



The *Saint-Philippe* and the first-rates under Louis XIII to Louis XIV

Patrick Villiers

They were named *Sovereign of the Seas*, *Couronne*, *Vasa*, *Soleil Royal*, *Beverode*, *Seven Provincien*, *Royal Prince*, *Fier*, *Saint-Philippe* or *Pompeux*, etc.. Classified as off-rate, first-rate or second-rate depending upon the era and armed with 70 to 110 guns, they were intended as flagships to squadrons or fleets. Why were they built? Who were the shipwright builders? What were there cost and the difficulties in building them? While the original concept of first-rate vessels belongs to the British, Louis XIV gave the French Navy its first flagship, the first *Saint-Philippe* (1663-1692) that was soon joined by the *Soleil Royal*, *La Reine*, le *Saint-Esprit* and the *Pompeux*. There were eleven

first-rates and twenty-two second-rates in 1672, 26 first-rates and thirty second-rates in 1693, sailing the Mediterranean as well as the North seas. As the backbone of Louis XIV's navy, did they hold to their promise? Forgetting the victories at Béziers (Pevensey) and Barfleur, the memory is mostly of the vessels that were burned down at La Hougue. The study of the two *Saint-Philippe*'s revises this vision of Louis XIV's navy. Also built at Toulon, the second *Saint-Philippe* (1693-1712), Admiral Tourville's flagship in 1694 and Vice-admiral d'Estrées' in 1701 and 1702, earned fame along with the other first-rates at the battle of Velez-Malaga in 1704 before she played a decisive role at the siege of Toulon along with her sister ship *Tonnant*.

Leaning upon an often unpublished iconography from the great European museums and upon original archives Patrick Villiers, Professor Emeritus of maritime history, five times a laureate of the Academy of Marine, offers us a fresh look on the naval confrontations between France, Great Britain, the Low Countries and Spain from the 1630s to the Treaty of Utrecht, with commentaries about naval architecture as well as about the role of crews, naval battles, the casting of 24-pounder and then 36-pounder guns, seen through the prism of these marvellous flagships.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOOK

A 184 page,
22x31 cm book
containing 150
photos or
prints,
144 of them
in color

- Ch. 1** The French Navy from Richelieu to Mazarin and the birth of vessels of the first rate
- Ch. 2** The first-rate vessels in the face of the new stakes in the fight against Spain in the first Anglo-Dutch war;
- Ch. 3** The second Anglo-Dutch war and first-rate vessels (1661-1672). The *Saint-Philippe*, Louis XIV's first flagship.
- Ch. 4** First-rate vessels in combat during the Dutch war (1672-1678).

- Ch. 5** The *Saint-Philippe* and first-rate vessels from 1678 to Béziers and La Hougue.
- Ch. 6** The new *Saint-Philippe* and first-rate vessels from 1693 to 1697.
- Ch. 7** The *Saint-Philippe* and the war of Spanish Succession: Velez-Malaga 1704 and the siege of Toulon 1707.

Annexes



SOME PHOTOS

