



# King Louis XIV's Anti-Prostitution Edict, 1684: A Translation

*Louis XIV, Francois Le Tellier*

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**King Louis XIV's Anti-Prostitution Edict, 1684: A Translation** Louis XIV, Francois Le Tellier  
King Louis XIV's Anti-Prostitution Edict, 1684, is an English-language translation of a law promulgated by France's most famous pre-revolutionary monarch. King Louis XIV was the longest reigning monarch in European history. He came to the throne as a young boy in 1743 and ruled until his death in old age in 1715. Over the course of his long reign he presided over a golden age of French political and military power in Europe, as well as stunning intellectual and artistic achievements. Louis XIV's most notable architectural legacy is his magnificent palace at Versailles, just outside of Paris. The palace of Versailles was begun by Louis XIV's father Louis XIII, but built up to an unprecedented level of opulence by Louis XIV. Besides building the luxurious palace at Versailles, Louis XIV engaged in a long series of wars for much of his reign. To further Louis XIV's military ventures, the secretary of state for war, Francois le Tellier, built up a new, modern, professional army. The new French military of Louis XIV and le Tellier was modern in the sense that it was employed and commanded by the state. In earlier times, most European monarchs had relied on the private armies of nobles who owned loyalty to them, rather than organizing national armies under direct royal or state control. Louis XIV personally commanded his troops and took a strong interest in supervising the details of his soldiers' lives. One problem that attracted the king's attention in 1684 was the large number of prostitutes who were frequenting his army's camps around Versailles. The military camps near to the palace, full of single male soldiers, naturally attracted female prostitutes from surrounding areas. These women were having a disruptive influence on the troops and causing violent disputes among the men, according to the king and his advisors. As a result, in 1684, Louis XIV issued an edict imposing a draconian punishment on prostitutes found repeatedly in the soldiers' camps- these women were to have their noses and ears severed.

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