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Matthew Vester, *Renaissance Dynasticism and Apanage Politics: Jacques de Savoie-Nemours, 1531-1585*. Early Modern Studies 9. Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2012. xiii + 290 pp. Maps, genealogies, figures, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 978-1-61248-071-8.

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Over the past decade, a new history of early modern nobles has emerged. Previous scholarship on European elites in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had relied heavily on the sociological theories of Norbert Elias and Max Weber to analyze nobles' patron-client ties, modes of sociability, and roles in state development.[1] During the 1980s and 1990s, historians such as Arlette Jouanna, Jean-Marie Constant, Ellery Schalk, Jonathan Dewald, Sharon Kettering, William Beik, Robert Harding, Mack P. Holt, James Collins, and Kristin Neuschel forged social and cultural interpretations of early modern French nobles that destroyed older caricatures of the frivolous royal court and models of the "nobility in crisis." [2] Building on this groundbreaking work, a new wave of historians of nobility have now begun to explore French archives with new anthropological and cultural methods to consider dynasticism [3], political culture [4], and noble violence. [5]

Matthew Vester's recent monograph, *Renaissance Dynasticism and Apanage Politics: Jacques de Savoie-Nemours, 1531-1585*, offers a biographical study of Jacques de Savoie, duc de Nemours (1531-1585), a cadet of the ruling Savoie dynasty who served as a military leader and courtier in France during the Habsburg-Valois Wars and the French Wars of Religion. As a young man, Jacques de Savoie served in the armies of Henri II, fighting in Italy and the Netherlands in the 1550s. He later became a powerful Catholic leader during the early religious wars of the 1560s and 1570s, but ultimately abandoned Henri III's court in 1576 and returned to Savoie. The career of Jacques de Savoie presents an opportunity to examine noble culture and politics across France, Savoie, and northern Italy. *Renaissance Dynasticism and Apanage Politics* is a translation of the original French edition of the book, entitled *Jacques de Savoie-Nemours: L'Apanage du Genevois au cœur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVIIe siècle*, reflecting the transnational interest in this subject. [6]

The career of the duc de Nemours raises intriguing questions about noble identities and Renaissance individualism. Vester comments that "one is initially tempted to view Jacques as a poster child for successful 'Renaissance self-fashioning'" (p. 3). The book might have addressed the serious criticisms of Stephen Greenblatt's concept of "self-fashioning" as constructed, as well as the recent attempts to move beyond the opposition between Jacob Burckhardt's individualism and Greenblatt's "self-fashioning" in analyzing early modern identities. [7]

Vester's approach instead mines the manuscripts of the Archivio di Stato di Torino, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and several Archives départementales to construct a detailed portrait of Jacques de Savoie and his princely *apanage* of the Genevois. Vester defines *apanages* as "parcels of the dynastic patrimony that were set aside to provide the household expenses of younger sons of the ruler, and were generally inherited by the eldest son of the apanagiste until the direct line ended. Then they reverted to the ruling branch of the family" (p. 16). Jacques deftly negotiated with his cousin, Emanuel Filibert, duc de Savoie, to maintain his *apanage* privileges and succeeded in getting the Genevois erected as a duché in

1564. The duc de Nemours-Genevois utilized the prestige and wealth of his *apanage* and other landholdings to construct châteaux in the Genevois and hôtels particuliers in Paris. The *apanage* thus represented the key source of Jacques de Savoie's prestige and honor.

The book proposes a transnational approach to early modern political culture, focusing on small states and on non-state actors. Vester's study "portrays a Jacques de Savoie who was emblematic of the international, cosmopolitan nature of late Renaissance politics in which layered sovereignty and composite polities (not incipient national states) were the rule" (p. 6). Vester examines the duc de Nemours's use of political patronage in his *apanage* of Genevois and within the duché de Savoie in general. Here, he constructs prosopographical sketches of Genevois officials and largely follows Stuart Carroll's model of "affinities" to explain noble patronage and clientage (pp. 189-190). Savoyard political patronage remained centered on the ruling dynasty, according to Vester, allowing local elites "to amplify but ultimately contain Jacques' political influence both within the Savoyard domains and abroad" (p. 210). Jacques's frustrations in his projects to retake Calvinist Genève and in his attempts to manage the passages of troops on the Spanish Road through Savoie reveal the serious limits on the political ambitions of the duc de Nemours (pp. 213-229).

The Savoyard dynasty plays a central role in the book's analysis through the categories of "dynastic interests," "dynastic prestige," and "dynastic self-conception" (pp. 11-12). Vester describes "dynasticism as a political force" (p. 15), asserting that "the [Savoie] dynasty can be said to have been a political actor in its own right, taking action through the choices of its members" (p. 4). Although Jacques de Savoie served four French kings, Vester argues that he maintained a constant loyalty and the Savoyard dynasty, serving as an informer, mediator, and negotiator for the ducs de Savoie. The author concludes that "dynasticism provided a mechanism—inheritance—by which junior members of a house always had an interest in maintaining the integrity of the dynasty's sovereign claims, since devolution was always a possibility" (p. 168).

These concerns with dynasticism challenge previous models of Savoyard absolutism and centralizing state development. Vester sees Jacques de Savoie as operating "on a political stage that was not *national*, but *European* in dimension," effectively critiquing national models of noble politics that have often portrayed nobles as hindering state development (p. 28). Vester refers—somewhat problematically in this reviewer's opinion—to a "feudal sensibility" that "permeated the state itself" (p. 8). Rather than emphasizing Savoyard state building, Vester argues that "like the Guises, the sovereign house of Savoy also showed itself to be remarkably capable of preserving dynastic unity and prestige during the turbulent later sixteenth century" (p. 252).

The book explores the dynastic concerns with marriage politics and clandestine marriage through an analysis of the scandal surrounding Jacques de Savoie's purported marriage to Françoise de Rohan. After giving birth to a child, Françoise filed a lawsuit claiming that Jacques had secretly married her, leading to a lengthy legal battle that exposed conceptions of sexuality and female honor. Rather than focusing on a gendered reading of the case, Vester examines the dynastic interests and noble politics that ultimately allowed Jacques de Savoie to avoid acknowledging Françoise de Rohan and instead marry Anne d'Este in a carefully negotiated alliance that benefitted the Savoyard dynasty and Jacques himself.

Despite this fascinating exploration of Jacques de Savoie's career, the book also reveals the limitations of biographical approaches to noble culture. The detailed portrait of the duc de Nemours at times becomes somewhat myopic, as when Vester claims that "Jacques de Savoie was clearly one of the most famous courtiers of his age" (p. 7). Contemporaries and later historians certainly celebrated the duc de Nemours, but they have also held up François de Lorraine, duc de Guise, Anne de Montmorency, duc de Montmorency, Henri de Lorraine, duc de Guise, Anne de Joyeuse, duc de Joyeuse, Louis de Gonzague, duc de Nevers, Jean-Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, duc d'Épernon, and many other nobles as ideal

courtiers at the French royal court during the religious wars. The biographical focus prompts some hyperbole, as when the book describes Jacques de Savoie as having “one of the most celebrated careers enjoyed by any Renaissance prince in Europe” (p. 25). Vester seems to envision Jacques de Savoie playing a particular role in a famous dispute between the duc de Montpensier and the duc de Nevers in 1580, yet virtually the entire royal court and many prominent provincial nobles were involved in efforts to mediate this quarrel (p. 145-146).

The book might have usefully explored Jacques de Savoie’s participation in religious violence in more depth. The duc de Nemours was intimately involved in several key episodes of religious violence. He led the force that captured the Huguenot conspirators who plotted to seize François II and remove his Catholic advisers at Amboise in 1560. Jacques seems to have been involved in a 1561 plot to entice the young Henri de Valois duc d’Orléans (the future Henri III) to flee from the royal court to protect him from Calvinist influence. With the outbreak of civil war, the duc de Nemours was appointed as a *lieutenant-général* to command royalist forces in southeastern France, where he coordinated with Italian forces arriving in France and launched an attempt to retake Lyon, which had been seized by Huguenots. Jacques de Savoie’s engagement in duels invites a reexamination of noble violence that might reevaluate recent interpretations of dueling and feuding.[8] The duc de Nemours participated in the rescue of Charles IX at Meaux and fought at the battle of Saint-Denis in 1567. He led Catholic forces in 1568 and 1569, but he quarreled with the Claude de Lorraine, duc d’Aumale over command, and abandoned the army to return to the royal court, subsequently playing little direct military role in the religious wars of the 1570s. The book might have considered the duc Nemours seriously as a *malcontent*, comparing his frustrations and his ultimate retreat from court with those of other prominent Catholic nobles such as the duc de Nevers.

Through its compelling portrait of Jacques de Savoie, duc de Nemours, *Renaissance Dynasticism and Apanage Politics* contributes significantly to the histories of Savoie and early modern France, offering new perspectives on small states, transnational noble politics, and European political culture. The poignant depictions of Jacques’s “glorious suffering” from gout and his preparations for death in 1585 (pp. 241-247) succeed in reinforcing the image of a Renaissance noble who desired military glory and princely power, but was ironically restricted by dynastic politics and his cadet position in the Savoyard household—the very basis of his *apanage* power and prestige.

NOTES

[1] For syntheses of the historiography on early modern European nobles, see Jonathan Dewald, *The European Nobility, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Jean-Marie Constant, *La Noblesse française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Hachette, 1985).

[2] William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); James B. Collins, *Classes, Estates, and Order in Early Modern Brittany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Jean-Marie Constant, *Nobles et paysans en Beauce aux XVIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1981); Jonathan Dewald, *Aristocratic Experience and the Origins of Modern Culture: France, 1570-1715* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Robert R. Harding, *Anatomy of a Power Elite: The Provincial Governors of Early Modern France* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1978); Mack P. Holt, *The Duke of Anjou and the Politique Struggle during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Arlette Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte: La noblesse française et la gestation de l’État moderne, 1559-1661* (Paris: Fayard, 1989); Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); J. Russell Major, “Noble Income and Inflation and the Wars of Religion in France,” *American Historical Review* 86 (1981): 21-48; Kristen B. Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University

Press, 1989); David Potter, *War and Government in the French Provinces: Picardy, 1470-1560* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

[3] Stuart Carroll, *Noble Power during the French Wars of Religion: The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michel Nassiet, *Parenté, noblesse, et états dynastiques, XVe-XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2000); Guy Rowlands, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV: Royal Service and Private Interest, 1661-1701* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jonathan Spangler, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

[4] Ariane Boltanski, *Les ducs de Nevers et l'état royal. Genèse d'un compromis (ca 1550 – ca 1600)* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2006); Laurent Bourquin, *Les nobles, la ville et le roi. L'autorité nobiliaire en Anjou pendant les guerres de Religion* (Paris: Belin, 2001); Hugues Daussy, *Les huguenots et le roi. Le combat politique de Philippe Duplessis-Mornay (1572-1600)* (Genève: Droz, 2002); Stéphane Gal, *Lesdiguières. Prince des Alpes et connétable de France* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2007); Nicolas Le Roux, *Nicolas. La faveur du roi. Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547 - vers 1589)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2000); Mathieu Lemoine, *La Faveur et la gloire. Le maréchal de Bassompierre mémorialiste (1579-1646)* (Paris: Presses de l'université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2012); Xavier Le Person, "Practiques" et "Practiqueurs". *La vie politique à la fin du règne de Henri III (1584-1589)* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2002); Julian Swann, *Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy: The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[5] Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Fadi El Hage, *Histoire des maréchaux de France à l'époque moderne* (Paris: Nouveau Monde et Ministère de la Défense, 2012); Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[6] Matthew Vester, *Jacques de Savoie-Nemours: L'Apanage du Genevois au cœur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVIe siècle* (Genève: Droz, 2008).

[7] John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

[8] Pascal Brioiest, Hervé Dréviillon, and Pierre Serna, *Croisser le fer. Violence et culture de l'épée dans la France moderne (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)* (Seysssel: Champ Vallon, 2002); Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Hervé Dréviillon, *L'Impôt du sang. Le métier des armes sous Louis XIV* (Paris: Tallandier, 2005).

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