

## Sons and daughters sent abroad: Successes and failures of foreign princes at the French court in the Sixteenth Century

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[Джонатан Спанглер](#), к. фил. н., Манчестерский столичный университет (All Saints, Manchester M15 6BH, United Kingdom)  
[j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk)

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[Jonathan Spangler](#), Doctor of Philology (Oxon), Manchester Metropolitan University (All Saints, Manchester M15 6BH, United Kingdom)  
[j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk)

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J. Spangler

**SONS AND DAUGHTERS SENT ABROAD:  
SUCSESSES AND FAILURES OF FOREIGN PRINCES  
AT THE FRENCH COURT IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY**

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*[I] find myself in greater labyrinths than before...<sup>1</sup>*  
Ippolito d'Este at the court of Francis I of France

At the end of July 1512, Queen Catalina of Navarre and her husband King-Consort Jean d'Albret abandoned their capital city of Pamplona and retreated north across the Pyrenees to safety. Despite recent promises of support from the Pope, the King of France and the Holy Roman Emperor, no help had arrived to stop the advance of Castilian troops led by the Duke of Alba. They continued north to the French court at Blois, where only one month before, Louis XII had formally recognised the sovereignty of their principality of Béarn. Louis made vague promises to the Navarrese royal couple that winter, but by the Spring he renewed his peace treaties with Aragon and Castile. Two years later a new king took the throne in France, François I; raised with the young heir to the Navarrese throne, Henri d'Albret, François immediately pledged to support a counter-invasion on behalf of Catalina and Jean in March 1515. The Italian historian Guicciardini wrote that François «burned with a desire to see them re-established in their estates», and by the terms of the Treaty of Paris, he pledged that they would share «*amys des amys et ennemys des ennemys*»<sup>2</sup>. But nothing much came of this oath, and after

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Ippolito d'Este to his brother, Ercole II, duke of Ferrara, March 1538, quoted in *Hollingsworth, M. The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court*. London, 2004. P. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Guicciardini and the Treaty of Paris, 23 March 1515, both cited in: *Boissonnade, P. Histoire de la réunion de la Navarre à la Castille: Essai sur les relations des princes de Foix*. © J. Spangler, 2017

two lukewarm invasion attempts, the House of Navarre settled more or less permanently at the French court, the independence of their kingdom lost forever<sup>3</sup>.

A generation later and on the opposite side of France, another borderland principality lost its independence when the last duke of its native dynasty died, and the claims of his heir were brushed aside by the Emperor Charles V. In the summer of 1538, Wilhelm the Rich, Duke of Cleves, claimed his cousin's inheritance, the Duchy of Guelders, despite the Emperor's warnings. He tried to secure his hold the following year by sending his daughter, Anne — whose betrothal arrangements with the neighbouring House of Lorraine had produced little diplomatic fruit and had been annulled — to England for a marriage to Henry VIII. This tactic also having failed to generate support, Duke Wilhelm turned to the King of France, the Emperor's rival, and arranged in 1541 a marriage for himself, to the next heir to the Kingdom of Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret. But the King of France, busy fighting in Flanders, was unable to send assistance when Imperial troops moved into the Duchy of Guelders, whose sovereignty was thereafter formally yielded to the Habsburgs by the Treaty of Venlo (7 September 1543). Another sovereign border principality vanished<sup>4</sup>.

Another half-century later, however, when Spanish troops again threatened the independence of a small state on France's borders, in this instance the Duchy of Monferrato in the Italian Piedmont, the King of France was motivated to intervene — with the aim of protecting the rights of a French client prince, Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, one of the rival Gonzaga claimants to both Monferrato and the Duchy of Mantua — setting off the War of Mantuan Succession<sup>5</sup>. Louis XIII was

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Albret avec la France et l'Espagne, 1479–1521. Paris, 1893. P. 430, 433.

<sup>3</sup> This article first emerged as a paper at the Renaissance Society of America conference in Montreal in March 2011, as part of a series of panels entitled «Snakes and Ladders: Power Games at the Renaissance Court», and has been revised in the light of further research on the themes of dynastic identity and trans-national elites. For a new appraisal of both of these themes, see: *Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe: Rulers, Aristocrats and the Formation of Identities* / Ed. by L. Geevers, M. Marini. Farnham, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> See: *Nijsten, G.* In the Shadow of Burgundy: The Court of Guelders in the Late Middle Ages. Cambridge, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Parrott, D.* A prince souverain and the French Crown: Charles de Nevers, 1580–

urged on by his first minister, Cardinal Richelieu, in a letter of December 1628: «Italy, oppressed for the past year by the armies of the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy, waits to receive from your victorious arms the relief of its misfortunes. Your reputation obliges you to take in hand the cause of your neighbours and allies, who are unjustly despoiled of their States»<sup>6</sup>. This statement certainly allows us to see a motivation driven by honour behind the French monarchy's protection of border princes. And of course Richelieu himself had other justifications for intervention in northern Italy, based on *raison d'état*. But there were other compelling reasons for the King to support Nevers, notably informal obligations based on personal affinity, kinship, and patron-client ties which should not be dismissed. In this case the appeal for French protection was successful: the resulting war devastated much of Monferrato and Mantua, but in the end both duchies remained in the hands of Nevers.

What had changed between 1512 and 1628? How had a member of the House of Gonzaga convinced the King of France to come to his aid against a Habsburg challenge, when the houses of Navarre and Cleves had been unable to do the same? This article will address this question by assessing degrees of success or failures of nobles of princely rank, junior sons (or daughters) of sovereign or semi-sovereign dynasties whose states were located along the borderlands of France (or French interests as they extended into the Rhineland or the Italian peninsula), who were sent to reside for long or short periods at the French court to safeguard the interests of their dynasty back home. These courtiers became known collectively at the French court as the *princes étrangers*, the foreign princes. They continued to be referred to as «foreign» long after they settled in France, and their influence there has been studied from a variety of angles<sup>7</sup>. But why did they come to France to begin with? It is impor-

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1637, in: *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe* / Ed. by R. Oresko, G. C. Gibbs and H. M. Scott. Cambridge, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Richelieu to Louis XIII, *Les papiers de Richelieu* / Éd. P. Grillon. Paris, 1975. Vol. III. P. 587–588.

<sup>7</sup> Carroll, S. *Noble Power During the French Wars of Religion. The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy*. Cambridge, 1998; Carroll, S. *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe*. Oxford, 2009; Hodson, S. *Politics of the Frontier: Henri IV, the Maréchal-Duc de Bouillon and the Sovereignty of Sedan*, in: *French History*. 2005. Vol. 19, No 4. P. 413–439; Vester, M. *Jacques de Savoie-Nemours: L'apanage du Genevois au coeur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

tant to question the notion set out by one of the first historians to examine the nature and role of the *princes étrangers*, Robert Oresko<sup>8</sup>, of a single-directional strategy, that these second sons were sent primarily as agents by their families as part of their long-term diplomacy strategies. Another historian has proposed that the term was established at the French court to honour high-ranking French aristocrats who shared blood ties with the royal family, downplaying the element of foreignness<sup>9</sup>. The truth is, as so often in history, a mixture of all of these ideas: the *princes étrangers* were sent by their dynasties in their own interests, and most of them did enjoy close blood ties to the French royal house, but they were also invited by successive French kings who were anxious to ensure their kingdom's security by carefully cultivating and maintaining stable dynastic links with semi-sovereign princely houses all along their north-eastern and south-eastern frontiers.

This article will argue that French kings starting with Charles VIII in the 1480s were not simply receptive, but were eager to attract foreign princes to their court to both increase the splendour of their court and also to secure relations with their princely neighbours. They drew clear lessons from the glittering and cosmopolitan court of the Valois dukes of Burgundy, who had used this strategy earlier in the century, for example, via members of the house of Cleves-Ravenstein, cadets of the dukes of Cleves, drawn into the closest circles of the Valois dynastic network through kinship links and the lure of offices and honours such as the Order of the Golden Fleece<sup>10</sup>. This strategy was then emulated by the successors of the House of Burgundy, the Habsburgs in Madrid and Vienna<sup>11</sup>.

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Geneva, 2008; Spangler, J. *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France*. Farnham, 2009; Kmec, S. *Across the Channel: Noblewomen in Seventeenth-Century France and England: A Study of the Lives of Marie de La Tour 'Queen of the Huguenots' and Charlotte de La Trémoille, Countess of Derby*. Trier, 2010; Dewald, J. *Status, Power, and Identity in Early Modern France: The Rohan Family, 1550–1715*. University Park, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Oresko, R. *Princes étrangers*, in: *Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Régime* / Ed. L. Bély. Paris, 1996. P. 1019–20.

<sup>9</sup> Antonetti, G. *Les princes étrangers*, in: *Etat et société en France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* / Éd. J.-P. Bardet, D. Dinet, et al. Paris, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Vale, M. *A Burgundian Funeral Ceremony: Olivier de la Marche and the Obsequies of Adolf of Cleves, Lord of Ravenstein*, in: *English Historical Review*. 1996. Vol. 111. P. 920–938.

<sup>11</sup> The influence of the so-called «Burgundian system» on the Habsburg courts has not been without question. See Paravicini, W. *The Court of the Dukes of Burgundy*:

But the Valois kings also wanted to create a «parti français» on the Italian peninsula to rival Spanish or Imperial influence, and to aid in establishing control of either Naples or Milan<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, there was a keen desire to bind allies from the northeast frontier regions — Lorraine, the Middle Rhine and the Low Countries — through kinship and affinity. Once established at the French court, success for the *princes étrangers* in safeguarding their family interests depended on a number of factors: individual skill, courtliness and personality; but also blood affinity with the monarch (either inherited or obtained); and having (or obtaining) an independent income. Beggars rarely triumphed, though some gamblers succeeded wildly. Some dynasties of foreign princes established power in France far beyond the expectations of their founders — notably the Guise from Lorraine, who came to dominate the French state itself in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the longer term, however, success can be measured less by individual successes at the French court than by the health and strength of the dynasty back home.

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The key to the success of the Duc de Nevers in 1628 lies in the fact that his father, Ludovico Gonzaga, had been sent to live at the French court as a teenager in the 1550s, not just for a one-off visit, but permanently. Ludovico's father, Federico III, Duke of Mantua, whose small duchy was wedged between Spanish Milan and the ordinarily pro-French Tuscany (not forgetting the often aggressively expanding Venetian Republic and the Papal States), would have certainly observed the successes and failures of other, similarly precarious border dynasties in the previous decades. He realised that the key to success was in the establishment of a permanent embassy more durable and symbolically charged than one simply staffed by diplomats, but instead by members of his own "blood. He will have seen in that same decade that when the sovereign duchy of Lorraine was threatened by Imperial troops in 1552, its annexation was prevented by French troops led by a prince of the House of Lorraine, from its junior branch, established in France, François, duc de Guise<sup>13</sup>. At the same time,

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A Model for Europe?, in: *Princes, Patronage and Nobility* / Ed. by. R. G. Asch and A. Bircke. Oxford, 1991. P. 69–102.

<sup>12</sup> *Solnon, J.-F.* La Cour de France. Paris, 1987. P. 83.

<sup>13</sup> This is ambiguous. Stuart Carroll seems certain that Charles V intended to take over Lorraine to join together his territories in Burgundy and the Low Countries (much

however, the king of France had no such inclination to remove his troops then occupying the Duchy of Savoy. The contrast would have been clear: Guise was one of the most popular and influential members of the French court — a successful military commander and a leading member of the council of Henri II (and indeed, uncle of the Dauphine, Marie Stuart) — while his counterpart representing the House of Savoy, Jacques, duc de Nemours, had yet to establish himself in a similar position of prominence<sup>14</sup>. By the end of the decade, however, Nemours' credit had risen to the extent that he was able to influence the restoration of his cousin's sovereignty in 1559. The Duke of Mantua undoubtedly wanted the same protection and influence for his state in sending his second son, Ludovico.

One of the first examples of the establishment of a line of cadets more or less permanently resident at the French court, can be seen in the strategies employed by the House of Cleves to ingratiate themselves with their powerful neighbours in France, in contrast to their neighbours and rivals, the dukes of Guelders, who were building similar alliances with the dukes of Burgundy. Engelbert de Cleves, the third son of John I, Duke of Cleves, and Elisabeth of Burgundy-Nevers, moved into French orbit in the last decades of the fifteenth century. Sent to France at a young age and naturalised in 1486, he married Charlotte de Bourbon-Vendôme (a distant cousin of the King) in 1489, and inherited the counties of Nevers and Eu (in Normandy) from his maternal grandfather in 1491<sup>15</sup>. Both counties were also peerages, which tied Engelbert immediately into the structures of princely justice and ceremonial in France; the peers were usually close kin of the monarch and participated in his coronation and in the legal decisions of his council and his *parlement*<sup>16</sup>.

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as his great-grandfather and namesake, Charles the Bold, had attempted to do in 1477) (*Carroll, S. Martyrs and Murderers*. P. 68–70). But it would be more logical that the Emperor was more interested in restoring the sovereignty of his niece (and thus dependable ally), the Regent Christina of Denmark (ruled 1545 to 1552); indeed, after the conquest of the duchy by the French in 1552, they did not annex it outright, but preferred to retain it as a 'client state' with its young duke raised as a virtual prisoner at the French court.

<sup>14</sup> *Vester, M. Jacques de Savoie-Nemours*. P. 50–53.

<sup>15</sup> For the House of Cleves-Nevers in France: *Anselme de Sainte-Marie. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, des Pairs, des Grands Officiers de la Couronne & de la Maison du Roy*. Paris, 1726–33. Vol. III. P. 349ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Labatut, J.-P. Les ducs et pairs de France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Paris, 1972; *Levantat, C. Ducs et pairs et duchés-pairies laïques à l'époque moderne, 1519–1790*. Paris, 1996.



Yet this was not a straightforward patron-client relationship between France and Cleves. As with so many border dynasties, before and after, the Cleves family's marriage patterns reveal a strategy of hedging bets: in contrast to Engelbert's French marriage, his elder brother, John II, Duke of Cleves, maintained the family's ties to the east through marriage to a princess from Hesse. Meanwhile, the youngest son, Philip, again typically, pursued a career in the Church and was promoted successively bishop of Nevers, Amiens and Autun — significantly, all dioceses formerly within the sphere of the dukes of Burgundy and which retained some degree of Habsburg influence. Armed with extensive landholdings in France, and kinship with the royal dynasty, a new cadet branch of the House of Cleves forged a place for itself at the French court, setting the standard for cadets from Lorraine and Savoy to follow. Engelbert added to his successes through military valour: he commanded the Swiss at the Battle of Fornovo in 1495, and was later named governor of Burgundy in 1499. He was honoured by Louis XII, being chosen to represent one of the six lay peers (the count of Champagne) at the coronation of 1498, and accompanied this king on his Italian campaigns, sharing his grand entrée into Genoa in 1502. Engelbert's son served at the conquest of Genoa in 1507, and his grandson was rewarded with the elevation of Nevers to a duchy-peerage in 1538, upon his marriage to yet another Bourbon-Vendôme princess. In the end, however, this was not enough to compel the French king to come to the aid of the House of Cleves when challenged by the Emperor over Guelders in 1541. From the perspective of the «home dynasty», the strategy of creating the first *prince étranger* dynasty in France was thus not successful.

Nevertheless the strategy was useful in other ways for border families like the Cleves-Nevers, enabling them to cultivate their rank as princes, rather than merely nobles, allies and kin to royalty. To aid in this effort, they highlighted their possession of territories that had fallen through the cracks of the feudal system over the previous centuries: for example, the counts of Nevers were «sovereigns» of the tiny principality of Château-Regnault, centred on a fortress on the river Meuse deep in the Ardennes that formally owed no fealty to any overlord. When he inherited this property from his Cleves mother, the third Duke of Guise likewise stressed the sovereignty of Château-Regnault, and even minted coins to make

the point abundantly clear<sup>17</sup>. In the same manner, when Ludovico Gonzaga was rewarded for his loyal service in French military campaigns with royal support for his marriage to the other Cleves-Nevers heiress, he ensured that his marriage brought him not only the wealth and status from the duchy-peerage of Nevers, but also the sovereign territory of Arches (not far from Château-Regnault), which he rebuilt and renamed for himself, Charleville<sup>18</sup>. His marriage also made him extremely well connected politically: he was now brother-in-law to both the Lorraine-Guise and Bourbon-Condé families, the two most powerful families in France outside the royal family itself.

Were the successes and failures at the French court for foreign princes based therefore on wealth and landholdings? On military valour? On personal relationships with the sovereign? Most likely it was based largely on kinship, something more enduring in the early modern conceptualisations of the purposes and functions of dynasticism. Looking once more at the example of Guelders, Duke Charles II successfully appealed to France for aid in restoring him to his duchy in 1492, due to his close kinship ties with the French royal house. But only a few years before, he had been firmly in the sphere of Burgundy, as cousin of Mary of Burgundy, wife of Emperor Maximilian. Prosopographical studies indeed have a lot to tell us about the mechanics of dynasticism within the spheres of international politics and diplomacy in the early modern world<sup>19</sup>.

Going further, Duke Charles' twin sister, Philippa of Gueldres, duchess of Lorraine, was mother to the first duke of Guise, Claude de Lorraine, who was therefore second cousin of François I (their grandmothers were sisters) and a close intimate friend, while the first Duc de Nemours, Philippe de Savoie, was much closer kin, as the King's uncle, brother of Louise de Savoie. A permanent branch of the house of Lorraine was

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<sup>17</sup> Henry, N. La principauté de Château-Regnault, in: *Revue de Champagne et de Brie*. 1882. Vol. 13. For a more recent analysis of princely status and the frontiers of France, see: Spangler, J. *Les Princes étrangers: Truly Princes? Truly Foreign? Typologies of Princely Status, Trans-Nationalism and Identity in Early Modern France*, in: *Adel und Nation in der Neuzeit: Hierarchie, Egalität und Loyalität 16.-20. Jahrhundert* / Ed. by M. Wrede and L. Bourquin. Ostfildern, 2016. S. 117–141.

<sup>18</sup> Parrott, D. *Prince souverain and the French Crown*. P. 156, 159.

<sup>19</sup> See: Nassiet, M. *Parenté, noblesse et états dynastiques: XV<sup>e</sup> – XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris, 2000; *Prosopographie et genèse de l'état modern* / Éd. F. Autrand. Paris, 1986.

established in France from about 1506, while a similar branch for the house of Savoy was in place a few years later. Duchy-peerages were granted to both — amongst the first non-royal peerages in French history — in 1526 (Guise) and 1528 (Nemours). Nevertheless, this close blood affinity did not compel the king of France to aid the duke of Gueldres when his duchy was invaded once more by the Habsburgs in 1506, or deter him from occupying Savoy in 1536. So what was the point of these families, the *princes étrangers*, established at the French court in the early sixteenth century?

As noted above, historians have tried before to devise regular formulae for the official recognition of princely status by the French crown, based on kinship, and signalled by the incorporation of the French royal arms into their own<sup>20</sup>. This idea is mostly pertinent for the later period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and can be dismissed by noting the number of grandee families who also added the royal *fleurs-de-lis* to their arms but did not put forward claims to princely status (Potier, Gondi, Arpajon, Rochechouart). This usage in heraldry is called «augmentation» and was a right given by French sovereigns to honour prominent allies, for example Cesare Borgia when he was created Duc de Valentinois in 1499. In fact, the *princes étrangers* held no formal legal position in France, in the sixteenth century or even later, but were recognised by the crown only obliquely as something distinct from the bulk of the native-born French aristocracy. We see for example a mention in letters patent of Henri III of December 1581, which, in confirming the precedence of his favourite's new duchy-peerage of Joyeuse over all peers except the princes of the blood and the princes «des quatre maisons,» named specifically the houses of Lorraine, Savoy, Mantua (Gonzaga) and Luxembourg<sup>21</sup>. Nevertheless, in the evolution of the privileges given to these foreign princes, much emphasis was indeed given to blood proximity to the reigning dynasty: in a memoir from 1572, King Charles IX gave explicit «royal» privileges to the Queen Mother, the Queen, his brothers, his sisters, the King of Navarre, and the dukes of Lorraine, Savoy and Ferrara, «qui avoient tous trois espouse des filles de France»<sup>22</sup>. A similar (but

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<sup>20</sup> Antonetti, G. Les princes étrangers.

<sup>21</sup> Printed in: *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. III. P. 806.

<sup>22</sup> Mémoire sur les honneurs dont jouissent chez le Roy les princes, ducs et pairs, ducs non pairs, officiers de la Couronne et autres seigneurs qui vont estre raportez

lesser) status was then extended to their kin, in part to settle disputes then raging over precedence at court and at state ceremonies between the *princes du sang* and the *princes étrangers*<sup>23</sup>. The struggle would continue into the late seventeenth century, and would also involve the *princes légitimés* (legitimised royal offspring) and the *ducs-et-pairs*<sup>24</sup>.

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A few historians have investigated the successes or failures of foreign princes at the French court based on performative and ritual agency. Anthony Cashman has demonstrated that Federico Gonzaga, son of Francesco II, marquis of Mantua, carried himself very well during a series of tournaments at the court of François I in the spring of 1518, presenting his *bella figura*, both in dress and in performance on the tilting grounds; but ultimately failed to achieve his primary goals: the repayment of significant Gonzaga loans to the French crown, and a more definitive promise of alliance between their two houses. He failed in this regard, not due to his performance or even his attainment of close friendship with the young King, but because he was unable to continue to reside at the French court due to a lack of the huge levels of cash needed to *vivre en prince* — money for court dress, for horses and equipment, an appropriate entourage and household, and especially for gifts<sup>25</sup>.

Mary Hollingsworth's study of the expenditures of Ippolito d'Este while in France in the 1530s, makes this entirely clear<sup>26</sup>. Ippolito was not only the younger son of the Duke of Ferrara, he was also brother-in-law of the King's sister-in-law (his brother Duke Ercole II was married to Renée de France, sister of Queen Claude). Ippolito was invited to the French court in 1535, an invitation sweetened with the prospect of a church

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(Bibliothèque nationale de France [BNF], Ms. Clairambault 721. P. 491), cited in: *Cosandey, F.* Préséances et sang royal. Le rite comme construction d'un mythe identitaire, in: *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*. 2008. No 77. P. 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Jackson, R.* Peers of France and Princes of the Blood, in: *French Historical Studies*. 1971. Vol. 7. P. 27–47.

<sup>24</sup> *Spangler, J.* Society of Princes. P. 16, 20–21.

<sup>25</sup> *Cashman, A.* Performance Anxiety: Federico Gonzaga at the Court of Francis I and the Uncertainty of Ritual Action, in: *Sixteenth Century Journal*. 2002. Vol. 33, No 2. P. 333–352.

<sup>26</sup> *Hollingsworth, M.* The Cardinal's Hat. P. 61, 67, 105–106, 121, 168–169, 174, 192ff, 263–264.

benefice. In the other direction, he was pressed to accept the invitation by his brother the Duke, who was then under intense pressure from both French and Imperial troops in northern Italy following the death of the last sovereign duke of neighbouring Milan. Here we see clearly that dynastic diplomacy was a two-way street. Ippolito quickly became a favourite at court, through hunting with the King, tennis with the Dauphin, and heavy gambling with the chief royal favourite, Jean, Cardinal de Lorraine, himself of course also a *prince étranger* (the younger brother of Duke Antoine of Lorraine). He became known for his lavish generosity in gift-giving, notably the famous Cellini salt-cellar commissioned as a gift for François I. He referred to these gifts in letters specifically as «investments».

By 1540, personal failure seemed imminent however, as he had run out of money; his revenues as archbishop of Milan had been sequestered by the Emperor, and the Pope was refusing his nomination by the King of France to the archbishopric of Lyon and the cardinalate. Hollingsworth indicates that the number and value of gifts brought from Italy to France rose significantly in response: embroidered sleeves and collars, viols, candied fruits, gold candlesticks, and so on, over 1,000 items recorded for 1536-40, consuming about 75% of his income. The letters between Ippolito and Ercole are revealing — this visit was not about pleasure; it was about the survival of the Este family and their hold over Ferrara (always a target for Venetian or Papal expansion). When Ippolito found out in Spring 1538 that Ercole was negotiating with the Emperor separately for Ippolito's cardinal's cap, he wrote in distress: «...I will find myself in greater labyrinths than before....»<sup>27</sup>. Finally, in March 1539, the French King was successful in obtaining Ippolito's cardinalship, along with the release of funds from Milan and the approval of his appointment to Lyon. He remained an influential member of François I's court, and that of his son Henri II, though the latter preferred to make use of him in Rome (even supporting him as candidate for Pope in 1549).

Although a cadet Este dynasty was not established in France, Este interests were guarded through the middle of the century, by another prelate, Ippolito's nephew, Cardinal Luigi d'Este, who was even more tightly connected to the French royal house by blood, as grandson and namesake of Louis XII; by his niece, Anne, married to the duke of Guise from 1540

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<sup>27</sup> Hollingsworth, M. *The Cardinal's Hat*. P. 204.

(on whom more, below); and by another nephew, Alfonso (the future duke of Ferrara), who served for a time on the King's Council and in the French armies. His service with François de Lorraine, duke of Guise, and Jacques de Savoie, duke of Nemours, at the defence of Metz in 1552 established a relationship which in turn aided Nemours in his own dynastic pursuits back in Italy several years later — another clear example of the reciprocity of these trans-national dynastic exchanges<sup>28</sup>.

French kings François I and Henri II were not the first to employ Italian princes like Ippolito d'Este and his nephew Alfonso as ambassadors and soldiers: their predecessors Charles VIII and Louis XII had similar policies. Ippolito's own uncle provides an excellent example of the vicissitudes of such favour: Ferrante d'Este, second son of Duke Ercole I, went to the court of Charles VIII in 1493. But when the King launched his famous invasion of Naples (whose king was Ferrante's maternal cousin and namesake), Ferrante chose not to follow the French army, and settled in Rome instead — in spite of the urgent letters his father sent, urging him not to lose the King's favour. He soon rallied to the cause of dynasticism, however, and served at the side of King Charles at battle of Fornovo, near Parma in 1495. In 1499, Ferrante was sent by his brother to Milan to formally recognise Charles's successor, Louis XII, as its new duke. But having run up significant debt at the court of Charles VIII, he was not made welcome<sup>29</sup>.

Prelates seemed to fare better than warriors in maintaining royal favour. Several French monarchs acted as patrons of the ecclesiastical careers of several «micro-sovereign» families, notably those that could help oil the wheels of diplomacy in northern and southern Italy. Members of the Ventimiglia/Vintimille and Lascaris de Tende families, two branches of an ancient semi-sovereign house of in Liguria (the latter of which having adopted the name of one of the former Byzantine imperial dynasties to boost their princely status) used their influence straddling the Alps in Provence, Savoy and Genoa to aid the kings of France in their incorporation of the County of Provence into the French kingdom after 1480. The Lascaris in particular were rewarded with benefices: they provided four successive bishops of Riez (in Provence) from 1466 to 1543, and one was promoted to the bishopric

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<sup>28</sup> *Vester, M.* Jacques de Savoie-Nemours. P. 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Mantovani, S.* «Ad honore del signore vostro patre et satisfactione nostra». Ferrante d'Este condottiero di Venezia. Ferrara-Modena, 2005.

of Beauvais, one of the six ecclesiastical peerages of France, in 1523<sup>30</sup>. Louis XII relied on Cardinal de Finale (from another Ligurian house, Del Carreto, sovereigns of Noli and Finale) and Cardinal de Sanseverino (whose family were sovereign princes of Salerno) to maintain his Italian policies. Cardinal de Finale was rewarded with the archbishoprics of Reims (the most important in France) and Tours, and the bishopric of Cahors<sup>31</sup>. Sanseverino's brother, Galeazzo, returned to France after Louis XII's conquest of Milan and was named his Master of the Horse (1505), a position he continued to hold into the next reign. These patronage cultivations did not always bear fruit, of course. For example, François I failed in 1532 to secure a cardinal's cap for Finale's nephew, Paolo del Carreto, who nonetheless succeeded him as bishop of Cahors. The French King went so far as to refer to Cahors, who had acted as his *Maître de la Chapelle* and his ambassador to Rome, as «cher cousin» in his letters to the Pope, emphasising his princely status (a quality surely recommendable for a cardinal), though clearly without effect<sup>32</sup>. There are several other northern Italian families that should be further investigated in this context, poised between subject and sovereign status, and between French and Imperial/Spanish service: Pico della Mirandola, Fieschi-Ferrero and Cibo di Massa-Carrara.

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Small Italian states like Mantua or Ferrara (or even smaller states like Finale) were not protected only by links forged at the French court by soldiers and prelates. Anna d'Este (1531–1607), duchess of Guise, then of Nemours, also acted as ambassador and protectrice of her native Ferrara, making skilful use of the twin keys we have thus far seen for *prince étranger* success: close blood affinity with the royal dynasty, and her own personal wealth. As co-heiress of her mother, Renée de France, duchess of Ferrara, she inherited significant properties in France, notably the duchy of Chartres and the county of Gisors, both formerly prominent (and lucra-

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<sup>30</sup> For the Lascaris de Tende: *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. II. P. 284ff.

<sup>31</sup> Details of Del Carreto and Sanseverino service in France are also in: *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. II. P. 49; and Vol. VIII. P. 502, respectively.

<sup>32</sup> *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. II. P. 49.



tive) parts of the royal domain<sup>33</sup>. Anne's loyalties were mixed, however, as a grand-daughter of France, a daughter of Ferrara, then as wife of the duke of Guise, and subsequently wife of the duke of Nemours (an unusual second marriage for a woman of her rank). We can see clear references to this 'composite' status in her funeral oration by Severin Bertrand from 1607<sup>34</sup>. Her last years were spent as matriarch to her offspring from both clans (Guise and Nemours), a useful 'glue' in holding together the ultra-Catholic factions at the French court in the 1580s<sup>35</sup>.

But favour has its limits: Anne was unable as a woman to succeed to the Este domains in northern Italy, and in the absence of a legitimate male heir, Ferrara was lost when Anne's brother Alfonso II died in 1597. There being no French-backed cadet to claim the throne (as in the Mantuan succession in 1628), the Duchy was annexed by the Pope. A cousin descended from an illegitimate Este son, Cesare, did claim the succession, and with Imperial, not French, backing, was able to retain sovereignty over at least part of the inheritance, Modena and Reggio, if not Ferrara. Nevertheless, Anne's status as grand-daughter of a French king (Louis XII), and holder of a royal apanage (Chartres), was important in solidifying the rank of the *princes étrangers* — her descendants in the houses of Lorraine-Guise and Savoie-Nemours — in the face of increased competition from the *princes du sang* and the increasing numbers of French *ducs-et-pairs* in the following century.

It is important for us therefore to analyse the careers of foreign daughters sent to the French court as well as foreign sons. The House of Savoy for example first established itself through women: the duchy of Nemours had been granted initially as a wedding gift to François I's aunt, Philiberte de Savoie, then transferred to her sister (the King's mother), Louise, in 1524, and only then to her brother, Philippe in 1528<sup>36</sup>. The gift had originally had been part of the King's initial strategy to win favour not with Savoy, but with the Medici, in his efforts to incorporate Florence

<sup>33</sup> On Anne d'Este see: *Coester, C.* Schön wie Venus, mutig wie Mars. Anna d'Este, Herzogin von Guise und von Nemours (1531–1607). München, 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Oraison funebre sur le trespas de tres-haulte, tres-illustre et tres-vertueuse Princesse Anne d'Est', Duchesse de Chartres, de Guyse, Nemours, Genevois, &c. Paris, 1607.

<sup>35</sup> *Munns, J., Richards, P.* Exploiting and Destabilizing Gender Roles: Anne d'Este, in: *French History*. 1992. Vol. 6. P. 206–215.

<sup>36</sup> *Anselme de Sainte-Marie.* Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. III. P. 475, 505, 512.



and the Pope into his Italian «parti français.» In Spring 1515 (just weeks after succeeding to the throne), the young King invited Giuliano de' Medici to his court and solidified Valois-Medici bonds through arranging a marriage to his mother's sister, and granting the newlyweds the lucrative duchy of Nemours. The duchy of Nemours had been used in this manner several times already, almost exclusively with the aim of linking the crown with a powerful vassal with trans-regional ties: the Evreux king of Navarre in 1404, the house of Armagnac in 1462, and the house of Foix in 1507<sup>37</sup>. But Giuliano de' Medici died just over a year later, and was succeeded as head of Medici interests in Florence (though still under the guidance of Pope Leo X) by his nephew Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino. In the Spring of 1518, another Franco-Medici alliance was forged: Lorenzo arrived bearing gifts from the Pope, notably several Raphaels, and was also given a bride with huge estates in France and a lavish wedding party<sup>38</sup>. Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne was co-heiress of the county of Auvergne, but more importantly was the King's cousin, through her mother, Jeanne de Bourbon-Vendôme. She was also a close kinswoman of the Constable de Bourbon, as well as the King of the Scots and the King of Navarre, all three individuals for whom the young François had great plans for his defensive strategies against the Habsburgs<sup>39</sup>. The dynastic triangle between France, Tuscany and Scotland (to counter a Habsburg-Tudor alliance) was further strengthened by the fact that Madeleine's older sister, Anne, was already married to John Stewart, Duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, 1514–1524. It is interesting to speculate how the 'Auld Alliance' with Scotland might have progressed if this couple had produced surviving offspring and established a Stewart line of *princes étrangers* permanently residing at the French court in the sixteenth century. A mostly forgotten figure in France, Albany also served as governor of the Bourbonnais, Auvergne, Forez and Beaujolais, as a commander of French troops in Italy in the 1520s, and was influential in arranging the marriage of his ward, James V, and Princess Madeleine of France in the 1530s<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. III. Chapter XXIV («Nemours Duché-Pairie»). P. 247–250.

<sup>38</sup> *Solnon, J.-F.* Cour de France. P. 80–81.

<sup>39</sup> *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique. Vol. IV. P. 530–531.

<sup>40</sup> See an out-dated yet still insightful biography: *Stuart, M. W.* The Scot who was a Frenchman: The Life of John Stewart, Duke of Albany. London, 1940.

Sadly, Lorenzo de' Medici too died within a year, followed by Madeleine de la Tour a year after that. All that remained of the King's Medici strategies was an infant, Caterina, but as is well known, she was not forgotten. She became duchess of Orléans in 1533 through marriage to the King's second son, and Dauphine in 1536 following the death of the eldest son, and finally Queen-Consort of France in 1547. We tend to think of Catherine de Medici in this light, as wife and mother of French kings, but it is important to consider that she also regarded herself as a *princesse étrangère*, representing Medici (and other Italian) interests in France<sup>41</sup>, and she ensured that this link was maintained through the arrangement of the marriage of her favourite grand-daughter (and legal heir), Christina of Lorraine, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1589<sup>42</sup>.

Women like Anne d'Este, Philiberte de Savoie and Catherine de' Medici help us see that *prince étranger* lineages should not be seen only as patrilineal, but as matrilineal networks as well, particularly important in the transmission of blood from one clan to the next. As in so many other aspects of history, men have thus far dominated our thinking. Overlooked in Cashman's account of Federico Gonzaga's visit to the French court in 1518, for example, the young man was not entirely a stranger: his first cousin was the Duke of Bourbon, a leading member of the court, whose mother was Chiara Gonzaga (who had died in 1503). Although Cashman notes that Federico formally paid court to the Duke and Duchess of Bourbon, not once but twice during his stay<sup>43</sup>, he does not note this close relationship. Chiara had proved invaluable in the previous generation as a conduit of letters and advice between her brother, Francesco, marquis of Mantua, and Louis XII, undoubtedly saving Francesco from the fate of his ally and kinsman, Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan, who lost his estates after betraying French interests<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> A point highlighted by: *Vester, M.* Jacques de Savoie-Nemours. P. 210.

<sup>42</sup> *Machahelles, K.* Appretissage du mécénat et transmission matrilineaire du pouvoir, in: *Patronnes et Mécènes en France à la Renaissance* / Éd. K. Wilson-Chevalier. Saint-Etienne, 2007. P. 557–576.

<sup>43</sup> *Cashman, A.* Performance Anxiety. P. 345.

<sup>44</sup> *Simon, K.* A Renaissance Tapestry: The Gonzaga of Mantua. New York, 1988. P. 120, 128. For a more analytical approach to Gonzaga familial ties, see: *Severidt, E.* Familie, Verwandtschaft und Karriere bei den Gonzaga. Struktur und Funktion von Familie und Verwandtschaft bei den Gonzaga und ihren deutschen Verwandten, 1444–1519. Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 2002; or: *Antenhofer, C.* From Local Signori to European High Nobility.

Other women whose roles in politics and diplomacy in this era have been analysed by historians in recent years include Alfonsina Orsini, mother of Lorenzo de' Medici and regent of Florence in his absences, and Marie de Luxembourg, countess of Vendôme, a model for the foreign princesses who followed her. Alfonsina's advice to her son on his dealings with the king of France were clear. In August 1515, she urged him «to consider well that that king is in Italy with 80,000 troops and that this city [Florence] is most devoted to the crown of France. And also I remind you that because Piero [Lorenzo's father] was determined and opinionated, we were exiled for nineteen years»<sup>45</sup>. Marie was a royal kinswoman, a major landowner in the strategic border provinces of Picardy and Flanders, and a powerful *mater familias*, with a reputation for business acumen and public piety — attributes she passed on to her daughter, Antoinette, duchess of Guise, and to her grand-daughter, Mary of Guise, Queen of Scots<sup>46</sup>.

We have seen how neither the early Gonzagas nor the Este established an enduring *prince étranger* lineage in France along the lines of the models established by Lorraine and Savoy, in part due to lack of funds. But neither did the apparent victors of the early days of the court of François I, the Medici. The key to success, both in the case of Lorraine and Savoy, seems to have been the establishment of independent wealth in France, the missing element in Federico Gonzaga's failed enterprise, and sheer genetic misfortune in the case of Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici who both died before they could establish a family. Claude de Lorraine, first duc de Guise had inherited his vast French estates in Champagne, Normandy

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The Gonzaga Family Networks in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, in: *Trans-regional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences Since the Middle Ages* / Ed. by C. H. Johnson, D. W. Sabeau, S. Teuscher and F. Trivellato. New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2011. P. 55–74.

<sup>45</sup> *Tomas, N.* Alfonsina Orsini de' Medici and the 'problem' of a female ruler in early sixteenth-century Florence, in: *Renaissance Studies*. 2000. Vol. IV, No 1. P. 80.

<sup>46</sup> For Marie de Bourbon, see: *Potter, D.* The Luxembourg Inheritance: The House of Bourbons and its Lands in Northern France during the Sixteenth Century, in: *French History*. 1992. Vol. 6. P. 28. For Antoinette de Bourbon, see: *Munns, J., Richards, P.* Antoinette de Bourbon, Première duchesse de Guise et Rémy Belleau: Construction d'un tombeau, creation d'un myth, in: *Patronnes et Mécènes en France à la Renaissance* / Éd. K. Wilson-Chevalier. Saint-Etienne, 2007. P. 401–417; and: *Grand-Dewyse, C.* Le triomphe d'une mater familias: Antoinette de Bourbon, duchesse de Guise, et une plaque émaillée de Léonard Limosin, in: *Patronnes et Mécènes en France à la Renaissance* / Éd. K. Wilson-Chevalier. Saint-Etienne, 2007. P. 419–431.

and Picardy, from his father, Duke René II of Lorraine, who in 1506 divided his lands into non-French and French for his eldest and second sons, respectively. A further treaty between the brothers in 1530 confirmed the division of their lands and their spheres of interest<sup>47</sup>. To further solidify its links with France, the House of Lorraine established a second cadet line, a generation later, that of Mercoeur. This branch was founded by the second son of Duke Antoine, Nicolas de Lorraine, whose loyalty to France during the regency crisis of 1552 won him the duchy-peerage of Mercoeur (erected on property in Auvergne inherited from his Bourbon mother). This second branch was never as prominent as the Guise — though the second duke of Mercoeur would be one of the last, and most threatening, hold-outs of the Catholic League against the reign of Henry IV — but is nevertheless noteworthy in the context of the establishment of the rank of the *prince étranger* in France, and the overall health of the Lorraine dynasty, through the marriage of Nicolas's daughter Louise to King Henri III, in 1575, one of the most successful marriages of any of the *prince étranger* families in this period. Added to the augmentations made by Anne d'Este to the Lorraine-Guise princely status as discussed above, Louise's contribution to the solidification of the rank and privileges of the *princes étrangers*, simply by being queen of France, should not be underestimated<sup>48</sup>.

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A further mark of the consolidation of the position of these foreigners within the power structures of the state was their status as peers of the realm. These originated in the earliest days of the Frankish monarchy, as the chief

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<sup>47</sup> There are several copies of the testament of Duc René II: BN, Coll. de Lorraine, 20, fol. 111; BNF, Ms. Fr. 2745. Fol. 1; Archives Départementales [AD], Meurthe-et-Moselle, 3F 432. Fol. 181 (this was originally kept in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, but was sent to Nancy when the Imperial archive was dispersed at the end of the first World War). The treaty of 1530 is in AD, Meurthe-et-Moselle, 3F 348. For the career of Claude de Lorraine, see: *Roche, F. Claude de Lorraine: Premier duc de Guise. Chaumont, 2005.*

<sup>48</sup> Louise de Lorraine is normally considered non influential in the history of the queens of France. But see: *Boucher, J. Deux épouses et reines à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Louise de Lorraine et Marguerite de France. Saint-Étienne, 1995, notably P. 344, which stresses that Louise played an important role after the death of Henri III as the leader of the moderates at court who immediately supported the new regime of King Henri IV, thus deflating some of the vehement opposition of the Catholic League.*

ecclesiastical and lay magnates who crowned the king. Their number was fixed at twelve in the reign of Philippe II Auguste, but as the original magnate families died out (Toulouse, Champagne, Flanders), their numbers needed to be replenished for ceremonial and ritual purposes. For several centuries, there were plenty of princes of the blood to do so, but from the last decades of the fifteenth century, their numbers dwindled due to natural extinctions or warfare<sup>49</sup>. Whereas the coronation of François I in 1515 had been performed with one Valois and five Bourbon princes taking on the six roles (Burgundy, Normandy, Guyenne, Toulouse, Flanders, Champagne), by the time of the coronation of Charles IX in 1563, the peers were represented by one Valois, two Bourbons, two Lorraines, and one Cleves — three *princes du sang*, and three *princes étrangers*<sup>50</sup>. François I had himself accentuated this trend by creating the first non-royal duchy-peerages for the foreign princes, but not without opposition — Claude de Lorraine received one of the very first in 1528, but his duchy-peerage of Guise had to be registered as law at the Parlement of Paris by royal force<sup>51</sup>.

We can also see in the granting of duchy-peerages a slightly different strategy on the part of the French monarchy: the amalgamation of *formerly* sovereign border dynasties within the body of the French nobility. This is seen in the House of Luxembourg, whose main line became extinct in 1437 (and the duchy passing to Valois Burgundy), leaving a cadet branch in possession of the counties of Ligny in Barrois, and Saint-Pol in Artois, both sensitive frontier regions of the French kingdom<sup>52</sup>. One of their more prominent members, Louis de Luxembourg, count of Saint-Pol, Constable of France, played a balancing act — completely typical for the families under analysis here — between Louis XI of France and Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, and lost, ending in his execution in 1475. But, also

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<sup>49</sup> The most notable extinctions were Burgundy in 1477, Anjou in 1481, Orléans in 1498 by succeeding to the throne, and Angoulême in 1515 for the same reason. This left only Alençon, extinct in 1525, and Bourbon, which of course succeeded to the throne as well in 1589.

<sup>50</sup> Jackson, R. *Vive Le Roi!: A History of the French Coronation from Charles V to Charles X*. Chapel Hill, NC, 1984. P. 257–258.

<sup>51</sup> Roche, F. *Claude de Lorraine*. P. 44.

<sup>52</sup> Anselme de Sainte-Marie. *Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique*. Vol. III. P. 715ff. In fact, Barrois was only half under French suzerainty (the *Barrois-mouvant*), while Artois was contested between France and Spain until finally settled in 1659 by the Treaty of the Pyrenees in the favour of France.

in parallel with many of these border magnate families, the individual may perish but the dynasty would survive through kinship ties: most of the Luxembourg lands and honours were recovered due to close blood relations with the house of Savoy, which thus made the Constable brother-in-law of Louis XI, and his grand-daughter and heiress Marie, both aunt and cousin of Charles VIII<sup>53</sup>. The House of Luxembourg thrived in France in the sixteenth century, forming several cadet branches which were each rewarded for their loyalty to the Valois dynasty by the creation of duchy-peerages — Penthièvre (1569), Piney (1576) and Brienne (1587) — done in part to counter-balance the now numerous duchy-peerages of the House of Guise. At the same time they were recognised by Henri III as one of the «quatre maisons» of princely rank resident in France in 1581, as noted above. Henri even created a principality for them in 1587, erected on Tingry in the Boulonnais — a dubious title juridically, and one rarely found in French history, since it legally removed territory from the jurisdiction of all royal justice save the king's immediate council of state. In contrast, almost all other princely titles borne by the *princes étrangers* were recognised, not created, by the French monarchy, and this is an important distinction to make<sup>54</sup>. The cadet branches of the House of Luxembourg were all extinct by the middle of the seventeenth century; their vast estates and princely aspirations were then useful in boosting the rank and prestige of their heirs, the families of Bourbon-Vendôme and Montmorency-Bouteville, in the ensuing century<sup>55</sup>.

The French crown's policy of amalgamation of frontier princely dynasties is especially noteworthy in the far south, in Gascony and the Pyrenees. The earliest non-royal duchy-peerages were created to enhance the status (and thus attempt to secure the loyalty) of premier magnates in this region from the houses of Armagnac and Foix (both were given the duchy-

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<sup>53</sup> Potter, D. The Luxembourg Inheritance. P. 27.

<sup>54</sup> See: Spangler, J. *Les Princes étrangers*: Truly Princes? Truly Foreign? There is concrete evidence for the creation of the principality of Joinville in Champagne for the Guise, and shadowy details for a handful of other creations, such as Guéméné for the Rohans or (possibly) «Mantoue» for the Gonzagas.

<sup>55</sup> The Montmorency received eventually a duchy-peerage of Luxembourg, and its most famous member, the maréchal-duc de Luxembourg, even requested formal recognition from Louis XIV of his sons as *princes étrangers* after he had conquered the real duchy of Luxembourg from the Spanish in the 1680s — with little success (Rowlands, G. *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV*. Cambridge, 2002. P. 327–329).

peerage of Nemours, in 1461 and 1507, respectively; the county of Foix was also re-granted as a peerage in 1458). Their neighbours, the lords of Albret, acted as both peers of France and also champions of Navarrese independence, after the marriage of Jean d'Albret and Catherine de Foix, queen of Navarre, in 1484<sup>56</sup>. Dual allegiance of borderland princes thus went further back into history. Indeed, earlier uses of this technique can be seen in the fourteenth century with the dukes of Bar and Brittany, on the eastern and western fringes of the evolving Capetian kingdom. Each was given a peerage, as a means of binding these princes more tightly to the French crown (with mixed success). A fascinating article by Philippe Depreux allows us to take this concept even further back, to the Merovingian period, where rulers of territories bordering the Frankish realm sent their sons to the Merovingian court with the goal of transformation, through baptism or education, «from hostages into guests», and into long-term allies<sup>57</sup>.

But why is an analysis of the use of peerages to attract and bind foreign princes to the French crown important for the early modern period? The peers represented to some the Frankish people, electing (or at least validating) their king<sup>58</sup>. To others it represented the unification of the king's family and his greatest magnates, tied together by ritual and by blood. As the peerage was extended to the *princes étrangers* in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, they therefore came to represent the king's blood, in ritual and the ceremonial face of the monarchy, and it was therefore important that they were in fact related to him. French monarchs also used the clout of these foreign princes to consolidate their hold over the French native aristocracy, and distanced themselves and their blood further from them. It has also been suggested that the sixteenth-century Valois were keen to raise up foreign princes as a counter-balance to the inherent power

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<sup>56</sup> *Anselme de Sainte-Marie*. *Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique*. Vol. III. P. 423 (Armagnac); Vol. III. P. 342 (Foix); and Vol. VI. P. 205 (Albret). For recent work on the relationships between France, Foix and Navarre at the end of the fifteenth century, see: *Woodacre, E.* *The Queens Regnant of Navarre: Succession, Politics and Partnership, 1274–1512*. New York, 2013.

<sup>57</sup> *Depreux, P.* Princes, princesses et nobles étrangers à la cour des rois mérovingiens et carolingiens: alliés, hôtes ou otages?, in: *L'étranger au Moyen Âge* / Éd. Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public. Paris, 2000. P. 154.

<sup>58</sup> *Jackson, R.* Elective Kingship and *Consensus Populi* in Sixteenth-Century France, in: *Journal of Modern History*. 1972. Vol. 44, No 2. P. 155–171. According to Jackson, like much else about the Renaissance monarchy of France, this «tradition» was in part invented.



of royal blood increasingly exploited by the House of Bourbon in the sixteenth century<sup>59</sup>. This support, however, led to the seemingly unstoppable rise of the Guise (and their allies, Gonzague-Nevers and Savoie-Nemours), until finally reversed through violent means. Their influence in the affairs of the Kingdom declined across the seventeenth century, and the number of legitimate princes of the blood rose once again, to the extent that, by the coronation of Louis XV in 1722, all six of the lay peers were represented by Bourbons, without exception<sup>60</sup>. This rise and fall of the representational power of the *princes étrangers* as peers is part of a much wider discussion about aristocratic and dynastic self-conceptualisations, and the overwhelming identification of the individual with the group rather than simply the self, and the importance of blood in cementing this group identity<sup>61</sup>.

Nevertheless, something more was required than blood links and independent wealth to ensure success or survival of a small border dynasty. Consider the example of the House of Saluzzo, who ruled a small border principality in the Piedmont. Indeed, they alone of the families in this survey bore the most appropriate title: *marchese*, literally, lord of a march or frontier. The Gonzaga and Este families both used this title before their fiefs were elevated to dukedoms (by imperial grant); and the House of Lorraine's formal representative position within the constitutional structure of the Holy Roman Empire — that is, its vote in the Diet — was as «marchio» (or margrave). Although unspecified in documents as margrave of what precisely, it is thought to indicate the responsibility to guard the frontier region of the river Meuse that had divided France from the Empire since the ninth century<sup>62</sup>. In a similar fashion, the Alpine lords

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<sup>59</sup> Jackson, R. Peers of France and Princes of the Blood.

<sup>60</sup> Compare the lists of peers at the coronations of Louis XIII in 1610 (three Bourbons, one Gonzague, one Lorraine, and one non-princely duc-et-pair, Nogaret d'Épernon) and Louis XIV in 1654 (two Bourbons, one Lorraine, and three non-princes: Nogaret, Gouffier and Bournonville). The peers in 1722 were Orléans, Chartres, Condé, Charolais, Clermont and Conti. In 1775, they were Provence, Artois, Orléans, Chartres, Condé and Bourbon (Enghien). See *Levantat, C.* Ducs et pairs (annexes), for a complete listing of the representative peers at coronations in the early modern period.

<sup>61</sup> On kinship and affinity, see: *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300–1900)* / Ed. by D. Sabean, S. Teuscher, J. Mathieu. New York/Oxford, 2007, notably chapters by K.-H. Spiess and M. Hohkamp.

<sup>62</sup> *Thiou, E.* Dictionnaire des titres et des terres titrées en France sous l'Ancien Régime. Versailles, 2003.



of Savoy gained their first footholds in Italy in the eleventh century through their hold of the imperial marches of Susa, Ivrea and Turin.

The *marchesi* of Saluzzo had French royal blood links (though intermarriage with the families of Blois and Foix), and a history of sending prelate sons to serve in France (bishops of Valence and Mende in the early fifteenth century, a bishop of Aire in the sixteenth). They even had a good track record of military service: Marchese Ludovico II was Viceroy of Naples for the French in 1503; his successor Michele Antonio distinguished himself at the side of François I at Pavia in 1525. But the younger son, Ludovico, had followed the traditional path of balancing his brother's pro-French alliance with Imperial service, and was therefore on the wrong side when he succeeded to the marquisate in 1528. Ludovico III was duly deposed by the French within a year, and although the French replaced him successively with his two brothers — one of whom was named commander of French troops in northern Italy and governor of occupied Savoy-Piedmont; and even secured his place in the court hierarchy through a marriage to the daughter of a royal favourite and Maréchal de France, Claude d'Annebault — the family never fully recovered their sovereignty, and by 1548 Saluzzo was annexed (temporarily) to France. An illegitimate branch of the Saluzzo («Saluces») was established in France immediately following the annexation, and obtained significant posts at the courts of Charles IX and Henri III, and were formally legitimised by the former in 1566. Were these ever considered *princes étrangers*? Though they faded from prominence quite dramatically in the seventeenth century, according to Courcelles, one of these attempted — unsuccessfully — as late as 1773 to re-claim princely status as heir to the formerly sovereign marquisate of Saluzzo<sup>63</sup>.

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Before concluding, it is useful to return to a contrast in success versus failure to see if a shift had occurred in the relationship between the French monarchy and its smaller neighbours from the early sixteenth century to the early seventeenth, and also to remind ourselves that this story is not solely about France's south-eastern neighbours, but concerns small border states in the northeast as well. The Duchy of Lorraine maintained its inde-

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<sup>63</sup> *Jullien de Courcelles, J.-B.-P. Histoire Généalogique et Héraldique des Pairs de France, des dignitaires de la couronne, des principales familles nobles du royaume et des maisons princières de l'Europe. Paris, 1822–1833. Vol. V: «Lur-Saluces». P. 48–50.*

pendence in the sixteenth century by serving as a bulwark of Catholicism, closely allied to the House of France.

Next door, the tiny principality of Sedan told a different story. Its rulers at the beginning of the century, the La Marck (another cadet branch of the House of Cleves), made careful treaties with the King of France (notably the Treaty of Romorantin, 1521) by which they promised loyalty and service, not as subjects, but as allies. Like so many other families in this study, they consolidated their alliance through the efforts of a prelate, Cardinal Erard, Prince-Bishop of Liège, who balanced an initial close alliance with Louis XII of France with service to the Emperor Maximilian I — his benefices were diverse, holding episcopal seats both at Chartres and Valencia before he died in 1538<sup>64</sup>. But by the 1560s the La Marcks had converted to Protestantism, and Sedan became a haven for religious printing and Calvinist education, a destabilising force on France's north-east frontier. The last prince's heir, Charlotte, married an able soldier and statesman, and a close friend of the new king, Henri IV: Henri de la Tour, vicomte de Turenne, who was also a Protestant. The treaty of Donchéry in 1606 was more solid than that of Romorantin, in that it specifically used the words «sovereign» when referring to Sedan. But the success of Turenne (also claiming the semi-sovereign but contested duchy of Bouillon) was consolidated by balancing his personal favour with the king of France with a non-French marital alliance after Charlotte's death, with a bride from the Calvinist princely clans of northern Europe (Orange-Nassau, Hesse, and the Counts Palatine)<sup>65</sup>. Unlike the foreign princes whose status was secured by membership in foreign dynasties, the La Tour needed to construct their princely status through foreign alliances. The *princes étrangers* of the seventeenth century would face very different challenges to those of the sixteenth, as grandees squarely in the crosshairs of the centralising efforts of Cardinal Richelieu, though ultimately they would find a new *modus vivendi* as part of the ceremonial theatre of state at Louis XIV's Versailles<sup>66</sup>.

As some of the older princely clans in France became extinct (notably the Luxembourg, in 1616 in the male line), or indeed moved back to their place of origin (the Gonzague), they were replaced by «new» princely

<sup>64</sup> Lonchay, H. Biographie nationale. Brussels, 1897. Vol. XIII. Cols. 497–512.

<sup>65</sup> Hodson, S. Politics of the Frontier. P. 436.

<sup>66</sup> These new challenges (and subsequent adaptations) are the main subject of Spangler, J. The Society of Princes.

families, who had to work a bit harder to gain formal recognition. With the extinction of the House of Albret and the elevation of the House of Bourbon to the throne of France, their Rohan cousins positioned themselves as the next heirs to the sovereign kingdom of Navarre (should it ever be re-established), though they later modified their dynastic representation to present themselves as heirs to the ancient Celtic kingdom of Brittany, where the bulk of their properties and power were located<sup>67</sup>. It would take their conversion to Catholicism and the chaos of the Frondes for these ambitious claims to be solidly recognised by the French Crown. Others were not so successful, for example the La Trémoille, whose claims to be the true heirs of the kingdom of Naples (their eldest son was therefore known as the «Prince of Taranto») were never fully recognised<sup>68</sup>. Others held genuine, if miniscule, sovereignty and were recognised as such: the Longueville in Neuchâtel (in Switzerland), and the Grimaldi in Monaco. Again, both of these had help: the former were distantly related to the French monarch (from an illegitimate branch of the royal house) and allied themselves by marriage to the powerful Bourbon-Condé clan; the latter secured their recognition as *princes étrangers* through a firm political and marital alliance with the remaining Lorraine-Guise princes who enjoyed close personal favour with Louis XIV himself, notably Louis de Lorraine, comte d'Armagnac<sup>69</sup>.

This personal favour helped re-establish the position of the Lorraine cadets at the top of the court hierarchy at Versailles after the family's influence was nearly completely destroyed in the 1630s. It is also relevant to consider this re-establishment of the prominence of the *princes étrangers* in the light of their original purpose for being in France: to tend the interests of their native dynasty. In the case of the Lorraine-Guise, this is clearly evident, in the re-establishment of the independence of the Duchy of Lorraine, after nearly six decades of French military occupation. This was an important issue for the Lorraine princes in France, affecting their status: if their dynastic home was no longer a sovereign state, how could they maintain the pretence of sovereign rank themselves? The Lorraine cadets were therefore important players in the negotiations that led up to the restoration of Duke Léopold of Lorraine following the Treaty

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<sup>67</sup> For an overview, see: *Boulaire, A.* Les Rohan. Paris, 2001.

<sup>68</sup> *Kmec, S.* Across the Channel.

<sup>69</sup> *Spangler, J.* Society of Princes. P. 99–105.

of Ryswick of 1697<sup>70</sup>. But this was to prove a temporary gain, and did not prevent Lorraine's eventual annexation to France in 1737. Similarly, the Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus II, played a precarious diplomatic game by balancing his own Habsburg kinship ties with a French marriage in 1684, and sending the resulting daughter to be married to the Bourbon heir in 1696. His «victory», by preserving the independence of the Duchy of Savoy (and pushing it into the ranks of Europe's fully independent kingdoms from 1713) can in part be attributed to these policies, though of course there are many other factors, notably the strategic value of his state's control of Alpine passes<sup>71</sup>. Moreover this success was achieved in spite of a «failure» of the cadet branches resident in France: the senior cadet branch (Nemours) had died out in 1659, but there remained another, the Savoie-Soissons (or Savoia-Carignano) who moved back and forth between Versailles and Turin; nevertheless, its influence was limited due to affronts caused by its most prominent members, Olympe, countess of Soissons, and her son, Prince Eugène<sup>72</sup>. Yet Eugène can perhaps be credited with contributing to the preservation of the independence of Savoy, not through French support as with the comte d'Armagnac, but through his personal favour of the Emperor in Vienna, and his tremendous military skill. It pays to have a balance strategy between Vienna and Versailles.

Nevertheless, balance was not always a failsafe policy (as seen above for Saluzzo). But it was the best strategy available, and one which semi-sovereign dynasties would continue to employ for the rest of the early modern period. For France was not the only important court in Europe, and further research needs to be done on cadet lineages established at the courts of Vienna, Madrid and Brussels, and the movements of princes between them.<sup>73</sup> When one son (or daughter) was sent to France, another was often sent to a Habsburg court. Going back to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, we can see examples of split service in the princely states of north-

<sup>70</sup> Spangler, J. Le rappel des princes de sang par Léopold: Une stratégie politique pour rehausser l'image ducale, in: *Échanges, passages et transferts à la cour de Lunéville (1697–1729)* / Éd. A. Motta. Rennes, 2017.

<sup>71</sup> Storrs, C. War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy, 1690–1720. Cambridge, 1999.

<sup>72</sup> The Savoy branches in France in this later period await a modern academic study of their own.

<sup>73</sup> See: Spangler, J. Those In Between: Princely Families on the Margins of the Great Powers — The Franco-German Frontier, 1477–1830, in: *Trans-regional and Transnational Families* / Eds. S. H. Johnson, D. W. Sabean. New York/Oxford, 2011. P. 131–154.

ern Italy (where of course much of early modern diplomatic tactics were born). In the 1440s, Lorenzo Gonzaga commanded Venetian troops in their fight against the Sforzas for control of Milan, while his younger brother Carlo entered the service of the same Sforzas against Venice.<sup>74</sup> A younger son of the duke of Mantua, Ferrante Gonzaga, count of Guastalla, became a successful commander and governor in the service of Charles V (Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor's Italian forces in 1527, Viceroy of Sicily in 1535, and Governor of Milan in 1546), having been sent to Spain in his teens, only a few years after his brother Federico's sojourn at the French court, examined above<sup>75</sup>. Ferrante established a firm foundation for a cadet branch in Lombardy, tied to the Habsburg monarchy, the Gonzaga di Guastalla, which could counter-balance the Gonzague-Nevers in France, and ultimately led to the Franco-Imperial showdown over Mantua and Monferrato in 1628. A similar case can be made for the Este in neighbouring Ferrara, where the interests of the normally Francophile dukes were counter-balanced by their pro-Imperial cousins, the Este di San Martino<sup>76</sup>.

Across the Apennines from Mantua and Ferrara, when Cosimo I de' Medici, duke of Florence, aggressively committed himself to a Papal-Imperial alliance in the 1560s, rejecting his traditionally pro-French stance, he first sent his young son and heir to the Spanish court to learn Habsburg etiquette, ensured that his brother was given a cardinal's cap, then acquired an Imperial bride for the heir on his return to Florence. He celebrated this in Medici style with an enormous festival production, and was rewarded with an elevation of his title by the Pope to grand duke of Tuscany<sup>77</sup>. And yet, Tuscany remained tied to France in the person of Queen Catherine, and renewed these ties with the marriage of her grand-daughter, Christina of Lorraine to the Grand Duke in 1589<sup>78</sup>. As above, this notion of balance should be considered in light of not just of princely sons, but in daughters and prelates who performed similar diplomatic roles: cardi-

<sup>74</sup> *Simon, K.* Renaissance Tapestry. P. 38–39.

<sup>75</sup> *Pescasio, L.* Don Ferrante Gonzaga, principe di Molfetta, signore di Guastalla, viceré di Sicilia, governatore di Milano, stratega dell'imperatore Carlo V. Suzzara, 2000.

<sup>76</sup> Formally princes of the Empire from 1623 (*Litta, P.* Famiglie celebri d'Italia. Torino, 1835. Vol. V, «Este»).

<sup>77</sup> *Cochrane, E.* Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527–1800. Chicago, 1973. P. 91.

<sup>78</sup> *Strunck, C.* How Chrestienne became Cristina. Political and Cultural Encounters between Tuscany and Lorraine, in: *Medici Women as Cultural Mediators (1533–1743)* / Ed. by C. Strunck. Milan, 2011.

nals and bishops are easy to find in Papal or Imperial service, and Medici and Gonzaga brides become an extremely attractive alternative to Habsburg dynastic endogamy by the early seventeenth century.

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It is apparent that there are a number of factors that contribute to foreign policy decisions made by semi-sovereign princely families on the margins of great powers, and indeed that contributed to both individual and dynastic success for sons of daughters of such families sent abroad to a foreign court. Key ingredients were a blood relationship with the hosting monarch and an independent means of supporting a princely lifestyle, but other necessities included individual skill, «courtly» character and the ability to balance family strategy between French and Hispano-Imperial alliances. Sometimes it was simply luck. And it is clear that this success or failure should not be seen solely in the longevity and power of cadet branches established in France, such as the Guise or the Gonzaga, or in the parallel actions of its prelates and princesses, as in the Este and Medici, but also in the long-term health of the dynasties of origin, seen, for example, in the occupation, restoration then annexation for Lorraine; or the occupation, restoration, then advancement to fully royal status for Savoy. More work needs to be done to understand this dynamic in other French border regions not covered in depth here: notably the small German principalities of the Middle Rhine, who did send dynastic members to the French court, sometimes with great impact. Examples include Jean de Sarrebruck (Saarbrücken), who as bishop-peer of Chalons acted as one of the six ecclesiastical peers at the coronation of 1429; or the Count-Palatine Jean-Casimir de Deux-Ponts (Zweibrücken), a leading Calvinist commander in the Wars of Religion. Did these act merely as individuals, or was a wider dynastic strategy involved?

This study of the survival strategies of minor ruling families in strategic border regions is important: it allows us to revise ideas about state building and proto-nationalism in the early modern era, by noting that at the same time French kings were consolidating their frontiers — notably by incorporating frontier elites — they were also continuing to make use of centuries old trans-national aspects of the society of princes, the diplomatic glue that held Europe together, and would continue to do so until

well into the eighteenth century, and even beyond.<sup>79</sup> As has been pointed out recently by Charles Lipp, studies of small states in Europe are essential to our understanding of the early modern period, as they represent what should be considered as «normal» for many people's experiences in Europe, rather than the large centralised states on Europe's western edge<sup>80</sup>. It was not a given that regions like Germany and Italy would follow the pathways being laid down by France, Great Britain or Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so to truly understand the international politics of the time — and lessons it can teach us about centralisation or decentralisation in Europe today; *étatisme* versus regionalism — it is important to examine closely the diplomatic manoeuvrings of the ruling families of Europe's smaller states.

From this study, three main themes emerge. The first is a clarification: although on the surface it appeared to many commentators (contemporaries and later historians) that foreign princes came to France as part of dynastic strategy to win security for the territories ruled by dynasties of small states, it is now clear that many of these princes were invited by French kings, as a means to stabilize their borders. The second point is that, once these princes arrived, diplomatic success depended on individual skill and courtliness, but almost as much on the dual factors of having blood links to the monarch, and on securing an independent income (in other words, beggars rarely triumphed; though some gambles paid off). Finally, we can measure success as something beyond individual triumphs (though those were helpful, to establish a reputation, even legend, that outlived the individual and benefited the clan as a whole), and instead in the establishment of a long-term presence — a cadet dynasty — in France, steadily accumulating revenues and clout within French politics, which could be put to good use when the health of the senior branch of the dynasty was threatened.

As we have seen, in the period that followed, both Lorraine and Savoy benefitted from having senior courtiers in the entourages of Louis XIII and Louis XIV in times of crisis. Even someone like the duc de Rohan, whose claimed sovereign state was by this period a fiction (the ancient independent kingdom of Brittany), nevertheless had a crucial role in using

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<sup>79</sup> For a prime example, see *Goujon, B. Les Arenberg: Le gotha à l'heure des nations, 1820–1919. Paris, 2017.*

<sup>80</sup> *Lipp, C. Noble Strategies in an Early Modern Small State: The Mahuet of Lorraine. Rochester, NY, 2011. P. 1–3.*



his membership in the network of northern Protestant princes (including England and the Netherlands) in representing the needs of French Huguenots in the troubling years of the early seventeenth century<sup>81</sup>. From the point of view of the French crown, these dynasties could also be useful in retaining key strategic allies in sensitive regions, as in the Mantuan Succession crisis of 1628, in which a Gonzaga prince resident in France was able to claim the duchy of Mantua successfully, in opposition to his pro-Habsburg Gonzaga cousins. There were also trans-national princely links that went the other way. The senior branch of the House of Montmorency, having established itself in the southern Low Countries following a failed rebellion in the fifteenth century, made use of their strong trans-national connections in the service of the king of Spain, and were rewarded with the rank of prince themselves by Spain in 1630. But these connections await closer academic scrutiny<sup>82</sup>.

It is plausible to surmise that the quickening rate of disappearance of small states at the start of the sixteenth century — Navarre, Milan, Naples, Guelders (and only a few decades before that, Holland and Luxembourg) — prompted a new strategy to be adopted by second-tier border families. This is not to say that the strategy always worked; as seen in the example of Saluzzo. And it is not say that younger sons and daughters of these families were not sent to establish themselves at the French court in previous centuries. Numerous examples can be found. But there had never before been such a clear effort to establish permanent representatives of these foreign dynasties. Moreover, the French monarchy was receptive to welcoming them with top honours due to the gap left behind in the ceremonial life of the court by the disappearance of the cadet branches of the French royal house itself. French monarchs were also quick to recognise the value of having natural diplomats of such high status at their disposal. That other second-tier sovereignties did not establish long-term cadet branches at the French court can be explained in a variety of manners: papal politics in Italy operated under its own dynamic, so the Este in Ferrara (and later in Modena) and the Medici in Florence remained French allies (mostly) out of a desire to escape Papal control; and in the years when the Papacy itself was pro-French, Roman cardinals

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<sup>81</sup> *Dewald, J.* Status, Power, and Identity in Early Modern France: The Rohan Family.

<sup>82</sup> The «Belgian» branch of the family is mostly absent, for example, in a new work by *Dessert, D.* *Les Montmorency: Mille ans au service des rois de France.* Paris, 2015.



functioned as *princes étrangers*, notably the Barberinis (Francesco and Antonio) in the 1650s. And we have seen that representation of these families was also maintained through women like Catherine de' Medici and Anne d'Este. It is therefore important not to discount the roles played by family cardinals who filled the gap if a permanent lineage was not established, or by foreign princesses. It is also prudent to say that while the success stories of the sixteenth-century *prince étranger* families in a few cases extended as far as the end of the *ancien régime* — witness the important roles played at the court of Louis XVI by Lorraine princes in the entourage of their distant cousin, Marie-Antoinette (whose father was the last sovereign duke of Lorraine)<sup>83</sup> — in other circumstances their power significantly waned by the late seventeenth century, as recently pointed out by Anna Blum, held in check by the high native French aristocracy<sup>84</sup>.

Back in 1517, another heir to a disappearing state on the borders of the French kingdom was the child Henri d'Albret, prince of Navarre, with whom this essay began. The Albret princes were not referred to as *princes étrangers* at the court of François I as the term did not fully develop until much later in the century. But there are many characteristics that situate them firmly within this study. Several times the estates of the sovereign viscounty of Béarn asked for the young prince to be returned to the south, but François I explicitly chose to keep him at his court<sup>85</sup>, and a decade later, consolidated his links by offering him his own sister Marguerite in marriage. An earlier marriage within this dynastic circle had already been useful to the foreign strategies of the French monarchy, that of the generally overlooked Charlotte d'Albret, Prince Henri's aunt, who was married to the infamous Cesare Borgia, and given the duchy of Valentinois, as part of the complex diplomatic manoeuvres of Louis XII and Cesare's father, Pope

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<sup>83</sup> Kaiser, T. Ambiguous Identities: Marie-Antoinette and the House of Lorraine from the Affair of the Minuet to Lambesc's Charge, in: *Marie-Antoinette. Writings on the Body of a Queen* / Ed. by D. Goodman. New York, 2003. P. 171–198. There are references to Marie-Antoinette bearing the surname Lorraine (not Habsburg) in her marriage contract, and indeed at her trial in 1793. See for example, Procès de Marie-Antoinette, de Lorraine-d'Autriche, veuve Capet, du 23 du premier du mois, l'an 2 de la République. 1793.

<sup>84</sup> Blum, A. *La Diplomatie de la France en Italie du Nord au temps de Richelieu et Mazarin*. Paris, 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Boissonade, P. *Histoire de la reunion de la Navarre à la Castille*. Chapter 5.

Alexander VI<sup>86</sup>. The Foix-Albret financial base within France was secure<sup>87</sup>. The key ingredients were there: kinship and independent wealth. Yet in the face of greater Spanish power, they never recovered their sovereign state. In another sense, however, they did achieve a much larger prize: through the consolidation of the House of Navarre first with the House of Bourbon in the 1560s, then with the House of France itself following the accession of Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre, as king of France in 1589.

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Jonathan Spangler, Doctor of Philology (Oxon), Manchester Metropolitan University (All Saints, Manchester M15 6BH, United Kingdom)

j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk

In the era of centralisation of the great powers in Europe, dynasties ruling smaller states on the margins between France, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire developed strategies for survival. One of these was to establish a presence at the courts of these larger states, by sending members of the ruling dynasty itself. This article looks in particular at the court of France, where such princely emissaries established lineages known to historians as the «foreign princes», the *princes étrangers*. The French monarchy desired the presence of these princes as well, for various political and ceremonial reasons. The successes and failures of the foreign princes sent to the French court can be measured at the individual level and the wider dynastic level, and are examined by scrutinising activities of secular princes (male and female) as well as prelates. The results are varied, and depended on a variety of ever-shifting factors, notably the establishment of kinship ties with the royal dynasty, a solid independent financial base, and individual character. By the end of the period, some smaller states had survived; others had not.

*Keywords:* Foreign princes, diplomacy, sovereignty, dynasticism, France, Lorraine, Savoy, Cleves, Mantua

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<sup>86</sup> *Baumgartner, F.* Louis XII. New York, 1994. P. 78–79.

<sup>87</sup> See: *Eurich, S. A.* The Economics of Power: The Private Finances of the House of Foix-Navarre-Albret during the Religious Wars. Kirksville, MO, 1994.

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Джонатан Спанглер, к. фил. н., Манчестерский столичный университет (All Saints, Manchester M15 6BH, United Kingdom)

j.spangler@mmu.ac.uk

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В эпоху централизации великих держав в Европе династии, управляющие небольшими государствами на территориях между Францией, Испанией и Священной Римской империей, разработали особые стратегии выживания. Одна из них заключалась в том, чтобы установить государственное присутствие в судах, направив туда членов правящей династии. В этой статье, в частности, речь идет о дворе Франции, где княжеские эмиссары установили кланы, известные историкам как «иностранцы князья» или княжеские эмигранты. Французская монархия также желала присутствия этих князей по различным политическим и церемониальным причинам. Успехи и неудачи иностранных князей, отправленных во французский суд, могут быть оценены на индивидуальном уровне и на более широком династическом уровне и рассматриваются путем изучения деятельности светских князей (мужчин и женщин), а также прелатов. Результаты разнообразны и зависят от множества постоянно меняющихся факторов, в частности установления родственных связей с королевской династией, независимой финансовой базы и характера отдельных представителей. К концу рассматриваемого периода некоторые из небольших государства сохранились, тогда как другие прекратили свое существование.

*Keywords:* принцы, князья, дипломатия, суверенность, династичизм, Франция, Лотарингия, Савойя, Клевес, Мантуя

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