

## Memoirs which Can Hide Others

### The *Mémoires* of Jean-Louis de Rabutin and Their Editions by the Prince de Ligne

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**Abstract.** Jean-Louis de Rabutin’s memoirs are considered a rather particular text which presents an interesting topic from the point of view of the history of noble emigration in the modern era. This author was a French nobleman who entered the imperial service in 1683 and then he participated in almost all military campaigns against the Turks and against Prince Francis II Rákóczi. His memoirs, which recount his military campaigns, were published twice by Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne. The initial project of Prince de Ligne was the glorification of the imperial generals by publishing their memoirs. During his own emigration, in 1795, the Prince republished the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin, supplemented by his own remarks and comments referring to his own experiences. Through this mirror game, he constituted a new connection between the Count of Rabutin and himself, which permitted him to reflect his own thoughts through the publication of Rabutin’s memoirs, thus contributing to repairing the errors of the past associated with the imperial army.

**Keywords:** Early Modern Hungarian history, noble emigration, Jean-Louis de Rabutin, Charles-Joseph de Ligne, Francis II Rákóczi, Turkish wars in Hungary

*Ce Monsieur de Rabutin que Vous venez de me céder, n’est point le faiseur des alleluia de Louis XIV. Il ne chantaient ni ne chantait personne. Il ne déplaisait pas à son Maître : mais s’il lui avait déplu, il aurait soutenu sa disgrâce avec fermeté. S’il n’était pas flatteur comme son parent sur la fin de ses jours, il n’était pas non plus si difficileux que lui. Les grands Hommes que nous avons alors dans nos armées l’estimaient. L’autre s’était brouillé avec M. de Turenne ; il fit trembler l’Académie Française. Celui-ci fit trembler les Turcs. Ils étaient bien braves tous les deux, avaient autant d’esprit à ce que je crois l’un que l’autre ; mais le nôtre était plus Soldat.<sup>1</sup>*

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1 *Mémoires de son Excellence le comte de Bussy Rabutin*, Preface.

As the above-cited extract from the preface of the first edition of the memoirs of the Count Jean-Louis de Rabutin<sup>2</sup> by Charles-Joseph de Ligne shows us, this work was born in the shadow of his illustrious cousin, the military writer Roger de Bussy-Rabutin.<sup>3</sup> Jean-Louis de Rabutin's memoirs are considered a rather particular text which presents an interesting topic from the point of view of the history of noble emigration in the modern era. Their author was one of the foreign gentlemen who offered their sword to Duke Charles V of Lorraine before entering the service of the Habsburg Empire. Belonging to the Rabutin-Chamuigy family, a younger branch of the illustrious Rabutin family, Jean-Louis de Rabutin was a distant cousin of Madame de Sévigné and the intriguing Count Roger de Bussy-Rabutin. He sometimes called himself 'Bussy-Rabutin' in order to suggest that he was a very close relative of the latter.

In 1683, he left the service of the army of Duke Charles V of Lorraine because of a matter of honour and joined the service of the imperial army. In 1692, he married Princess Dorothea-Elizabeth of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Wiesenburg, of the royal family of Denmark. This marriage brought Count de Rabutin not only a considerable fortune but also strong support at the court of Vienna, thanks to the circles and connections of his wife, whose salon was a famous place of sociability for the Viennese elite.<sup>4</sup> Jean-Louis de Rabutin participated in almost all the major battles associated with the re-conquest of Hungary from the Turks, from the liberation of the city of Vienna (1683) to the Peace of Karlowitz (1699). From 1697, he was commander of the Transylvanian army and, in this capacity, a serious opponent of Prince Francis II Rákóczi during his war of independence (1703–1711).<sup>5</sup> He returned to Vienna in 1708 and finished his life as a member of the Secret Council. In 1710, no longer able to serve, he retired. He lived for a few more years on his land, then died on November 16, 1717.

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2 Jean-Louis de Rabutin (1642?–1716), Imperial General of French origin. See on his life and activity: Hlavka, "Johann Ludwig Graf Bussy de Rabutin." See also: Gérard-Gauilly, *Un académicien grand seigneur*, 19–23; Vincent, "»Bussy-Rabutin«, l'heureux maréchal"; Petiot, "Rabutin (Jean-Louis, comte de)"; *Feldzüge des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen*, 71.

3 Roger de Rabutin, Count of Bussy (1618–1693), lieutenant-general of the armies of King Louis XIV, courtier, philosopher, memoirist, libertine writer, and member of the French Academy. See recently on his life and activity: Duchêne, *Bussy-Rabutin*; Vincent, *Bussy-Rabutin*; and see on his military career in particular: Chaline, "Les campagnes de Bussy-Rabutin."

4 During her visit to Vienna in 1716, Milady Montagu noticed: "Madam Rabutin has the assembly constantly every night at her house...". Montagu, *Letters*, 119; Cp. Hassler, *La cour de Vienne 1680–1740*, 119.

5 See on the Hungarian war of independence: Köpeczi, *La France et la Hongrie au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Some recent works on Jean-Louis de Rabutin's activity in Transylvania: Szirtes, "Kirchenunion und Übergang"; Szirtes, "Bethlen Miklós és az erdélyi politika"; Vida, "Információ és hatalom."

Count Rabutin's memoirs are not unknown in the history of European franco-phone literature. This text was discovered and edited twice by a prestigious aristocrat of the European Enlightenment: Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne.<sup>6</sup> Its first edition takes the title *Mémoires de Son Excellence le comte de Bussy Rabutin* and was published in Paris in 1773.<sup>7</sup> Despite its relatively limited importance in the *oeuvre* of the Prince de Ligne, this edition nevertheless aroused a certain interest among historians. The Belgian writer and historian Félicien Leuridan, a great expert on the life and works of Charles-Joseph de Ligne, discovered in 1919 that the work in question was not printed in Paris but in Liège, with the same printer who produced the edition of the *Lettres à Eugénie* in 1774.<sup>8</sup> The Belgian researcher identified a striking similarity between the vignettes of the two works and found proof of it in the Prince's correspondence.<sup>9</sup> A second edition of the same work was included in volume V of the series of *Mélanges militaires, littéraires et sentimentales* by Prince de Ligne published in Dresden in 1795.<sup>10</sup>

These are, therefore, two editions of the same work within twenty years by a Walloon aristocrat and officer in imperial service. Although the main textual core is generally the same, both editions were marked by considerable changes over the intervening twenty years. At the time of the publication of the work in 1773, Prince de Ligne was young and full of hope, while at the release of the second edition, the prince was ruined, disgraced and disenchanted by a succession of misfortunes during the time of the French revolutionary wars.

His comments and dedication testify to his interest in the biographies of the great imperial warlords. Following the example of French historical works of the time, he started to publish a collection of their memoirs, some of which probably came directly from his pen. The first work in this collection was the memoirs of Count de Rabutin.<sup>11</sup> Apart from this major project, the two editions of the Prince de Ligne also allowed him to add his own testimonies, and he thus became a co-author of the work. In this study, I propose to identify the authentic contribution of the Prince de Ligne to these editions by comparing them with the manuscript of the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin that I have just discovered.

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6 Charles-Joseph Lamoral, 7<sup>th</sup> Prince of Ligne (1735–1814), marshal of the imperial army, diplomat in the service of the emperor and man of letters from the Austrian Netherlands. See on his life: Mansel, *Prince of Europe*.

7 *Mémoires de son Excellence le comte de Bussy Rabutin*.

8 Ligne, *Lettres à Eugénie*.

9 For the history of this edition, see: Mouriau de Meulenacker, "Le prince de Ligne." See also: Vercruyse, ed., *Bibliographie des écrits relatifs*, 32–41.

10 Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*.

11 The following editions, those of Prince Eugene of Savoy and Count Louis of Baden, were most likely from his own pen and can be considered false memoirs.

## The original manuscript

The two printed editions give indications of the existence of a manuscript which was the origin of their texts. According to the dedication of the first edition, the manuscript came from the princely library of the illustrious family of Liechtenstein, and it had been given to Prince de Ligne by his brother-in-law, Franz Joseph of Liechtenstein.<sup>12</sup> The second edition presents a slightly different version by specifically indicating the collection of manuscripts of Prince Joseph-Wenceslas of Liechtenstein<sup>13</sup> as the source of this publication. According to this preface by Prince de Ligne, the late Prince of Liechtenstein, who died in 1772, even gave him permission to publish these manuscripts. This information encouraged me to pursue research in the princely Liechtenstein family collection in Vienna. After consulting the experts and the catalogues of the princely library, I managed to identify a manuscript with a title similar to the works published by the Prince de Ligne which was probably the original copy of this work.<sup>14</sup>

This manuscript, in one separate volume, has the form of a work bound in painted paper, probably from the eighteenth century, and contains seventy-six numbered folios. The text is written by a single hand and was probably corrected and prepared for later publication. In terms of the quality of the French, the text is neat, but the spelling leaves much to be desired—as the Prince de Ligne remarked: “Mr. de Rabutin had somewhat forgotten his language with us.”<sup>15</sup> The text is written in the third person singular, which was quite common in memoirs of the time, but which may also prove that its real author was not Jean-Louis de Rabutin, and this is confirmed by the study of manuscript writing.

We can quite easily exclude the idea that the manuscript was actually an autograph of Jean-Louis de Rabutin because we know his handwriting well from his letters sent to Count Harrach, which he often signed and certified. As he had secretaries who wrote up his missives that were sent to important people at the court of Vienna, he often added a few personal sentences in the post scripta to the recipients that clearly indicate the characteristic features of his writing. What appears in these sources is that he had considerable difficulty writing letters.

First, at the end of the seventeenth century, his hands were so shaky that he

12 Franz Joseph I (1726–1781), Prince of Liechtenstein.

13 Joseph-Wenceslas (1696–1772), Prince of Liechtenstein, imperial warlord. See on his life: Baumstark, *Joseph Wenzel von Liechtenstein*.

14 FSL HS 206 *Memoire ou recueil des campagnes faites au service de l'Empereur par feu S. E. le Comte Bussi de Rabutin, conseiller d'Etat de S. M. chambellant, marshal de ses armes, general commandant en Transilvanie et colonel d'un regiment des dragons*.

15 In the text of the edition of 1773: “M. de Rabutin avoit un peu oublié sa langue chez nous.” In the second edition (1795): “Peut-être qu'il avoit oublié sa grammaire chez nous,” VIII.

could not write himself.<sup>16</sup> The causes of his infirmity are certainly his various illnesses; particularly, he suffered from gout, about which he often complained in his letters.<sup>17</sup> But gout, a common illness linked to the lifestyle of European aristocrats, was not his only health problem. We also know that he was often in bed, suffering from fever. Like many other soldiers of his time who fought the Turks in Hungary in the marshy and unhealthy environs of the Danube and the Tisza, he must also have contracted malaria, the scourge that threatened the great military leaders of that time.

Recent research on the health of Vauban and Charles V of Lorraine seems to confirm that these two strategists suffered from the same illness and had similar symptoms: fevers, weakness and tremors of the hands.<sup>18</sup> To this was added a final infirmity which certainly caused the count a lot of difficulty with writing: the consequences of his arm injuries. During the siege of Belgrade on 13 August 1688, a musket shot broke his arm, which caused him great problems with the use of his hand.<sup>19</sup>

The few autographed texts of Count de Rabutin that we can find in his correspondence also show us that he did not perfectly master the written French language and, according to the opinions that circulated around him, he spoke almost no other foreign language. Although he was a French speaker by birth, his French was far from the literary language that was then beginning to be perfected in his native country thanks to classical writers. His spelling was rudimentary, and his style was very simple. The manuscript of his memoirs was certainly written by another person, probably by an anonymous writer, maybe his secretary. A register containing copies of his correspondence is conserved in the Vienna War Archives.<sup>20</sup> The handwriting of these copies of letters closely resembles that of the above-mentioned manuscript from the princely library of Liechtenstein, which may indicate that they were written by the same hand of an unknown person.<sup>21</sup>

16 Here is an extract from the note added to his undated letter (towards the end of 1698): “[...] il m’est impossible d’écrire tout ses chose de propre main tant ie les tramblant, incÿ que vostre Excellence me tin pour exqusé [...]” ÖStA HHStA AVA FA Harrach N° 291.

17 For example, on 22 December 1698, he ended his letter with this excuse: “Un accès de goutte a la main droite fait qu’a peine puis ie signer mon nom.” ÖStA HHStA AVA FA Harrach N° 291.

18 Perréon, *Vauban, l’arpenteur du pré carré*, 169–70.

19 His wife, in her letter of 10 November 1700, characterized her husband’s state of health as follows: “[...] luy reste une foyblesse a la main qui estoit deux fois cassez par un coup de mousquë autre fois [...]” ÖStA HHStA AVA FA Harrach N° 291.

20 ÖStA HHStA Kriegsarchiv, AFA, Kt. 205, *Türkenkrieg 1696 Livre de copie des lettres écrites par Son Excellence le general de Cavallerie Conte de Rabutin (à commencer de l’année 1696)*.

21 Furthermore, we can easily find analogies with the other memoir of a great military leader, which was truly the work of a confidant and servant with a humanist education that allowed him to write a coherent text even of literary quality. Duke Charles V of Lorraine used the

## The author and his motivations

The text of the manuscript was, therefore, probably a work written by a secretary under the dictation of Jean-Louis de Rabutin. It is essentially a summary account of the count's military career intended to show his military qualities and his uncompromising loyalty to the emperors Leopold I and Joseph I. This *curriculum vitae* ends at the end of 1707, which signified the end of his active military service. Without a doubt, the text must have been written between 1708 and 1717, the date of his death. Unfortunately, we do not have precise chronological information which could allow us to discover the circumstances of the origin of the manuscript apart from a small remark at the end of the codex. On leaf 66 of the manuscript, when talking about the affair of Chancellor Miklós Bethlen, the author gives us a chronological reference: "The Emperor tested everything that had been done, but as the thing was handed over to his clemency, the sentence was limited to perpetual prison, where the said chancellor died only two years ago."<sup>22</sup> Since the date of Miklós Bethlen's<sup>23</sup> death was 17 October 1716, and that of Count de Rabutin on 16 November 1717, the interval of approximately one year invites us to reflect on the identity of the author of the manuscript.

Either this is an oversight on the part of old Jean-Louis de Rabutin, or the author of his memoirs was an unknown person who must have completed the manuscript after the death of the count. As the thread of the narration of the events of his life stops abruptly at this time, it is entirely possible that the person who was responsible for writing the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin added parts according to the testimony of the count and completed this work at the end of 1717. This hypothesis allows us to explain the use of the third person singular and the mention of the death of the Count of Bethlen as an event which occurred one year previously, that is to say, after the death of Count Jean-Louis de Rabutin. That said, we may presume that the author of these memoirs was a person who knew him well and who probably used his diaries and correspondence, or even other sources, to write this work, which was not truly completed.

The account of the services of Jean-Louis de Rabutin could have been written to exalt his feats of arms with the prospect of obtaining a pardon for his family, already well established in Vienna. We can only regret that the author of the work does not give any information about the count's family or the circumstances of his youth and his private life. We may presume that this was a prudent omission on the part of Count Rabutin, who did not want to divulge the scandalous details of his

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services of François Le Bègue, his chancellor and diplomat, to compose his campaign diaries. See: Tóth, "Le Journal de Charles V de Lorraine comme source."

22 FSL HS 206 *Memoire ou recueil*... fol. 66.

23 Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716), Count, Transylvanian statesman and memoirist.

emigration from France to the Habsburg Monarchy. His ‘*affaire*’ with the wife of the Prince of Condé<sup>24</sup> was to overshadow the life of his family, which was well integrated into the aulic society of Vienna. Thus, these memoirs are limited to the relation between his military operations and his political activity in Transylvania. The official character of the work is thus explainable as family reasons in the form of an apology for the Count de Rabutin. To better understand the genesis of the *Memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin*, it is appropriate to recall the genealogical project that his famous cousin, Roger de Bussy-Rabutin, composed in the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> This work is all the more interesting in relation to our subject because it was sent quite quickly to the wife of Jean-Louis de Rabutin, a distant cousin of the author of the *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, he also inserted a letter of dedication addressed to the wife of Jean-Louis de Rabutin, in which he outlined a project intended to increase the international influence of his noble family.<sup>27</sup> Apparently, the work was never finished—it

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24 Depretto, “Coup d’épée à l’hôtel de Condé.”

25 Bussy-Rabutin, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Rabutin*. A manuscript of the work is at the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal in Paris: Ms 4159 *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Rabutin, dressée par messire Roger de Rabutin, comte de Bussy, lieutenant général des armées du Roy, et maître de camp général de la cavalerie légère de France, et adressée à dame Marie de Rabutin, marquise de Sévigné*. Another copy or a copy can be found at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Rothschild 3149 (2487 a) [IV, 2, 42]). See on this topic the introduction by Henri Beaune in Bussy-Rabutin, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Rabutin*. IX. Cp. Deguin, *L’écriture familiale des mémoires*, 266–71.

26 The *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules* is a pamphleteering satirical historical novel on the customs of the French court of the Grand Siècle, published in the original version by Editions à la Croix de Malte in 1665. Bussy-Rabutin, *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*. See on this affair: Bayle, *Ce que c’est que la France toute catholique*, 144.

27 “Vous faites un si grand honneur à la maison de Rabutin, Madame, et particulièrement à la branche ou vous êtes entrée, que nous ne scaurions jamais asses vous en temoigner notre reconnaissance. Pour moy qui suis aujourd’huy le chef de cette famille, j’ay une joie infinie de la grace que vous luy avés faittes et il n’y a que mon cousin votre mary qui en seroit plus aise que moy. Je me souviens, Madame, que la premiere fois que vous me fistes l’honneur de me mander votre mariage, vous m’escrivites que mon cousin avoit bien du merite ; j’en demeurè d’accord avec vous et j’en conviens encor aujourd’huy, mais vous mavouerés aussy qu’il est bien heureux, car enfin, Madame, vous savés que ce ne sont pas les mepris ny les rigueurs de votre sexe qui l’ont fait sortir de France, et qu’il n’a pas été lontems en Allemagne sans qu’une des plus belles princesses de l’empire l’ait jugé digne de l’épouser. Nous voyons dans ce royaume de grandes et de surprenantes fortunes, mais nous n’en voyons point de si complettes que celle de mon cousin. Il n’a rien à souhaitter du coté du plaisir et de la gloire, il n’a qu’à demander à Dieu que cela dure longtems et que vous ne vous quittiez qu’après avoir laissé des restes de vous deux qui perpetuent cette branche jusqu’à la fin du monde.” Bussy-Rabutin, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Rabutin*, 34–35.

is very likely that it remained at the bottom of a drawer until its discovery by the Prince de Ligne in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Evoking the possible literary models of Jean-Louis de Rabutin's memoirs, we should not forget that this work was written in an important period from the point of view of this genre. Memoirs began to appear as a literary and historical genre in literature and history in the seventeenth century thanks to classic works such as those of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Cardinal de Retz, the Duke of Saint-Simon and Count of Rabutin de Bussy, our author's distant cousin. These testimonies from turbulent times in France clearly show the phenomenon of the emergence of particular histories of the aristocracy contrasted with a general history increasingly controlled by the state. Apart from the great classics of the genre, the memoirs had several branches that were distinguishable: private court memoirs, political memoirs, religious memoirs, and military memoirs.

The work of Jean-Louis de Rabutin certainly belongs to this last category, which includes the autobiographical writings of great military leaders with a view to spreading their reputation and transmitting their genius and military theories. The roots of this literary branch go back to Antiquity if we think, for example, of the literary activity of Julius Caesar, and underwent a revival during the Renaissance when humanist military authors began to create a modern genre, of which the memoirs of Philippe de Commines are considered one of the most significant works. The author of the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin certainly benefited from the dynamism of this movement.<sup>28</sup>

Among the writings that could have influenced the genesis of this work, it is appropriate to recall two memoirs of two military leaders of the imperial army: Count Raimondo Montecuccoli and Duke Charles V of Lorraine. Both held the position of general commander of the imperial armies and left us written accounts of their military campaigns. The French translation of Montecuccoli's writings, notably his work entitled *Della guerra col turco in Ungheria*, was published in Paris under the title *Mémoires de Montecuccoli*. The French edition, buoyed by the high tide of Francophonie during the Age of Enlightenment in literature in general, became a reference work and, above all, a *vademecum* for the officers of almost all armies.<sup>29</sup> Another work that may have had a certain influence on the present one was the *Journal des campagnes* of Charles de Lorraine, composed by Abbot François Le Bègue, which also circulated in military and scholarly circles under the title of a memoir.<sup>30</sup> Apart from the memoirs of the two great imperial captains, there was

28 See on this topic: Garapon, ed., *Mémoires d'État et culture politique*.

29 See the recent reedition of this work: Montecuccoli, *Mémoires ou Principes de l'art militaire*.

30 Tóth, "Le Journal de Charles V de Lorraine."

one other which necessarily was of great importance for the creation of the work under discussion: this was the memoirs of Roger de Bussy-Rabutin. Too often cited as a libertine work *par excellence*, it should also be remembered that the memoirs of Count de Bussy-Rabutin offer valuable descriptions of the military campaigns of the second half of the seventeenth century, which are often exploited by military historians. Published in 1696, the success of the memoirs Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy was to cross European borders and bring a certain notoriety to the younger branch of the family. This also encouraged Jean-Louis de Rabutin to use the particle “de Bussy” from the eldest branch of the family, which appears in the title of his manuscript: “Comte Bussi de Rabutin.”

### **Mirror effect in the editions of the *Memoirs* by the Prince de Ligne**

For Charles-Joseph de Ligne, this work was a major piece among the biographies of the great imperial captains that he wanted to contrast with those of French apologetic military literature. Prince de Ligne published this work twice in order to show the greatness of the military quality of the imperial generals in contrast to that of the French generals. Initially, it was in the period following the Seven Years’ War that the problems of the French army were clearly demonstrated, and the reforms recommended by the Duke of Choiseul began to show their results. The second edition was published in a more delicate period, during the Revolutionary Wars, when European allied armies tried in vain to defeat the French army. At this time, Prince de Ligne was himself also in emigration and tried to animate the Austrian troops by evoking the victories of ancient times. In any case, the prince’s steps in preparing this text for publication may not be explained by scientific motives, even if he apparently used some philological methods such as corrections of the text and the addition of comments in the preface and footnotes.<sup>31</sup>

The study of the two consecutive editions of the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin by the Prince de Ligne identifies particularities which should be mentioned here. First of all, let us note that there are a whole series of differences between the manuscript and the two printed editions. To start the comparison, we can see that their titles are not identical because the printed versions are shorter than those of the manuscript. Probably, the Prince de Ligne, aware of the evolution of times and ideas, reduced and simplified the baroque-styled title of the original manuscript.

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31 As Simon Gabay has shown in one of his recent studies, the methods of publishing texts from the Grand Siècle did not become standardized until the nineteenth century: Gabay, “Éditer le Grand Siècle au XIX<sup>e</sup> s.”

Knowing and following the evolution of the orthography of the French language, Charles-Joseph de Ligne, himself a writer and great reader, revised and corrected many archaisms and errors in the work composed in an older style. Apart from the modernisation of the text according to the usage of the time of Voltaire and Rousseau, the Prince de Ligne recurrently uses capital letters for feudal titles and military ranks, even if he sometimes uses abbreviations for some of them. The printed version restores accents, joins compound words, completes missed words, and corrects mistakes and errors. Even if the spelling of Ligne's texts leaves much to be desired, in general, the writing of certain proper names is much more precise than that of the author of the manuscript, who apparently had great difficulty deciphering the Hungarian homonyms and toponyms. However, we also find exceptions, such as the case of 'Kovar' (originally Kővár) in the manuscript, which becomes 'Komar' (a non-existent place) in the printed version of the work. Sometimes, Prince de Ligne wrongly corrects perceived mistakes, as is the case with the adjective 'rassienne' (which means 'Serb' in the language of the time), which he transforms into 'Russian' (which means 'originating from Russia'). In other cases, he uses his linguistic knowledge to translate a proper name of Latin origin into German, as with the case of 'Tibisque' (Tibiscus, the Tisza river in Hungary), which in the printed version becomes 'Teis'. We could give still more examples to illustrate the work, certainly meritorious, of Prince de Ligne, who tried to make the manuscript easier to read, as he admits in his preface to his first edition: "I [changed] many small mistakes in French, construction and style; but it seems to me that we must leave manuscripts almost a hundred years old as they are."<sup>32</sup>

The real value added by Prince de Ligne lies in his comments and reflections on the memoirs of Count de Rabutin in the second edition of the work. In this historical context, the Prince also found himself in emigration at the end of his career, and his remarks constitute a mirror effect through which he looks at his own career. Struck by the collapse of the *ancien régime* in France, a world to which he was accustomed, in his critical remarks, he became much more lenient of the simple and military style of Count de Rabutin, whom he describes thus in a footnote: "Here is proof that a military writer, especially, can do without elegance. In a sentence of many lines, in truth, Mr. de Rabutin says enough things for someone else to make three pages of it."<sup>33</sup>

He looks at military operations with the eye of a modern officer who tried to minimise human problems in their decisions and accomplishments. The Prince de

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32 See the preface in the edition of 1773. *Mémoires de son Excellence le comte de Bussy Rabutin*.

33 "Voici une preuve qu'un Écrivain militaire surtout, peut se passer d'élégance. Dans une phrase de beaucoup de lignes, à la vérité, Mr. de Rabutin dit assez de choses, pour qu'un autre en fasse trois pages." Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*, 1.

Ligne did not accept the human weaknesses, intrigues and enmities that reigned among the military leaders of the imperial army. Sometimes, he even tried to repair the past by adding notes to extracts that described the division of command, such as this one relating to the strained relations between Prince Louis of Baden and Count de Rabutin: “This makes me feel dreadful. If I had lived in their time, I bet I would have mended them.”<sup>34</sup> In another place, condemning the jealousy between the imperial military leaders: “Will we never get rid of this accursed jealousy? That of husbands has gone out of fashion. It is terrible that the jealousy that stopped the success of a Campaign still exists.”<sup>35</sup> If we are to believe his remarks, Prince de Ligne retained an idealised vision of the coalition army at the time of the war of re-conquest of Hungary that was capable of bringing together soldiers from different nations for a common cause: “It’s a French name. It was then necessary to take into the Service many foreign officers. Two-thirds of the Generals and Officers were Italians, Lorraines, French, Irish, Walloons and Spaniards. The eldest, the only sons, the Chiefs, or sons of somewhat rich families, did not serve.”<sup>36</sup> This principle, of course, was no longer valid at the time of the revolutionary wars, which Charles-Joseph de Ligne bitterly regretted, even if he was one of the propagators of national military qualities.

In his strictly military remarks, we can observe modern principles of the eighteenth century, which he opposed to those that existed at the end of the Grand Siècle; in particular, he favoured battles, active operations and the frequent use of small wars and underlined the importance of the inventive military spirit to the detriment of mechanical discipline.

Prince de Ligne actively participated in the last war against the Turks in Hungary (1787–1791) and knew Ottoman warfare well. The prince commanded a corps of 30,000 men there and contributed greatly to the capture of Belgrade in 1789, a delicate period for the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, he experienced the consequences of the Brabant revolution on both his family and the power of the Habsburgs in Europe. When commenting on the history of Prince Rákóczi’s war of independence, he also draws a parallel with the history of his own country, the Austrian Netherlands, and approves of the very severe methods used by Count

34 “Ceci me fait une peine affreuse. Si j’avois vécu de leur tems, je parie que je les aurois raccomodés.” Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*, 5.

35 “Ne se défera-t-on jamais de cette maudite jalousie? Celle des maris a passé de mode. Il est affreux que celle qui arrêta les succès d’une Campagne, existe encore.” Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*, 19.

36 “C’est un nom françois. Il falloit alors prendre au Service beaucoup d’Officiers étrangers. Les deux tiers des Généraux et des Officiers, étoient Italiens, Lorrains, François, Irlandois, Wallons, Espagnols. Les ainés, les fils uniques, les Chefs, ou fils de famille un peu riches, ne servoient pas.” Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*, 9–10.

37 Colson, *Les Belges dans l’armée des Habsbourg*, 185.

de Rabutin thus: “There has never been anything more dexterous. With fuses, hostages, and examples, there is no Rebellion to fear. See Mr. de Rabutin getting out of trouble, as I said: without means, without support from the Court, almost without Soldiers, food and money.”<sup>38</sup> In short, the military experiences and personal feelings of the Prince de Ligne considerably nourished this edition of the memoirs of the Count de Rabutin, which reflected, like a mirror, his own thoughts.

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In conclusion, the memoirs of Count Jean-Louis de Rabutin appear to us first of all as a text which is part of a family writing project, openly inspired by Count Roger de Bussy-Rabutin, who had expressed in his genealogical history the exaltation of a noble lineage through memorialist literature with a view to projecting an illustrious destiny into the future. This project visibly failed because neither the elder branch of the family, represented by the famous Bussy-Rabutin, nor the younger branch of his distant cousin succeeded in consolidating their situation in two different countries.

If the memoirs of the first author nevertheless became a masterpiece of classical literature, those of his cousin remained buried for a long time in a box in the archives of the princes of Liechtenstein. The discovery of the manuscript by Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne inspired him, in another ambitious project, to constitute a lineage, in the hope of promoting filiation, of the memories of the famous military leaders in the service of the Empire in order to counterbalance the effect of the French military memoirists very fashionable in the period of second modernity in Europe. With a view to carrying out this project, Prince de Ligne first published the manuscript of Count Jean-Louis de Rabutin, and then he did not disdain to take up the pen and write himself false memoirs of the famous war leaders which he published in his own collected works.

After the failure of this attempt to glorify the noble generals of the Empire, he embarked on a new literary adventure. During his emigration, he republished the memoirs of Jean-Louis de Rabutin, supplemented by his own remarks and comments referring to his own experiences. Through this mirror game, he constituted a new connection between the Count of Rabutin and himself, which permitted him to reflect his own thoughts through the publication of Rabutin’s memoirs, thus contributing to repairing the errors of the past associated with the imperial army.

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38 See the preface to the 1795 edition. Later, in commenting on the Nicolas Bethlen’s affair, he goes even further: “Pourquoi toujours de la clémence? C’est la peine de mort qui en impose: et dans un tems de trouble, un bon *Standrecht* (loi martiale) fait plus d’effet.” Ligne, *Mélanges militaires*, 137.

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