agree with the soldier: a tone which would ill become another, but which is pardonable in a military man; not always excellent, and sometimes too familiar. His style, such as it is, is clear and concise, like his conversation, as the Prussian general, Lentulus told me, who had retired to Neufchatel, where he died at a very advanced age. He served under him in his last campaign on the Rhine, whither he accompanied the great Frederick, then Prince Royal. These are sufficient facts, dates, and names, all of which may be testified: mine only shall be wanting.⁸⁷

In spite of the claims made in Charles-Joseph’s mock autobiography of Eugene, some editions with the Prince de Ligne’s name attached and some without, little of Eugene’s papers survived his death. Eugene’s niece, who

⁸⁶ Charles Joseph Ligne, *The Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy: Written by Himself*, trans. William Mudford (New York: Ezra Sargeant, 1811; reprint, Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2009), 17.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

inherited his estate, spent sixteen years dispersing his collections and palaces.⁸⁸

Eugene left no memoirs or personal writings, and what correspondence still existed was often terse and restricted to military matters. Eugene's legacy lay in the collections of others.

Though the manuscript contains testimonies that lend a certain amount of legitimacy and authenticity to Charles-Joseph's memoirs of Eugene, history suggests that Charles-Joseph had no intention of his work ever being considered the actual work of Eugene. In 1742 Eléazar Mauvillon published *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy*. While Mauvillon's biography begins with Eugene's birth, both contain notations starting in the year 1683, the year Eugene left Paris for Vienna; Charles-Joseph ended his work two years before Mauvillon's concludes with Eugene's death.

In a review of Max Braubach's *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Biographie*, the author noted that as early as 1829, the collected works of Charles-Joseph included "Mémoires du Prince Eugène," yet authors as late as the 1950s used the mock autobiography in their bibliographies. One even commented that it was "interesting, but unfortunately too brief; Eugene fought better than he wrote."⁸⁹ Though Eugene's official biography, written by Alfred von Arneth, was based on selective archival research, a later publication of 21 volumes on

⁸⁸ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 243.

⁸⁹ Paul R. Sweet, "Prince Eugene of Savoy: Two New Biographies," review of *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen, Eine Biographie*, by Max Braubach, and *Prince Eugene of Savoy*, by Nicholas Henderson, *The Journal of Modern History* 38, no. 2 (June 1966), available from JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu> (accessed 13 October 2009), 181.

Eugene's military campaigns included both original documents and historical fabrications.⁹⁰ Thus Charles-Joseph's *Memoirs*, though a work of historical fiction, were no more flawed than the scholarly sources that succeeded it, and as a commentary the fictionalized memoir lends validity to the exploits of the Holy Roman Empire.

Eugene spent his last months recuperating from a life spent in the field, but Charles-Joseph killed himself in his lust for court. His grandson wrote of his last days that "he greatly tired himself: visits, staircases, kings, the court corridors, fêtes where he stayed four or five hours on his legs, and above all the desire to be everywhere and not to admit that he was tired may have contributed to his illness."⁹¹ In the delirium that preceded his death, Charles-Joseph believed that he was conducting plays, both on the battlefield and in the theatre, and he uttered his last words: "*C'est fait.*"⁹² His funeral was a state affair: detachments of infantry and grenadier regiments carrying flags bordered with black ribbon accompanied his coffin, which had been decorated with his hat, sword, baton, and medals. A black knight, symbolizing the tradition of chivalry and the Austrian sense of ceremony, escorted the prince to his grave. Austrian, Russian, Prussian, Bavarian, French, and British officers made up his entourage. His epitaph connected him to the Roman generals he had studied and to the Holy Roman Empire he had served:

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 260.

⁹² Ibid., 261. "It is done."

“To Charles Lamoral Prince of Ligne, general in the army, Praetorian Prefect, a brave man, a famous writer. Born on 23 May 1735, died 13 December 1814.”⁹³

Unlike the perceived Eugene, Charles-Joseph wrote as well as he fought, and he had retired to Vienna for a life spent writing in the Imperial court. His family heritage and his own travels meant that Charles-Joseph considered himself to have seven fatherlands—the Holy Roman Empire, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Austria, Poland, and Russia—and he could write on the politics and culture of each with equal competence.⁹⁴ He was not just a prince in the Netherlands; he was a prince of Europe. His legacy was not merely dependent upon his ancestry: his service as a field marshal in the Austrian army and his writings reveal him to be a man of his day, enmeshed in the politics of an Enlightenment-era Europe and the passions of the royal courts.⁹⁵ He was as much responsible for his cosmopolitan existence as was his family, those uncles who fought tirelessly on behalf of the Holy Roman Empire, those bastard sons who were proud to bear the Ligne name, even if illegitimately, those grandparents who died during recreational hunts on the family estate.

Writing about both his time and a generation past, Charles-Joseph left some insight into a Europe that was evolving from a time that emphasized the divine right of kings into an age when nationalism was rising even as borders were blurring. He modeled his life after that of Eugene of Savoy, and the

⁹³ Ibid., 261-262.

⁹⁴ Ligne, *Fragments*, I, 116. Qtd. in Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 2.

⁹⁵ Mansel, *Prince of Europe*, 2.

European theatre offered him a fitting stage. Europe was overwhelmed by wars of succession that turned into struggles over land, and the life of Charles-Joseph was not so different from the life of Eugene. Both men were welcomed by the Holy Roman Emperors, and both made their home in the court of Vienna. Charles-Joseph, however, refused to leave his reputation in the hands of others, and he immortalized his own life in his memoirs and saw that they were published. He was not just a second Eugene, who devoted his life to the army and little else. He was a new Eugene, one who could wield a pen as well as a sword.

Chapter 3

LORDS OF THE FIRST QUALITY: THE HISTORY AND MEMOIRS OF PRINCE EUGENE

The “Preface to the Weimar Edition (1809)” of the *Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy*, begins with provenance of the manuscript given by the Princess of Hildburghausen, the niece and heir of Eugene of Savoy, to the Count of Canales, “a very amiable, and well instructed man, and one who always sought to be more so.”⁹⁶ The Count of Canales documented the following scenario within his papers: “The Princess of Hildbourghausen, after having related to him a variety of things respecting her uncle, said to him, ‘As to warlike matters, you must excuse me from them. Here is a small abridgement, written partly in the Prince’s own hand, in the period between his last campaign, and his death. Do not keep it: read it with attention and return it to me again.’”⁹⁷ According to the editor, the manuscript “was still in his hands, when the Princess died, about the year 1752 or 1753. For a long time there was nothing said about it; he lent it, and it was returned to him.”⁹⁸ The manuscript was then passed on to the Count of Guasco, a quarter-master-general visiting the Count of Canales: “I will not show you the Prince in his morning gown; but I will display him to you in his helmet

⁹⁶ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 7-8.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

and cuirass.”⁹⁹ From the Princess of Hildburghausen to the Count of Canales to the Count of Guasco to his aide-to-camp to his daughter to the editor: thus “the reader now begins to see the genealogy of what I have printed, and how it has happened to be given to the world.”¹⁰⁰

Though “only the conversations which [Eugene] had with various individuals, the reflexions, and the last year, are in his own hand-writing,” the manuscript could be authenticated by comparing his “long and small hand” to his signature in the Imperial Council of War in Vienna.¹⁰¹ Thus the detailed origins of the manuscript and the style of writing presented this publication as the words and thoughts of Prince Eugene of Savoy. The prefaces of both the German and French publishers, as well as the preface of the prince, make it clear that though the punctuation and words were chosen for readability, the manuscript itself, the basis for the German, French, and English publications, was written by Prince Eugene of Savoy.

Though many Italian and German manuscripts, as well as French and English ones, were written, they were not written by Prince Eugene of Savoy but by Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne some years after Eugene’s death. As previously stated, Ligne’s contemporaries would have had little doubt that this publication was a creative reinterpretation of Eléazar Mauvillon’s *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy*. The texts were so similar as to sometimes have

⁹⁹ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.

as little difference as the use of the personal pronoun over the third-person. While Ligne's work is highly derivative of Mauvillon's, the two Eugenes, one published for the public and the other hidden away in private papers, sometimes clash, each holding different insight to a man who, while famous, few ever knew.

The Hôtel de Soissons, Paris

“Some future historians, good or bad, will perhaps take the trouble to enter into the details of my youth, of which, I scarcely recollect any thing. They will certainly speak of my mother; somewhat too intriguing indeed, driven from the court, exiled from Paris, and suspected, I believe, of sorcery, by persons who were not, themselves, very great conjurors.”¹⁰² Eugene was certainly aware of his mother's scandal as he was sixteen when his mother fled Paris because of her involvement with magic and love potions in *L'affaire des poisons*. Eugene's father had passed away six years before, in 1673, and Eugene was raised by his paternal grandmother, Marie of Bourbon, and her daughter Princess Louise.¹⁰³ Historians, even the amateur ones, would also tell “how I quitted [France], my heart swelling with enmity against Louis XIV, who refused me a company of horse, because, said he, I was of too delicate a constitution [...]”¹⁰⁴ Louis was grateful for his departure, and Eugene swore never to return to France without a weapon in his hand. “I have kept my word,” wrote Ligne's Eugene, and so

¹⁰² Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁰³ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 9-10. Louise's son, Louis of Baden, would become one of Eugene's closest friends and mentors in the Imperial army.

¹⁰⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 18.

Eugene had.¹⁰⁵ The context of this statement was after a successful French raid when Eugene remarked to a fellow soldier, “Did I not declare that I would never re-enter *France*, but with a Sword in my Hand? *Lewis* banished the Countess of *Soissons* my Mother, and I have now driven from their Houses and Settlements some Thousands of his Subjects.”¹⁰⁶

Eugene would eventually lose contact with his family. His youngest sister died in childhood, and the other two, Marie Jeanne Baptiste and Louise Philiberte, led lives full of scandals that would equal their mother’s. Eugene’s childhood home, the Hôtel de Soissons, was closed by municipal authorities because it had been turned into a gambling den and brothel by the sisters. Marie was alleged to have born a bastard a year and be unable to name the father, and later she became the subject of a duel, which caused her banishment from Paris. Three of Eugene’s brothers also died unmarried, including Louis Julius; it was his Imperial regiment that came under Eugene’s command. Emanuel had died in 1676. Philippe, who had been exiled from France because of his “adventurous life as priest, soldier, and Venetian sea-captain, wandered about Europe, became involved in England in a duel over his aunt, and in an affair with the Duchess of Portsmouth, and eventually died of smallpox in 1693.”¹⁰⁷ Eugene’s eldest brother, Louis Thomas, was a soldier in the French army until a falling out with Louis XIV, after which

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Eléazar Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy* (London: Looking Glass, 1742), accessed 1 December 2009, <http://books.google.com>, 56.

¹⁰⁷ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 49-50.

he traveled to Vienna to ask for a command under his brother. He was the only child in the family to marry and procreate, and after his death in 1702 Eugene took on his nephews and niece as his heirs.¹⁰⁸ In spite of the lack of his own children, Eugene “cherished the hope of bequeathing to a member of his family and hence to history both his name and the undivided inheritance of his elaborately amassed property.”¹⁰⁹

Though Eugene had suffered from the nickname *Little Abbot*, it was not an empty title. Much responsibility lay in an ecclesiastical upbringing, and much power attached to the running of an abbey, but Eugene did not have the character for the Church, not because the palace gossip said he “was more formed for pleasure than piety”¹¹⁰ or because Louis XIV believed that the “young Prince appeared very unfit for the Fatigues of War, on Account of the Delicacy of his Constitution” but because “his martial Character” made him desire that “the Ecclesiastical Benefices his Majesty had conferred on him [...] be exchanged for some Employment in the Army, which would put him in a Condition of doing his Majesty more Service.”¹¹¹ To compound the insult, other princes living in Paris were allowed military commissions. Eugene “cared neither for the success of the church, nor of the court. I had enough of society; but I wished to follow the

¹⁰⁸ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 52.

¹⁰⁹ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 49.

¹¹⁰ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 18.

¹¹¹ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 3.

war.”¹¹² Spurred both by the desire to command a regiment and to avenge his brother’s death, he left Paris on 26 July 1683 and journeyed to Vienna, the seat of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, which was under siege by the Turks.

The House of Habsburg, Vienna

Eugene’s ties to the Habsburgs transcended his brother’s service and the cosmopolitanism of the Holy Roman Empire: his grandfather Thomas Francis, the founder of the Carignan line of the House of Savoy, was the grandson of Philip II of Spain by the Infanta Catherine, and as such was a great-grandson of Emperor Charles V.¹¹³ Eugene became attached to Prince Louis of Baden, a cousin on his father’s side, and the Duke of Lorraine, who used Eugene to convey “orders into the hottest parts of the battle. I had been told that the Duke of Lorraine never employed, during the time of action, any but generals to convey or even to alter an order, if he needed it. I was duly sensible of the honour therefore, and he appeared satisfied with me.”¹¹⁴ Eugene was not the only French prince to volunteer for the Imperial army: “Voluntiers came in from all Parts of Christendom, to learn the Art of War, in opposing these Infidels. Among others the Princes of *Conti* and *Roche-sur-Yon*, and of the Royal Blood of *France*; the Prince of *Turenne*, Nephew of the famous Marshal of that Name; and many young Lords of the first Quality, obtained Leave, on this Occasion, to make a Trial of

¹¹² Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 19.

¹¹³ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 12.

¹¹⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 19-21.

their Valour.”¹¹⁵ Prince Louis Armand Conti had certainly attempted to accompany Eugene, but his relationship with his father-in-law, Louis XIV, took precedence over his friendship with the Savoyard prince.

Though Eugene would spend the rest of his life fighting on behalf of the Holy Roman Empire against the French, very few battles took place in the Empire or in France. Battles were not fought in contested territories but rather in areas that were easily reached by roads and waterways and that were able to produce enough to sustain large standing armies. Wars between western crowns were often fought in five main areas, including the previously mentioned “cockpit of Europe,” which encompassed northeastern France and the Netherlands (home of Charles-Joseph de Ligne) as entry points to Paris, Versailles, and Germany, and northern Italy, which was an entry point towards Vienna and southern France and where Eugene spent many years.¹¹⁶

When the Turks were defeated, the Duke of Lorraine wrote to the Emperor that Eugene “contributed the most towards the execution of that design,”¹¹⁷ and he gave a “high Encomium of Prince *Eugene*’s Conduct and Bravery, and attributes to him much of the Honour of the Day.”¹¹⁸ Prince Louis of Baden, “an excellent Judge of military Virtue, and who that day observed the Conduct of our Hero, was

¹¹⁵ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 4-5.

¹¹⁶ David Chandler, *Marlborough as Military Commander* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973), 67.

¹¹⁷ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 22.

¹¹⁸ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 11.

charmed to see how cool and serene he appeared in the Heat of Action.”¹¹⁹

Eugene was presented to Emperor Leopold I by the Prince of Baden: “Sir, this young *Savoyard*, whom I have the Honour to introduce, will in Time equal the greatest Captains.”¹²⁰ The Emperor “loaded him with Caresses, and already foresaw that he would one Day be the Right Hand of the *Austrian* Family, and the Restorer of Glory to the whole *German* Empire. The Empress testified no less Esteem for his Person: And *Eugene*, for his Part, appeared so affable in the midst of Favour, that he was beloved by all the Courtiers, and even by the Ministers themselves.”¹²¹ Eugene became a favorite of the court in Vienna, and “it cannot detract from his natural Modesty, to say he was well pleased with this growing Reputation.”¹²² He was made colonel of a regiment of dragoons on 11 December 1683 at the age of twenty;¹²³ the next year he was promoted to major-general, and in 1688 he was made a lieutenant-general with the promise of further promotions, “so rapidly did he advance in military Dignities!”¹²⁴ He was only twenty-five years old.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 19. See also Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 27. “It was then the Prince of Baden, taking me by the hand, said to the Emperor, ‘Sire, here is a young Savoyard—.’ The rest of my modesty forbids me to repeat.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 13.

¹²² Ibid., 19.

¹²³ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 21.

¹²⁴ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 33. See also Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 32.

In 1691 Eugene found himself fighting the French at the Siege of Cuni during the Nine Years' War (1688-1687). Either "indiscreetly eager"¹²⁵ or "so engaged in this Action" that he sustained minor wounds, Eugene found himself "at the Point of being shot through the Head by a *French Trooper*."¹²⁶ One of the dragoons under his command shot the Frenchman before the Frenchman could shoot Eugene; both Mauvillon and Ligne related that, though Eugene rewarded the dragoon, the dragoon was more pleased with saving his general than he was with his commendation.¹²⁷

Eugene once again found himself battling the Turks, this time at the Battle of Zenta in 1697. The prince received a letter from the Emperor ordering him not to pursue battle under any circumstances. Because he "should have sacrificed a part of my troops and my own honour" if he complied, Eugene ignored this Imperial directive.¹²⁸ Mauvillon gave greater detail of the incident: "I have chosen to insert the Substance of [Eugene's] Narrative, as it was published by Authority, and shall only add to it a few Particulars: As, that the Prince of *Vaudemont* was sent with an Account of it to the Emperor, in a Letter written with Prince *Eugene's* own Hand; and that the Stile of this Letter is so remarkably modest, as to discover the true Character of the Hero who wrote it, and who ascribes hardly

¹²⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 40.

¹²⁶ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 50.

¹²⁷ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 40. See also Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 50.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

any Thing to himself.”¹²⁹ The letter in question was a response to Eugene’s desire to attack at the first opportunity. Mauvillon related that Eugene was surprised by the injunction but that the Imperial army had been hit by sickness and the reserve troops depleted. The chance that Eugene would be defeated in battle and thus lose more soldiers was not worth the risk, and “his Majesty thought it more prudent to save what was left, than to hazard the Loss of the whole.” Though Eugene was aware of the reasons for the Emperor’s order, and “knew better than any Man how far it was well-grounded,” he still believed in his resolution, that he did not think it proper to retreat when he had already come so far. Thus he concealed the Emperor’s order, “in Hopes that the Event would justify his Conduct.”¹³⁰

Eugene proved himself in battle and wrote to the Emperor of his victory. When he was summoned to Vienna to give his account of the successful campaign, he reserved the right to deliver to the Emperor the seal of the sultan, surrendered in battle as the spoils of war.¹³¹ Both Ligne and Mauvillon gave great detail about Eugene’s reception in Vienna, beginning with the fact that Eugene believed he would be received well on account of his glorious victory (“a hundred times better than I had ever been yet” according to Ligne’s Eugene). Instead Leopold I received him “in the coldest manner; more austere than ever, he heard me without replying by a single word. I saw, immediately, that I had been circumvented during my absence; and that, while I was getting rid of the Turks,

¹²⁹ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 91.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

the good Christians at Vienna were endeavouring to get rid of me.”¹³² Ligne left out the details of this audience extant in Mauvillon’s narrative, how Eugene’s rivals at court emphasized Eugene’s disobedience while the Austrians were calling him the “Deliverer of the Empire”. Leopold, in hindsight, “had much of that Haughtiness so natural to Sovereigns, which made him jealous of his own Authority,” and he was thus made to focus on Eugene’s defiance rather than any subsequent accomplishment. Even though Eugene came bearing the Great Seal of the Ottoman Empire, he had some difficulty gaining an audience with the Emperor, “yet with a Boldness worthy of his Innocence, he gave an Account of what had been done, and how Affairs had been left in Hungary.” The Emperor neither praised nor punished him.¹³³

In spite of the Emperor’s cold reception, Eugene had yet to face the consequences of his actions. He was confined to the city, rumored to be commanded to make an appearance before the Imperial Council of War. In the meantime, he was demanded to surrender his sword. “ ‘There is the Sword,’ said our Hero, ‘which his Majesty demands: It is still reeking with the Blood of his Enemies; and I consent never to resume it, except to employ it in his Service.’” While the Imperial court debated Eugene’s merits, the citizenry expressed their allegiance by offering him a guard, which he “modestly refuted, ‘in full Assurance,’ as he told them, ‘that the Emperor would soon distinguish Truth from Calumny, and render him that Justice which he could not help thinking was due

¹³² Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 53.

¹³³ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 94-95.

his service.” Eugene was absolved and reappointed commander in Hungary. Furthermore, he received a secret commission “signed with [the Emperor’s] own Hand, to act as [Eugene] thought proper, without being accountable for the Success.” Eugene was also permitted to grant promotions and commendations to those who “chiefly distinguished themselves under his Highness, and were most strongly attached to his Person.”¹³⁴

Ligne played on the indignity felt by Eugene when he was not immediately received as the hero at the Battle of Zenta. He described Eugene’s statement upon the relinquishment of his sword as half “a gasconade, and the other half a base resignation.” He was enraged to be put under house arrest upon his trial “for disobedience, and for having performed a bold and hazardous action,” and that he might lose his life should he be found guilty. Though these details do not appear in Mauvillon’s biography, they provide a more viable argument for why the citizens of Vienna felt the need to protect Eugene while he was under house arrest, “to prevent me from being removed, in case it was attempted to carry me to my examination, as had been talked of.” In spite of their zeal, Eugene persuaded them to remain loyal to the Empire. Ligne posited that because the city was so small that the Emperor would have heard of this outpouring of support for Eugene, Leopold returned his sword “whether from fear or repentance,” and upon accepting it Eugene demanded full authority over his troops so that he would no longer be “exposed to the malice of [Leopold I’s] generals and ministers.” It was “poor” Leopold that gave Eugene unconditional

¹³⁴ Ibid., 95.

power over his troops. Ligne interjected that Eugene condemned Leopold “for not feeling that I merited a more signal of reparation,” and he denied that Eugene felt “that, of the three Emperors whom I had served, the first had been my father, the second my brother, and the third my master. Pleasing mark of parental fondness, to cut off my head for having saved his empire!”¹³⁵ Thus Ligne created a character of Eugene who was not just a heroic servant but a real power, one who was hindered by the Holy Roman Emperor and ostensibly only cared for the Empire so long as his successes on its behalf were acknowledged. Eugene quickly grew tired with the court officials and was equally critical of the Emperor: “No one thinks of anything but eating, drinking and gambling; they trouble themselves about nothing else... The tragic circumstances in the Empire certainly disturbed the Emperor for the space of an hour. But luckily on that same day there was a procession, and he forgot anything else.”¹³⁶ Eugene had no time for court squabbles or petty politics, not if he were to preserve the power of the Empire.

The Question of the Spanish Succession

The two narratives take a sharp split in 1700, the year Charles II of Spain died and left Europe embroiled in war. Ligne focused on Eugene’s desire to outfit his palace, Belvedere. While in Vienna, Eugene purchased books for his library and the occasional art piece, “some fine cabinet pictures, and some drawings not

¹³⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 53-55. See also Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 340. “His Meaning was, that *Leopold* had taken the same Care of his Fortune as of a Son’s, that *Joseph* had loved him with paternal Affection, and that *Charles* had rewarded him like an old and faithful Servant.”

¹³⁶ P. Frischauer, *Prince Eugene* (London, 1934), 182. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 34.

generally known. I was not rich enough to form a gallery; and I did not like engravings, because others could have the same as myself. I never loved imitations of any sort, nor talents which consume valuable time.” Though he was outfitting his home, Eugene still did not care for court, musing that any music played at dinner excused him from making or hearing idle chatter.¹³⁷

The year 1700 played a much more important role in Mauvillon’s work, but he, too, concentrated on Eugene’s cultural side, citing that Eugene “had two Years of Repose from the Fatigues of War, which were not however wasted in Idleness.” He spared no cost in forming his library. He wrote the memoirs of his campaigns (allegedly). “It may be said of him as it has been of *Caesar*, that he was equally a gallant Commander and a good writer. His Knowledge, especially in History, was so universal, that he justly deserved the Epithet of *Learned*: A Quality so far from being incompatible with Heroism, that it is even necessary to soften that Ferocity which is too natural to a Soldier.”¹³⁸ He was a soldier and a scholar, the best of men, yet nothing concrete exists as proof of this claim.

Eugene was a prince by birth, but he was a general by choice, a man of genius in Mauvillon’s estimation, and “as he was born for War, it seemed as if War sprung up only for him.” Having already bested the Turks in seventeen years of war, Eugene was about to experience another fourteen years of battle for the Spanish Succession, “the most obstinate and bloody Contests that had ever been known.” He was in the “Flower of his Age,” and Mauvillon’s account described

¹³⁷ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 57.

¹³⁸ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 99.

him “in the greatest Lustre”.¹³⁹ Eugene’s success in this war would be no less outstanding than the success he had in his youth.

Before Eugene could marshal his troops, there had to be a catalyst. This was the death of Charles II, King of Spain, “in whom ended the Elder Branch of the House of *Austria*” and who “was in so languishing a Condition, that his Death was every Day expected.”¹⁴⁰ Spain had been undergoing a pattern of problematic succession. The legitimate son of Philip IV of Spain, Baltasar Carlos, had died in 1646, leaving only the illegitimate Don Juan of Austria. Philip then married Leopold’s sister, Maria Anna, who had two sons: Philip, who died when he was four, and Charles, whom no one believed would survive childhood.¹⁴¹ Philip also had two daughters: María Teresa, from his first marriage to Élisabeth of France, and Margarita Teresa, daughter of Maria Anna.

Both Spain and the Empire had assumed that María Teresa would marry the Holy Roman Emperor, but Mazarin intervened, claiming María Teresa in spite of Louis XIV’s wishes in exchange for France leaving Spanish territories alone. As queen of France, María Teresa renounced her claims to the Spanish throne, but Mazarin conditioned the renunciation upon a legitimate son of Philip IV living to

¹³⁹ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 99.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁴¹ Spielman, *Leopold I*, 45.

be king. To maintain a favorable relationship with the Empire, Philip betrothed his younger daughter, Margarita Teresa, to Leopold I.¹⁴²

Philip IV, however, fell ill, and the French had gained influence in the Spanish court. Count Franz Eusebius von Pötting, the Imperial diplomat in Madrid, was charged with concluding the marriage contract, and Margarita Teresa's rights to succession were secured over her sister's. Margarita Teresa remained in Spain, and Pötting was unable to quicken her departure for Vienna. Leopold I sent another diplomat, Franz Paul von Lisola, to succeed where Pötting had failed. Lisola encouraged Philip to write a will securing Margarita Teresa's right to the Spanish throne and Queen Maria Anna's control of the regency for Charles. Philip died in September 1665, and Maria Anna became regent for Charles II of Spain; Lisola returned to Vienna with Leopold's interests in Spain as secure as they could be.¹⁴³ In 1666 Leopold and Margarita Teresa were married.

Charles II took the throne in 1665 at the age of four, but he was sickly and childless, and his death seemed imminent for the thirty-five years of his reign. One diplomat suggested that it "would be a shorter way to knock him on the head rather than all Europe should be kept in suspense with the uncertain state of his health."¹⁴⁴ The question revolved around who would gain power over Spain's expansive holdings in Europe, including the southern Netherlands, Luxembourg,

¹⁴² Ibid. Margarita Teresa was Leopold I's niece; María Teresa was Louis's cousin. See Appendix I.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 46.

¹⁴⁴ *Lexington Papers*, 307-308. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 54.

Milan, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Tuscany, should Charles die without an heir, which seemed likely. Charles's two closest relatives were Leopold I and Louis XIV, both sons of Spanish princesses (Maria Anna and Ana María Mauricia, respectively) and husbands of other Spanish princesses (Margarita Teresa and María Teresa).

Leopold I and Louis XIV shared a mutual dislike of each other in spite of never having met. Louis's resentment of the Spanish wife who had been forced upon him and his many extramarital affairs insulted both Leopold's sense of dynasty and of propriety. Leopold saw Louis "as an insufferably arrogant hypocrite whose deceitfulness was matched only by his bumptious disregard for the conventions of good behaviour" while Louis saw Leopold as a pompous young ruler who was constantly in the way of French expansion. European politics had given Leopold a taste for how French diplomacy, coupled with bribery and extortion, could interfere with the Empire's goals, particularly when the marriage of Louis to María Teresa foreshadowed Bourbon control of Spain. When Mazarin died in 1661, Louis further infuriated Leopold by pressuring Philip IV to nullify María Teresa's renunciation of her rights, offering French military assistance in exchange for the promise of succession.¹⁴⁵

Louis XIV almost succeeded in shutting out Leopold I from Spanish politics. There was no legal precedent for a princess renouncing rights to succession, and Maria Anna did little to influence the court in spite of being Leopold's sister. The distribution of Spanish power concerned all of Europe, and

¹⁴⁵ Spielman, *Leopold I*, 52.

before the death of Philip IV, many European nobles pondered a partition of the Spanish inheritance so that no European house would gain a disproportionate amount of power. Two years before Philip's death, Imperial Chancellor Johann Philipp of Mainz devised a plan that would divide Spain between Louis and Leopold in the hopes of avoiding the long-feared war. While this plan seemed to be the obvious solution, Spanish nobles would not concede a division of Spain's holdings. Leopold knew that the Spaniards would back a single monarch who promised to keep Spain complete, so he refused to discuss any proposal that included division, knowing that he would lose his support in Spain and that his marriage to Margarita Teresa could be further delayed. Because of rumors that Louis was to invade the Franche-Comté and the Netherlands as soon as Philip died, Leopold was in a hurry to secure his marriage and his subsequent claim to the Spanish succession.¹⁴⁶

When Philip IV died, Charles II assumed the throne with his mother Maria Anna as regent. Maria Anna's grip on Spain slipped when Philip's bastard son, Don Juan of Austria, gained the support of a court friendly to France, and Charles was betrothed to Louis XIV's niece, Marie Louise of Orléans.¹⁴⁷ Once Maria Anna returned to court after Don Juan's death, she isolated Marie Louise and her French supporters from court.

The fact that Charles II had no heirs meant that the Spanish throne was likely to pass to a foreign prince, either Habsburg or Bourbon. Leopold I

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 52-53.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 169.

cemented the Habsburg claim by marrying his daughter Maria Antonia to Electoral Prince Maximilian II Emanuel of Bavaria, a Wittelsbach; their son would be a great-grandson of Philip IV. The union between Maria Antonia and Maximilian II was also supported by England and the Dutch Republic, who preferred that Spain be ruled by neither the Habsburgs nor the Bourbons.¹⁴⁸

The Spanish court welcomed the idea of a Bavarian prince, a male descendent of Philip IV, ruling Spain. Charles II's sister, María Teresa, was married to Louis XIV, and their son, the dauphin of France, had a greater claim, "had not a formal Renunciation of such Right been made at the Marriage of his Parents" when the Bourbon and Habsburg lines were united. Maximilian II was still the favored heir, but Leopold I as the head of the House of Habsburg also had a claim for his younger son, Archduke Charles II of Austria, and he had Maximilian secretly transfer any claims to the Spanish throne to Leopold's male heirs. In return, Leopold promised Maximilian the Spanish Netherlands if the Empire inherited Spain.¹⁴⁹

Louis XIV was so "piqued at this Indignity, yet thinking it best for the present to stifle his Resentment" suggested a Partition Treaty that would weaken the Spanish holdings if the dauphin might take the Spanish throne. This treaty was not ratified, and Louis opened negotiations with the Spanish ministers and involved the court of Rome in order that Spain might be left to Duke Philip of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin. "Meanwhile he kept up his Army as in Time

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 170.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 170.

of War, tho' all the other Parties had disbanded theirs, and marched great Bodies of Troops to the Borders of *Spain* and the *Netherlands*, there to be ready at the first Notice."¹⁵⁰

Louis XIV's secondary plan came to pass, and a Spanish minister visited the French court "with Advice of the Disposition made in [the King of *Spain*'s] Will, and desiring that the Duke of *Anjou*, now their Sovereign, may be sent among them." Louis sent both the duke, now Philip IV of Spain, and his army into the Spanish territories. "This was the Rise of that long War, the Transactions whereof will be the Subject of many subsequent Pages."¹⁵¹ With the might of France behind the throne, the Spanish ministers hoped that Philip IV would be strong enough to leave the Spanish holdings in tact instead of dividing them among the other houses of Europe.¹⁵²

At the Imperial war council, it was decided that it was time to assert the Habsburg right to the Spanish crown against the Bourbon claim and that the multinational nature of the Empire and its alliances would aid the Holy Roman Empire in securing the throne: "The Court of *Vienna* was sensible it had several Friends in *Spain*, *Naples*, *Milan*, and other States of the *Spanish* Monarchy, who would be ready to espouse its Interest, whenever they found it in a Capacity to support them. Thus the War was resolved on, in Expectation that *England*, *Holland*, and even the whole Empire, would join their Forces, to prevent the

¹⁵⁰ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 101.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 56.

Storm which threatened all *Europe*, in case the House of *Bourbon* should obtain all the Kingdoms and State of the *Spanish* Monarchy.”¹⁵³ Eugene advised that Archduke Charles II lead an army, either into Lombardy according to Ligne or to Spain, where “the Catholick King [Charles II of Spain] had applied to [the Emperor] for Troops with great Earnestness, and would have received the Archduke into *Spain* before his Death.” Leopold I’s councilors rejected Eugene’s suggestions, and “the Emperor experienced too late the fatal Effects of neglecting Prince *Eugene*’s Advice.” Prince Louis of Baden was appointed commander in the Low Countries, and Eugene was sent to Italy.¹⁵⁴

In 1703 Count Henry Mansfeld, President of the Imperial Council of War, died (according to Ligne) or resigned (according to Mauvillon), and Eugene was appointed president in his place to preside over the court. Mansfeld was, in fact, promoted but to a position of little importance that had few duties.¹⁵⁵ Eugene had long been an opponent of Mansfeld, whom one English diplomat described as motivated more “by personall than publick interests.”¹⁵⁶ Eugene blamed Mansfeld for ignoring his correspondence and promising him more troops while telling the Emperor that Eugene had more than enough resources.¹⁵⁷ Upon his ascension to

¹⁵³ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 102.

¹⁵⁴ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 62. See also Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 102.

¹⁵⁵ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 69.

¹⁵⁶ 12 July, Stepney to Hedges, S.P. 105/65. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 65.

¹⁵⁷ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 65.

the post, Eugene's first thought, as a loyal soldier, was to reform the army, taking care that they were well paid in a way they had not been previously.¹⁵⁸ Ligne's Eugene took a more aggressive position, not just asserting "that it was impossible to carry on war without troops and without money, that they had been wanting for the last six months, as well as every other necessary; I wished that the other military commands might be better supplied than I had been, which accordingly took place." He was also set to advise the Emperor and change Leopold's philosophy of war: "Your army, Sire, is your monarchy, without that it will revert to the Turks, to the French or perhaps, one day or other, to the Hungarians. Your capital is a frontier town; your Majesty has no fortress on any side; every one is payed except those that serve you. Make peace, sire, if you cannot make war; which is impossible without the money of England. What are your ministers doing that they take no advantage of the hatred against France, but involve you in a war with all France, and even with your own subjects."¹⁵⁹ Because of the state of the army in Vienna, Eugene was not able to give himself the military edge he believe he needed, and so Ligne's hero was hindered by the inferior minds that had come before him.

Another hindrance was the Holy Roman Empire's multiple warfronts and ultimately the multiple goals of the war. Although Leopold I wished to limit the power of the House of Bourbon, he also wanted to maintain his holdings, particularly in Italy where Eugene had been posted. War in Spain was secondary

¹⁵⁸ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 147-148.

¹⁵⁹ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 80-81.

and contingent upon victories elsewhere in Europe, which would force France to declare peace, and the undertakings of the Imperial princes in Germany allowed the Empire to deploy its troops in the south.¹⁶⁰

Though this was an eighteenth-century war, it was fought with seventeenth-century methods and was similarly plagued by seventeenth-century problems. The armies had grown, but modes of food production had not. The biggest problem for a government raising an army was financing and supplying it. Armies of the Thirty Years' War had heavily depended on supplying themselves through a march, living off the land or commandeering supplies from conquered towns. With the army growing, so too had preparation, and food and arms were collected before a campaign started and stored in multiple locations to be accessible to a marching army. Raiding became a form of intimidation rather than necessity; conquered areas were robbed of available cash and supplies in order to impede the enemy. Money could even be extorted by threatening to burn the fields or destroy industry. If the villages paid, they became an ally to the army, a source of food and ready cash. An army could only survive if it maintained contact with its supplies, whether they were stored in magazines or available from local resources: "merely to carry sufficient fodder for horses and draught animals as well as the grain, handmills, bricks and firewood to bake bread for any army of 60,000 men for a month would have needed a transport train of 11,000 carts,"

¹⁶⁰ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 76.

which would have stretched for over one hundred miles.¹⁶¹ While foraging was wholly impractical, it was also considered “uncivilised” and a military risk: “the conduct of the formal ‘grand forages’ involved almost as many security precautions as the proximity of an enemy army” because the result was often mass desertions by those unwilling to march without supplies.¹⁶²

In 1705 Eugene was encamped in northern Italy facing the French when word reached him of the death of Leopold I. Both Ligne and Mauvillon expounded on Eugene’s feelings for Joseph I, Leopold’s eldest son and successor. Ligne’s opinion on Eugene’s behalf was that he had loved Joseph better but that he feared Joseph would care less for war than his father did “as sons generally adopt a directly contrary course of proceeding to their fathers.” His fears were calmed when he received a coronation gift from the new Emperor: payment for his troops.¹⁶³ Eugene conceded that Leopold was “not without good qualities,” a less than generous opinion given Leopold’s favorable treatment of Eugene, but that he could not comprehend “how any Spanish and Austrian flatterers could attempt to call him Leopold the Great.”¹⁶⁴

Mauvillon lamented that Leopold I was not able to see the French defeated. The Emperor, who died 5 May 1705 when he was sixty-five years old, so hated the French because of his many wars with Louis XIV that “he would not

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁶² Chandler, *Marlborough*, 67.

¹⁶³ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 89-90.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

suffer the *French* Tongue to be spoken in his Court, tho' he understood it perfectly well."¹⁶⁵ The biographical Eugene had not yet learned to love Joseph I, and he greatly lamented the death of Leopold along with the allies and subjects of the Holy Roman Empire. He, too, feared that Joseph might not feel as kindly towards the army, but along with the payment for Eugene's troops came a letter, which "confirmed him in the Power he had before, and encouraged him to use it for the Interest of his Royal Highness." Joseph hated the French as much as his father did, "so that no Alteration happened in the State of Affairs by the Death of that Monarch. The War in *Flanders*: and upon the *Rhine* was pushed with all imaginable Vigour; and the Archduke [Charles II of Austria], supported by *England, Holland, and Portugal*, made great Progress in *Spain*. All the Allies, in a Word, seemed to agree, that no Peace should be made till young *Philip* was dethroned."¹⁶⁶

In 1707 Joseph I sent Eugene to command the army on the Rhine, the command that had once been held by Prince Louis of Baden. Ligne failed to mention that Louis was being replaced because he had died. In any case, both Ligne and Mauvillon related Eugene's reluctance to leave his Italian troops. "This was certainly some trick of my enemies that I did not wish it, and that I was going on prosperously where I was." Eugene had had much success in Italy but had

¹⁶⁵ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 185. See also Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 90. Eugene got around this by speaking Italian "which I knew better than German, though I easily understand it and can give orders in that tongue."

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

been forced to waste time putting down a conspiracy in Naples instead of humiliating Louis XIV by taking Dauphiné, Languedoc or Provence.¹⁶⁷ The transfer from Italy to the Rhine was a sign of the Emperor's satisfaction with Eugene, but still Eugene was loath to desert the territories he had just conquered, desiring that he be the one to restore peace. His refusal was such that the Emperor was inclined to accept it, and Eugene was allowed to remain in Italy.¹⁶⁸ It seemed that Eugene grew to feel affection for each of the three Emperors he served, but that did not mean he did not criticize them. He began to worry that the Emperor spent more time hunting and catering to his mistresses than he did administering his court.¹⁶⁹

The war advanced, as did Eugene, and he besieged forts in southern France. Other great soldiers distinguished themselves in these battles. Prince William of Saxe-Gotha, only twenty years old when he was a lieutenant-general of the armies of the Empire, England, and Holland, fought with Eugene at the siege of St. Catherine. The prince, "a charming figure, and accomplished at all points, defended himself like a lion." Having been warned of an attack, William sent a message to Eugene requesting men as the French outnumbered the Imperialists by too many. Prince William rallied those who were left with the cry, "My friends, let us, at least, die like men of honour." He was shot twice. Eugene "was inconsolable for the loss of the young prince: but I was a little comforted by

¹⁶⁷ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 106-107.

¹⁶⁸ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 234.

¹⁶⁹ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 109.

the destruction of St. Catherine, and by the capture of the two forts of St. Margaret and St. Louis.”¹⁷⁰ The manner in which Ligne related it breaks from the prevailing sense of the *Memoirs*, which presents Eugene as the only hero of the Holy Roman Empire.

Mauvillon’s retelling was slightly more epic. When Prince William received word of the attack, he sent a messenger to Eugene to ask for reinforcements. Any aid would arrive too late on account of the great numbers of French who attacked “on all Sides with great Fury.” The Imperial soldiers fought well and then broke ranks until the “Prince of *Saxe-Gotha* put them into Order again, and animating them by his Presence and his Exhortations, led them on to the Enemy, whose Numbers encreased continually.” Even Prince William’s charisma could not hold the flailing Imperial army together, and he was shot through the head. His last words were “Friends, ‘tis more honourable to perish here, than to have it said, The Prince of *Saxe-Gotha* was beaten out of his Works.” The rest of his wing was similarly slain.¹⁷¹

Eugene returned to Vienna later that year and was gallantly received by Joseph I. “I am entirely pleased with your Conduct, except only in one Particular, which is, that you expose yourself too much. Take care how you fall again into the same Fault, and remember that we shall have more Occasions for your Service.” Far from the insults Eugene tolerated at the war council, the praises of the court esteemed him as a successful and valuable general. He was offered a

¹⁷⁰ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 107-108.

¹⁷¹ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 253-254.

command in the Netherlands with the Duke of Marlborough. With Italy having been conquered, he was willing to follow the Emperor's orders, and he planned to issue commissions on his way to meet his new army.¹⁷²

Ligne read more into Eugene's first court appearance since he was rebuffed at the Imperial War Council. Here Ligne inserted Eugene's opinions about court life that certainly were not consistent with how Ligne himself lived in Vienna: "I hate grumblers, even when they have reason to grumble. Idle sallies pass from the closet to the parlour, from the parlour to the dining-room, and, from the imprudence of speaking before servants, from thence to taverns; and all this gradually makes an impression upon the people which may become dangerous." Eugene was certain there would be an awkward encounter between himself and Joseph I on account of the many disagreements the two had had in regards to military strategy. Eugene took the high road, maintaining "a respectful but easy carriage towards him. He behaved kind to me, and scolded me because I had exposed myself too much."¹⁷³ It is likely that this scolding came after the battle of Blenheim, which was an allied victory but one that had put Eugene's life in danger while he commanded with John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. Though the Emperor was pleased with the victory, "he could not conceal that his joy was united with fear for the danger in which Eugene was found. He had to ask him therefore to take more care for his safety and security in the future because he knew how much the Imperial House and the whole alliance is dependent upon

¹⁷² Ibid., 260.

¹⁷³ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 110-111.

him.”¹⁷⁴ In return for his valiant service, Eugene received the Stadtpalais in Vienna.

In 1711 Joseph I contracted smallpox. Eugene wished for an audience with the Emperor, who was recovering, before he left Vienna again for war, but Joseph sent word that Eugene had already exposed his life too much for the Emperor “and that he needed it elsewhere, not with the small-pox.” Three days after Eugene departed from the Austrian court, Joseph I died from a “heat in the bowels” that the College of Physicians could not cure. “I regretted greatly the loss of this prince, who was only in his thirty-third year; the first, since Charles V. who had any character, and who was not superstitious; and I longed to serve him even after his death. I ran to almost all the Electors, to dispose them to secure the Imperial crown to his brother; and I went to solicit the Dutch again to continue their credit in money and in friendship to the King of Spain, [Archduke] Charles II. who became the Emperor Charles VI.”¹⁷⁵ There was a rumor that the Emperor had been poisoned by the physicians, but Ligne suggested that “we should never believe defamatory libels, or these authors of pretended anecdotes, with their malignant doubts. For a long time it has been the fashion to make all great

¹⁷⁴ Alfred Arneth, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen: Nach den handschriftlichen Quellen der kaiserlichen Archiv* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1864; reprint, Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1978), I, 274. This incident occurred in Mauvillon’s work in 1707, but the battle of Blenheim was fought in 1704. It is possible that Eugene did not return to Vienna until several years later to receive his commendations.

¹⁷⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 149-150.

personages die of poison.”¹⁷⁶ Certainly this was an allusion to *L'affaire des poisons*, in which Eugene’s mother had found herself embroiled thirty years earlier. These details did not appear in Mauvillon’s version of the Emperor’s death, only that Joseph was sick and that he had ostensibly recovered before a relapse took his life.¹⁷⁷

The Death of Eugene

Three Holy Roman Emperors. Five wars. Fifty years spent loyal to the Holy Roman Empire. Eugene of Savoy had been President of the Imperial War Council for thirty years when the War of the Polish Succession, his last war, began in 1733. He had become the symbol of the Imperial army, the only general to have won major victories against France. As evidenced by the number of wounds he received, his leadership style involved commanding from the battlefield. He “showed great personal bravery and had a direct effect on the outcome of the fighting; during the wars as a whole he squeezed the most out of an inadequate and creaking system, one which often produced armies more reminiscent of the Thirty Years War than those of Marlborough.”¹⁷⁸ He may have demanded much from his soldiers, but he risked his own life standing beside them.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷⁷ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 298-299.

¹⁷⁸ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 227.

On 21 April 1736, at the age of seventy-two, Eugene was found dead in his chambers, “extinguished dead like a taper.” Upon an autopsy, it was discovered that he had choked on his own phlegm, likely a victim of pneumonia. “In a word, My Lord,” wrote one English diplomat, “his life was glorious and his death was easy.”¹⁷⁹

Mauvillon omitted “the Relation of his pompous Funeral, at which the Emperor assisted in Person, and which many Foreigners came to *Vienna* on purpose to see. Those Honours, so justly paid to his Remains, added nothing to his real Glory, and their Place here may be better supplied by a short idea of his Person and Character.”¹⁸⁰ Mauvillon went on to describe the qualities of Eugene’s body, mind, and heart, but his funeral was a testament to his years of loyal service. Eugene was laid in state, “dressed in a wig and in his uniform of a colonel of dragoons: red tunic with gold braid and black velvet facings, and spurred boots. Laid out next to him were ‘on one side his cap as Prince, his sword sent him by the Pope after one of his victories against the Turks’, a victory which seemed such an ago that the observer who wrote the description did not know which one.”¹⁸¹ His body was processed to the *Kreuzkappel* of St. Stephen’s Cathedral. Though the prince had not been a part of the Imperial family, Emperor Charles VI and his

¹⁷⁹ 21 April 1736, Robinson to Harrington, S.P. 80/121. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 242.

¹⁸⁰ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 340.

¹⁸¹ 25 April, Robinson to Tilson, S.P. 80/121. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 242.

court accompanied the funeral procession.¹⁸² Eugene's heart was sent to be interred in a family plot in Italy while his body was buried in Vienna, a fitting metaphor for the prince's life.

Eugene had devoted his life to three successive Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, not as a subject of the Austrian rulers but as a member of one of the ruling families of Europe, believing the House of Savoy to be equal in eminence to the House of Habsburg or Bourbon. In spite of his French upbringing, he never considered himself French, as evidenced by his defection and his hatred of the king. In spite of his close ties to the Habsburgs, he never advised the Emperors on personal matters since he was not of their house. Yet with so little time spent in Savoy, it seemed that Eugene was not so much fighting on behalf of his royal family but that his family allowed him the independence to fight for whomever he wanted. What mattered to Eugene was not protecting the lands on which the Habsburgs traditionally had a dynastic claim but to fight on behalf of those lands that currently brought Austria power, those regions that were militarily and politically important: Italy for its strategic location, the Netherlands for its ties to England, Germany for its similar fear of French hegemony.

His death may have been easy and his funeral grand, but his legacy was problematic. Since he had never married, he had no children, and his possessions were passed down to his niece Maria Anna Victoria, who would later marry Prince Friedrich of Sachsen-Hildburghausen. Since Eugene had made out no will,

¹⁸² McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 243. See also Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 290. During the three days Eugene's body lay in state, the bells of Vienna tolled from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Victoria was allowed to do what she wanted with her inheritance, which troubled those who understood what Eugene's estate entailed: "Would you have believed that P. Eugene should die without a will, that a sister as old as himself [there was none], and a niece fifty years old should inherit, the finest library, the finest pictures and the finest furniture of all kinds that any one less than a crowned head had in Europe. His estates in Hungary return to the Emperor for want of a will, and God knows how the rest will be dissipated."¹⁸³ Though Eugene was interested in preserving his family name through his holdings, Victoria seemed interested in nothing but money. His medals and trophies from his many wars, his portraits, antique furniture, old masters, sculptures, and landscapes were sold to whomever would buy them.¹⁸⁴ Over the course of sixteen years, Victoria would live in Vienna with her husband while she broke up her uncle's estate. Eugene's library was purchased by Charles VI, and the House of Savoy purchased much of the art collection. Eventually Eugene's palaces—Belvedere, Stadtpalais, and Schlosshof—were acquired by Empress Maria Theresia.¹⁸⁵

King Charles Emmanuel III of Sardinia was given first choice of Eugene's personal art collection as the head of the House of Savoy. In the resulting transaction, Charles Emmanuel purchased Eugene's entire collection of 176 pieces as cataloged by Victoria as well as a set of ten battle pieces. The broker of

¹⁸³ 21 April 1736, Robinson to Harrington, S.P. 80/121. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 243.

¹⁸⁴ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 291.

¹⁸⁵ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 243. See also Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 291. Charles VI purchased the palace of Belvedere along with its library.

this deal was the Count of Canales, the Sardinian ambassador to Vienna and the man mentioned in the preface to Charles-Joseph de Ligne's memoirs as the recipient of Eugene's writings.¹⁸⁶

Ligne's memoirs end in the year 1734, two years before the death of Eugene. It was stated that "since the year 1717, and consequently during eighteen years, I have fought no battles; but that was because I wanted men, money, allies, and credit at the court, (this word I pronounce reluctantly); and, at length, I procured peace to Europe after two intolerable campaigns, in which, if I did not acquire honour, I at least had nothing to reproach myself with."¹⁸⁷ Though he was in his seventies and largely served in politics, Eugene had still taken a field command at the start of the War of the Polish Succession. In spite of his age and the many campaigns he had already fought, Eugene felt he held much responsibility as President of the Imperial War Council, and that post required him to fight in the field until his death.

¹⁸⁶ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 301-302.

¹⁸⁷ De Ligne, *Memoirs*, 241.

Chapter 4

A SHARE OF LAURELS: JOHN CHURCHILL AND THE ALLIED ARMY

England entered the war against France in 1702, but Prince Eugene of Savoy was not to meet his English counterpart, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, until two years later. Marlborough, unlike great generals such as Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, or even Eugene of Savoy, did not distinguish himself in war as a young man; indeed, he was in his fifties when the War of the Spanish Succession began, an age “of considerable maturity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when relatively few men survived to reach the traditional lifespan of three score years and ten [seventy years], so great were the hazards presented by sickness, crude surgery, over-indulgence (for those wealthy enough to afford it) and a score of other pitfalls.”¹⁸⁸ In spite of his age, Marlborough cut a striking figure: “his features without fault, fine, sparkling eyes, good teeth, and his complexion such a mixture of white and red as the fairer sex might envy: in brief, except for his legs, which are too thin, one of the handsomest men ever seen.”¹⁸⁹ He was a soldier and a statesman, a general and nobleman of whom England could be proud.

As Eugene spoke for the Holy Roman Empire, so did Marlborough for Queen Anne of England as her “Captain-General and chief Favourite. His Highness [Eugene] set forth the Danger of the Empire very pathetically, prayed

¹⁸⁸ Chandler, *Marlborough*, 1.

¹⁸⁹ Sicco van Goslinga, *Mémoires (1706-9 et 1711)* (Paris: 1857), 42. Qtd. in Chandler, *Marlborough*, 27.

the Duke to be an Advocate in its Behalf, and guarded against such Objections as might be made to the Propositions.”¹⁹⁰ Marlborough demanded that the resources of the Empire be devoted to his campaigns, and he also wanted Eugene: “It is absolutely necessary that I should have a supporter of his zeal and experience.”¹⁹¹ The two men formed an instant friendship, and George Stepney, an English diplomat in Vienna, commented that “our generals live in as perfect harmony as if they were brethren.”¹⁹² This was not an unfounded observation from an outsider. Eugene wrote that Marlborough was “a man of high quality, courageous, extremely well-disposed, and with a keen desire to achieve something; with all these qualities he understands thoroughly that one cannot become a general in a day, and he is diffident about himself.”¹⁹³ The two generals would fight together in four battles over the course of five years, and their friendship would outlast the alliance between England the Holy Roman Empire.

The Duke of Marlborough and the Battle of Blenheim, 1704

Charles-Joseph de Ligne’s Eugene met the duke at Heilbronn to strategize with him and Prince Louis of Baden. Thus began the battle of Blenheim

¹⁹⁰ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 154.

¹⁹¹ W. S. Churchill, *Marlborough: His Life and Times* (London, 1967), II, 250-251. Qtd. in Derek McKay, *Prince Eugene of Savoy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 78.

¹⁹² 25 Sept. 1704, Cron Weissembourg, Stepney to Whitworth, S.P. 105/73. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 81.

¹⁹³ Undated letter to the Duke of Savoy, *Feldzüge des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen, herausgeben von der Abteilung für Kriegsgeschichte des k.k. Kriegsarchiv Wien, 1876-92, I Ser., VI, Suppl., 131*. Qtd. in Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 101.

[Blindheim] in southern Germany, the armies of Austria and England against those of France and Bavaria. The two generals bonded over an opinion that decisive military action was needed. For Eugene, who had spent years as the dissenting voice at the Viennese court, this meant he had found someone who validated his opinions and who was completely dedicated to destroying Louis XIV. In character, the two men were opposites. Where Eugene was so dedicated to military success that he had little interest in money, family, or politics, Marlborough was a diplomat, politician, and courtier, “able to charm anyone with his smile and conversation. He was also a family man, fiercely loyal to his wife, intent on creating a dynasty and notoriously mean.” Eugene was the seasoned veteran at the age of forty-two; at fifty-five, Marlborough had yet to command a major battle. There is little mention of Eugene’s health with the exception of wounds incurred in the course of battle, but Marlborough suffered from severe headaches, about which he often wrote.¹⁹⁴ The two generals differed in disposition but agreed on their ultimate aim to bring France to her knees.

The French had situated themselves in Blenheim and the surrounding villages, and Marlborough sought to spur them to the attack by plundering Bavaria. This is the first statement in Ligne’s *Memoirs* of the affection between the Prince of Savoy and the Duke of Marlborough: Eugene had permitted Marlborough to pillage, Marlborough “who, in consequence, was entirely devoted to me. We truly loved and esteemed each other. He was a great statesman and

¹⁹⁴ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 81.

warrior.”¹⁹⁵ It was in Marlborough’s interest to incite the battle before French reinforcements arrived just as it was “the Interest of the *French and Bavarians* therefore to avoid coming to a Battle” until they had built up their army.¹⁹⁶

The French did not take the bait, and reinforcements arrived. So, too, however, did Eugene’s troops, and Ligne states that the armies were evenly matched. Both Eugene and Marlborough moved out their armies in the middle of the night, sounding the bugles and drums at three o’clock in the morning of 13 August 1704. The army divided in half, and the enemy was unaware of their movements until the sun had risen.¹⁹⁷ Crossing “a rivulet,” the Kessel, proved to be their first obstacle in approaching battle on the opposite bank though Marlborough fared better than Eugene did: “My infantry did well; my cavalry very bad. I had a horse killed under me: Marlborough was checked, but not repulsed. I succeeded in rallying the regiments, who were, at first, shy of attacking. I led them back to the charge four times.”¹⁹⁸ The English forces

¹⁹⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 83-85.

¹⁹⁶ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 158.

¹⁹⁷ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 85.

¹⁹⁸ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 85. See also Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 155; Chandler, *Marlborough*, 65; Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 107; McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 82. Mauvillon says Eugene was in charge of 30,000 men. McKay’s analysis of the battle reveals that 80,000 men were part of the allied army, 30,000 under Eugene and 50,000 under Marlborough. Henderson states that Eugene was in command of 13 battalions and 74 squadrons, approximately 16,000 men, while Marlborough commanded 53 battalions, and 86 squadrons totally 36,000 men. Chandler’s total of 52,000 under the two generals supports Henderson’s numbers. Eugene and Marlborough were fighting against approximately 56,000 French by Henderson and Chandler’s calculations

scattered the enemy while Eugene was momentarily pushed back by the French. The prince demanded excellence from his army and commanded from the thick of things, causing one of his soldiers to comment that it was “almost a miracle that he escaped the danger.”¹⁹⁹ After his third unsuccessful charge, he shot two of his soldiers who were arguing, declaring that he wished “to fight among brave men and not among cowards.”²⁰⁰ At last Eugene made another push: “I have no squadron or battalion that would not attack fewer than four times.”²⁰¹ The battle ended with the enemy forces driven back to the Danube. “I was under the greatest obligations to Marlborough, for his changes of position, according to each circumstance.”²⁰²

John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough and commander of the English forces, gave his own perspective on events. His dispatches to English secretaries and ministers revealed Marlborough’s strategies and thoughts about his time on the Continent. On 10 August 1704, Marlborough wrote to Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, stating that he and Eugene had parted company that morning to oversee their respective armies but that Eugene had returned when he had heard about the

¹⁹⁹ V. Bibl, *Prinz Eugen: Ein Heldenleben* (Vienna: 1941), 135. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 86.

²⁰⁰ A. Arneth, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen* (Vienna, 1864), I, 266. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 86. See also Henderson, *Prince Eugene*, 110. Henderson’s analysis of this episode revealed that this may have been a rumor but that Eugene shot two men who were deserting in the middle of battle.

²⁰¹ Arneth, *Prinz Eugen*, I, 272.

²⁰² Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 85-86.

French reinforcements, “and upon consulting together, we thought it advisable that he should be forthwith reinforced, and that the whole army should advance nearer the Danube in order to join him if the enemy passed.” The armies were therefore divided in order to be more maneuverable, should the positions of the French and Bavarians change. While Eugene and Marlborough were commanding the battle, “Prince Louis [of Baden] will still be entirely at liberty to send parties to burn and destroy the rest of Bavaria, and carry on the siege at the same time.”²⁰³

Eléazar Mauvillon gave a more detailed description of Blenheim but first played upon the sentiments of the great generals, “that Prince *Eugene* built upon the Valour of his Troops, and their Love of his Person: That *Marlborough* trusted to that admirable good Fortune, which never forsook him [...]”²⁰⁴ The two armies divided into eight columns, “the Imperialists on the Right and the *English* and *Dutch* on the left.”²⁰⁵ The English army crossed over first on bridges constructed by Marlborough’s engineers:

When this was done, the Duke commanded his Foot to pass the Rivulet first, and then his Horse. As his Grace had observed the Want of Infantry in the *French* Army before him, he judiciously thought, that by drawing up his Horse behind the Foot, the Fire of the latter would be of the utmost Service in attacking the Enemy’s Calvary with his; and that he should thus oblige them to abandon the Infantry in the Villages. Only 3 Squadrons appeared at last to dispute his Passage, and those were soon

²⁰³ John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, from 1702 to 1712*, ed. Sir George Murray (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), I, 387-388.

²⁰⁴ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 158.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

obliged to retire. Their Attempt seemed to be a Matter of Ceremony, rather than any Thing else.²⁰⁶

The banks of the Kessel were more hazardous down the line where Eugene and the Austrian army were attempting to cross. With the enemy's fire drawn towards Marlborough's troops, the Imperialists crossed without incident. Eugene's foot soldiers gained an advantage, but the cavalry was repulsed and left the infantry unprotected so that a retreat was ordered.²⁰⁷

Marlborough's cavalry was broken by the enemy, "but the *French* Cavalry, finding a second Line, and behind that a third, fell with great Precipitation, and abandoned the 8 Battalions, who were all slaughtered by the Duke's Horse, except a few Men that saved themselves by falling down among the Dead."²⁰⁸ Meanwhile, Eugene's forces regrouped and charged, but Eugene "had again the Mortification to see his Horse turn Tail. A *Bavarian* Dragoon had not undoubtedly dispatched his Highness, if a *Danish* Soldier had not shot him dead at the Instant he was going to strike." Eugene abandoned his cavalry, resolving to win the battle with his infantry only. Marlborough had taken the French Marshal Tallard prisoner, and the French "abandoned the Field of Battle to Prince *Eugene*."²⁰⁹ The rest of the enemy troops retreated or surrendered, and neither Eugene nor Marlborough pursued.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 162.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 163.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 164.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 165. See also Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 110; Arneth, *Prince Eugen*, I, 266.

Marlborough again wrote to Harley on 14 August, the day after the battle. In addition to relating that Tallard, as well as several of his generals, were prisoners of war, Marlborough also stated that “we pushed thirty odd squadrons into the Danube, where great numbers of them were drowned, and we obliged twenty-six battalions and twelve squadrons of dragoons, all French, to surrender themselves prisoners at discretion, so that I reckon the greatest part of M. Tallard’s army is ruined.”²¹⁰ The French suffered a forty-percent casualty rate, approximately 20,000 men with an additional 40 generals and 1,150 junior officers taken prisoner. The allied army lost 12,500 men.²¹¹

The Battle of Blenheim was a rousing success for the allies of the Holy Roman Empire, precisely because Marlborough and Eugene worked in concert. Marlborough’s mastery of war was impeccable, his tactics and strategies unsurpassed. Eugene’s loyalty to his Empire was unquestionable—Marlborough later remarked that he did not believe “the Prince could or would quite the Emperor’s service on any terms.”²¹² Blenheim was “the most decisive of the war.” Southern Germany was now in the hands of the allies, and France and the French army no longer dominated Europe.²¹³ It was also the battle that established the reputation of Marlborough as a military commander, “the champion of the Grand

²¹⁰ Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, I, 393-394.

²¹¹ Chandler, *Marlborough*, 65, 148.

²¹² Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, I, 470.

²¹³ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 88.

Alliance and one of the great captains of history.”²¹⁴ Marlborough was often given sole credit for the victory of Blenheim, and he was “fortunate” that Eugene was “willing to co-operate to the full in accepting Marlborough’s overall direction of the struggle.” The victory was attributed to “his firm, flexible control of the battle at its different stages, his personal intervention at the places of crisis, and his proven ability to weld a multi-national army into an integrated weapon of high morale and single-minded purpose”.²¹⁵ In spite of historians’ different takes on the generalships of Eugene and Marlborough, Marlborough would later write that “Prince Eugene and I shall never differ about our share of laurels.”²¹⁶ Both generals, however, “exposed their person repeatedly,” reported one officer. “Eugen went so far that it is almost a miracle that he escaped with his life.”²¹⁷ The overwhelming result was the armies of the Imperial allies established themselves as a major threat, and France was no longer assured in its victory.²¹⁸

Funding the War, 1708-1709

In the midst of a financial crisis, Eugene requested that Marlborough travel to Vienna, where he was presented to Emperor Joseph I. Ligne’s narrative

²¹⁴ Chandler, *Marlborough*, 148.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

²¹⁶ Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, IV, 142.

²¹⁷ *Feldzüge*, I, Ser. Bd. VI, 521. Qtd. in Henderson, 110.

²¹⁸ See Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 112. Due to the financial negotiations between England the Holy Roman Empire, as many as 32,000 of the 52,000 troops accounted for at Blenheim may have been hired by England though less than 10,000 were actually British. Henderson puts the allied casualties at 4,500 dead and 7,500 wounded.

stated that Queen Anne agreed to lend 25,000 sterling to aid in the battles in the Low Countries, where Marlborough was in command while Eugene was in Italy.²¹⁹ Mauvillon stated that ten thousand Hessians, four or five thousand Palatines, and troops from Saxe-Gotha, Bavaria, and Prussia were recruited after this meeting to fight in Italy.²²⁰

The Marlborough dispatches settled the matter. He wrote from The Hague in January 1706 to George Stepney, an English diplomat in Vienna, that the deal to which Mauvillon alluded had taken place in the Netherlands and in the previous year.

I can now assure you that the States have not only consented to the sending the seven thousand Palatins in the Queen's pay and their own to Italy, but have also found a fund for the augmentation of three thousand men desired by the Elector Palatin as a condition of his letting his troops march; and they are resolved likewise to join three thousand men more of old troops to these seven thousand Palatins, so as to make a body of ten thousand men to reinforce Prince Eugene's army [...] I dispatched a courier at the same time to Vienna to inform the Emperor of the good news, that he may not only comply with such conditions as the Elector may reasonably desire from him for so seasonable an assistance, but likewise press the immediate march of the first four thousand men. This you may believe that court will be very ready to do, since they reap a double advantage from it, first by quelling the troubles in Bavaria, which I hope so great a body of troops may easily do on their march without losing too much time, and then by restoring their affairs in Italy, which seem to be in a desperate condition.²²¹

A subsequent letter confirms the recruits from Saxe-Gotha for Italy.²²² As for the money lent to the Holy Roman Emperor, Marlborough laid out the proposition for

²¹⁹ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 97.

²²⁰ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 201.

²²¹ Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, II, 372-373.

Stepney as agreed upon by Queen Anne: a sum of 250,000 sterling was to be lent over a period of five months at an interest rate of eight percent per year for the funding of Eugene's campaigns in Italy.²²³ For the rest of that year, Marlborough and Eugene merely corresponded about their relative victories and defeats in the Low Countries and Italy.

The two generals met again in 1708 at The Hague to confer with their allies before departing once again to their respective commands. Eugene proposed two projects in the Rhine and Mosel, which would require thirty thousand men in the Low Countries, men the allies at The Hague were disinclined to provide. Marlborough, however, believed that "it is very necessary we should be in a condition to act offensively on this side, that we may have an eye at the same time on our affairs in England to prevent and deter the enemy from the thoughts of another invasion, which they might be inclined to if we should weaken ourselves too much in Flanders."²²⁴ The States-General, however, preferred to maintain a defensive stance until convinced by Marlborough and Eugene.

Another issue on the table was aiding the crown of Spain, claimed by Archduke Charles II. Marlborough had written to Secretary Boyle about garnering troops for Spain: "it was agreed to lay aside the thoughts of sending the thousand horse, considering the great charge of their transportation; and besides that when

²²² Ibid., II, 383-384.

²²³ Ibid., II, 395-397. See also Henderson, *Prince Eugene*, x. "Though Britain made a great contribution in mercenaries and hard cash, native British troops only amounted to about a fifth of the Allied total at the battle of Blenheim, an eighth at Oudenarde, and a seventh at Malplaquet."

²²⁴ Ibid., III, 698-699.

the rest of the Palatins and the Imperialists that are waiting for a passage arrive, they will make up a body of about nine thousand horse, which, it is my thought, may suffice.” Eugene offered to recruit more soldiers out of the Empire to replace those sent to Spain on condition of receiving English money for it. Marlborough, knowing “the Queen was very averse to giving any levy-money,” passed on the proposal with a request for a speedy response, “the four thousand men in Italy being in the meanwhile out of service, since they will not be sent to Catalonia, nor can they be employed elsewhere till I receive your answer.”²²⁵ Though both Ligne and Mauvillon’s Eugene seemed to be always in concert with Marlborough, the duke’s dispatches reveal some dissent. In another letter to Secretary Boyle, Marlborough cautioned Queen Anne against providing levy-money for the four thousand soldiers in Spain, thinking “it is very unreasonable to comply with these terms while [Her Majesty] obliges herself at the same time to maintain these troops in Spain: especially considering how much she has done already for the King [of Spain], and the little assistance he has had from his brother [Emperor Joseph I].”²²⁶ Thus, unless the court of Vienna was willing to match funds, Marlborough did not think it prudent to comply with Eugene’s scheme. A compromise was reached: Queen Anne offered twenty crowns for every private

²²⁵ Ibid., III, 702-703.

²²⁶ Ibid., III, 717-718.

man Eugene could recruit to the sum of twenty thousand pounds.²²⁷ With matters set in Spain, the two generals could once again concentrate on the Low Countries.

Upon his departure from The Hague, Eugene took a roundabout route, stopping to confer with Electoral Princes in Dusseldorf, Hanover, Leipzig, and Frankfurt and convince them to remain in support of Emperor Joseph I, giving them a rendition of the “your army is your monarchy” speech that he had once given to Emperor Leopold I: “It is for your interest: a great Emperor would live at your expense, were you not [great], and perhaps would find himself better off. One is obliged to preserve your country thus. If you do not protect yourselves in defending it, take care that another Louvois [French minister of war] does not give the whole Empire to fire and blood.” In order that his enemies not discover that he was parlaying with so many Germanic rulers, Eugene spread the rumor that doctors had ordered him to spend some time at the baths in Schlangenbad for the sake of his health.²²⁸

Marlborough and Eugene met again in Belgium where Marlborough was encamped at Asch with the French on the other side of the Dender tributary; this was the beginning of the Battle of Oudenaarde in East Flanders. Eugene demanded to know if Marlborough intended to engage the French. “It is my intention, and I perceive with pleasure, but not with surprise, that we are both of opinion, that without that, they would cut off our communication with Brussels: I

²²⁷ Ibid., IV, 7.

²²⁸ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 111-113.

wish, however, to wait for your troops.”²²⁹ Eugene advised that it was not wise to give the French time to attack. Despite the years of war, France was still capable of fielding a huge army from a large population. Their generals may not have been on par with Eugene and Marlborough, but their sheer numbers meant that they could hold onto an advantage while the Imperial army had problems hiring troops from the German princes.²³⁰

The army marched without waiting for Eugene’s reinforcements from the Mosel to reach them, covering fifty miles in sixty hours to meet the French army at the Scheldt River. When the French general was aware of their presence, he remarked that “the devil must have carried them, such marching is impossible!”²³¹ Because the allied army had moved so quickly, there was little time for the French generals to position their columns or perfect their strategies. Marlborough and Eugene urged their army forward. The French generals disagreed on a strategy, so half the army stayed back, causing one general to complain afterwards that “I cannot comprehend how 60 battalions and 180 squadrons could be satisfied with observing us engaged for 6 hours and merely look as though watching the opera from a third-tier box.”²³²

²²⁹ Ibid., 114-115.

²³⁰ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 111.

²³¹ W. S. Churchill, *Marlborough, his Life and Times* (London: 1967), III, 337. Qtd. in Chandler, *Marlborough*, 215.

²³² *Archives du depot de la guerre*, tome 208I, f. 78. Qtd. in Chandler, *Marlborough*, 222.

Ligne gave an account of “our perfect harmony. My affairs were going badly on the right, which I commanded. Marlborough, who perceived it, sent me a reinforcement of eighteen battalions; but for that I should hardly have been able to keep my position.” With the aid of reinforcements, Eugene’s Prussian troops pushed through the French lines. Eugene returned the favor to the duke, reinforcing him on the left to a close victory.²³³ “After a Cannonading with some Field pieces, the Fight began, and the Fire was most terrible, every inch of Ground being disputed with the utmost Obstinacy: But the Confederate Troops, encouraged by the Presence of these two Heroes, animated by their Example, and led to the Charge by them in Person, broke the Enemies, and obliged them to give Ground.”²³⁴ The allies of the Holy Roman Empire may have been inferior in number, but they were more than equal in bravery, and they used their surroundings—the hedges, ditches, and trees—to cover their attack.²³⁵

The French may have seen their enemy as devils, but “they ought to have taken for Gods the Generals who commanded them. And indeed, Prince *Eugene* and the Duke of *Marlborough*, while they were present every where, drawing up and animating the Troops, leading them to the Charge, sharing the Danger with

²³³ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 118-119.

²³⁴ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 265-266.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 266.

them, and making them triumph, more justly deserved to be called Deities than the old *Romans*, who assumed that Honour.”²³⁶

One of the French prisoners taken by the allied army, the count de Biron, gave an interesting perspective of the two generals: “He was struck by an almost royal magnificence at Prince Eugene’s quarters and a shameful parsimony at those of the Duke of Marlborough, who ate the most often at the tables of others; a perfect understanding between the two in the conduct of affairs, of which the details fell much more on Eugene; a profound respect of all the generals for these two commanders but a tacit preference on the whole for Prince Eugene, without the Duke of Marlborough being at all jealous.”²³⁷ To that same French prisoner, Eugene remarked that Louis XIV had refused his brother a command that their father had once held, saying that Louis preferred to promote one of his own sons and keep the post in his family rather than deliver it to the House of Savoy. “However it is impossible not to feel rather pleased sometimes when one is in the position to make him regret his contempt.”²³⁸ The prince’s free time in battle was often taken up in discussing the art of war, “seeing that he does not write any more than he needs to,” and he was claimed to have said that councils of war were only held when no one wanted to actually make war. As to his lack of writing, he had never written up his affairs except when required “because as soon as an army

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

²³⁷ *Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon*, VI, 64. Qtd. in Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 162.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

was arranged in an order of battle everyone ought to know what they had to do.”²³⁹ Eugene was the fighter, the general who wanted nothing at court. Marlborough, on the other hand, was the charismatic diplomat, and these two men together had done much to shake France. “Just as Marlborough willingly let himself be led by Eugen, so too was the case of the army, and this motley army coming together from the troops of various commanders had the sight and service of a compact united whole.”²⁴⁰

More reinforcements for the allied army arrived from the Mosel valley, rendering their forces as strong as the French. The Imperialists pushed the French out of the Netherlands, and Eugene suggested besieging Lille. The States General at The Hague disagreed, but upon Marlborough’s concurrence the allies agreed upon a plan of action with Eugene leading the siege while Marlborough commanded the covering army.²⁴¹ In spite of his agreement that Lille should be taken, Marlborough related later that that he did not believe it could happen as early as his ally desired. Still, there were some advantages: the movement of multiple armies would intimidate the French and perhaps provoke a peace treaty; “and if this fail, in case they have not some powerful diversion from other parts, it is probable, trusting to their great numbers, they may venture a battle at the

²³⁹ J. M. Schulenburg, *Leben und Denkwürdigkeiten* (Leipzig, 1834), I, 337. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 114.

²⁴⁰ Arneth, *Prinz Eugen*, II, 20.

²⁴¹ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 122-123. See also Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 269.

opening of the campaign.”²⁴² In another letter, Marlborough confessed more uncertainty, this time in regards to the troops: “were our army all composed of English the projection would certainly be feasible, but we have a great many among us who are more afraid of wanting provisions than of the enemy.”²⁴³

The two generals scouted out the plain from where they would launch an attack, and that same day they caught a scout who was attempting to announce to the French marshal in the fortress that Burgundian troops were marching to their aid.²⁴⁴ Eugene’s desire to strike quickly, before reinforcements arrived, proved a necessary tactic. Marlborough lent five thousand English soldiers to Eugene, but tragedies befall even the greatest of heroes: “I led them into the midst of the fire; but a ball above the left eye overthrew me, in a state of insensibility. They thought me dead, and I thought so too.”²⁴⁵ Eugene was likely to die, or at least go blind, but neither happened. Marlborough visited Eugene the day after the wound, finding him “dressed, and ready to go abroad: But as Wounds in the Head are not to be slighted, his Grace and some other Persons of Quality, prevailed upon his Highness to continue in his Chamber for 2 or 3 Days.”²⁴⁶

²⁴² Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, IV, 429-430.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, IV, 129.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 203-204.

²⁴⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 126-127.

²⁴⁶ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 277. See also Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, IV, 237.

Eugene had retired from the field in the midst of a stalemate, and Marlborough took command while Eugene recuperated. “I have been every day since at the siege,” Marlborough wrote to the Earl of Sunderland. “We made an attack yesterday in the evening and possessed ourselves entirely of the tenaille on the left, and likewise made a lodgment on part of counterscarp.” This would not be an easy victory though. Marlborough lamented that his situation was such that “the lateness of the season, the slowness with which the engineers have proceeded in their approaches, and the great difficulty we shall meet with in bringing up a further supply of ammunition, as to make us doubt of the success of the siege.”²⁴⁷ The stress of full command took its toll so that after a summer of headaches he felt “almost dead.”²⁴⁸ Eugene, however, shot in the head, showed few signs of stress, even when there was an attempt to poison him.²⁴⁹

The siege of Lille was by no means an easy victory, but it was a victory. The fortress “was in itself as strong as Art could make it, defended by a numerous Garrison, under one of the bravest Marshals of *France*, and several other experienced Generals; provided with all Manner of Necessaries, and encouraged to a vigorous Defence by the Approach of a powerful Army, equal, if not superior

²⁴⁷ Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, IV, 237.

²⁴⁸ Coxe, *Marlborough*, IV, 238, 243. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 116.

²⁴⁹ M. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen* (Munich, 1963-65), IV, 300. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 116. Upon opening a letter from Holland, Eugene was overcome by fumes. In order to see what effects the contents were meant to have, the “piece of greasy blotting paper” was tied to a dog’s collar; the dog died.

to that of the Allies [...]”²⁵⁰ Eugene eventually returned to the field, and Marlborough relinquished his command, telling Eugene to make a public display of going about his everyday business in order that the army might see that he suffered no ill effects from his wound.²⁵¹ On 9 December 1708 the French relinquished the citadel, and Eugene and Marlborough allowed the garrison to retreat to France.²⁵² By the end of the year, the allies controlled all but the southern areas of the Netherlands as well as areas in France around the fortress of Lille. In spite of the overwhelming French numbers, the allies had had a successful year. “He who has not seen this,” remarked Eugene, “has seen nothing.”²⁵³ Marlborough and Eugene were given equal credit for the successful season. Though England was contributing funds to the Imperial army, Marlborough did not treat Eugene as his subordinate, nor did Eugene treat Marlborough as his apprentice in command.

Eight years of war had tired both French and Austria along with their allies, and Louis XIV met with several deputies of state, including Eugene and Marlborough, at The Hague. “The Allies [of the Holy Roman Empire] would abate nothing of what they had fought for, but insisted upon an entire Restitution of the *Spanish* Monarchy to the House of *Austria*, and the Surrender of several

²⁵⁰ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 284.

²⁵¹ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 127.

²⁵² McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 117.

²⁵³ Schulenburg, *Leben und Denkwürdigkeiten*, I, 368. Qtd. in Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 167.

Fortresses and Territories to the other Confederate Powers.” In spite of the toll the war had taken on France, Louis XIV rejected the conditions.²⁵⁴

Marlborough trusted implicitly the prince’s judgment in all matters of war, and Eugene adopted a strategy that involved moving from fortress to fortress, which had worked for him in Italy. Eugene suggested that the next attack be on Mons in the Hainaut province of Belgium in the hopes that the French generals “will be tired of being so prudent.”²⁵⁵ The attack on the fortress would be the prelude to the Battle of Malplaquet in northern France. The allies received word that the enemy was moving nearly sixty battalions and fifty squadrons more than they had the previous year from Italy, Spain, and the Rhine to Lille, requiring that the besieging force be augmented as well. Though the allies received ten thousand men from Prussia and six thousand from the Netherlands, the forces were unevenly matched. Still, Marlborough hoped that, “with the blessing of God upon the goodness of our troops, we shall be able to disappoint their measure.”²⁵⁶

The spring and summer of 1709 were wet ones, and though the army was advancing in order to engage the French, “the continued rains and ill weather for three weeks together having obliged the troops to march more slowly than was intended, and given time to the enemy to entrench a large tract of ground, and likewise to fortify the avenues to their camp, making the roads leading to it also

²⁵⁴ Mauvillon, *History of Francis-Eugene*, 286-287.

²⁵⁵ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 139.

²⁵⁶ Marlborough, *Letters and Dispatches*, IV, 435-436.

extremely difficult,” Marlborough decided to wait so that they were not fighting both the weather and the French.²⁵⁷

Eugene’s affairs were going on so well that he “wished to decide those of Marlborough’s on the left, which went on slowly.” The Dutch had sustained many casualties with Marlborough gaining no advantage. Eugene sent his cavalry to reinforce the Dutch and English troops, but they, too, were pushed back. Eugene was once again wounded, grazed by a bullet behind his left ear. Instead of withdrawing from the field of battle, he continued to fight, refusing to have his wound seen to. “To what purpose, if we are to die here? If we live, there will be time enough in the evening.”²⁵⁸

At last Marlborough made some headway, and the French troops retreated when their marshal was seriously wounded. “I think it is not over-rating it to say, that the loss of the two armies amounted to forty thousand men: those that had not been killed, died of fatigue.”²⁵⁹ The number of casualties for the allies was catastrophic: 25,000 dead while France suffered only half that. Even veteran soldiers were affected by the dead. One commented that his troops “endeavoured to the utmost of our ability to get out of the noise of the wounded, but found it almost impossible, except we had gone three or four miles distance, for all the

²⁵⁷ Ibid., IV, 530-531.

²⁵⁸ J. Banks, *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy* (London: 1741), 263. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 125.

²⁵⁹ Ligne, *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, 142-413.

hedges and ditches were lined with disabled men.”²⁶⁰ The slaughter also had an effect on Marlborough, but Eugene was indifferent. His years of war had taken their toll, and he seemed to accept the cost of battle. In spite of the casualties, Eugene and Marlborough never regretted their decision to attack, but the soldiers under their command did: “both our generals were very much blam’d for throwing away so many brave men’s lives, when there was no occasion: it was the only rash thing the Duke of Marlboro’ was ever guilty of; and it was generally believ’d that he was pressed to it by Prince Eugene.”²⁶¹

The End of the War of the Spanish Succession

In spite of England’s aid and the Duke of Marlborough’s unflagging loyalty to Eugene of Savoy, the ministers of the Holy Roman Empire were never certain what England hoped to gain by fighting on behalf of the Habsburg claim. Ostensibly England feared a united France and Spain, as did the Empire, but once France’s army had been soundly routed by the Imperial allies, England was in a position to reconsider. Emperor Charles VI wanted Eugene to present a plan for invading Spain with the help of England and her allies; he especially wanted first-hand knowledge of any talks of peace with France.

Eugene traveled to London in 1712 with an assurance from Marlborough that he would be well received in spite of reports that the English public considered him a warmonger: “The reports you have been given of the attitude of

²⁶⁰ Matthew Bishop, *The Life and Adventures of Matthew Bishop* (London, 1744), 214-215. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 125.

²⁶¹ R. Kane, *Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne* (London: 1745), 85. Qtd. in McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 126.

the English people to you are an insult to us; in truth everyone is dying to see you, and I am quite certain that you will be received everywhere with the respect and applause due to Your Excellency personally and to the services you have rendered Europe.”²⁶² By the time Eugene reached London, Marlborough had been dismissed from his court appointments, the victim of a scandalous tract published against him. The Holy Roman Empire had never contributed enough to the war, the tract claimed, leaving England to finance and fight it while the Imperial generals claimed all the glory. Marlborough was implicated as the man who did not do enough to assert England’s superior influence on the Continent.²⁶³ The English ministers reiterated this to Eugene, and every proposal he made for a new campaign and more contributions from the Emperor was met with self-aggrandizement and verbal abuse for the Empire’s dependence on English troops. Eugene only spent a few months on this lost cause and set sail for the Continent with a message for the Emperor: the English were no longer his allies.²⁶⁴

The war would continue for another two years, ending in 1714 with the Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt. The Holy Roman Empire took control of the Netherlands, Milan, Naples, Sardinia, and Tuscany. The Bourbon candidate was officially recognized as King Philip V of Spain, but he renounced his claim to the French succession, somewhat decentralizing the Bourbon influence in Europe. The Empire had not won much after fourteen years of fighting, and the fact

²⁶² *The Letters and Dispatches of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough from 1702-1712*, ed. Sir George Murray (1845), V, 573. Qtd. in Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 190.

²⁶³ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, 191.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

remained that a Bourbon still occupied the Spanish throne.²⁶⁵ France did not lose much territory, and though Philip was no longer in line to inherit another crown, the French King ultimately saw his vision realized. England fared better given that they had no personal interest in the Spanish succession; her involvement had always been political. Colonial and commercial power increased, and England was granted Minorca and Gibraltar in the Mediterranean, thus widening its maritime power. Though England had fought on the side of the Empire, the result of a Bourbon on the throne instead of a Habsburg was the desired outcome. Their support of Archduke Charles II had been contingent on his brother Joseph I having an heir; when Joseph died and Charles had claims both to Spain and Austria, England feared another monopoly, this time a Habsburg one with a united Holy Roman Empire and Spain. The great dynasties of Europe were once again settled with France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire duly separated, and the fear of French hegemony under the House of Bourbon was quelled.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 218.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

The similarities between Charles-Joseph de Ligne's *Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy* and Eléazar Mauvillon's *The History of Francis-Eugene, Prince of Savoy* are too numerous to be a coincidence and too obvious for Ligne to think he would fool any of his readers. The detail of the preface, however, suggests that some research went into the publication and advertising of Ligne's work. The careful construction of the provenance, that the Count of Canales had received the work from Princess Maria Anna Victoria of Hildburghausen herself, ostensibly while she was selling Eugene of Savoy's estate to the King of Sardinia, lends an air of legitimacy to the manuscript. Perhaps someone included the preface with the manuscript when it made its way to a publisher after Ligne's death, or perhaps a memoir of Eugene's once existed before the destruction of his estate. Whatever the case, as an author Charles-Joseph de Ligne never meant for someone to read his manuscript and think it was penned by the great Eugene of Savoy himself.

Though Eugene's estate did not survive, his legacy did. Napoleon Bonaparte ranked him among history's greatest commanders along with Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, and Frederick the Great.²⁶⁶ Some historians may disagree with Bonaparte's conclusion: Eugene had no mind for military innovation and continued fighting wars with the same methods that had been used fifty years prior. This was a

²⁶⁶ Henderson, *Prince Eugen*, ix.

turning point in military modernization, a subtle and slow change from the mercenary armies fighting for dynasties to the standing armies of modern nations.

What cannot be denied is that Eugene made the antiquarian system work. Though the Holy Roman Empire wielded much influence in Europe, its army had never been one to be feared. Eugene changed that, at least for a time, and the Imperial army by the time of Charles-Joseph de Ligne rivaled that of France. Perhaps the biggest criticism of Eugene was that he was too charismatic, too influential, for “he left no school of officers nor even an army able to function without him.”²⁶⁷ If all of Eugene’s opinions had been followed, perhaps a Habsburg would have once again sat on the throne of Spain. If Louis XIV had allowed Eugene to serve in his army, perhaps the House of Bourbon would not have had to fight a war for fourteen years. There are enough mentions of Eugene to create a historical background for this great general, but he also remains a man of mystery, little known outside of the Germanic countries where he is held as a hero.

Eugene’s legacy exists in both fact and fiction. Since no memoirs of his are extant, Ligne’s revival of Mauvillon’s biography served to keep Eugene in the historical memory of the Holy Roman Empire until he was appointed an official biographer. While Ligne’s Eugene may tend to be full of himself, it is only because Mauvillon speaks of him so highly; the Duke of Marlborough’s letters corroborate that his contemporaries thought him brave and tireless, and the

²⁶⁷ McKay, *Prince Eugene*, 247.

historical record confirms his long military career and his political influence.

What cannot be known is what Eugene thought of himself.

Eugene's friendship with Marlborough garnered him a place in English history. No book about Blenheim, England's greatest victory, is complete without a chapter on Marlborough's comrade in arms, a man who would get off his horse and fight with the infantry. The two generals supported each other throughout their campaigns, ready to run to the other's aid if a need called for it. When Eugene was forced to retire from the field because of a wound, Marlborough was ready to take command. When the French seemed to gain the upper hand, Eugene traveled from Italy to help Marlborough in the Netherlands. The two men were polar opposites in experience. Marlborough was in his fifties before he commanded his first major battle when Eugene had been fighting since he was twenty years old. Marlborough was the urbane politician, able to conduct his affairs on the battlefield as well as he kept abreast of national and international politics. Eugene cared for nothing but to pay his soldiers and fight against the enemy; the only thing he cared for more was to report a victory to his Emperor.

The War of the Spanish Succession was the last of a series of wars that were fought against French hegemony in Europe. In a sense the Holy Roman Empire was defeated: Charles II of Spain had been the last Habsburg monarch on the Spanish throne. Though Philip V of Spain had been removed from the French succession, Spain and France remained allies through the next century, united under the House of Bourbon while the House of Habsburg licked its wounds.

The War of the Spanish Succession was not Eugene's first war, nor was it his last, but it was a war in which he shined. His influence transcended the great houses of Europe, and his reputation survived his death. It took only six years for a comprehensive biography to be written; fifty before someone attempted to emulate him; and a hundred before an official biographer combed all the Imperial archives for anything he could find about Eugene's life and time in the field. His estate may have been dispersed, but his legacy remained in the memories of those who saw him as a great soldier and a great subject of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Memoirs of Prince Eugene, of Savoy by Charles-Joseph de Ligne has too long been disregarded by modern scholars as the whimsical fancy of a nineteenth-century prince. The *Memoirs* and the source material from Eléazar Mauvillon's *The History of Francis-Eugene Prince of Savoy* are the closest contemporary sources to Eugene, closer even than any Imperial work on the prince. These works were in greater demand for an English-speaking audience than any nineteenth- or twentieth-century large-scale scholarly work. Not only did Ligne never intend to fool readers with his *Memoirs*, it would hurt scholarship little if he had: his and Mauvillon's books are corroborated by archival research. They are certainly no less historical than any other work that has appeared in the centuries since Eugene's death, and they are in fact the closest publications to Eugene's life.

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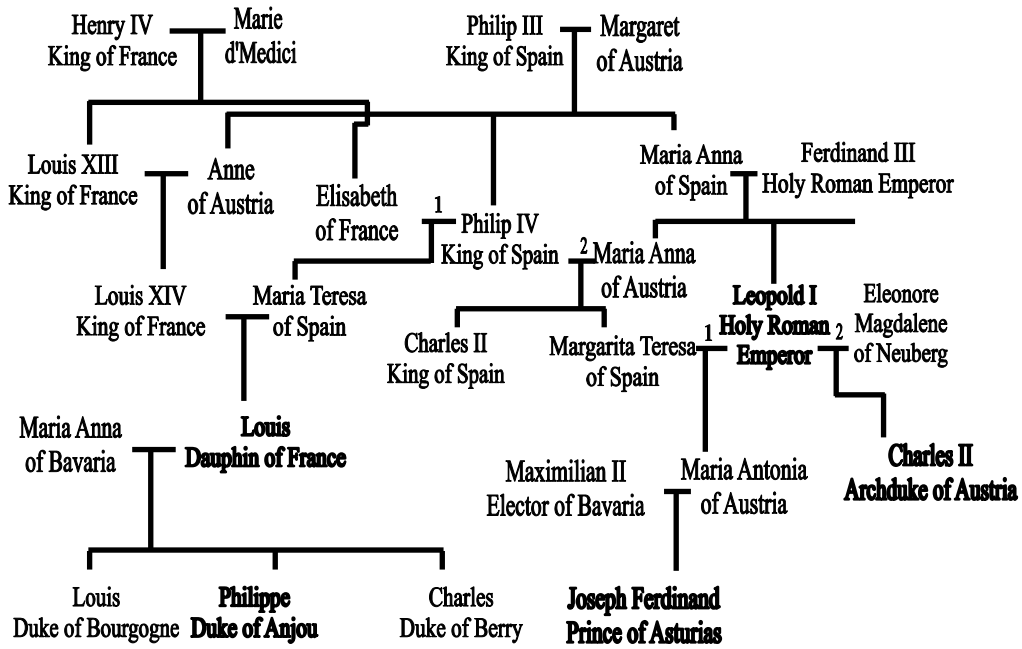
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APPENDIX I
THE SPANISH SUCCESSION



APPENDIX II
CHRONOLOGY

14 May 1643: coronation of King Louis XIV of France

26 May 1650: birth of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (Devon)

18 July 1658: coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I

18 October 1663: birth of Prince François Eugène of Savoy (Paris)

1683 – 1699: Great Turkish War

 11 September 1697: Battle of Zenta (Serbia)

1688 – 1697: Nine Years' War

1 November 1700: death of King Charles II of Spain (Madrid)

1 November 1700: coronation of King Philip V of Spain

1701-1714: War of the Spanish Succession

 9 July 1701: Battle of Carpi (Italy)

 1 September 1701: Battle of Chiari (Italy)

 13 August 1704: Battle of Blenheim (Germany)

 14 May 1706 – 7 September 1706: Siege of Turin (Italy)

 29 July – 21 August 1707: Battle of Toulon (France)

 11 July 1708: Battle of Oudenaarde (Belgium)

 12 August 1708 – 10 December 1708: Siege of Lille (France)

 11 September 1709: Malplaquet (France)

 24 July 1712: Battle of Denain (France)

5 May 1705: death of Leopold I (Vienna)

5 May 1705: coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I

17 April 1711: death of Joseph I (Vienna)

12 October 1711: coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI

1 September 1715: death of Louis XIV (Versailles)

1716 – 1718: Austro-Turkish War

16 June 1722: death of Marlborough (Windsor)

1733-1738: War of the Polish Succession

23 May 1735: birth of Prince Charles-Joseph François Lamoral Alexis de Ligne (Brussels)

21 April 1736: death of Eugene (Vienna)

13 September 1745: coronation of Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresia

1756 – 1763: Seven Years' War

13 December 1814: death of Charles-Joseph (Vienna)