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The Uncertain World of Renaissance Geneva and Savoy: Political Life, Factional Conflicts and Religious Turmoil

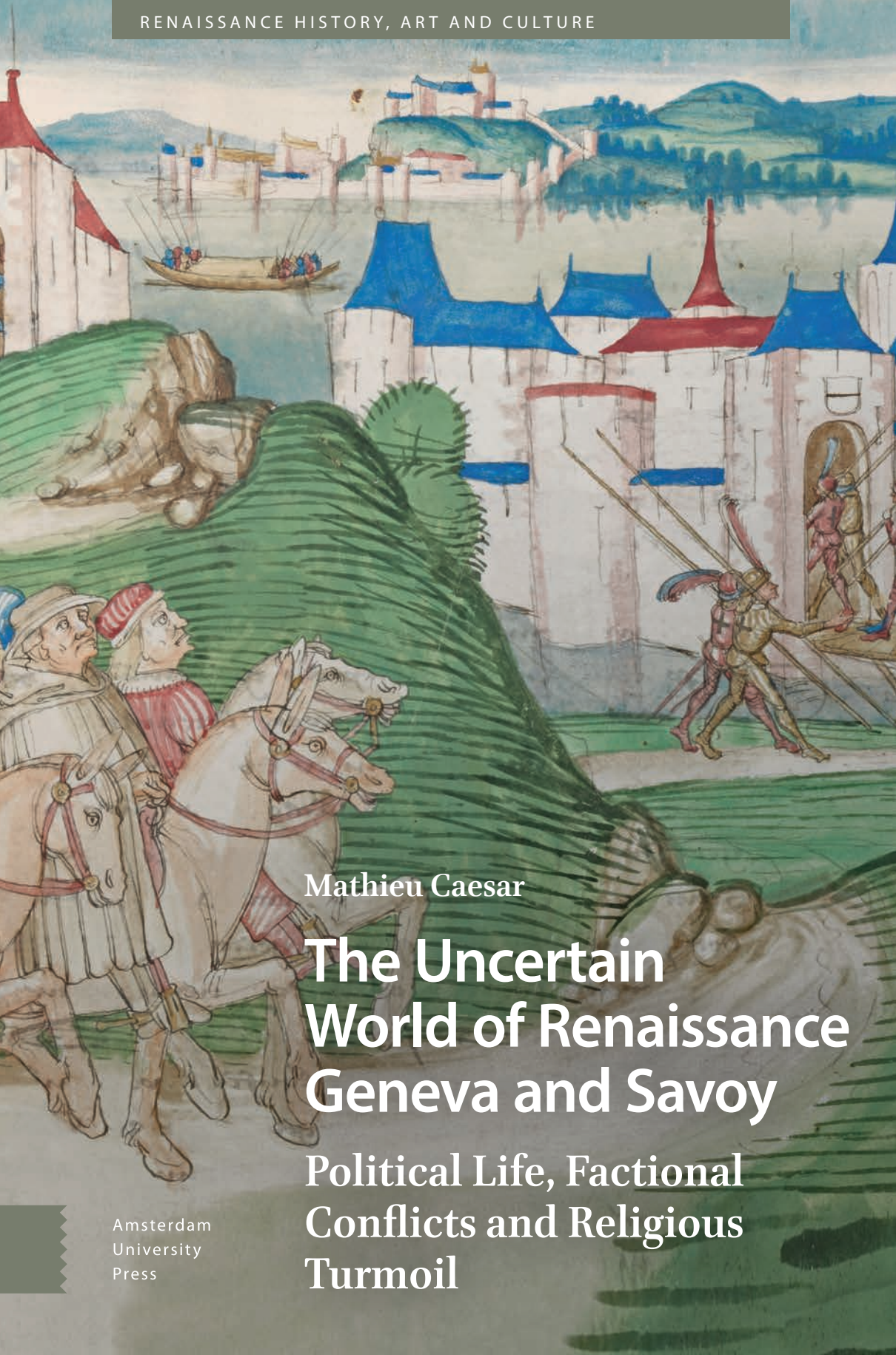
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Mathieu Caesar

The Uncertain World of Renaissance Geneva and Savoy

Political Life, Factional
Conflicts and Religious
Turmoil

Amsterdam
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The Uncertain World of Renaissance Geneva and Savoy

Renaissance History, Art and Culture

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Abbreviations

Archives

ACV	Archives Cantonales Vaudoises
AEF	Archives de l'État de Fribourg
AEG	Archives d'État de Genève
Mss. hist.	Manuscrits historiques
P.C.	Procès criminels
P.H.	Pièces historiques
ASTo	Archivio di Stato di Torino
GE	Corte, Paesi, Genève
Protocolli dei notai SN	Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Protocolli dei notai della corona, Protocolli dei notai camerale, Serie Nera
Protocolli dei notai SR	Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Protocolli dei notai della corona, Protocolli dei notai ducali, Serie Rossa
SR	Sezioni Riunite (also called Archivio camerale)
StALU	Staatsarchiv Luzern
StABE	Staatsarchiv Bern

Printed Sources, Dictionaries and Databases

Bonivard, <i>Chroniques</i> (1551)	François Bonivard. <i>Chroniques de Genève</i> , ed. Gustave Révilliod. 2 vols. Geneva: J. G. Fick, 1867.
Bonivard, <i>Chroniques</i> (1563)	François Bonivard. <i>Chroniques de Genève</i> , ed. Micheline Tripet. 3 vols. Geneva: Droz, 2001–2014.
DBI	<i>Dizionario biografico degli Italiani</i> , online: https://www.treccani.it/biografico/ .
EA	<i>Amtliche Sammlung der Ältern Eidgenössischen Abschiede</i> , 22 vols. Lucerne: Meyer, 1839–1882.
e-DHS	<i>Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse</i> , online: https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/ .

- Edit 16 The national census of sixteenth-century Italian editions, online: <https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/en/>.
- GLN 15–16 Database of books published in Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel and Morges in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, online: <http://www.ville-ge.ch/musinfo/bd/bge/gln/>.
- GW *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, online: <https://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>.
- HS *Helvetia Sacra*. 28 vols. Bern: Francke, 1972–2007.
- PS Armando Tallone. *Parlamento sabaudo*. 13 vols. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1928–1946.
- RC *Registres du Conseil de Genève (1409–1536)*. 13 vols. Geneva: Kündig, 1900–1940.
- RCC *Registres du Conseil de Genève à l'époque de Calvin (1535–1543)*. 10 vols. Geneva: Droz, 2003–2021.
- RQBE Hermann Rennefahrt, ed. *Das Stadtrecht von Bern*. 2 vols. Aarau: H. R. Sauerländer, 1955–1956 (*Die Rechtsquellen des Kantons Bern* I/4.1–2).
- SDGE Émile Rivoire and Victor Van Berchem, eds. *Les sources du droit du canton de Genève*. 2 vols. Geneva: H.R. Sauerländer, 1927–1930.
- SDVD Danielle Anex Cabanis and Jean-François Poudret, eds. *Droits seigneuriaux et franchises municipales. Lausanne et les terres épiscopales*. Aarau: Sauerländer, 1977 (*Les sources du droit du Canton de Vaud* B.1).
- USTC Universal Short Title Catalogue, online: <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>.

A Preliminary Note on Terms, Names and Maps

Writing about Renaissance Savoy, a plurilingual principality¹ spanning territories that are nowadays part of three countries – France, Switzerland and Italy – each with its own historiographical tradition, poses some linguistic problems that have to be addressed.

Both medievalists and early modernists commonly use the expression “Duchy of Savoy” (Duché de Savoie and Ducato di Savoia) as a synonym for the entire Sabaudian principality.² From a strictly juridical and constitutional point of view this is an incorrect shortcut, since the “Duchy of Savoy” was only one of the components of the principality which was composed of an aggregation of various territories (other duchies, counties, *pays*, etc.) with various names and juridical statuses, and their own traditions and degrees of autonomy from the princely power and its central offices.³

Nevertheless, although it is not the most frequently used expression, “*ducatus Sabaudie*”, referring to the whole of the ducal possessions, already appears in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century texts. When in 1416 Emperor Sigismund granted Amadeus VIII the title of duke, he used the expression “*decoramus tibi illustri principi Amedeo duci Sabaudie predicto, ducatum sive principatum Sabaudie supradictum*” in the diploma.⁴ And when the emperor, in the same diploma, asked Amadeus VIII to grant protection to the clergy and the church “*in dicto ducatu olim comitatu Sabaudie appellato*” and to ensure “*in dicto ducatu Sabaudie pacem et iustitiam*”, he was clearly referring to the entire principality, not only to the “Duchy of Savoy”. Other

1 On this fact, see *La parole du pouvoir – Les princes de la Maison de Savoie et l’usage des langues (XIII^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, Chambéry: Laboratoire LLSETI (forthcoming).

2 On the difficulties of using a term referring to the entire principality and the different historiographical traditions, see also Vester, *Sabaudian Studies*, p. 12–18.

3 Similar remarks could be made for the use of expressions such as “Duchy of Milan” or “Duchy of Burgundy”. See *infra* chapter 1, p. 39–48, for a brief summary of the structures of the Renaissance Sabaudian principality.

4 Ripart and Guilleré, “Investiture”, p. 377–378.

examples can be found (also in middle French) in letters, instructions for ambassadors, registers of urban councils, chronicles, etc.⁵

It must also be said that, especially in French, “Savoie” was used with various meanings, sometimes simply referring to a generic geographical region limited to “Savoie propre” (the duchy strictly speaking), but also as a synonym for the francophone part of the principality north of the Alps, or in some cases, for the principality as a whole. The multiple meanings of the terms sometimes obliged writers to be precise. For example, at the end of the fifteenth century, Jacques Lambert, a ducal councillor, speaking of the noblemen of the principality, called them “barons seigneurs et nobles du pays de Savoye tant deçà que delà les mons” (“barons, lords and nobles of the country of Savoy, both on this and the other side of the mountains” [i.e., the Alps]).⁶

In any case, “Savoy” also became a possible shortcut referring to the entirety of the lands under ducal rule. For instance, the title of Amadeus VIII’s reform of 1430–1432 was, in the medieval manuscripts, *Compendium Statutorum generalis reformationis Sabaudie*, and later printers often titled the collection of ancient Sabaudian legislative texts *Statuta Sabaudiae*.⁷ Finally, one can note that terms and expressions such as “Savoyards/Savoysiens” or “gens de Savoye” referred to people coming from somewhere within the entire principality, not simply from Savoy as a region or a “duchy” in the restrictive constitutional terminology.⁸

For these reasons, in this book, I have chosen to use “Duchy of Savoy” as a synonym for the entire principality. Not only is this practice widely used and accepted in standard historiography, but “Savoy” and “Duchy of Savoy” were already used as a designation for the territories under the rule of the Sabaudian dukes during the Renaissance.

The duke of Savoy between 1504 and 1553 was Charles II, and not Charles III as he is sometimes still wrongly called. The origin of this error lies in the old French historiography, which arbitrarily shortened Duke Charles-Jean-Amédée (1490–1496) to “Charles II”, as he was the successor of Charles I (1482–1490). Therefore, Charles II (1504–1553) became “Charles III”. This is incorrect, however, as Charles-Jean-Amédée, for instance on his coins, never

5 Cf. for example, *RC* 2, p. 424; *RC* 4, p. 310; *RC* 10, p. 58; Segre, *Documenti*, p. 149; Ménabréa, *Chronique*, p. 266; *Chronica latina Sabaudiae*, p. 651; Morenzoni, *Le prédicateur*, p. 158; Tallone, “Ivrea”, p. 82 n. 3.

6 Ménabréa, *Chronique*, p. 40.

7 See Morenzoni and Caesar, eds., *La Loi du Prince*.

8 Cf. for instance, Bollati, ed., *Geste*, vol. 2, p. 178 and 274 and Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, p. 127.

used the shortened version of his name nor the title Charles II. The same applies to Charles II, who never styled himself “Charles III”.

In Swiss historiography, territories administered by two or more cantons are called *Gemeine Herrschaften* in German and *Bailliages communs* in French. Various English translations can be found, such as “condominiums” (or “condominia”), “mandated territories”, or “common lordships”. I have opted for the latter as a good translation of the German expression. For the names of cities, when a “standard” English translation exists, I have adopted it (for example, Geneva, Turin, Bern and Basel); otherwise, French, Italian and German names have been retained according to the main language spoken in the area nowadays. Thus, “Fribourg” always refers to the present-day Swiss city, and I did not add “in Nuithonie/Üchtland” to differentiate it from the German Freiburg im Breisgau.

As with city names, I have adopted an English version only for emperors, popes, kings, and various princes that have a standard translation. For members of the local ruling elite, bishops, preachers, etc., I have retained their names in the French, German, Italian or Latin version, accordingly. Since Savoy had a longstanding tradition, up to the Reformation, of using Latin in administration (for both ecclesiastical and communal institutions), most of the common people appear in the primary sources with many variants of their names, and usually both in Latin and Italian/French. Wherever possible, I have tried to use the “standard” French/Italian version following the local historiography. For others, I have kept the Latin version to avoid confusion (their names are given in italics). Another frequent problem is that some families appear both with and without “de” before the family name. Once again, I have attempted to be as consistent as possible and to retain the most common form. The indices of the *Registres du conseil de Genève (RC)* provide many useful variants of the name for a given individual, mostly (but not only) Genevans.

Maps 3 and 4 are simplified maps and some of the choices differ from the standard representation of the Swiss Confederation at the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁹ I have decided to represent only sovereign cantons with their lordships (regardless of the number of cantons ruling over them), and highlighted lordships under the control of Bern and Fribourg alone. I have decided not to represent the classical “allied/associated members” that Swiss historiography calls *Zugewandte Orte/pays alliés*, nor the protectorates. In fact, “allies” and “protectorates”, despite being clear labels, present

9 For example, Kreis, ed., *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*; Church and Head, *A Concise History*, p. 55, or Schmid, “The Swiss Confederation”, p. 28.

very different configurations, and even during the early modern period there was no consensus as to the exact boundaries of the Confederation.¹⁰ In particular, concerning the western regions under analysis here, some cities that had *combourgeoisies* (i.e., a particular type of alliance treaty) with the Swiss cantons are usually classified under these labels. This is the case, for instance, for Bienne (an “ally” of the Confederacy, but which only had *combourgeoisies* with Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn, and the important right to participate in the Diet), and for the “protectorates” of La Neuveville (*combourgeoisie* with Bern alone), Le Landeron (with Solothurn alone), Moutier-Grandval and Bellelay (with Bern and Solothurn).¹¹

Finally, concerning alliances, I have thus preferred (map 4) to give a representation of treaties and *combourgeoisies* concluded or renewed only by Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn from 1482 to 1536 (inclusive).¹² Map 4 is therefore an attempt to represent political activity during these years, and not a juridical situation at any given date (see *infra* chapter 1, p. 51–54 for the analysis). The map does not include treaties and alliances that Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn signed as members of the Swiss Confederation.

10 Cf. Würgler, “Which Switzerland?”.

11 For an overview with useful lists of allies and protectorates, see Würgler, “Pays alliés” (26 February 2014 version), in *e-DHS* and Würgler, “Protectorats” (18 October 2012 version), in *e-DHS*. See also table 6.

12 Data are available in table 6.

Prologue

On 28 April 1564, a month before his death and severely weakened by illness, John Calvin gave a famous farewell speech to the Company of Pastors, recalling his first arrival in Geneva in August 1536 with these words:

When I first arrived in this Church there was almost nothing. They were preaching and that's all. For sure, they were seeking out idols and burning them, but there was no Reformation. Everything was in turmoil.¹

Calvin was retrospectively judging the situation from the standpoint of the church he had shaped over a quarter of a century. Yet somehow his assessment could be applied even more broadly to the entire social and political order within Geneva, and to the whole Duchy of Savoy.² When he arrived in Geneva, the French and Swiss armies had already conquered almost the entire principality. Geneva had only recently officially adopted the Reformed faith (in May), had gained independence from its temporal lord, the bishop, and was riven by political and confessional conflicts. Factionalism had been destabilising the city for almost twenty years. Geneva was not alone in finding itself in this state of turmoil and upheaval; factional conflicts troubled Piedmontese towns as well, Lausanne and the Pays de Vaud had also become Reformed under their new Bernese lords, and the situation in the entire Sabaudian principality was very unstable and uncertain.

Instability and uncertainty did not erupt as a consequence of sudden events, such as the simple aftermath of the invasion and collapse of the Duchy of Savoy in 1536. On the contrary, they had been affecting the

¹ The French original is in *Joannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, t. 9, Brunsvigae: C. A. Schwetschke, 1870, col. 891–892: “Quand je vins premièrement en ceste Église, il n’y avoit quasi comme rien. On preschoit et puis c’est tout. On cherchoit bien les idoles et les brusloit-on, mais il n’y avoit aucune réformation. Tout estoit en tumulte.” An English translation is provided by Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, p. 95, which I have used here in slightly revised form.

² For a detailed discussion about the meaning of the expression “Duchy of Savoy”, and its use as a synonym for “Sabaudian principality”, see *supra*, “A Preliminary Note on Terms, Names and Maps”, p. 11–12.

principality and many urban centres such as Geneva and Lausanne for most of the previous decades, since the mid-fifteenth century. In this book, I wish to examine the troubled decades that preceded the political and religious changes of 1536, showing how actors faced multiple options to overcome conflicts and crises. Practices and debates aimed at attaining stability appear to have been a central feature of political life in these decades; indeed, this period can only be understood if we take into account the way uncertainty affected political society and the strategies of individuals and institutions alike within the Renaissance Duchy of Savoy.

Geneva, and to some extent Lausanne and the Pays de Vaud, occupy a central role in the story told in this book. The primary reason for this lies in the nature of these territories and the historical events they helped shape. Geneva was the largest and wealthiest city in the entire duchy – but, as we shall see, juridically it was not Sabaudian. Thus, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the city had become the centrepiece of political efforts by the duke of Savoy to control and conquer it. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Bern, Fribourg and later France also set their eyes on Geneva. On a more regional scale, the territories around the Lake Geneva region were those where Savoy had to deploy more intense political activity, and these areas thus witnessed more conflicts. The Genevan case in particular has left very abundant archival materials, and not due to mere chance. The competing efforts to secure control of the city sparked a first phase of intense factional struggles that lasted for almost two decades (1517–1536).³ Geneva's importance for the dukes and the conflicts over control of the city both generated a flow of sources whose abundance is a first sign of its historical relevance for our understanding of not only the city's history, but of the whole of political life in Renaissance Savoy.

Factionalism also affected many Piedmontese towns – as we shall see in chapter 3 – but the phenomenon was less important, or even absent, in most of the other Sabaudian cities during the period. This is the main reason why some parts of the principality – including many of the other francophone territories such as, for instance Bresse and *Savoie propre* – are absent from my narrative. This is a powerful reminder that factional quarrels were not necessarily the outcome of uncertainty and instability; rather, they occurred where a particular political and social situation enabled them to occur. From that point of view, factionalism is less a feature of Sabaudian

3 For a second phase of harsh conflict between factions following Calvin's arrival, see, Naphy, *Calvin*.

society than a lens I will use to shed light on the underlying stakes of the debates and conflicts.

The abundance of the Genevan materials prompted me to begin this book as a study of factionalism within that city, and in some respects, this is still one of its main topics. However, as I moved forward with my research, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of writing a social and political history of factional struggles conceived as an internal Genevan problem. A systematic and deep prosopographical approach to factions was not possible due to the lack of sources. Available archival material mostly focuses on the political and public activities of members of the ruling elite. Common people and members of important families who did not sit on city councils often remain in the background, leaving the historian with few details concerning their agency and networks. Moreover, for many individuals, their private life, economic activities and family ties remain obscure.⁴ This also made me aware that part of the factions, precisely those members who were not active in the communal councils, were less visible, if not almost invisible.⁵ At the same time, I also discovered stories of people who had sometimes taken strange paths, and whose choices could not be explained in terms of a “Genevan story”. A solely prosopographical and Geneva-centred perspective was definitely not satisfying.

Hence, I broadened my focus to cover other relevant parts of the Sabaudian principality: particularly Lausanne, the Pays de Vaud and some Piedmontese cities, in particular Cuneo and Mondovì. This is why reforms (both religious and princely), disputes about jurisdiction (and the respect for procedure), and the importance of alliances are other topics addressed at length in the following pages. They emerged as key points for understanding factional quarrels and the way that factions wielded power. From the same perspective, while political life is certainly the core of this book, I felt it necessary to venture into economic, social and religious aspects of the story; these aspects are central to my analysis in the last two chapters. Endeavouring to describe Sabaudian political society in all its complexity meant not only

4 The notarial records for the pre-1536 period (AEG, Notaires latins) are relatively poor and the series of criminal trials, although it is extremely valuable, does not permit a satisfactory prosopographical approach. Blanca Baechler, in her unpublished PhD thesis *Le Petit conseil*, attempted a prosopographical analysis of the members of the Ordinary Council (later called the Small Council), with disappointing results. Moreover, most of the analysis presented in vol. 1 of the thesis is not reliable and is marred by debatable statistical choices. On the contrary, vol. 2, which offers 188 records of syndics for the period 1460–1540, provides many useful materials.

5 See also *infra*, p. 27, about factions and their historiography.

looking at its neglected aspects, but also varying the scale of the analysis, alternating the European and regional scales with more micro-historical approaches focused on a given city or on individuals – some of whom were what we could call “ordinary people”.

This book will then look especially at four main features of the period under analysis that I consider to be at the core of its political life and the source of much of the uncertainty that characterised it: the importance of the *combourgeoisies* (i.e., a particular type of alliance treaty), the role of urban factionalism, confessional conflicts before the final shift of 1536, and the policies of reform promoted by the dukes of Savoy and the bishops. These aspects have not been studied with the attention they deserve and have been overlooked due to the linear and teleological narratives I shall return to in the following pages.⁶ I will begin with a first chapter setting the scene and presenting the main polities featured in the story: the Duchy of Savoy, the episcopal cities of Lausanne and Geneva – with their bishops and urban elite – and the Swiss cities of Fribourg, Bern, and to a lesser extent Solothurn. I will examine the shift from prosperity to instability which, during the second half of the fifteenth century, made Savoy a geopolitically fragile region. In chapter 2, I will gradually move forward and focus on the beginning of the sixteenth century and the way alliances between these actors shaped political relationships. I will first look at the *combourgeoisies* which Bern and Fribourg concluded with Lausanne (1525) and Geneva (1526), and will then analyse the factional conflicts that affected Geneva as the result of its rapprochement with its Swiss neighbours. In chapter 3, we will travel south of the Alps and examines factionalism within the Piedmontese cities and the response of the duke and his court to this problem during the first decades of the sixteenth century. As for the northern part of the duchy, geopolitical instability and the Italian Wars fuelled local conflicts, but unlike in the francophone territories, Piedmontese factional struggles were more deeply rooted in family conflicts. The last part of chapter 3 will return to the more chaotic situation north of the Alps, showing the importance of diplomatic negotiations during the years 1526–1530. During these same years, the spread of Evangelical ideas added religious hatred to urban factionalism, as chapter 4 will show. I will analyse the Genevan case in depth by looking at the formation of an Evangelical community and the subsequent confessionalisation of factional conflicts that impacted the entire city and surrounding countryside, especially in 1534–1536. The last

6 For more details on these narratives, and especially on the Genevan patriotic one, see *infra* p. 24–26 and chapter 2, p. 93–96.

chapter will change the focal point and move back to a broader perspective, both chronologically and geographically: I will look at how the bishops and the duke of Savoy reacted to the spread of the new religious ideas and how this was rooted in the larger policies of reform that were an essential component of political life in Renaissance Savoy. These subjects and the chronological focus on the early sixteenth century call for a more detailed explanation.

It may be helpful to readers, especially those not familiar with Sabaudian and Swiss history, to now discuss some of the key events and the main historical evolutions that affected the Duchy of Savoy and the territories under analysis in this book, especially the Lake Geneva region.

The death of Duke Amadeus VIII in 1451 marked the end of one of the most prosperous periods for the House of Savoy, with the duchy slowly entering a long phase of internal weakness, military pressure from its neighbours, and at times open warfare, which were three of the main reasons for its instability and political uncertainty.⁷ Many dukes of the second half of the fifteenth century were politically weak – some of them were frequently ill or acceded to the throne at a very young age. Fragility also increased due to frequent and repeated internal tensions which started with the rebellion of Philip of Bresse – Duke Louis I's fifth son – in 1462. These tensions were also stimulated by French manoeuvres and the subsequent factional struggles at the Sabaudian court. If the rapprochement with the king of France had many supporters at court, those who supported the traditional fidelity to the emperor were numerous too: Savoy was, after all, juridically part of the empire. The necessity of accommodating both a distant suzerain (the emperor) and a powerful neighbour (the king of France) affected Sabaudian politics until 1531. It was only at that moment that the duke abandoned this rather long phase of balancing strategy and clearly sided with the emperor, accepting the risk of an overt conflict with France.

In the meantime, by the 1450s roughly, economic recession had begun and Geneva and Savoy had entered the first phase of this recession. While the first half of the century had been characterised by the dynamism that accompanied Genevan international fairs, the following decades were marked by a return to a more regional economy. In particular, Geneva suffered from the king of France's policies promoting fairs in Lyon. By the

7 Amadeus VIII retired to Ripaille in 1434, but continued to rule informally until his death in 1451, with his son Louis I acting as general lieutenant of the duchy. See below, chapter 1, p. 42–48 for more details about the Sabaudian crisis of the fifteenth century.

mid-1460s, the city had definitely lost its role as a European financial centre, although foreign merchants did not completely disappear from Geneva.⁸

The Burgundian Wars (1474–1477) led to another acute crisis. The duke of Savoy, as well as the bishop of Geneva, were among the losers. Savoy lost many territories north of the Alps (cf. map 3) and Fribourg became definitively independent, free from all Sabaudian juridical dependence. By 1477, Swiss political and military expansion towards the Lake Geneva region and Swiss interference in Sabaudian territories – especially in the internal affairs of cities – had become a fact, constituting the second main feature that heavily affected Sabaudian political life and diplomatic relationships with the Swiss during the first decades of the sixteenth century.

In fact, if the first years of Charles II's reign – who acceded to the throne in 1504 – were relatively calm, by 1508 tensions and sources of conflicts with Bern and Fribourg were constantly increasing. That year, the Dufour affair ignited a long judicial quarrel with Bern and Fribourg. A ducal secretary, Jean Dufour, for reasons that have never been entirely clarified, decided to forge the testament of Charles I, implying that Savoy owed 200,000 florins to Bern and 150,000 to Fribourg for these cities' help during a military campaign against the marquis of Saluzzo in 1486. Dufour took refuge in Fribourg and the two Swiss cities were able to engage Charles II in litigation and try to extort from him some of the sums supposedly owed.

Despite these problems, the two cities had alliance treaties (renewed many times) with the duke of Savoy, and, at the same time, constantly reinforced their network of alliances with cities on the western border of the empire. In 1519, Fribourg had already almost concluded a *combourgeoisie* with Geneva, and only Sabaudian military intervention and the reluctance of the Swiss Diet – fearing war with the duke of Savoy – prevented the treaty from being officially sealed. Some years later, Fribourg's and Bern's political manoeuvres were finally effective in securing *combourgeoisies* with Lausanne (1525) and Geneva (1526).

The duke considered these alliances an infringement of his own alliance with the Swiss and the bishops saw them as illegal, since they were princes of the empire and the legitimate lords of the cities. Disagreement about the validity of the *combourgeoisies*, and disputes within the urban elites about the policy to follow (should Lausanne and Geneva seek new allies and “turn Swiss”?), led, by the late 1510s, to urban factional conflicts and juridical quarrels with the bishops and the duke of Savoy, constituting the third main turning point.

8 Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, especially p. 361–436. Cf. also *infra* chapter 1, p. 64–67.

It should also be borne in mind that all of these conflicts and juridical quarrels, and the numerous military campaigns – with many defeats for Savoy and subsequent compensations to be paid – put great pressure on the ducal finances. Moreover, the non-payment of war reparations could be used as a pretext for declaring a new war.⁹ And for nearly two decades before the final invasion of 1536, a general war involving the Swiss, Savoy and France was almost always on the horizon.

The fourth and last important watershed was Bern's shift to the Reformation in 1528. From that date forward, Bern's western-oriented political appetites were coupled with efforts to promote religious change in the neighbouring territories. Henceforth, religious choices and political struggles had a reciprocal influence. The Swiss and French invasion of Savoy in 1536 was the peak of this long crisis which led to several critical breaking points. Duke Charles II was left with control over only a small portion of his territories: Nice, Vercelli and part of the Valle d'Aosta. Savoy lost many territories that had long been part of its principality – the Pays de Vaud had been under Sabaudian influence since the thirteenth century – and most of the Lake Geneva region, starting with the two episcopal cities of Lausanne and Geneva, turned to the Reformation. For these reasons, 1536 is commonly accepted as marking the end of the Sabaudian Middle Ages.

That said, I hesitate to describe the years under analysis as late medieval. In fact, if 1536 certainly marked a strong break (both political and religious), the long century spanning roughly from the death of Amadeus VIII (1451) to the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) – when the duke of Savoy recovered a portion of the territories lost in 1536 – can also be regarded as a phase of transition, characterised by a slow transformation of state structures. Pier Paolo Merlin defined it as a moment of decline of the feudal state,¹⁰ and more recently Alessandro Barbero has argued that Savoy during the period 1450–1550, although it was in part still a “feudal principality”, also presented a “concentration of particular changes that justify the label of Renaissance State”.¹¹ These changes included the farming out of offices, the abolition of the Three Estates and the discontinuation of many archival series, replaced by new ones (a sign of institutional change).

9 Detailed information on these financial issues in Scott, *The Swiss*, p. 73–165.

10 Merlin, “Il Cinquecento”, p. 3.

11 Barbero, “The Feudal Principalities”, p. 195. See also, Vester, *Renaissance Dynasticism*, p. 4–26. An interesting parallel regarding the persistence of feudal practices is the fifteenth-century Duchy of Milan, cf. Savy, *Seigneurs et condottières*, p. 15–32. On the concept of the Renaissance, see the many reflections in Le Gall, *Défense et illustration*.

Political dialogue also underwent transition and faced increasingly critical moments. The Duchy of Savoy was a principality grounded in forms of “pactism” between the prince and various territorial powers: first and foremost cities, regional nobility and ecclesiastical institutions. The “pact”, tacit or explicit, involved limitations on the ducal power – for example the necessity of summoning the Three Estates to discuss taxation or promises of respecting urban liberties and *franchises* – in exchange for fidelity and support by the various political bodies composing the principalities. Saubaudian “pactism” provided space for political dialogue and “involved not only formalised forms of government and institutions, differing merely in scale and purpose, but also actors and practices that did not derive from the public sphere, for example, aristocratic clients or factions”.¹² Cities such as Geneva and Lausanne also participated in this intense dialogue, and it is precisely during this transitional phase that relationships between the prince and the two Lemanic cities entered a phase of tension which finally erupted into open conflict at the end of the 1510s. Tensions grew also in the second half of the fifteenth century because the towns and the principality as a whole were subject to various disaggregating forces: the expansionism of Savoy’s neighbours (mainly the Swiss and France, cf. map 2) and rivalries with other principalities (such as Milan, Saluzzo and Montferrat) engendered regional geopolitical instability.

It is a matter for debate to what extent Piedmont had a real rivalry with the francophone territories north of the Alps. However, it is undeniable that both parts of the duchy expected the duke and the duchess to be present as much as possible on their side of the Alps.¹³ On a more administrative level, starting from the late fifteenth century, Piedmontese lands acquired an increasing political weight.¹⁴ The *Consilium cum domino residens*, in particular, underwent a “piemontisation” during the reign of Charles II. During the first decades of the sixteenth century, the *Consilium* – a sort of informal council assisting the prince that had normally been itinerant during the previous century, following the prince as he travelled across the duchy, as its name suggests – became an institution based in Turin increasingly composed of officers of Piedmontese origin. In any case, during the sixteenth century the gradual shift of political gravity away from Chambéry – the main political centre – and the territories north of the Alps to the Piedmontese part of the principality is not in doubt, and it is a

12 Cf. Gamberini and Lazzarini, eds., *Italian Renaissance State*, p. 3–4.

13 Cf. Barbero, “Savoïardi e Piemontesi” and Barbero, *Il ducato*, p. 121–144.

14 On this, see especially Marini, *Savoïardi e Piemontesi*.

fact that became more tangible than ever when Turin officially became the capital of the principality (1572) and the Holy Shroud was moved from the royal chapel in the Chambéry ducal castle to Turin (1578).¹⁵

This transitional phase was also evident in other areas. Court rituals underwent changes in relation to the exercise of power and the princely *mis en scène* of his majesty; for example, the gradual end of medieval burial rituals.¹⁶ More generally, Charles II (1504–1553) showed a particular interest in dynastic rituals (such as weddings, *joyeuses entrées*, baptisms, and funerals) as a medium for the public expression of princely power. This was a sort of effervescence that was also observed in other early sixteenth-century European courts, and is typical of transitional or difficult dynastic periods.¹⁷ In a similar vein, Renaissance tastes influenced urban, ecclesiastical and courtly elites, as the presence of Italian artists at court and in urban circles,¹⁸ new fashions in episcopal seals and funerary slabs,¹⁹ and a growing interest in the relics of antiquity prove.²⁰

There are many factors that make an inquiry into this transitional period of Sabaudian political life interesting and challenging. An important one is that the period 1450–1550 is still largely a kind of historiographical no man's land, a “silent century”, as it has been called.²¹ Although many interesting studies exist, medievalists have rarely ventured beyond the first half of the fifteenth century and the prosperous reign of Amadeus VIII, and early modernists have extensively analysed the period following the “restoration” of the duchy after the French occupation, in the wake of Cateau-Cambrésis. The composite nature of the principality, whose territories are nowadays part of three different nations (Switzerland, France and Italy), has for a long time contributed to historiographical fragmentation, with national debates moving at different paces and focusing on different subjects.²² Moreover, as an effective part of the Holy Roman Empire, but split into two by the Alps, and divided into francophone and Italian-speaking territories, the Duchy

15 Cozzo, “De Chambéry” and Ripart, “Le Saint Suaire”.

16 Andenmatten and Ripart, “Ultimes itinérances”.

17 Brero, *Rituels dynastiques*, p. 560.

18 Natale and Elsig, eds., *La Renaissance*.

19 Deonna, *Les arts*, p. 178–179.

20 On this latter point, one good example is Aymon de Montfalcon, bishop of Lausanne (1491–1517), who in 1494 visited the town of Avenches, of which he was temporal lord, filled with wonder at the ruins of the ancient Roman Aventicum, cf. Oguey, “La ‘petite Renaissance’”.

21 Merlotti, “Disciplinamento e contrattazione”, p. 229.

22 On these historiographical issues, see Barbero, “Feudal Principalities”, p. 195–196; Bianchi, “La prima età moderna”; Vester, “Sabaudian Studies”; Merlin, “Il Piemonte”; various contributions in Raviola, Rosso and Varallo, eds., *Gli spazi sabaudi* and Merlin, *La Croce e il Giglio*, p. 15–22.

of Savoy has never been considered either a fully French principality or an entirely German or Italian one, meaning it is a peripheral principality difficult to place into the historiographies of medieval polities.²³ This book is also an attempt to bring together aspects of the historiography that are often separated by national (cantonal for Swiss historiography) and confessional narratives, or simply by fields of specialisation.

Happily, over the last few decades, a dialogue between Italian, French, Swiss and English-speaking historians has started to fill the void. Some recent studies, especially on courts and nobility, have highlighted the value of analysis that transcends traditional divides (both regional and chronological) and that looks at this neglected “silent century”.²⁴ They also remind us that historians studying Renaissance Savoy need to consider that it was not a peripheral polity, but rather a crossroads between the empire (and the Swiss Confederation), France and the Italian world, obliging us to shift away from national perspectives.

Nevertheless, standard narratives and works of synthesis still interpret the collapse of the principality in 1536 and the Reformation as the inevitable outcomes of the late medieval crisis.²⁵ Much of the historiography has presented these changes as a linear phenomenon: the end of Sabaudian rule and of Catholicism in Geneva and the Pays de Vaud was a sort of revolution against feudal powers. During the last centuries of the Middle Ages, the urban elites had gained political power and given birth to communal institutions which increasingly gave them a mature awareness of the weaknesses and flaws of their rulers. In particular, according to this view, the episcopal cities of Lausanne and Geneva became “hotbeds of democratic ideas”, and were finally able to shake off the yoke of a tyrannical duke and incompetent bishops. The combourgeoisies of 1525–1526 were mostly interpreted as the

23 An attempt to consider the Sabaudian case within the history of the Italian peninsula during the Renaissance is offered in Gamberini and Lazzarini, eds., *Italian Renaissance State*. Quite interestingly, the map on p. xiv is misleading and shows the difficulty of grasping the real nature of the duchy. The map suggests that Savoy was an “Italian” principality and was not integrated into the Holy Roman Empire.

24 Two good recent studies are Brero, *Rituels dynastiques* and Vester, *Transregional Lordship*.

25 On the political and military history of this period, a first partial reassessment of an all-too-linear history can be found in Scott, *The Swiss*, p. 61–171. See, however, some critical remarks on this work by Andreas Würzler in *Francia Recensio*, 2017/4 and my review in the *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, 67/3 (2017). For the history of Savoy and of Romandy, standard narratives can be found in Paravicini Bagliani *et al.*, eds., *Les pays romands*; Guichonnet, ed., *Nouvelle histoire* and Bianchi and Merlotti, *Storia degli Stati sabaudi* (mostly on the early modern period). Concerning Swiss history, the best syntheses available are Walter, *Histoire de la Suisse*; Church and Head, *A Concise History*, and Kreis, ed., *Die Geschichte*.

inevitable outcome of citizens looking for help and support from their neighbours and “fellow” citizens in Bern and Fribourg.²⁶

Genevan religious historiography has been especially affected by this teleological interpretation and also tended to explain the spread of the Reformation as a linear process, as an inevitable “religious revolution” against the bishop and the House of Savoy. This “natural” push for religious change (and freedom) was interpreted as the logical consequence of political independence and an awareness of feudal tyranny. Needless to say, the religious Reformation and political independence were also seen as the beginning of a modern era that had rejected medieval obscurantism. Although the political side of the spreading of the Reformation within the city has received some renewed attention, its importance is still insufficiently recognised.²⁷ Even in many authoritative recent syntheses that offer the standard narrative of the spread of the Reformation in Geneva and of Calvin’s role, discussions about politics and the pre-1536 period are still influenced by this old nationalistic, and now outdated, historiography.²⁸ Other excellent syntheses have taken a more religious-oriented approach in writing about the Reformation in Geneva, according politics very little role in their histories and explanations. The choice of writing a religious history of Geneva’s Reformation is in itself legitimate. However, one cannot fail to take note of curious shortcuts (probably arising from this choice) in explaining the sudden changes of 1535–1536.²⁹ It is curious that so little attention is paid to the political side of the Reformation and to the heavy influence of patriotic Genevan history, given that long ago William Monter in his *Calvin’s Geneva* (1967) – which remains one of the

26 This reading of late medieval/Renaissance society was first produced by nineteenth-century historiography, which heavily influenced later works during the twentieth century, especially those exploring relations between cities (and their *bourgeois*) and their lords (both secular and ecclesiastical). Cf. Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 9–14.

27 On the history of the Reformation in Geneva and in Romandy, two recent collective overviews have been published: Balserak, ed., *Companion*, and Solfaroli Camillocci *et al.*, eds., *La Construction*. However, these works mostly deal with the period after 1536 and are more concerned with religious issues than with political problems. For the latter, see in particular Caesar, “Un monde” and Würigler, “Politique”. Bruening, “Francophone Territories”, offers a good, nuanced analysis of events in Romandy, including political events.

28 Cf. Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, p. 29; Kingdon, “The Calvinist Reformation”, p. 68–70 or Léchoy, *Une histoire de la Réforme*, p. 73–77.

29 Mack P. Holt explains that Farel, following his first appearances in 1532, “after several visits over the next three years [...] eventually persuaded the General Council of the city of Geneva on May 21, 1536 to adopt the Reformation” (“Calvin and Reformed Protestantism”, p. 216) and Carlos Eire, in a chapter devoted to Calvin, briefly concludes that in 1536 Geneva “had only recently declared its independence from the duke of Savoy and turned Protestant after an iconoclastic riot” (*Reformations*, p. 297).

best concise overviews of Geneva in the period around 1536 – had already underlined the importance of taking political and institutional history into account in order to understand the changes of 1535–1536.

These standard narratives unfortunately offer an overly simplistic explanation of the events that led to the turmoil of the early 1530s. It must also be remembered that these accounts are based on the point of view of the winners, the part of the elite that pushed for political independence and embraced the new faith. These narratives had indeed been written by the first chroniclers of the sixteenth century and by the urban elites that had won the factional conflicts and tended to downplay these conflicts and erase them from the city's memory, presenting their political and religious choices to their neighbours and allies as the decisions of the entire community.³⁰ Urban elites were in reality divided about the choices to be made, and – as we will see – factions played a substantial role in the political life of these decades.

As I intend to demonstrate in this book, both the search for political independence and the shift to the Reformation were not so much the result of linearly realised political and religious goals but rather of unexpected circumstances, rapid changes and unforeseen opportunities that some of the actors were able to exploit.

Although conflicts and instability deeply affected the Sabaudian world, the final outcomes of 1536 were far from being the only ones possible. Certainly, war between Savoy, France and the Swiss had continuously been on the horizon, especially after the end of the Burgundian Wars in 1477, yet it was not until the final months of 1535 that the outbreak of a wider war appeared inevitable to contemporary actors.³¹ Other options were available and political and religious debates were intense. Within the cities, the ruling elites were far from being a compact and united front acting against the “feudal oppression” of the House of Savoy and the traditional religion of the Catholic Church. And one should also wonder about the following contradiction: if the Duchy of Savoy was in a perpetual state of crisis beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, why did it last until 1536?

An initial answer is that, although it was affected by multiple conflicts and tensions, the political system had reached a very sophisticated stage, with the whole region being characterised by a sort of unstable equilibrium that nevertheless prevented collapse. In particular, the dense network of

30 Cf. in particular *infra* chapter 4 p. 99–105, about the way Genevans during negotiations with the Swiss were required to conceal the presence of factional conflicts.

31 Scott, *The Swiss*, p. 133–140.

alliances³² that I will analyse were at the same time a response forged by political actors to reduce uncertainty – a search for greater stability – but also the source of complexities that led to conflicts and ultimately to increased uncertainty. The same remarks could apply to factionalism.

There is now a well-established historiography on urban factionalism, especially among historians working on the Italian world. Medievalists and early modernists have worked intensely on the topic, connecting factions with other historical problems such as honour, vengeance and violence, as well as the place that feuds and factions had in the regulation of conflicts.³³ The last two or three decades have seen considerable innovation in the historiography, with many studies on Italian cities (mainly in the northern part of the peninsula) and other regions, such as the Low Countries, France and cities within the Holy Roman Empire, exploring social composition, ideals and political languages.³⁴

Especially in the Italian case, factions could function as political parties, as means of political dialogue between urban elites and their ruler, and they were often deeply rooted in family tradition. Belonging to a faction was in some sense a component of familial identity.³⁵ But in many other cases, factions existed almost exclusively during conflictual phases, to the extent that people mostly became aware of each other's existence (and of which faction they belonged to) when they were involved in a fight.³⁶ Often, factions were not simply preexisting and well-defined groups that at some moment clashed; in some way, they were shaped by conflicts. This makes factions elusive for historians: they were not very institutionalised and thus produced few sources, unlike communal and princely administration. Ultimately, no single model of urban factionalism is discernible, for most of the time the various geo-political contexts gave particular and different shapes to factions and the dynamics of conflicts.³⁷

32 See *infra* chapter 1, p. 51–52, for a discussion of the influence of the teleological perspective on the formation of alliance networks.

33 For historiographical and methodological remarks, cf. Gentile, “Factions and Parties”; Raggio, *Feuds*, p. xiv–xvi and Caesar, “Did factions exist?”. The seminal work by Jacques Heers (*Parties and political life*), published in 1977, still offers interesting remarks, although largely based on northern Italy only and sometimes flawed because of a vividly anti-Marxist polemic.

34 Cf. especially Gentile, ed. *Guelfi e Ghibellini*; Gentile, *Fazioni al governo*; Ferente, *Gli ultimi Guelfi*; Taviani, *Lotte di parte*; Caesar, ed., *Factional Struggles*; Haemers, “Factionalism”; Ter Braake, “Parties and Factions”; Dutour, “Pouvoir politique”.

35 Gentile, “Factions and Parties”, p. 312–315.

36 See, for example, Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring*.

37 The same difficulty, of discerning factions in the sources and defining them, also affects factionalism in courts. Cf. in particular Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles*, p. 248–259 and González

And this is also what we will mostly observe in this book. Factions, as they appeared in Geneva, and partially in Piedmont, were to some extent largely informal and elusive groups, emerging *in* and *because of* a peculiar political context.³⁸ The case of Piedmontese factions is to some extent different from the Genevan one. While geopolitical uncertainty also fuelled factional conflicts, factions in towns like Cuneo and Mondovì (like in many other northern Italian cities) were closer to being parties: they had long political traditions, sometimes finding a recognised place in communal statutes, and were deeply rooted in familial clientele.

Their elusive nature is best illuminated from the preserved sources. Most of the archival material comes from the level of the institution and concerns tensions between these institutions and the factions. Sources internal to the factions are less abundant – mainly letters – forcing historians to grasp their composition, ideals and political agendas by reflecting on documents and interpretations created by institutions prosecuting factionalism. From that point of view, historians of factions face very similar problems to those studying heresy. That said, there is no question that factions were an important feature of Sabaudian political life over many decades. They cannot simply be seen as forces disrupting the so-called modern state and its order; instead, they were the direct result of the endless negotiations and discussions about alliances and a way political actors used to try to reduce uncertainty and regional instability. Factions were part of the political debate, and, one might say, a product of political life.

At this point, the concepts of uncertainty and instability and the way they shape my analysis warrants further clarification. A caveat is first necessary: this book is not proposing a conceptual history of uncertainty and instability and related categories such as trustworthiness, risk and contingency. During the past decades, some of these topics have been the object of interesting historical analysis. Trust and religious certitudes/uncertainties have received fresh inquiry, particularly by scholars working on post-Reformation Europe and the problems of faith and doubt.³⁹ And

Cuerva and Koller, eds., *A Europe of Courts*. On factions at the Sabaudian court, see Andenmatten and Pibiri, "Factions".

38 Lausanne certainly exhibited some factional conflicts around the first decade of the sixteenth century, but very little material has emerged from the archives, cf. *infra* p. 83–85. The conflicts there were certainly less harsh than in Geneva, and there was probably less cohesion of the groups. For some examples of the difficulties historians have in determining the nature, goals and members of factions, see *infra* chapter 2, p. 110–112.

39 On trust, see in particular the essay by Geoffrey Hosking (*Trust*), and from the perspective of medieval history see Dutour, *Sous l'empire*, p. 117–147, Forrest, *Trustworthy Men* and

the notion of risk and the way societies adapted to it, especially connected with natural catastrophes or economic policies, have also been analysed by historians.⁴⁰

In this book I will show how geopolitical uncertainty affected political life within cities and their networks. A second caveat, I suspect, is also needed. I am not stating that Renaissance Savoy and its cities were the only period and politics affected by uncertainty. It might be said that uncertainty is always present, for the future is by nature uncertain. Granted, Renaissance Savoy was a particularly unstable duchy that had been under pressure for a long period prior to 1536; these political and religious circumstances definitely increased the uncertainty it experienced. Looking for uncertainty and the way urban elites and rulers faced it is not an easy task. The principal political actors we will meet rarely defined their future as uncertain and explicit references to uncertainty are exceptional in the preserved primary sources. However, we constantly see actors taking pains to understand the situations and read the events before them. Uncertainty was mostly about unclear situations and the proper response to contingent issues. Uncertainty was more about the present than about a distant future that was yet to come.⁴¹

The possibility of sudden change, of a possible shattering of the unstable geo-political equilibrium of Western Switzerland and Savoy, was constantly felt: "If war begins, we fear it will be the ruin of the whole country", Bern wrote acutely to the Estates of Vaud on 18 November 1530, six years before the collapse of 1536.⁴² As we shall see, Swiss cities often remained very unsure about which policy to adopt. Solothurn councils complained about an unclear internal situation in Geneva,⁴³ and Bern often hesitated to renew its alliances and offer support to the Lemanic cities. Consequently, minutes of the urban councils often refer to the fear of losing an ally and of a subsequent reversal of the particular situation. Observing this unstable geopolitical situation in 1528, the Genevan ambassador Amy Girard wrote to some of his colleagues: "May God by His grace appease the situation, things are very obscure".⁴⁴

Leveleux-Teixeira, "La vérité incertaine". On religious studies and the place of trust and doubt in post-Reformation Europe, see Peeters, *Trust* and the discussion in Faini, "Early Modern Uncertainty".

40 Cf. Collas-Heddeland *et al.*, eds., *Pour une histoire culturelle*; Walter, *Catastrophes*; Scheller, Becker and Schneider, eds., *Die Ungewissheit des Zukünftigen*; Scheller, ed., *Kulturen des Risikos* and Botticini, Buri, and Marinacci, "The Beauty of Uncertainty".

41 On the change in how people related to the future, see Landwehr, *Geburt der Gegenwart*.

42 PS 13, p. 420: "Se la guerre commence, doubttons icelle sera la ruyne de tout le pays".

43 See *infra* chapter 2, p. 99.

44 See *infra* chapter 3, p. 146–147 for details.

Another way uncertainty can be grasped lies in how the reasons for the flow of documents created by institutions can be explained. Studying the Norman Conquest of England in the eleventh century, Tom Clanchy observed that part of the production of written sources is to be interpreted as the result of mutual distrust.⁴⁵ Similar remarks could also apply to Renaissance Savoy and its cities, where many of the preserved documents are the result of uncertainty about the political and religious situation. It was precisely the difficulty of interpreting the events and deciding which policy to adopt that gave rise to a flow of letters, ambassadors' reports and interrogations of witnesses.⁴⁶ Adopting the language of sociology and of game theory, it could be argued that the political life of Renaissance Savoy was profoundly shaped by *information asymmetries* (i.e., when actors have different bundles of information available to them).⁴⁷ The gathering of information could then be seen as the most important remedy for uncertainty. Many of the written sources of this period were intended to provide evidence of assessments of certainty about events: a well-written plea, a certain narrative about conflicts or a trial demonstrating the identity of culprits were also instruments for gaining the trust of an audience. In the end, on many occasions, the foremost reasons for uncertainty were difficulties in assessing the scope of a treaty and in determining who should be trusted, or which narrative was correct. Social relationships and political alliances relied at least in part on mutual trust to correctly evaluate contingencies and take appropriate risks.

Yet, in this book uncertainty cannot simply be taken as an index measuring the degree of instability of the political climate. I will instead attempt to use it as a lens for highlighting neglected aspects of Sabaudian history and to look at the agency of people and polities. Studying René de Challant's career and policies, Matt Vester has already shown the importance of factoring in a climate of uncertainty when we endeavour to analyse actors' goals and strategies.⁴⁸ By including uncertainty in my analysis, I will trace unintended consequences and unexpected issues. Looking at hesitations can be highly revealing of how politics worked.⁴⁹ In doing so, I am not aiming to write a

45 Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 7.

46 On these points, see especially chapters 2 and 4.

47 See for example Kollock and O'Brien, "The Social Construction" and Rasmusen, *Games and Information*.

48 Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 40–41.

49 On the early Reformation, cf. also the plea in Lemaitre, "Renouveau", p. 200: "Nous tendons trop à suivre les controverses dogmatiques ou politiques et pas assez les incertitudes ou les sensibilités changeantes des individus et des groupes de chercheurs d'absolu. Nous devons reconnaître que les historiographies confessionnelles pèsent encore sur nous afin de sonder le

“what if ...” history⁵⁰ simply by reinjecting uncertainty into the narrative; rather, I endeavour to reassess the strategies of actors, highlight non-linear paths and write less teleological histories, and I hope to put forward a more circumstantiated understanding of the nature of Renaissance Sabaudian political society.

In attempting to write such a history, I am also aware of the necessity of looking more closely at the people who were the losers in the Sabaudian collapse of 1536, those who did not benefit from religious and political change and who ceased to be rulers. By 1536, Lausanne and Geneva were no longer episcopal cities, and their bishops had been exiled. So were many other people who had belonged to the urban ruling elite, or to urban factions or groups that were the losers in the political and religious conflicts of these years. Previous scholarship has either not attempted to write their histories or has partially misinterpreted their strategies. The importance of urban factions and of divisions among the ruling elites has not been studied;⁵¹ nor has any serious analysis been conducted of the policies of the bishops, who are often described as politically incapable and lacking in pastoral zeal. One of the motivations for writing a history of political life in the Duchy of Savoy, with a focus on Geneva and the Pays de Vaud, was also to establish a tentative new narrative for the period 1451–1536, and thus to give a voice to these actors – and their strategies – who have largely been obscured by teleological historiography.

One final remark is necessary: I do not claim to have written a comprehensive history of Renaissance Sabaudian and Genevan political life. Nor is this book intended to be a general history of the Duchy of Savoy, or of Geneva or Lausanne during the troubled transitional decades that led to 1536.⁵² Readers and colleagues could probably find aspects that are missing

r  el avec la conscience que l'avenir n'  tait pas inscrit n  cessairement dans la rupture ou dans la r  action. Mais que celles-ci ont bel et bien ferm   des chemins possibles du christianisme”.

50 For the debate, see, among many others, Deluermoz and Singarav  lou, *Pour une histoire des possibles*.

51 In 1967, William Monter noted that: “No work has yet been done to determine the basic composition of Geneva’s Evangelical and Episcopal factions of the early 1530s; the problem is as interesting and as obscure as the composition of the Eidguenots and Mammelukes of the preceding decade” (Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, p. 62, n. 65). Since then, virtually nothing has been done on this. A first attempt to draw attention to factionalism and its importance is my study “The Prince”.

52 Although a good synthesis of the history of Savoy in English is lacking, many good studies exist in other languages, especially in French. Readers who require more detailed studies will find abundant bibliographical references at the beginning of each chapter. For a general overview of the main features of the Renaissance duchy, see also *infra*, chapter 1.

from my picture. The chapters that follow are more like figures and scenes from a bas-relief: their aim is to highlight dynamics, facts and people that deserve to be seen but have been overlooked – or wrongly interpreted – in past historiography. Thus, I am chiefly concerned with how political life worked in a time of great instability. I am convinced that without taking this state of uncertainty into account, it is hard to understand institutional and individual choices and attitudes. This book therefore seeks to address a straightforward – but not easy-to-answer – question: how did people face and react to political and religious instability and uncertainty?

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Rory Gallagher, The Clash and The Who – along with many others – have been good companions throughout these intense last years of final research and writing. In the following chapters, many people will make

53 I have already published a portion of these reflections as the following articles: “Popular Assemblies”, “The Prince” and “Un monde incertain”. I used some of these materials in a revised form for parts of this book.

their appearance: *nos amis les morts*, as one of my professors and a *maître* at Université de Genève used to say when I was a young student. They have also been my companions for a decade as I turned archival investigations and readings into a book. Some are quite well-known historical figures; others are more obscure individuals who had little impact on the events they were part of and rarely appear in grand historical narratives. Yet, they are – so I am deeply convinced – highly revelatory of the religious and political climate of those times. They will accompany us and allow us to look at their uncertainties, and I hope they will all be good companions to the reader throughout the pages of this book.

1. An Uncertain World: From Prosperity to Instability

Abstract: This chapter explores Renaissance Savoy's political life during the late fifteenth century, highlighting the dukes' struggle against growing geopolitical uncertainty amid tensions with France and the Holy Roman Empire. Savoy's relations with the two episcopal cities of Geneva and Lausanne, and especially its numerous attempts to gain full control over Geneva, reflect the general Sabaudian desire to take a firmer grip over the strategic territories in the Lake Geneva region. As Swiss influence increased, notably through Bern and Fribourg's interventions in local governance and episcopal matters, the House of Savoy faced persistent conflicts with the Swiss. The chapter's final section focuses on Geneva, the political prize most highly coveted by Savoy, explaining how Sabaudian instability and a more general economic crisis affected the city.

Keywords: Lake Geneva region, geopolitical instability, territorial control, political struggles, economic crisis

In his *Memoirs*, the well-known Burgundian chronicler Olivier de la Marche asserted that Duke Amadeus VIII had been so wise that “his country of Savoy was the wealthiest, the safest and the most bountiful among all its neighbours”.¹ Although this judgement should not be overvalued, it is true that most of the first half of the fifteenth century was a time of prosperity for Savoy. Spared the devastations of wars and internal strife, the dukes controlled some of the most important Alpine passes, ensuring safe trade routes for merchants travelling across Europe.²

1 De la Marche, *Mémoires*, t. I, p. 264: “que son pays de Savoye estoit le plus riche, le plus seur et le plus plantureux de tous ses voisins”.

2 The best and most up-to-date overview is Morenzoni, *Marchands*, p. 11–62.

Sitting at the western edge of Lake Geneva, and surrounded by the Sabaudian territories, Geneva was certainly the most important commercial crossroads of these territories, benefiting greatly from this political conjuncture. The city was strategically located at the intersection of routes running from northern Italy to Flanders and from southern Germany and the Swiss Confederation towards southern France and Mediterranean towns. Moreover, the chaotic situation of the kingdom of France, riven by civil war, contributed to the shift of the commercial axes to the east, favouring the Swiss cities and Geneva.³ Its international fairs grew rapidly, and by the 1450s, it had become one of the most important financial centres in Europe. Italian merchant bankers, especially from Lombardy, Piedmont and Tuscany, were numerous in Geneva, and some of them settled permanently in the town.⁴ Among them were the Varembergs, a family from Chieri, a wealthy commune of some 7,000 inhabitants in the Sabaudian Piedmont.⁵

Matthieu Varemberg took up residence in Geneva by 1444 at the latest, followed by his brother Martin in 1449. Like most of the rich foreign merchants living in the city, they settled in the Madeleine parish, not far from Saint Pierre's Cathedral. They were certainly not among the wealthiest: in 1444, the commune taxed Matthieu for six florins, a respectable sum but not an enormous one compared to the taxation levied against other Italians.⁶ The Milanese Giovanni Panigarola paid 20 florins; Barthélemy Asinari, of Piedmontese origins, whose family moved to Geneva around the mid-fourteenth century, paid 60 florins; and the powerful director of the local branch of the Medici Bank, Giovanni di Amerigo Benci, paid the highest tax: 100 florins.⁷

The nature and exact extent of Matthieu and Martin Varemberg's early activities remain uncertain. We know that in 1464, Martin associated with a certain Michel Pommetaz, an apothecary also from Chieri who was living

3 See Caesar, *Histoire de Genève*, p. 68–73.

4 On the Genevan fairs and the merchants who operated in them, see Bergier, *Genève et l'économie* and Morenzoni, *Marchands*.

5 On the Piedmontese cities, see *infra*, chapter 3.

6 AEG, P.H. 560, fol. 7v and AEG, P.H. 588, fol. 23v–24r.

7 AEG, P.H. 560, 7v–8v. At that time, Giovanni Benci had already left Geneva and was in Florence as a general manager of the bank acting as Cosimo's chief financial advisor. The house was thus probably occupied by some associate of the bank. On the activities of the Genevan branch of the Medici bank, see De Roover, *Rise*. On Tuscan merchant-bankers active in Geneva, see Cassandro, "Banca e commercio"; Cassandro, *Il libro giallo*; Cassandro, "Le élites internazionali". For the Milanese in Geneva, see also Del Bo, *Banca e politica*. On Lombards in Geneva, see the catalogue in Reichert, *Lombarden*, vol. 2, p. 301–306.

in Lausanne. The contract stipulated that Pommetaz and Varember would rent an apothecary's shop (with rooms for a store and a workshop included) in Lausanne for a period of nine years. Pommetaz was in charge of running the shop, and the profits were to be split two-thirds for Pommetaz and the other third for Varember.⁸ We do not know if Martin Varember simply put up the money as an investment or if he was himself an apothecary, as is highly possible. In fact, many Piedmontese established within the Sabaudian territories practised this profession,⁹ and, as we shall see, the Varembers from the 1480s were certainly active as apothecaries.

We have a clearer view of their establishment in local society. The Varembers' activities show close ties to the local Genevan elite, and in particular with Guillaume *de Bosco*, who held various offices during the 1440s and 1450s, mainly as secretary and treasurer for the dukes of Savoy and the bishops of Geneva. On two occasions, in 1453 and 1459, Matthieu Varember made payments on behalf of *de Bosco* to the Tuscan company Guadagni & Della Casa.¹⁰ And the house where Matthieu and Martin were living in 1464 was the property of *de Bosco* himself.¹¹ During these same years, Matthieu, along with other important merchants working in Geneva, also acted as an expert for the duke of Savoy and the Genevan Commune on questions of coinage value.¹² Finally, around 1459, Martin entered the Genevan municipal institutions and gained a seat on the Council of Fifty.¹³ Some fifteen years after their arrival, the Varembers had become more than wealthy foreign merchants; they were members of the urban ruling elite.

However, an unforeseen event would interrupt their success in business and their social ascent. On 20 October 1462, King Louis XI of France promulgated an ordinance forbidding merchants from travelling across his kingdom to access the Genevan fairs. During the following two years, the king took various other measures to promote the fairs in Lyon, granting attractive privileges to merchants attending them. Louis XI's policy was a success: by the end of 1465, the vast majority of Italian merchant bankers

8 Olivier, *Médecine et santé*, vol. 1, p. 297–298.

9 Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, p. 48–50.

10 I am grateful to Franco Morenzoni who shared information about the payments to Guadagni & Della Casa in the *Libro perso* he is editing with Laure Eynard. See also Cassandro, *Il libro giallo*, p. 91 and 411.

11 Boissonnas, "La levée de 1464", p. 97.

12 In 1454 and 1459, cf. Borel, *Les foires*, p. 237 and RC 1, p. 268.

13 RC 1, p. 318–481 *passim*. He last sat on the Council in 1475 (RC 2, p. 353). For more details on the city councils, see *infra* chapter 2, p. 160–161.

had abandoned Geneva and had transferred their branches to Lyon. The city on Lake Geneva had lost its status as a European financial centre. However, not every foreign merchant left, and Geneva's fairs still boasted intense trading activity for many years.¹⁴

The Varembergs remained in Geneva. We can only speculate as to the reasons for this choice. Presumably, they were mainly involved with trading operations, and their affairs were conducted mostly locally and regionally; as we have seen, they already had roots in the local community. Geneva was more than a place to do business that could be replaced by Lyon; the city had become a place to live. Nevertheless, the region was entering a period of crisis and instability.

It is precisely this shift – from prosperity to instability – that the present chapter seeks to explain, in addition to introducing the main political actors of the next chapters. The first part of the chapter offers an overview of political life in Renaissance Savoy, showing the many fragilities and difficulties the dukes faced during the second half of the fifteenth century. On a regional level, uncertainty was mostly a geopolitical problem, determined by the military and political weakness of the principality, much caught up in the growing tensions between France and the Empire. Savoy's relations with the two episcopal cities of Geneva and Lausanne, and especially its numerous attempts to gain full control over Geneva, reflect the general Sabaudian policies to establish a firmer grip over the strategic Lemanic territories. The second part provides explanations for the growing influence of the Swiss in these regions and its subsequent conflicts with the House of Savoy. The Swiss influence was evident mainly in the fact of Bern's and Fribourg's rapprochement with the two cities on Lake Geneva and the former's growing interference in those cities' internal affairs, starting with the episcopal elections. And finally, the last part of the chapter narrows the focus to Geneva – the political prize most highly coveted by Savoy – and explains how Sabaudian instability and a more general economic crisis affected the city, which also experienced a shift from the prosperity of the first half of the fifteenth century to the crisis of the second part of the century. The ways in which the Varembergs, and more generally Lausanne, Geneva and the Sabaudian princes, experienced these first decades of crisis and the new geopolitical instability, and the solutions they envisioned for managing an increasingly uncertain world, are the subject of this first chapter.

14 Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, p. 374–379 and 405–407. See also the remarks about regional trade in the next paragraph.

Renaissance Savoy

Straddling the western part of the Alps, the Duchy of Savoy was a largely rural and Alpine principality. It featured a network of relatively small towns; in the fifteenth century, most of these towns had populations of less than 5,000.¹⁵ North of the Alps, the most notable city was Geneva, reaching a population of 10,000–11,000 during the second half of the fifteenth century. Chambéry and Turin barely reached 5,000–6,000 inhabitants by the mid-fifteenth century. South of the Alps, Piedmont was certainly more urbanised, and towns there had more autonomy than cities in Savoy. But there, too, towns were relatively small on a European scale, the only exceptions being Chieri, which had 6,000–7,500 inhabitants during the 1420s, and Mondovì, an episcopal seat, with some 10,000 inhabitants around the end of the fifteenth century.

In this environment, Chambéry, and to a lesser extent Turin, slowly emerged as the main administrative centres of the duchy.¹⁶ The most important offices in these cities were the two resident councils (the highest courts below the ducal council, which were responsible for civil and criminal matters) and the *chambre des comptes* of Chambéry, with the general treasurer having responsibility for the princely finances. However, Chambéry could hardly be described as a capital, at least not in a modern sense. The prince and his entourage were largely itinerant, and north of the Alps, Thonon, Geneva and Morges were princely residences as much as Chambéry. The heart of power lay within the *Consilium cum domino residens*, an informal privy council that assisted the duke, made the most important decisions, and acted as the highest tribunal of the duchy.¹⁷ The court was itinerant, largely owing to the nature of the duchy: it was a composite principality, a heterogeneous aggregate of territories, some of which – in particular the Bresse, the Pays de Vaud and the Piedmont – enjoyed broad autonomy which they exercised through local Estates.¹⁸ The government's main features were its itinerancy and contacts with local urban elites, as well as its control of the main cities (which were usually also a seat of a castellany).¹⁹ The situation had not changed by the end of the fifteenth century. The Venetian chronicler and politician Marino Sanudo remarked that Duke Philibert II never liked to “keep still in one place”.²⁰

15 Leguay, “Un réseau urbain” and Ginatempo and Sandri, *L'Italia delle città*, p. 61–68.

16 A good overview of the administrative structures is given in Barbero, *Il ducato di Savoia*, p. 3–47.

17 Cf. also *supra*, Prologue p. 22.

18 On the role of the Estates, see also *infra*, chapter 5.

19 Galland, “Le pouvoir”.

20 Quoted in Merlin, “Il Cinquecento”, p. 9.

Nonetheless, two of the most important cities within the duchy were not under Sabaudian sovereignty: the episcopal seats of Lausanne and Geneva. The two bishops possessed imperial immediacy (which granted substantial autonomy) and were the lords of the city, also controlling a small, and geographically non-contiguous, hinterland.²¹ Compared to its neighbour Geneva, Lausanne was the “younger sister”: a smaller city, with some 4,000–5,000 inhabitants during the fifteenth century. It had a small regional market, and its municipal government was fragmented and weak, not becoming a united commune until 1481–1482. The Sabaudian princes took advantage of this political fragmentation, and profited from internal conflicts among the citizens and their bishop.²² From 1356 until 1527, an imperial tribunal under Sabaudian control existed in Lausanne, the Judge of Billens. This officer was not in charge of ordinary justice, but could only hear appeals. While the duke never possessed full jurisdiction, he controlled an important portion of the administration of justice in Lausanne, and the surviving register of this court shows that appeals to the Judge of Billens were numerous and frequent.²³

As in Lausanne, Geneva's political framework had become increasingly complex from the twelfth century onwards. Up to the Reformation, the bishop was required to share power over the city with many other institutional actors: the commune, the cathedral chapter and the Sabaudian vidomne.²⁴ The vidomne was originally an episcopal officer who held an important role, along with the syndics and other episcopal officers like the official (judicial vicar), in the administration of both civil and criminal justice. In 1290, in the wake of a long conflict with the bishop, the House of Savoy obtained the right to choose the vidomne. Until 1527, the vidomne was thus in practice a Sabaudian official and a powerful political lever. Nevertheless, although he was important, this official was given far from complete control over the city, and the bishop was still the lord of the city.²⁵

21 Cf. Braun, “Immédiateté impériale” (25 June 2012 version), in *e-DHS*.

22 Morerod, *Genèse d'une principauté*. On the commune of 1481, see Thévenaz Modestin, *Un mariage contesté*. On Swiss intervention in Lausanne's internal political life, see *infra*, section *The Swiss Influence*.

23 On the Judge of Billens, see Bertolino, *Ricerche sul giuramento* and Poudret, “Le comte Amédée VI”.

24 On the episcopal city, the bishopric and its institutions, see HS I/3. For a short synthesis of the history of the city from its origins to the Reformation, see Caesar, *Histoire de Genève*. More specifically on the relations of the commune with the bishop and the House of Savoy during the late Middle Ages, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*. A good study of urban justice is still lacking.

25 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 17, 30–32, and 113–116. For the officiality, see HS I/3, p. 187–190.

The growing importance of Geneva and its fairs during the fourteenth century inspired the Sabaudian princes to try to extend their power over the city and make it the capital of the principality, replacing Chambéry. During the second half of the fourteenth century, the counts obtained the imperial vicariate twice (in 1365 and 1398). The vicariate stipulated that anyone holding imperial fiefs in the duchy was required to take an oath to the duke as vicar of the emperor. This privilege also provided that the duke would exercise “the jurisdiction, lordship, sovereign rights and sovereignty” of the emperor and that he could prosecute crimes and enact statutes to deter crime. In practice, the vicariate “annulled” the bishop’s imperial immediacy, placing him under the jurisdiction of the Counts of Savoy. On both occasions that the vicariate was granted, the bishops opposed it and in both instances they succeeded in convincing the emperor to withdraw the privilege after two years (in 1367 and 1400).²⁶

Probably aware of the ineffectiveness of this “imperial policy”, Amadeus VIII turned to Rome and endeavoured to obtain sovereignty over Geneva with the help of the papacy. On two occasions, around 1407–1408 and in 1420, he negotiated with the pope for full jurisdiction over Geneva, arguing that the bishop was incapable of maintaining peace and order within the city. Some years later, in 1428–1430, Amadeus VIII devised, with the bishop’s consent, an ambitious plan to split the city into two separate jurisdictions, which were to be divided by a sort of “Berlin Wall”. The neighbourhood of Saint-Gervais, the Rues-Basses, the bridge over the Rhône and the castle would come under Savoy rule, whilst Saint Pierre’s Cathedral and the upper hill would remain under the bishop’s control. All these attempts failed, mainly due to the opposition of the citizens, who apparently preferred to keep the prince at a certain distance and to remain under the lordship of the bishop, who guaranteed them greater autonomy.²⁷

However, Geneva was more than just a wealthy city, and Sabaudian appetites are also suggestively brought to light by some of their religious policies. In 1453, Duchess Anne of Lusignan had purchased the Shroud of Lirey.²⁸ At that time, the relic had a dubious reputation and other similar (and more prestigious) relics existed across Europe. It was not until 1506 that Pope Julius II recognised the Shroud of Lirey as the one and only true Holy

26 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 47.

27 On these attempts, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 46–49; La Corbière, “Le ‘rideau de fer’”, and Morenzoni, *Le Prédicateur*, p. 61–75.

28 On what is now known as the Shroud of Turin, its purchase and the subsequent legitimisation policies adopted, see Pibiri, “L’acquisition du Saint Suaire”; Pibiri, “Les Franciscains”, and Ripart, “Le Saint Suaire”.

Shroud. The papal recognition was the fruit of the House of Savoy's diplomatic negotiations. From the very beginning, the Savoyes used the Shroud as a tool for legitimisation. The purchase in 1453 had taken place in Geneva, where an exposition was organised that year. Some years later, in 1461, Anne demanded that a chapel of the Holy Sepulchre be built within the Franciscan priory, and it is highly possible that this chapel was meant to preserve the Shroud. It is certain that Duke Louis I and Anne of Lusignan tried to establish Geneva as a new ducal necropolis. Abandoning the traditional Sabaudian burial church in Hautecombe, they were both buried within the Franciscan priory of Geneva. In the end, their ambitions were not pursued by their successors: Geneva never became a princely necropolis, and by 1506, the Holy Shroud was in the royal chapel in the ducal castle of Chambéry.

No simple explanation can be given for why Geneva never became the new necropolis and was replaced by Chambéry. During the late fifteenth century, a dispersal of burial sites can be observed; this was certainly due to the gradual decline in the importance of funeral rituals.²⁹ Also, the political crisis in Savoy had an impact on the possible choices for a burial site; most of the dukes were buried where they had died (or nearby), often far from the political centres of the duchy, due to political turmoil: Amadeus IX in Vercelli, Charles I in Pinerolo, Charles-Jean-Amédée in Moncalieri, and Philibert II in Bourg-en-Bresse.³⁰ It is also likely that Charles II had decided to promote Chambéry in its role as a capital city by adding a prestigious relic. Thus, in 1506, despite his aspirations, he was far from realising his goal of taking control of Geneva.

In fact, the Renaissance Duchy of Savoy was afflicted by a series of problems that destabilised normal political life.³¹ The long reign of Amadeus VIII (r. 1391–1451) had been prosperous, as had a portion of the reign of his son Louis I (r. 1451–1465).³² They were followed by four decades of weak

29 Brero, *Rituels dynastiques*, p. 389–506.

30 Andenmatten and Ripart, "Ultimes itinérances", p. 215–219.

31 For a first general overview, see Brondy, Demotz and Leguay, *Histoire de la Savoie*, vol. 2 and Guichonnet, ed., *Nouvelle histoire de la Savoie*. Barbero, *Il ducato*, is still the best introduction to the fifteenth-century structures of the duchy. A shorter overview is provided by Alessandro Barbero, "The Feudal Principalities". For the period 1450–1540, the necessary starting point is Marini, *Savoiaardi e Piemontesi*, to be supplemented with Merlin, "Il Cinquecento" and the articles on the various dukes published in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, which are still the best overviews on the various reigns. The old Gabotto, *Lo stato sabaudo*, still provides many useful details.

32 In 1434, Amadeus VIII resigned and retired to his castle at Ripaille. His son Louis ruled the duchy as lieutenant general but acceded to the throne as the new duke (Louis I) only in 1451. Amadeus's influence remained strong until his death and continued to influence his son's

rulers and many internal conflicts. During his captivity in France, around 1464, Philip of Bresse, later to become Duke Philip II, composed a song addressing his concerns about the duchy and complaining about a “very perverse misfortune.”³³ Philip’s complaint was almost accurate, for most of the Sabaudian princes of this period saw frequent reversals of fortune: they were politically weak, often sick and acceded to the throne during their minority.

Amadeus IX (r. 1465–1472) showed little interest in politics, and suffered frequent epileptic seizures. The actual governance of the duchy was in the hands of his wife Yolande of Valois, the daughter of King Charles VII of France. The dynastic succession then brought to the throne Amadeus’s son Philibert I (r. 1472–1482), who was only six years old and, like his father, in poor health. A regency was, once again, the only solution and Yolande governed the duchy until her death in 1478. The last decades of the century were hardly more favourable. Charles I (r. 1482–1490) acceded to the throne at a relatively young age (14 years old) and, for the most part, never really managed to gain full independence from his uncle Philippe of Bresse. Charles-Jean-Amédée (r. 1490–1496), born in 1488, never ruled. The power was again in the hands of the regent, the duchess. Thereafter, the rather short reigns of Philip II (r. 1496–1497) and Philibert II (r. 1497–1504) did not allow these dukes to do much to turn their principality around.

Dynastic misfortunes were aggravated by intrigues and factional struggles at court. Amadeus VIII had considerably strengthened the role of the princely court as the centre of Sabaudian political society, and his political force had, at least partially and as the result of some political trials, quelled dissent among the nobility. After his death in 1451, divisions resurfaced.³⁴ During the reign of Louis I, the princely entourage was riven by conflicts within the Sabaudian nobility. Moreover, the duke had married Anne of Lusignan, the daughter of the king of Cyprus, and many Cypriot nobles had arrived at the court. A foreign princess, Anne, and her Cypriot courtiers – like many other foreign-born princely wives and courtiers over the centuries – sparked the suspicions of the Sabaudian elites, who saw them as the source of all of the duchy’s weaknesses.³⁵

policies during the years 1434–1451. Cf. Andenmatten and Paravicini Bagliani, eds., *Amédée VIII*; Gießmann, *Der letzte Gegenpapst* and Caesar and Morenzoni, eds., *La Loi du Prince*.

33 The Genevan chronicler Servion quoted the song at the beginning of his history of the House of Savoy, cf. Bollati, ed., *Geste et chroniques*, vol.1, p. 6. On Servion, see also Caesar, “Servion, Jean”.

34 Andenmatten and Pibiri, “Factions”, and Barbero, *Il ducato*, p. 163–183.

35 Although some of the Cypriots held important charges within the court, modern historians have concluded that their power and influence were largely overestimated by contemporary

The internal crisis peaked in 1462, the same year King Louis XI of France initiated the competition with the Genevan fairs. That year, Philip of Bresse, later nicknamed “Lackland”, the fifth son of Duke Louis I, entered into conflict with his father and plotted to seize power. Philip was backed by some Sabaudian noblemen who were angry at the Cypriots and at the influence of the king of France, who had managed to give Giacomo Valperga, one of his protégés, the role of chancellor, and who was, in practice, exercising a protectorate over the duchy. On 24 October, Philip entered Geneva with more than 400 knights and before the Sabaudian Estates proclaimed his intention to end the influence of the “Cypriot faction” and of the king of France at the court, and to restore his father’s power.³⁶ The action was also a political reversal, since until that time Philip had gravitated towards the French court. The shift in his stance was probably a result of manoeuvres by the Duke of Milan, who was worried about the growing influence of Louis XI in Sabaudian matters. Possibly, Philip of Bresse had been attracted by the prospect of strengthening his power, and he did not hesitate to get rid of the king of France. The troubles led to the death of the marshal of Savoy, Gaspard de Varax, and then to the political trial of Giacomo Valperga, the chancellor of the duchy. Philip of Bresse also managed to have one of his supporters, Jean de Compey, the abbot of Sixt, promoted to the office of chancellor. More than a simple rebellion, Philip of Bresse’s actions were the beginning of his long and complex policy aimed at gaining control over the duchy and restoring, at least in his own view, the honour and power of the House of Savoy.

The troubles of 1462 ended with Louis I pardoning his son. During the following years, Philip served as governor on several occasions and attempted to get rid of the various regents, especially Yolande of Valois. His policy later received the backing of the king of France, who had again obtained Philip’s loyalty: in 1481, the Sabaudian prince was among the king’s pensioners, receiving the very high sum of 12,000 livres.³⁷ This new shift in allegiance was certainly the fruit of political calculation by Philip. When he finally became duke, in 1496, he was 52 and already weakened by malaria. He died a year later, and with him his dreams of power and glory.

The meandering political career of Philip of Bresse reveals some essential characteristics of political life within the Duchy of Savoy in the second half

chroniclers. On this marriage, see Chamorel, *Un destin méditerranéen*, p. 143–171.

36 On Philip of Bresse, see Daviso di Charvensod, *Filippo II*; Crotti Pasi, “Filippo II”, in *DBI*, and Cereia, *Percorso politico*.

37 Dauphant, “Les 700 pensionnaires”, p. 69.

of the fifteenth century that continued into the sixteenth century. It was not uncommon, in the early sixteenth century, for Sabaudian nobles to be bound to both the ducal court and the imperial or the French court due to marriage or simply political calculations.³⁸ Instability was the result not only of internal weakness and tensions, but also of the political game being conducted on the European level.

The Duchy of Savoy and the Sabaudian elites were deeply affected by the intrigues and interference of France and Milan, which were attempting to assert their power over Savoy (including Nice and the surrounding regions) and Piedmont, respectively, and were scrutinising each other's moves.³⁹ When Philibert I became duke of Savoy in 1472, he was only seven years old. A regency was necessary and the Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the duke of Milan, supported Yolande, hoping to counterbalance the power of the king of France.⁴⁰ Louis XI reacted, and between 1478 (after Yolande had died) and 1482, Philibert I spent more time at the court of France under the king's supervision than in his own duchy. Louis XI was cleverly using the French faction within the Sabaudian court and taking advantage of the mounting tensions between the Savoyard and Piedmontese elites. The French influence continued in various forms until the reign of Philibert II. His marriage in 1501 to Margaret of Austria, the second daughter of Emperor Maximilian I, marked a first important (although not decisive) step for the new pro-imperial policy of the dukes of Savoy.⁴¹

In fact, on a European scale, by the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Duchy of Savoy was increasingly caught in the middle of the struggle between the empire and France, going on amidst the tensions arising in the Italian peninsula. Its geographical position at the crossroads between France, the empire and Italy, was the main reason for this situation. Savoy was part of a long geopolitical fault line, running from the North Sea to the Mediterranean along the border between France and the empire. This fault line was tested by many fractures and territorial shifts. The Burgundian Wars (1474–1477) and the subsequent partition of the former possessions of Charles the Bold between France and the empire were a first powerful political earthquake. In some regions, such as in Franche-Comté, the situation remained very unstable for many years. A French possession after

38 Merlotti, "Disciplinamento e contrattazione", p. 233–236 and Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 55–61.

39 Koenigsberger, "The Parliament of Piedmont", p. 59 and Merlin, "Il Cinquecento" p. 3–7.

40 Crotti Pasi, "Filiberto I", in *DBI*; Crotti Pasi, "Filiberto II", in *DBI* and Peyronet, "The Distant Origins", p. 42–53.

41 A step that will be explored more deeply in the next chapter (cf. *infra*, p. 123).

the Burgundian Wars, these territories (along with the Charolais, which remained a French fiefdom) returned to imperial sovereignty only after the Treaty of Senlis (1493). The border with the empire had moved slightly eastward, however, across the river Saône, running now along Franche-Comté (see map 2).

During the following decades, a very fluid scenario still characterised this part of the empire, also because of the expansionism and intense political activity of some of the Swiss cantons, mainly Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn. Franche-Comté and especially the strip bordering Lake Neuchâtel up to Basel were increasingly under Swiss influence during the first decades of the sixteenth century.⁴²

Instability and change also affected the southern border of the empire and the Duchy of Savoy. In fact, the complex legacy of the County of Provence, which was incorporated into the Kingdom of France in 1486, was a second major shakeup, definitively making France a dangerous neighbour for Savoy.⁴³ A year later, new tensions arose when Duke Charles I of Savoy occupied the Marquisate of Saluzzo. The marquisate had been under French influence for many years prior and the marquis was a rival for Charles in the Montferrat succession. The occupation lasted until only 1490, when Charles I died and Blanche of Montferrat assumed the regency of the Duchy of Savoy.⁴⁴ By the end of the century, French expansionism and the rivalry with the empire had turned the Duchy of Savoy and Franche-Comté into a fault line, under constant pressure.

The Sabaudian princes were obviously aware of this geopolitical situation, and tried to exploit it in order to expand their power and territories. Yet it would certainly be misleading to think of the relations between France and Savoy, or between Milan and Savoy, only in terms of interfering polities that the Sabaudian princes had to resist. Exploiting European rivalries was the basis for political life, and Savoy existed in the middle of a complex and unstable network of alliances. Instability and shifting alliances were probably one of the most difficult challenges the duke had to deal with. However, instability could also offer leeway and the possibility for military intervention.

To appreciate Sabaudian politics in this period, we need to take a step back to the middle of the fifteenth century. The rule of Duke Louis I (1434–1465)⁴⁵

42 See also *infra*, the section *The Swiss Influence*. On the instability around Neuchâtel during the first decades of the sixteenth century, see also *infra*, chapter 2, p. 77–79.

43 Frizet, *Louis XI*, p. 221–287.

44 Marini, *Savoardi e Piemontesi*, p. 269–272 and 291; Barbero, “La dipendenza politica” and Barbero, “La politica di Ludovico II”.

45 On these dates, cf. *supra*, p. 42 n. 32.

was marked by an ambitious aggrandisement policy, and Savoy was occupied on several military fronts. South of the Alps, expansion to the west and the conquest of the Duchy of Milan became, from the mid-1440s, a primary goal. Louis I's ambitions were a continuation of the extension of the duchy which had already started at the beginning of the fifteenth century when Piedmont ceased to be an apanage and was definitively incorporated into the ducal domain (1418) and when the episcopal city of Vercelli was conquered (1427).⁴⁶ Louis I tried to take advantage of the succession of the Visconti and undertook a complex campaign (1447–1450) that ended in military defeat. In the same period, north of the Alps, the war against Fribourg (1447–1448) ended with the submission of the city to the duke. From a geopolitical point of view, these two wars had little impact on the borders of the duchy. Their consequence was severe, however, for the princely finances: during these years, seventy-five per cent of the general treasurer's revenues were allotted to the war, and the difficulties in raising the necessary funds and in paying the troops were among the reasons for the defeat in the Milanese campaign.⁴⁷

The Burgundian Wars and the subsequent negotiations had even more dramatic consequences. Savoy decided to ally with the duke of Burgundy, who was considered during those years to be an effective counterbalance to France.⁴⁸ The bishop of Geneva, Jean-Louis de Savoie, as a prince of the empire and brother-in-law of the regent Yolande, also sided with the Burgundian alliance.⁴⁹ They both paid heavily when the Burgundians were surprisingly defeated by the Swiss: Savoy lost sizeable portions of its territory (see map 3): the Lower Valais, Aigle, Erlach, Morat, Echallens, Grandson and Illens.⁵⁰ Moreover, Fribourg, at least in theory under Sabaudian rule, permanently exited the princely orbit: in 1477, the city obtained imperial immediacy; in 1481 (along with Solothurn) it became a member of the Swiss Confederation.⁵¹ To recover the Pays de Vaud, conquered by the Swiss, Savoy had to agree to pay 50,000 florins. The bishop of Geneva and the city were

46 Barbero, "La cessione di Vercelli".

47 Biolzi, "Avec le fer", p. 155–159 and Barbero, *Il ducato*, p. 88–97. On warfare in the Duchy of Savoy, the standard synthesis is now Biolzi, *J'ay grand envie*.

48 Cereia, "Far politica", p. 200–204.

49 Sieber-Lehmann, "Bourgogne, guerres de" (17 March 2011 version), in *e-DHS* and Scott, *Swiss*, p. 73–83.

50 Parts of these territories were not under the direct suzerainty of the duke of Savoy, but had been given as fiefs to some vassal families, like the Chalon (who also lost Orbe) and the de La Baume, or constituted the apanage committed to Jacques of Savoy, count of Romont and the son of Duke Louis I. On maps, see also *supra*, the preliminary note, p. 13–14.

51 Scott, *Swiss*, p. 63–64.

forced to pay a huge ransom of 28,000 gold *écus* to avoid being ransacked.⁵² Needless to say, like the wars in the 1440s, the Burgundian Wars had a disastrous impact on the princely finances. The war against Fribourg and the Burgundian Wars had also taught the Sabaudian princes a lesson: their Swiss neighbours, and Bern in particular, were becoming more unbearable than in the past and their influence in Sabaudian political life was increasing.

The Swiss Influence

The ties between the House of Savoy and the cities of the Swiss Plateau (the *Mittelland*), such as Bern, Fribourg and Morat, at the linguistic border between Germanic and Franco-Provençal, were much older than the Burgundian Wars. Undoubtedly, these contacts increased considerably during the fifteenth century, revolving around three main topics: commercial matters and toll policies; the forming of alliances thanks to a particular form of alliance treaty, the *combourgeoisie*; and Swiss interventions into ecclesiastical affairs, particularly in Geneva and Lausanne.

The first contacts between Bern, Fribourg and the Lake Geneva region were not dictated by the interests of these cities, but by Sabaudian expansionism. From the mid-thirteenth century, the counts of Savoy spearheaded an ambitious policy to acquire strategic localities controlling the trade routes leading north to Fribourg and Bern, and to the Jura via the Jougne. This led to the conquest of the Pays de Vaud and to war with Fribourg and the counts of Kyburg.⁵³ In this troubled context, Bern turned for protection to Count Peter II of Savoy, nicknamed “Little Charlemagne” by fifteenth-century Sabaudian chroniclers. The protection offered, and in particular, help with the building of a bridge over the Aare and of new city walls, considerably boosted the popularity of the House of Savoy. Two centuries later, Bernese chroniclers of the fifteenth century, such as Konrad Justinger (died 1438), Benedict Tschachtlan (ca. 1420–1493) and Diebold Schilling (ca. 1436/1439–1486), were still portraying Peter II as a second founder of the city.⁵⁴

The two centuries separating Peter II's actions in Bern from their chronicled legacy were a period of complex political relationships, alternating alliances and wars between Bern, Fribourg and Savoy. Imperial vacancies,

52 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 158 and 211.

53 Cox, *The Eagles*, p. 199–205.

54 Tremp, “Peter II”, p. 191–192. On the use of chronicles in political life, see Schmid Keeling, *Geschichte im Dienst der Stadt*.

wars between the main noble families such as the Kyburgs, the Zähringen, the Habsburgs and the Savoy, and the territorial appetites of the cities explain the constantly shifting patterns.⁵⁵ Chiefly during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Bern built its strength on a web of alliances and *combourgeoisies*⁵⁶ of various kinds, known to historians as the Burgundian Confederation. The traditional view is that during the fifteenth century, with the strengthening of ties with the nascent Swiss Confederation and the building of a Bernese territorial state, this network of alliances became meaningless.⁵⁷

However, it is debatable how much this network of alliances in the western part of the empire had lost its importance. The formation and strengthening of a Swiss Confederation, especially during the second half of the fifteenth century, and the fact that some of the former allies became subjects of the Bernese, is unquestionable.⁵⁸ But it is also true that Bern did not cease to form or renew alliances with cities, nobles and ecclesiastical institutions, some of which were already part of the former Burgundian Confederation. In particular, Bern had a longstanding tradition of alliances and *combourgeoisies* with Fribourg (since 1243), the House of Savoy (1255), Biel (1279), Solothurn (1295), the counts of Neuchâtel (1308) and the counts of Gruyère (1352), to mention the most important.⁵⁹ Not only did these treaties remain valid, but they were continually renewed throughout the

55 A good summary, from Freiburg's point of view, can be found in Utz Tremp, *Histoire de Fribourg*, p. 7–40. For a Bernese perspective, see Zahnd, "Berns Bündnis- und Territorialpolitik".

56 The *combourgeoisie* (also called simple *bourgeoisie* by sources) was a treaty granting reciprocal citizenship rights (under certain conditions and with some restrictions) that established an alliance between its two parties, normally implying mutual military and judicial help. They could be very diverse in nature, and the conditions and mutual obligations vary from one *combourgeoisie* to another. A useful introduction to the various forms of alliances is provided by many articles in the *e-DHS*. See, for instance, Burmeister, "Alliances urbaines" (16 February 2012 version); Würbler, "Combourgeoisie" (16 February 2005 version); Stettler "Pactes fédéraux" (7 May 2010 version) and Holenstein, "Paix territoriale" (20 May 2010 version). For a more detailed discussion, in particular about the western part of the Confederation, see Brady, *Turning Swiss*; Buchholzer-Remy and Richard, eds., *Ligues urbaines*; Cuendet, *Les traités*; Kaiser, Sieber-Lehmann and Windler, eds., *Eidgenössische "Grenzfälle"*; Sieber-Lehmann, *Spätmittelalterlicher Nationalismus*; Speich, *Burgrecht*; Morerod et al., eds. *La Suisse occidentale*.

57 Zahnd, "Berns Bündnis- und Territorialpolitik" and Zahnd, "Confédération bourguignonne" (25 August 2003 version), in *e-DHS*.

58 A good overview of the Swiss Confederation as a political entity in Würbler, "Confédération" (8 February 2012 version), in *e-DHS*; Schmid, "The Swiss Confederation" and Burghartz, "Vom offenen Bündnissystem".

59 The dates in brackets indicate the first known treaty, cf. Zahnd, "Berns Bündnis- und Territorialpolitik", p. 474, 479 and 485. For Savoy, we have used the year 1255, when Bern and Morat placed themselves under the protection of Peter II of Savoy, cf. Cox, *Eagles*, p. 202–203.

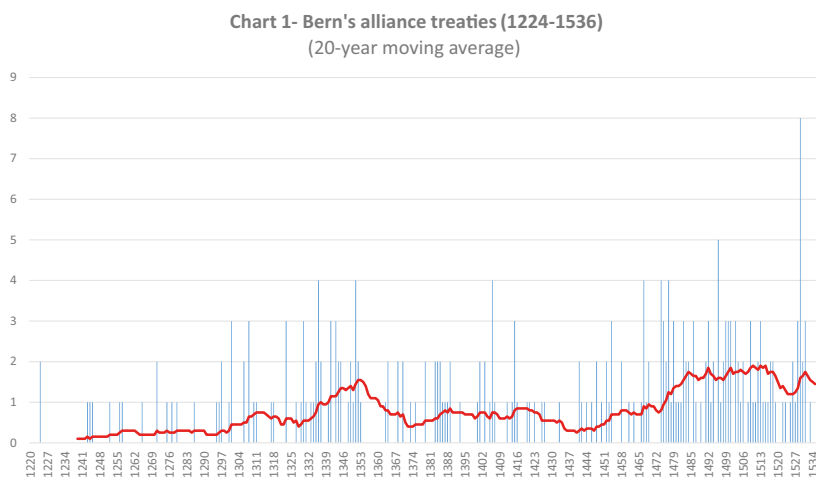


Chart 1. Bern's alliance treaties (1224–1536)

fifteenth century and the early decades of the sixteenth century, showing, as Tom Scott has suggested, “where Bern perceived its geopolitical interest principally to lie”.⁶⁰

Viewed through the lens of the political conjuncture of the period 1210–1536, and if we mainly examine the various alliance treaties, Bernese political activity appears to have been at its peak during the period spanning from the end of the Burgundian Wars to the Perpetual Peace with France in 1516 (see fig. 6).⁶¹ This graphical representation is admittedly an imperfect attempt to measure political activities: it does not take into account differences between contracting parties, the content of the treaties, or the distinction between renewals and new treaties. It nevertheless clearly shows that alliances and *combourgeoisies* were still an essential political instrument even at a time when the Swiss Confederation was strengthening. That the period 1475–1516 was one of intense political conjuncture is also confirmed by the fact that it was precisely during this period that the Diet considerably strengthened its role and met the most often.⁶² Thomas Brady has shown how for many German cities in the southern part of the

60 Scott, *Swiss*, p. 65.

61 I am borrowing the idea of using alliances and *combourgeoisies* as indicators of a political conjuncture from Körner, “Genève et la Suisse”, p. 14–15. The list of treaties for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is taken from Zahnd, “Berns Bündnis- und Territorialpolitik”, completed, for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (up to 1536), with data from *RQBE* (see table 6 for details).

62 Würgler, *Die Tagsatzung*, p. 180–181 and Würgler, “Krieg und Frieden”.

empire, the desire to “turn Swiss” – that is to become a member of the Swiss Confederation – reached its height around 1500.⁶³ The same remark applies to francophone territories along the western border of the confederation.

Both the European and the regional context can explain this conjuncture. The instability which had begun with the Burgundian Wars continued to affect the southwestern part of the empire due to the Swabian War, as well as due to the Italian Wars and the campaigns for the control of Duchy of Milan. In this framework, for many political actors, combourgeoisies and alliance treaties were still useful instruments to try to reduce the margins of uncertainty. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Bernese web of alliances was certainly not a meaningless network. On the contrary, it was still very much alive and one of the pivots of Bern's political actions.

Similar remarks can be made concerning Fribourg and Solothurn. With the insight of later developments, 1481 was an important turning point determining admission into the Swiss Confederation. However, the unstable political conjuncture actually suggests that relationships with other entities were not of lesser importance, and that for many decades the Swiss Confederation was merely one of several other networks, just as the Burgundian Confederation had been before.⁶⁴

From 1482 to 1536, Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn concluded or renewed ninety-five alliance treaties and combourgeoisies. To this total, we can add twenty-eight treaties they signed as members of the Swiss Confederation (see table 6). If we attempt to represent this web on a map, we obtain interesting results (see map 4). All this data shows that the westward policies of Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn were still very intense during 1481–1536: Savoy, Neuchâtel and Gruyère constituted three main axes.⁶⁵ If we compare this

63 Brady, *Turning Swiss*.

64 The cantonal histories of Fribourg and Bern tend to overlook the importance of combourgeoisies after the Burgundian Wars and 1481. Urs Martin Zahnd's text on alliance treaties, published in a history of Bern in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, has no equivalent in the volume on the fifteenth century (*Berns grosse Zeit*). According to these standard narratives, the time of alliances and combourgeoisies was that of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The most recent synthesis for Fribourg takes a similar point of view. Significantly, the chapter on alliances and combourgeoisies ends with 1481 (Utz Tremp, *Histoire de Fribourg*, p. 23–42). See also, in the same perspective, Meier, *Von Morgarten*, p. 153–162. Speich, *Burgrecht*, p. 42, signals the importance of combourgeoisies after 1481, but his analysis concentrates on the previous period.

65 The lines are thicker according to the number of renewals. Map 4 is a simplification. For instance, combourgeoisies with “Neuchâtel” were signed with the counts, the commune and the chapter. Cf. also *supra*, the preliminary note, p. 13–14. Concerning methodological problems related to drawing maps of these kinds of alliances, see Kammerer and Droux, “La géographie des ligues”.

cartography of alliances with the “standard mapping” of the alliances of the Swiss cantons, centred around the three Waldstätten,⁶⁶ we see how much a teleological perspective, underemphasising cantonal alliances as compared to the growing Swiss Confederation, has obscured the role of other networks.

The fact that the Swiss Confederation was just one of several networks, albeit an important one, is also demonstrated by the relations between Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn. Although the three cities were bound together by their membership in the Swiss Confederation, separate *combourgeoisies* did not lose their importance. In 1482, Bern and Fribourg stated that their *combourgeoisie*, renewed in 1480, was not undermined by the 1481 alliance between Fribourg and Solothurn and the other Swiss cantons.⁶⁷ The *combourgeoisie* of 1480 was a renewal of the treaty of 1403, with some articles slightly changed and some minor additions.⁶⁸ Although concluded as “perpetual friendship” (*ewige fründtschafft*) – as *combourgeoisies* were frequently described – the treaty had to be sworn again every five years.⁶⁹ The main reason given was the necessity to make it known to future generations.

The oath was not, legally speaking, necessary for the validity of the alliance, and thus the charters normally specified that if it was not sworn the pact was still valid.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the oath was considered a form of renewal and thus strengthening of the alliance. Once again, the relevance of these practices needs to be appreciated from a political point of view, and not simply from a legal one. Especially in troubled times, the ritual involving the mutual sending of ambassadors and a ceremony before the entire population asked to take an oath could be a powerful political tool – as we shall see in the next chapter.⁷¹ For the moment, I wish to note only one significant example.

In 1492, Solothurn and Fribourg decided to conclude a *combourgeoisie*. How should this alliance between two cities that were already bound together by their membership in the Swiss Confederation be interpreted? It should not be forgotten that in 1481, Solothurn and Fribourg had not been admitted to the same rank as the older members of the Swiss Confederation. In particular, for two decades, until 1501, when Basel and Schaffhausen joined the confederation, Fribourg’s and Solothurn’s participation in the

66 Cf. Kreis, ed, *Die Geschichte*, p. 141.

67 Speich, *Burgrecht*, p. 13–14.

68 Both charters are published in *RQBE*, I.4.1, p. 355–364 and 560–562.

69 *RQBE*, I.4.1, p. 562.

70 On the importance of these oaths, Würgler, “A quoi sert”; Würgler, *Die Tagsatzung*, p. 390–397 and Richard, “Le citoyen assermenté”.

71 See *infra*, in particular p. 101–104.

Diet – the main central institution regulating political ties between the cantons – remained partial and a source of discussions and tensions.⁷² Moreover, during the 1480s, the Diet had decided only to swear to alliance treaties and not to the other charters that were fundamental for the cohesion of the confederation, such as the Priests' Charter (1370), the Compact of Sempach (1393), and the Compact of Stans (1481). Those documents had only to be read before the assemblies. The combourgeoisie of 1492 was ultimately a reaction to this uncertain situation.⁷³

In fact, the overlapping networks of alliances established a framework in which relations between the political actors and the legal implications of each treaty were not always clear. The hierarchy of treaties was often a source of debate, as is best shown by the charter that Bern and Lucerne had to sign in 1492 in order to specify some mutual implications for both cities of the alliance between Bern and the Waldstätten (concluded almost 150 years previously, in 1353!)⁷⁴ This legal uncertainty left room for political manoeuvres. A new treaty, or the admission of a new member to the confederation, was a change in the balance of power. Combourgeoisies were thus a good counterbalance to this unstable political framework. In the end, a combourgeoisie was more than the product of political actors; it *created* the actors and *propelled* them onto the scene.

Cities were not the only political actors involved in this dense network of alliances. Many Sabaudian nobles, given their scattered possessions, formed alliances or acquired the burghership, especially with Bern (see table 6): Pierre de Pesmes, lord of Brandis (1482); Louis, count of La Chambre (1487); Jacques de Clermont, lord of La Batie in the Albanais (1492); the powerful La Palud family in the County of La Roche (1499, 1518, 1531); Claude de Luyrieu (1508); and René de Challant (1522). These political relationships were rooted in these noblemen's need to pursue their family interests and protect their fiefs, some of which were sometimes outside the Sabaudian principality. Most of these families had transregional possessions that were rarely delimited by the political boundaries of larger principalities.

All this is probably best illustrated by the figure of René de Challant (1504–1569).⁷⁵ René possessed a vast, fragmented and transregional lordship, with scattered territories from the Lordship of Valangin and the Barony of Beaufremont – north of the Alps – to fiefs in the Valle d'Aosta and Monferrato,

72 Würbler, *Die Tagsatzung*, p. 101 ff.

73 Würbler, *Die Tagsatzung*, p. 396 and Gutzwiller, "Die Beziehungen", p. 54–61.

74 RQBE, I.4.1, p. 576–577.

75 Vester, *Transregional Lordship*.

in the south. He was certainly a faithful servant of the dukes of Savoy: from 1529 he became marshal of Savoy, the head of military operations for the whole duchy, and certainly one of most important Sabaudian officers north of the Alps. He will make his appearance again in chapters 4 and 5 in such a role. But René also was a powerful noble with his own agenda, seeking political autonomy, and staunchly defending his rights. And like many other noblemen, he had connections and properties outside the Duchy of Savoy. As lord of Valangin, a lordship close to Bernese territories, he sealed a *combourgeoisie* with Bern in 1522.⁷⁶

The regional nobility thus held many territories that were of military and strategic importance. For the Swiss cities acting on the western border of the confederation, and for these nobles as well, alliances and *combourgeoisies* were a tool for entering into political dialogue and creating a political space, thus exercising their influence and protecting their interests. However, such a framework was very unstable and sometimes the duke of Savoy had to worry about the loyalties of his officials, as happened during the troubled year of 1536 when the loyalty of René de Challant came into question.⁷⁷

In the end, political uncertainty was at the same time the consequence and the cause of these policies and of the general instability. During the sixteenth century, this instability increased considerably due to the Swiss politics of expansion to the southwest. Especially from the mid-1510s, important new members entered this complex network, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter.⁷⁸ Geneva and Lausanne were certainly the most noteworthy. This strengthening of political ties did not come as a sudden break. In fact, important economic ties, especially with the Pays de Vaud and the Genevan market, go back to the middle of the fourteenth century.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it was not until the first half of the fifteenth century – with the growth of the international fairs – that Geneva became an important centre for the merchants of Fribourg and Bern. Fribourg was an important manufacturing town: almost half of its population was employed in the production of woollen cloth and leather products.⁸⁰ During the 1430s–1440s, Geneva became an essential outlet for these goods, so essential that one of the city's two covered markets was commonly called the *halle* of Fribourg,

76 See table 6 and Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 54–55.

77 Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 82.

78 Cf. *infra*, p. 79–92.

79 Hektor Ammann's works are still the necessary starting point: *Freiburg und Bern* and "Oberdeutsche Kaufleute". A quick overview is given in Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, p. 339–349.

80 An excellent history of the city is Utz Tremp, *Histoire de Fribourg*. On manufacturing and trade, see p. 55–68.

due to the massive presence of merchants from this town. Although woollen cloth production declined in the second half of the fifteenth century, the presence of Fribourg's merchants remained substantial in Geneva. The activities of the Varembergs offer an important testimony to this persistent link. During the period 1480–1520, forty different families from Fribourg appear in the Varembergs' accounts, including such well-known and wealthy families as the Griboloets, Studers, Vögelis, Techtermanns and Helblings.⁸¹

Bern's interest in Geneva was somewhat different in nature.⁸² The city on the Aare had not developed manufacturing in a sense comparable to Fribourg. The famous Diesbach-Watt trading company, founded by the Bernese Niklaus von Diesbach and Hugo and Peter von Watt from St. Gallen, was more an exception than the rule. In Bern, diplomatic careers, mercenary service and land ownership were more profitable activities for the local elites. In fact, the Bernese interest in the Genevan market lay mainly in the commerce transiting through its territories. During the fifteenth century, the city councils in competition with Solothurn staunchly promoted a commercial road running from Olten towards Bern, Fribourg, and finally Geneva and southern France. When the crisis with Louis XI about the fairs erupted, Bern and the confederation were quick to react, fearing that the roads passing through their territories would be abandoned by German merchants.⁸³ The Swiss ambassadors told Louis XI in November 1463 that competition from Lyon might not only ruin Geneva, but also damage the Swiss "tributes and tolls".⁸⁴

On the road to Geneva lay the Pays de Vaud with its main centre, Lausanne. The city was the seat of the diocese to which the cities of Bern and Fribourg belonged, and many abbeys and priories had close ties with these cities. Moreover, the end of the Burgundian Wars had definitively raised Bern and Fribourg to the rank of the main political actors within the region. During the following decades, the Swiss had many opportunities to intervene in political life in Lausanne, often as mediators, taking advantage of continuous tensions between the bishop and the citizens under the episcopate of Benoît de Montferrand (1476–1491) over their relative rights and the exercise of justice.⁸⁵ In 1479, Benoît de Montferrand sought aid in

81 Ammann, "Genfer Handelsbücher", p. 23.

82 The best historical syntheses of the history of Bern are Schwinges, ed., *Berns mutige Zeit* and *Berns grosse Zeit*.

83 Ammann, *Freiburg und Bern*, p. 99–100; Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, p. 154–159; 179–183; 395–396; Roland, "Zölle und Verkehr", in *Berns Grosse Zeit*, p. 202–204 and Scott, *Swiss*, p. 67–72.

84 Quoted in Borel, *Les foires*, p. 26: "treuz et peages".

85 HS, I/4, p. 34; p. 144–146 and Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 61–83.

Rome; the pope, in turn, asked Bern to help the bishop recover his rights. Bern promptly declared on 20 March 1480 that the bishop was under its protection ("in nostram salvagardiam").⁸⁶ During the following years, Bern and Fribourg acted as mediators on various occasions, particularly during the years 1481–1482 when the two municipal administrations of Lausanne (the *Cité* and the *Ville inférieure*) were united into a single commune in order to better counter the bishop.⁸⁷

In the course of the last decades of the fifteenth century, Bern and Fribourg also exercised special influence over some of the elections of bishops in Lausanne and Geneva. Undoubtedly, all of the political actors – Savoy, the Swiss and France – considered Geneva, and to a lesser extent Lausanne, to be crucial cities. Controlling the bishops was key to controlling these cities as the bishop was the lord who possessed imperial immediacy over them. In 1449, when he resigned as pope, Felix V (Amadeus VIII) obtained from the Roman Pope Nicolas V the right of nomination for the main benefices within the Duchy of Savoy, including Lausanne and Geneva. The papal indult was finally delivered on 10 January 1452 to the new Duke Louis I.⁸⁸ However, despite this privilege, the dukes of Savoy very often had to contend with cathedral chapters that were jealous of their prerogatives and urban communities supporting the chapter's candidates.⁸⁹ In the end, the Sabaudian princes were able to appoint their candidates, but often only after lengthy negotiations, which permitted Bern and Fribourg to fashion themselves as political actors and intermediaries with respect to the local urban elites.

In Lausanne, tensions first arose in 1472 with the election of Giuliano Della Rovere – Sixtus IV's nephew and himself the future Pope Julius II.⁹⁰ His election was contested by the citizens and the duke of Savoy, who also opposed the vicar general Della Rovere had appointed: Burkard Stör, provost of the Bernese collegiate chapter of Amsoldingen. Stör received support from Bern and Fribourg, but his authority over the francophone part of the diocese

86 StABE, A III 170 (Lateinische Missivenbücher B), fol. 355v.

87 Thévenaz Modestin, *Un mariage contesté*, p. 46–53 and 160–167.

88 Cf. Mongiano, "Fulsit lux mundo". In 1439, the Council of Basel surprisingly elected Amadeus VIII as the new pope. At that time the duke had retired to his castle at Ripaille and was living a pious life as a sort of quasi-hermit with other Sabaudian noblemen, see Gießmann, *Der letzte Gegenpapst*.

89 Until the Reformation the cathedral chapters of Lausanne and Geneva continued to elect their bishops. However, in practice, the choice had to be confirmed by the pope, and this rarely happened against the duke of Savoy's will. In the end, with some few exceptions, the pope always confirmed the Sabaudian candidate and not the chapter's elected candidate. On cathedral chapters see HS I/3, p. 217–239 (Geneva) and HS I/4, p. 35–37 and 357–404 (Lausanne).

90 The Lausanne bishopric was only one among the many benefices Della Rovere received during these years. Cf. Pastore, "Giulio II", in *DBI*.

was never really accepted and he renounced the office in 1475. In the end, Giuliano Della Rovere never came to Lausanne, and in 1476 exchanged his bishopric for the Norman see of Coutances.⁹¹ Some years later, in 1491, the Bernese authorities made attempts to push Jean Armbruster, provost of the collegiate chapter of Saint Vincent in Bern, for the see of Lausanne. However, once again, their efforts were thwarted and the Sabaudian candidate, Aymon de Montfalcon, finally obtained the see.⁹²

It was in Geneva, nonetheless, that the Swiss manoeuvred more intensely. On 19 July 1482, following the death of Jean-Louis de Savoie, the pope granted the see to his nephew Domenico Della Rovere and, on 24 July, he authorised him to exchange it for the see of Turin, held by Jean de Compey. In the meantime, the chapter had elected another candidate, Urbain de Chevron, who was backed by Bern and Fribourg. A long legal and diplomatic conflict followed until 25 May 1483 when Compey finally arrived in Geneva and Urbain de Chevron was transferred to the Archdiocese of Tarentaise. At that time, however, a third candidate had appeared: François de Savoie, son of the former Duke Louis I and officially supported by the House of Savoy. Thus, a second conflict ensued, lasting until June–July 1484, when Compey agreed to take the Archdiocese of Tarentaise, which was vacant following the death of Urbain de Chevron.⁹³

The motives and actions of the various parties in these events are not entirely clear. Until the first months of 1483, Urbain de Chevron and his Swiss supporters had to face only the papal wish to impose Compey. The Swiss Diet had decided on two occasions to support Chevron, on 18 August and 14 November 1482, and to discuss the matter with the papal legate.⁹⁴ Ambassadors from Bern and Fribourg arrived in Geneva on 25 November 1482 and before the General Council presented the Diet's wish to support Urbain de Chevron. Fribourg and Bern also promised to protect Geneva "as is appropriate for good neighbours".⁹⁵

Most probably, the Swiss decided to intervene only after the chapter and the commune requested their help, as they did similarly in Lausanne during the same years. At any rate, this is the official version they provided later, in

91 *PS* 8, p. ccxlvii–ccxlviii. About Stör, Utz Tresp, "Stör, Burkhard" (19 December 2011 version), in *e-DHS*.

92 Andenmatten *et al.*, *Aymon de Montfalcon*, p. 15. On Armbruster, see also Utz Tresp, "Armbruster, Jean" (17 September 2001 version), in *e-DHS*.

93 On this conflict, see *HS* I/3, p. 106–108; Mallet, "Mémoire historique", p. 185–217 and Gabotto, *Lo stato sabaudo*, vol. 2, p. 296–311.

94 *EA* III/1, p. 129 (b.) and p. 136 (d.).

95 *RC* 3, p. 233.

March 1483, when the duke of Savoy was pushing François de Savoie for the Genevan see, reaffirming his right to choose the bishop (due to the indult of 1452) and contesting the Swiss interference.⁹⁶ During the first phase of the conflict, the duke of Savoy remained discreet, although François de Savoie already had some partisans within the city and the duchy. The prince's passivity might be explained by the fact that Charles I had become duke only a few months earlier, on 22 April, and was still living at the court of France, under the influence of Louis XI. Also, tensions were evident at the Sabaudian court between pro- and anti-French factions. Thus for the first year, Charles I ruled from his French "exile", not entering Chambéry until 11 April 1483.⁹⁷

Moreover, Urbain de Chevron had been a loyal Sabaudian councillor and ambassador since the time of Duke Amadeus IX. At the height of his Genevan quarrel, in January 1483, he was certainly not a disgraced servant. On the contrary, on 26 January 1483, he was the head of the Sabaudian diplomatic delegation that had the power to renew the alliance between Savoy and Bern and Fribourg. In both the Swiss sealed charters and the Sabaudian one, he is referred to as the *electus Gebennensis*,⁹⁸ showing that both the Swiss and Savoy regarded him as the legitimately elected bishop. Some days later, Urbain was in Lausanne, acting as an arbitrator in the dispute between the bishop of Lausanne and the citizens concerning the union of the two municipalities.⁹⁹ The fact that the duke of Savoy ultimately turned to François de Savoie, and from March 1483, began intense manoeuvres for the purpose of placing him on the episcopal throne is probably the consequence of French influence. In fact, some months later, on 31 October 1483, the new king of France, Charles VIII, wrote to the Genevan syndics asking them to support François de Savoie. The king of France was still acting as protector of the duke, although Charles I had by then reached majority, showing that the French influence was still important. Charles VIII reminded the syndics that the bishop of Geneva had to be a "person faithful to the House of Savoy" and closed his letter with a plea to the syndics, asking them to favour François de Savoie with "regard and consideration for the good and security of this land [of Savoy], and for your city, which is the key of this land".¹⁰⁰ That Geneva was the key to control of the Lake Geneva basin had become clear from the time of the Burgundian Wars, when the French king

96 RC 3, p. 256.

97 Uginet, "Carlo I, duca di Savoia", in *DBI*.

98 ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati con gli Svizzeri, pag. 3, no 8 and *RQBE* I 4.1, p. 554.

99 Thévenaz Modestin, *Un mariage contesté*, p. 175–176.

100 Letter edited in Mallet, "Mémoire historique", p. 232.

had suggested to the Swiss that their army should occupy Geneva to prevent the city from being conquered by the armies of their enemies.¹⁰¹ Controlling the city, or preventing enemy conquest, remained a central feature of French policy throughout the first decades of the sixteenth century.

Bern manoeuvred again, in 1490, to support Charles de Seyssel, elected by the chapter, against the Sabaudian candidate Antoine Champion,¹⁰² and anew in 1513, when Bern, supported by Fribourg and the Swiss Diet, attempted to favour Aymon de Gingins, the candidate of the chapter, for the Genevan see.¹⁰³ Once again, their efforts did not succeed, and the Sabaudian candidate, Jean de Savoie, obtained the see by papal bull (15 July 1513). This time, Bern and Fribourg were mainly interested in the possibility of obtaining half of the right to Bonmont Abbey, of which Gingins was abbot.¹⁰⁴ Bonmont was a Cistercian abbey, one of the largest and wealthiest of the Pays de Vaud. In two papal bulls, dated 20 December 1512 and 10 January 1513, the pope had granted Bern and Fribourg half the revenues of Bonmont and some other abbeys and priories within the Duchy of Savoy for their collegiate chapters. This split of revenues was to take effect upon the death of the current abbot. When the Genevan chapter on 12 or 13 April 1513 elected Aymon de Gingins, Bern considered Bonmont to be a vacant benefice and thus available for its collegiate chapter. The election of Aymon de Gingins was ultimately not confirmed by the pope, and Bern's plan was ruined. The manner in which the Swiss tried to put pressure on the duke of Savoy nevertheless warrants a closer inquiry.

In a very interesting letter, dated 5 May 1513, the Bernese authorities wrote of their dissatisfaction with the duke of Savoy's support for a candidate, Jean de Savoie, who had not been elected by the chapter. Bern asked the duke to wait for the pope's decision and not to harass the chapter or Aymon de Gingins. In a barely veiled threat, Bern reminded the duke that the abbot of Bonmont was a *combourgeois* of Fribourg and Lucerne, and thus these two cities could intervene militarily if the duke acted in a violent or unlawful manner.¹⁰⁵ Charles II politely but firmly replied that he would

101 Santschi, "Genève et les Suisse", p. 36.

102 Gabotto, *Lo Stato sabaudo*, vol. 2, p. 456–472. No good and recent study on the political role of the cathedral chapter exists. The general overview provided by *HS* I/3, p. 217–238, is still the necessary starting point.

103 On this election, see *HS* I/3, p. 111–113 and Waeber, "Efforts conjugués". For a brief biography of Aymon de Gingins, see *HS* I/3, p. 185.

104 *HS* III/3, p. 125–127.

105 StABE, A III 175 (Lateinische Missivenbücher G), fol. 421r–421v. The letter states that Aymon, Fribourg and Lucerne were bound together by a *vinculo civilegii*. *Civilegium* and *borgesia* were

await the pope's decision but that he was surprised to see Fribourg and Bern, as *combourgeois* of Savoy, acting against his rights.¹⁰⁶

It is no surprise that the duke underlined his alliance with the Swiss. In 1509, as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter, Charles II had renewed his alliance with Bern, Fribourg and, by a separate treaty, with Solothurn. The fact that Bern considered Aymon of Gingins a *combourgeois* of Fribourg and Lucerne is more surprising. Bonmont was not among the ecclesiastical institutions that had entered into a *combourgeoisie* with Swiss cities. And no trace of such a personal *combourgeoisie* for Aymon has been found.¹⁰⁷ The explanation probably lies with the Gingins family. In fact, this family was at that time divided into two main branches: the Gingins and Divonne (which was Aymon's branch), and the Châtelard and La Sarraz. Around the 1510s, the Barony of La Sarraz was at the centre of disputes within this branch of the family, specifically involving two brothers, Jacques and François, claiming its possession. François obtained the *combourgeoisie* of Lucerne and Fribourg, and in 1512, military operations troubled the region, caused by small armed contingents sent by these cities. In 1514, François also entered into a *combourgeoisie* with Solothurn.¹⁰⁸ Some years before, in 1509, the family had also bolstered its ties in Lucerne when Antoinette (or Antonia), a sister of François, married a member of a family from the Lucerne ruling elite, a certain Von Wyl.¹⁰⁹ It must also be said that, although the family had two branches and tensions among them existed, the Gingins preserved unity with intermarriages.¹¹⁰ It is therefore possible that Bern was referring to this situation, but maybe it was also playing on a certain ambiguity.

It is not always clear under what authority Bern and Fribourg entered into these discussions, but every indication is that the issue was not merely legal but primarily political. In this game, the Swiss did not hesitate to employ all possible means, including veiled threats, to strengthen their political weight in these regions. This last conflict of 1513 also shows, despite uncertainty and some points that remain unclear, that the *combourgeoisie* played a

the usual Latin terms used for the *combourgeoisie*.

106 Waeber, "Efforts conjugués", p. 203–204.

107 On this abbey, see *HS* III/3, p. 87–127.

108 ACV, P Château de La Sarraz, C 106 and C 134; *Almanach généalogique Suisse*, vol. 5, p. 257–262; Charrière, "Les dynastes de La-Sarra", p. 454–456 and 486, Wildermann, "Gingins, de" (15 November 2005 version), *e-DHS*.

109 StALU, Arkiv 1, Personalien, AKT 113/2195 and Egloff, "von Wil" (30 October 2013 version), *e-DHS*.

110 Wildermann, "Gingins, de" (15 November 2005 version), in *e-DHS*.

central role. Bern used it to threaten military intervention and Charles II invoked it to ask for loyalty and the maintenance of traditional alliances. Treaty alliances and especially *combourgeoisies* were undoubtedly the cornerstone of all policy during these years. Similarly, Geneva increasingly became the centre of the Swiss interests. For this reason, we need now to look deeper at the city and its elite's ties with Savoy and the Swiss.

Prosperity Lost

In 1563, François Bonivard (1493–1570), the former prior of the Cluniac house of Saint Victor (in the Genevan suburbs), later celebrated by Lord Byron in his poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*, wrote a new version of his *Chroniques de Genève*. Describing the city where he lived, he admitted that “even though the town is still beautiful and pleasant, this is nothing compared to what it was during the past times”.¹¹¹ Bonivard's nostalgic statement summarises the condition of Geneva during the 1560s: one of lost prosperity. Part of the internal conflicts the Genevans endured during the early decades of the sixteenth century, which I will analyse in the coming chapters, was a struggle to regain these prosperous times. Therefore, if we want to fully understand these conflicts, we must first grasp this past splendour and Geneva's prosperity during the fifteenth century.

The city's economic development during the first half of the fifteenth century coincided with substantial demographic growth. The city grew from 4,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the fifteenth century to 10–11,000 by the 1460s, becoming the biggest city in the Duchy of Savoy.¹¹² The subsequent urban development was significant: the *extra muros* suburbs grew considerably; on the right bank of the lake, the suburb of Saint-Gervais tripled its surface area between 1424 and 1460, and the other suburbs showed similar growth.¹¹³ Not surprisingly, the reconstruction and embellishment of the urban parish churches was impressive as well. During 1430–1460, practically all of the seven urban parish churches underwent considerable work, most of them being almost completely rebuilt during these years. When the Varembergs settled in the Madeleine neighbourhood, they found a freshly

111 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 1, p. 33 (“Combien que le contenant de la ville soit encores beau et playsant, ce n'est rien à respect de ce qu'il estoit le temps passé”). Cf. also *HS* 3/2, p. 310–320 and Caesar, “Bonivard, François”.

112 Binz, “La population, p. 167 and Leguay, “Un réseau”.

113 La Corbière, ed., *Genève, ville forte*, p. 33–43.

renovated church (by 1446, the work was for the most part finished): the choir had been entirely rebuilt thanks to the support of Jacques de Rolle, a rich merchant who ostentatiously placed his arms at the keystone and at the base of the vault's ribs. Pierre Rup, another rich merchant, donated an altarpiece and new canopied wooden stalls.¹¹⁴

The Madeleine was not an isolated case: very often, the financing of these works and the embellishment of churches were made possible thanks to the sums donated by the Genevan merchants enriched by the economic vitality of the city. Notre-Dame-La-Neuve was partially rebuilt during the 1450s with the financial support of the merchant Clément Poutex. Similarly, in Saint-Gervais, another wealthy Genevan merchant, Mathieu Bernard, built a side chapel dedicated to All Saints and decorated it with frescoes, in particular a Virgin of Mercy that is still visible today.¹¹⁵

Foreign merchants were also very active in the embellishment of city churches. Around 1450–1460, the Florentines donated wooden stalls to the Franciscan priory where some of them had been buried, and financed the construction of a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary near the Rhône bridge. In 1462, Antonio di Pagolo, working for the Medici's Genevan branch, wrote to his master, Piero di Cosimo di Medici, informing him of this veritable artistic effervescence. The letter sheds light on some of the reasons behind the merchants' patronage:

As I wrote to you in another letter, here there are many Florentine families and their coats of arms appear in every church and in their wall claddings; and your House, which is the oldest one and the one which realised the greatest profits in this city, does not appear yet; nor is your coat of arms visible anywhere, a fact that astonishes everyone.¹¹⁶

Then Antonio di Pagolo, as a wise and faithful servant, suggested that his master should help with the reconstruction of the choir in the Dominican church, an action that would be, as he wrote, “praiseworthy to God and to the world”. These religious-artistic investments were a necessity, not only a noble commitment. As the Italian historian Giacomo Todeschini has clearly demonstrated, merchants needed to reinvest their gains for the common good, for this was the only way they could prove to be trustworthy and honourable

114 Grandjean, *L'architecture religieuse*, t.1, p. 53–75.

115 Winiger-Labuda, ed., *Genève, Saint-Gervais*, p. 123–130, Broillet and Schätti, “Chapelle d'Espagne” and Costa, *Giacomo Jaquerio*, p. 166–181.

116 Letter edited in Bergier, “Lettres genevoises”, p. 303.

men.¹¹⁷ From that point of view, it is no surprise that the first half of the fifteenth century, a period of economic prosperity, coincided with the most notable artistic production in Geneva. Ironically, di Pagolo's counsel arrived in the same year Louis XI initiated his aggressive policy. By 1466, the Medici and most of the Italian bankers had transferred to Lyon. The French competition brutally stopped the growth and the artistic flow of these years.

Peace, economic prosperity and artistic effervescence in Savoy are best summarised in one of the panels of the altarpiece painted in 1444 by Konrad Witz for Saint Pierre's cathedral: the well-known *Pêche miraculeuse* (*Miraculous Draft of Fishes*). For the first time in Western art, the painting places two episodes taken from the Gospels into a lifelike portrayal of a natural landscape. In particular, the southeastern side of Lake Geneva features a prosperous and carefully maintained countryside, with mountains in the background that locals would have immediately recognised: the Voirons, the Môle and the Petit Salève. The painting can easily be considered a representation of the effects of Sabaudian *buongoverno* on the region: a well-kept and cultivated countryside where prosperity reigns.¹¹⁸

Witz's *Miraculous Draft* and Saint-Gervais's Virgin of Mercy survive, but most of these artworks and buildings had a less fortunate fate and disappeared during the 1530s. Bonivard complained that many "beautiful and pleasant" constructions had been destroyed within Geneva and outside the city walls in order to fortify the city and "to abolish the papal superstition."¹¹⁹ In fact, the destruction of the suburbs (done for security reasons and to build new, more modern, fortifications) and the iconoclasm or simple looting of churches and chapels during the tumultuous years around 1534–1536, deprived the city of the vast majority of its artistic works and of many religious buildings.¹²⁰

Just before the Reformation, the city and its suburbs counted twelve major religious complexes: Saint Pierre's Cathedral (which was also a parish church); six other parish churches (one of which was Bonivard's Cluniac

117 See in particular Todeschini, *I mercanti e il tempio*.

118 The painting is a blend of two distinctive Gospel episodes: the miraculous draft of fishes (Jn 21:1–7) and Jesus walking on water (Jn 6:15–21). On the Witz altarpiece, see Deuchler, "Konrad Witz", and Elsig and Menz, *Konrad Witz*.

119 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 1, p. 33.

120 On Geneva's fortifications and the destruction of the suburbs, see La Corbière ed., *Genève ville forte*. The best synthesis on iconoclasm during 1530–1536 is still Carlos, *War against the Idols*, p. 122–165. See also, on damaged artefacts that have survived, contributions by Brigitte Roux, Nicolas Schätti and Corinne Charles in Dupeux, Jetzler and Wirth, eds., *Iconoclasm*, p. 272–273, 330, 343–345 and Grosse and Solfaroli Camillocci, "Réaménager le rapport".

priory, Saint Victor); four monasteries or convents (Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Poor Clares), and a Benedictine priory (Saint Jean), to say nothing of many smaller chapels (for instance, within the city hospitals¹²¹) and niches with statues across the city. By 1563, when Bonivard was writing, half of these buildings had been completely destroyed – the two parish churches of Saint Léger and Saint Victor, the Dominican and Franciscan houses, and the Benedictine priory of Saint Jean – or repurposed, such as the convent of the Poor Clares, which became the new general hospital.

Iconoclasm and the need to eliminate the suburbs were not the only reasons for the disappearance of buildings and their artistic contents. The political and religious upheavals were often a good occasion for looting, and during the 1530s, Geneva had become a real marketplace for precious stolen liturgical objects and reliquaries. Around 1535, many people suspected of being “Lutherans” – the name given to early Evangelical followers during the 1520s–1530s, regardless of their theological views – were arrested around Geneva and put on trial by the bishop’s officers.¹²² Among these was a man named Henri Goulaz. A former Sabaudian mint officer, Goulaz was, like the Varembergs, from Chieri, and was arrested and interrogated in April 1535. He admitted that he had bought sacred vessels and some silver coming from a reliquary in Saint Jean’s priory. Goulaz confessed that Jean Maréchal, a local hatmaker, was selling many such objects, but religious people and priests were also involved in the sales.¹²³ That Bonivard would complain about the beauty of Geneva having dissipated during the first stage of the Reformation is unsurprising. Louis Binz has rightly pointed out that the history of the art of fifteenth-century Geneva is a history of “lost masterpieces”.¹²⁴

The sudden loss of beauty was not the only fact that Genevans looked back on with nostalgia. The economic prosperity and the prestige of the fairs were for many decades a major loss that the Genevans attempted to recover. As we have already seen, Louis XI’s aggressive policies ruined the Genevan economy in 1462–1465. It is true, as Jean-François Bergier has convincingly demonstrated, that some years before the competition with Lyon, the fairs had already entered a period of economic recession. Economic historians over the last century have offered various reasons for this decline, and that

121 On the ancient medieval hospitals, see Brunier, ed., *Genève, espaces et édifices*, p. 183–193.

122 On this, see especially *infra*, chapter 4.

123 AEG, P.C. 1^e série, no 293, p. 25.

124 Quoted in Guichonnet, ed., *Histoire de Genève*, p. 121. A social history of religious art in Renaissance Geneva has yet to be written. Some useful information in Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 1, p. 256–278 and Deonna, *Les arts*, p. 123–275. For a Sabaudian framework, see Elsig, *La peinture* and Natale and Elsig, eds., *La Renaissance en Savoie*.

of late medieval and Renaissance international fairs in general: the shift in international trade routes and the growth of long-distance maritime trade, the replacement of the medieval fairs with more efficient permanent urban trading networks, and, more recently than these, the proliferation of regional fairs.¹²⁵ However, contemporaries – especially Genevans – were probably only dimly aware of these shifting trends, and they certainly saw the competition with Lyon, and the subsequent departure of the Italian merchant bankers in particular, as the main cause for their distress.

Geneva never recovered its previous economic prosperity and the prestige of its fairs. But this is the final outcome known to us as historians, and it should not be forgotten that for a long time – at least until the 1520s – the loss of economic prosperity was not seen as definitive. Not surprisingly, in his chronicles, Bonivard discusses the events of 1462 and Louis XI's aggressive economic policy. At that time, probably everyone had given up the hope of recovering the former splendour of the fairs, since, as Bonivard acknowledged, with the help of both the Swiss and the dukes of Savoy, "everything that could be attempted to restore the fairs had been done".¹²⁶ In fact, during the period from the 1460s to the 1520s, negotiations with the king of France had been recurrent and the prospect of eliminating the competition from Lyon emerged regularly, shaping the relations between Geneva and its neighbours.

After the first surprise, following Louis XI's decree of October 1462, the Genevans sought help from both the Swiss cantons (with Bern on the front line) and the duke of Savoy. The years 1463–1467 and 1484–1487 saw intense negotiations.¹²⁷ The Lyon fairs also had their enemies within the Kingdom of France, especially among those who believed that foreign merchants were draining gold and silver from the kingdom. For a short period, the effort seemed worthwhile, and Charles VIII revoked Lyon's fair privileges in 1484.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, the victory would last only a few short years. In 1487, Lyon's fairs were partially restored, and in 1494, the king permanently restored their former privileges.

During the first two decades of the sixteenth century, hope was very much alive and every occasion to rekindle negotiations was carefully considered. Once again, changes in the geopolitical context opened up new possibilities.

¹²⁵ Bergier, *Genève et l'économie* and Epstein, *Freedom*, p. 73–88.

¹²⁶ Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 1, p. 193.

¹²⁷ On these negotiations, see Borel, *Les foires*, p. 25–52, Bergier, *Genève et l'économie*, p. 379–396 and Bergier, "De mundinis".

¹²⁸ See Bergier, "De mundinis", p. 35.

In particular, the beginning of the Italian Wars in 1494 and rivalries between France and the Holy Roman Empire at the borders of Savoy added much instability and fuelled expectations. In 1508, France and the empire were in separate negotiations with the Swiss Confederation to attempt to forge an alliance. On 14 January, an ambassador from Fribourg informed the Genevan Ordinary Council about the talks, telling the councillors that if France was chosen, the Swiss would ask the king to withdraw the privileges granted to Lyon.¹²⁹ The Council politely thanked the ambassador with some wine and decided to discuss the matter with the duke of Savoy. However, no further discussion of this proposal was held at the city council.

Four years later, Pope Julius II offered a new glimmer of hope. On 13 August 1512, the pope promulgated an interdict against France and in particular the city of Lyon. The interdict was the papal response to the cardinals that had summoned a council in Pisa against his will and later fled to Lyon. For these reasons, Julius II had decided to punish the city, and he stipulated that the Lyon fairs had to be transferred to Geneva.¹³⁰ The bull arrived in Geneva only at the beginning of October, and its content was discussed at the Ordinary Council on 10 October.¹³¹ The measure against France and Lyon was enforced again during the third session of the Fifth Lateran Council on 3 December 1512.¹³² Until January 1513, the city council had talks on many occasions with both Savoy and the Swiss about how to finally (and permanently) end Lyon's privileges, but no real solution could be found, especially since the duke's requests for payments (in exchange for his diplomatic assistance) were considered excessive.¹³³ Once again, their hopes were dashed.

After his victory at Marignano (1515), the new king of France, Francis I, had to secure his conquest and he reached a peace agreement with the Swiss. A first round of negotiations, under the mediation of the duke of Savoy, Charles II, took place in Geneva from 28 October to 7 November. The Genevan commune, aware of the possibilities afforded by the presence of the king of France, offered gifts to the various ambassadors and discussed asking the bishop and the duke to negotiate in favour of their fairs. Unfortunately for the Genevans, Francis I had no intention of diminishing Lyon's fairs,

129 Babel, *Histoire économique*, vol. 2, p. 419–420.

130 *Bulla interdicti generalis in vniuerso regno Francie et translationis nundinarum ex Lugduno ad ciuitatem Gebenen. Ex causis in bulla contentis*, [Roma]: [Johann Beplin], [1512]. Two copies of the bull are preserved in the Geneva public library: BGE Ba 3129 and Te 6860.

131 RC 7, p. 289.

132 Edited in *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque*, vol. II/2, p. 1347–1348.

133 RC 7, p. 290–309.

and the treaty of peace with the Swiss cantons, sealed on 7 November 1515, confirmed the privileges of the Swiss in Lyon.¹³⁴ The subsequent Treaty of Fribourg (26 November 1516), the so-called Perpetual Peace, signed this time with all of the XIII cantons and their allies, confirmed this point.¹³⁵ Some years later, in 1522, rumours of dissatisfaction of many European merchants with their privileges in Lyon and their willingness to return to Geneva circulated in the city,¹³⁶ and the duke of Savoy also seemed willing to help the Genevan fairs.¹³⁷ Still, no real negotiations were undertaken and the restoration of the fairs had become an unrealistic dream.

The departure of the Italian merchant bankers and the competition with Lyon certainly affected Geneva deeply. Entering the sixteenth century, the city was no longer a European financial centre, and the volume of trade had significantly decreased.¹³⁸ All the efforts made for many decades to recover the fairs' vitality are the best proof of their importance. Yet Geneva remained an important market, and local and foreign merchants were still numerous and active. The Varembergs were among these. After Martin and Matthieu, a second generation took over: Antoine and Bernardin Varemberg, brothers, in association with Domenicus Sallaz, also from Chieri, were actively involved in the spice trade, and to a lesser extent the cloth trade. Seven account books covering their activities for the period 1483–1520 have survived.¹³⁹ Most likely, these books were among the goods seized when the family, involved in factional struggles, was banished from the city (1526–1527).¹⁴⁰ The Varembergs had an extensive clientele, spanning from Piedmont to southern Germany. Not surprisingly, German and Swiss merchants were numerous and, from that point of view, the Varembergs'

¹³⁴ Le Fur, *François I^{er}*, p. 119–120; RC 8, p. 65–68. EA, 3/2, p. 928–929. The treaty is published in Gattoni, *Leone X*, p. 293–296.

¹³⁵ On this treaty, see Dafflon, Dorthé and Gantet, eds., *Après Marignan*.

¹³⁶ Bergier, "Marchands italiens", p. 892–893.

¹³⁷ RC 9, p. 172.

¹³⁸ An economic history of Geneva in the period around 1500 is still lacking. Jean-François Bergier's thesis for his diploma at the École des Chartes (*Recherches sur les foires*) has never been published, but a short summary can be found in the *Positions des thèses* (Paris: École Nationale des Chartes, 1957, p. 31–36). Some results of this early research were later published as separate articles; see in particular Bergier, "Marchands italiens" and Bergier, "De Nuremberg à Genève". On trade in Geneva during the late Middle Ages, see also Babel, *Histoire économique*, vol. 2, p. 273–436.

¹³⁹ These books have been cursorily analysed by Ammann, "Genfer Handelsbücher". Well preserved and consisting of some 1,800 written folios, they deserve further study (AEG, Commerce F4-10). Little has been preserved concerning the Varembergs in the series of the "Notaires latins" at the AEG.

¹⁴⁰ About these political struggles, see *infra*, chapter 2.

business reminds us that until the 1540s, the city remained an important market for southern German merchants on the route to Spain. Especially during the period 1480–1520, these merchants were mainly responsible for Geneva's economic vitality.

Other merchants and their activities emerge from the archives. Perrin Peyrolier, a Genevan cloth merchant, had a more regional business, and was active mainly in the Pays de Gex, Savoy and Chablais, even though he also had debtors in Valais and the Valle d'Aosta.¹⁴¹ Like many other Genevans later banished from the city, he lost many of his goods, merchandise and claims on debtors, which were seized and sold by the commune. During 1531–1533, the municipal authorities cashed in a substantial amount from these sales: 4,402 florins.¹⁴²

François Milliet and Jean Donzel were merchants too, possibly of cloth, and a register showing their debtors for the year 1515 has survived.¹⁴³ The two merchants noted their debtors, their geographical location and the amounts due. For each entry, there is a reference to another register (which unfortunately has not survived), which probably indicated details about the goods sold, and thus information about their activities remains somewhat obscure. Nevertheless, Milliet and Donzel's register allows us to reconstruct the geographical range and the amount of their trade. Like Perrin Peyrolier, they had a regional clientele, mostly within the diocese of Geneva, totalling 712 clients dispersed over 165 locations (see map 1). Their clients owed a total of 11,858 florins, a significant sum (see table 1).

Table 1. Milliet and Donzel's debtors

Debt amount (in fl.)	Cities	Clients		Total claims (in fl.)	
2,000 or more	2	196	27.5%	4,278	36.1%
200–499	8	87	12.2%	2,502	21.1%
100–199	13	85	11.9%	1,714	14.5%
50–99	24	133	18.6%	1,653	13.9%
Up to 49 florins	118	211	29.6%	1,711	14.4%
TOTAL	165	712	100%	11,858	100%

¹⁴¹ Mottu-Weber, *Économie et refuge*, p. 30–31.

¹⁴² AEG, Finances M21, fol. 137r–139v.

¹⁴³ AEG, Commerce F11. The following paragraphs and tables 1 and 2 are based on this register.

The first ten cities shown in table 2, each representing debt claims of more than 200 fl., accounted for a total of 6,780 fl.; i.e., about fifty-seven per cent of the entire amount of the claims due to Milliet and Donzel. That Geneva was a significant market with 133 clients is not surprising given its size. That Rumilly, a relatively small town, accounted for 2,156 florins, surpassing Geneva, is more surprising at first glance. However, the fact should be considered that the Milliets were actually from Rumilly, and had only recently settled in Geneva. Rumilly and Geneva were thus the centres of the family's interests. More generally, the entire Albanais region, as the map shows, was important for Milliet and Donzel's activities. Many main routes crossed the region, including the Rhône, going south, to Lyon, Chambéry, Grenoble and the Alpine passes, such as the Mont-Cenis, the Montgenèvre and the Little Saint Bernard.

Table 2. Ten biggest urban markets for Milliet and Donzel

City	Number of clients	Debt claims (in fl.)	Estimated population ¹⁴⁴
Rumilly	63	2,156	720
Geneva	133	2,121	11,000
Aubonne	1	411	450
Desingy (Haute-Savoie)	36	389	540
Thoiry	1	365	450
Vallières	24	309	360
Annecy	7	287	1,900
Marignier (Haute-Savoie)	2	263	630
Serrières-en-Chautagne	14	261	450
Abbey of Saint Maurice d'Agaune	2	212	---
TOTAL	283 (39.7% of all clients)	6,774 (57.1% of total debt claims)	

The activities of these few merchants, while not providing us with a complete overview of the Genevan economy at the beginning of the sixteenth century, suggest that the crisis following the competition with Lyon should not be overestimated. A good portion of the fifteenth-century prosperity had been lost, but regional, and in some cases international, trade was alive and well.

144 See Binz, "La population". For Annecy, Duparc, *La formation d'une ville*, vol. 2, p. 109.

Moreover, regional fairs were not synonymous with economic stagnation. Stephan Epstein has shown that the growth of regional fairs during the late Middle Ages was the consequence of a need for smaller and more specialised markets, and that these fairs were the backbone of the European economy.¹⁴⁵ Quite interestingly, the three case studies presented here concern families that had recently settled in town. We saw that the Varembergs settled in Geneva by the mid-1440s, and the Peyroliers and the Milliets were even more recent arrivals to the city. Perrin Peyrolier was admitted to the bourgeoisie in 1489 and François Milliet in 1511.¹⁴⁶

These merchants not only shared a similar socioeconomic rise, but they also shared a common political choice, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter: supporting Savoy's power within the region against Swiss expansionism. For them, as for many other members of the urban elite, although the duchy was not any longer "the wealthiest, the safest and the most bountiful among all its neighbours", as described by Olivier de la Marche, it remained the best available source of peace and stability.

This view of the situation is not contrary to the available evidence. On 10 September 1504, the new duke of Savoy, Charles II, acceded to the throne. Contemporaries and later historians have judged him severely. A Venetian ambassador described him as a "hideous man" and François Bonivard wrote a similarly unfavourable portrayal, describing the duke as short, hunchbacked and with a deformed face. His physical appearance was considered a sign of political incapacity. But Bonivard had good reasons for describing Charles II as such: when he wrote his chronicles, Geneva had already turned to the Reformation and Catholic Savoy had become a political and confessional enemy of the entire city.¹⁴⁷ In 1504, the situation was very different, and Charles II quickly demonstrated that he was an energetic prince. Many could hope that the dynastic misfortunes and the internal crises of the principality were finally over.

On a European level, however, the prince inherited a very unstable political situation. Tensions north of the Alps and pressure from the Swiss and the French determined most of Sabaudian politics during his reign. Already in spring of 1506, hostilities with the Valais troubled regional peace and Charles II had to send an army to the Chablais. Genevans were asked to send a contingent, which they placed under the command of the syndic

¹⁴⁵ Epstein, *Freedom*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁶ Covelle, *Le livre des Bourgeois*, p. 109 and 171. Perrin was admitted with his father Claude and his brother Perceval.

¹⁴⁷ Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 1.

Hugonin de Burdigny. As was customary in every European city at that time, the Ordinary Council ordered processions to pray for peace and to repel military operations threatening their cities, while needing to find money to finance the troops. Given the financial difficulties of these years, the treasurer had to borrow money from the rich burghers of the city: on 21 April, Pierre Cornaz, a certain Gonrart and Bernardin Varember put forward the necessary sums.¹⁴⁸ Genevans' prayers were eventually answered and the war was reduced to a number of small siege operations around Evian. The treaty signed at Ivrea, on 8 March 1507, gave temporary relief for the frictions in the Chablais, but the tensions and financial problems that Geneva and Bernardin Varember endured in April 1506 would soon return to trouble the city and the entire Duchy of Savoy, as I will now examine in the following chapter.

¹⁴⁸ RC 6, p. 298. On the financial problems of the commune and their solution, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 196–205 and 248–259.

2. Regional Alliances and Urban Factionalism

Abstract: By the early sixteenth century, Bern and Fribourg had intensified their political rapprochement with Geneva and Lausanne, particularly through *combourgeoisies* (alliance treaties) signed in 1525 and 1526. The Swiss factions saw alliances with Bern and Fribourg not as liberation from a “tyrannical” feudal rule – as an outdated historiography has often claimed – but as a pragmatic alternative to Sabaudian and episcopal rule, better ensuring security and economic stability. As the Genevan case shows, these alliances, aimed at countering Savoy’s instability, intensified local factionalism. In the end, turning Swiss was less about democratic ideals and more about a complex interplay between diplomacy, the personal ambitions of some of the factional leaders, and the practical requirements of regional protection.

Keywords: *combourgeoisies*, factions, Eidguenots, Mammelus, Charles II of Savoy

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Switzerland was at its military peak and was still expanding. New full members were joining the confederation: Basel and Schaffhausen in 1501 and Appenzell in 1513, forming the so-called Confederation of the XIII Cantons. The Swiss also acquired new territories through military conquest and, in the wake of their participation in the Italian Wars (1494–1515), they created new common lordships south of the Alps, across the Gotthard Pass on the road to Lombardy (see map 3).¹ This military power explains the force of attraction the Swiss exerted during this period over their neighbours, and especially over cities. Many southern German towns considered the idea of joining the Swiss Confederation, of

1 See also *supra*, the preliminary note, p. 13–14.

“turning Swiss”.² To some contemporary observers, the same option seemed almost inevitable for Milan. In 1520, the Venetian ambassador Gian Giacomo Caroldo wrote in one of his reports: “It’s the opinion of many that, in the end, Milan will become a Swiss Canton”.³

The southwestern francophone regions of the Holy Roman Empire, along the fault line of the Comtois–Sabaudian frontier,⁴ felt a similar attraction. The city of Mulhouse became a *Zugewandter Ort* (i.e., an official associate) of the Swiss Confederation in 1515. Mulhouse had been in the confederal sphere of influence for a long time, as it had previously formed a 25-year alliance with Bern and Solothurn in 1466 and signed a similar treaty with Basel in 1505.⁵ Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn also continued their traditional policy of entering into alliances and, jointly or separately, signed new treaties and combourgeoisies with four important cites on the western border of the empire: Montbéliard (1517), Besançon (1518), Lausanne (1525) and Geneva (1526). These alliances prompted reactions from lay and ecclesiastical princes and the emperor, worried about the growing importance of the confederation and contesting the citizens’ right to sign such treaties. Given the sensitivity of these political initiatives, which might also lead to factional struggles, a phase of secret negotiations often preceded these new combourgeoisies.

In the autumn of 1518, the Genevans sent Étienne de La Mare as an ambassador to Fribourg. De La Mare was a member of the Eidguenot faction (partisans of an alliance with the Swiss) who in that period was able to secretly negotiate a proposal for a combourgeoisie with Fribourg. As we shall see in this chapter, at that time, Geneva was already plunged into factional struggles and tensions with Charles II of Savoy were reaching unprecedented heights. The proposal of a combourgeoisie with Fribourg became a matter of public political debate in Geneva at the beginning of 1519 and led to a fierce reaction from the bishop and the duke of Savoy. In April, Charles II entered the city with his troops and obliged the Genevans to renounce this planned combourgeoisie. Some months later, in August, the four syndics elected in February were deposed under pressure from the duke; Étienne de La Mare was among these four.

The origins and Étienne’s exact genealogy remain unclear.⁶ A Janin (I) de La Mare (de Mara) and a Perrin, sitting in the Council of Fifty, were

2 Cf. Brady, *Turning Swiss*, who, however, does not take cities in the French-speaking part of the empire into account.

3 Quoted in Chittolini, “Milan”, p. 401, n. 32.

4 Cf. *supra*, chapter 1, p. 45–46.

5 Oberlé, “Le zugewandter Ort Mulhouse” and Sieber-Lehmann, “Schimpfen und Schirmen”.

6 Cf. Galiffe, *Notices*, vol. 1, p. 134–136 and de Foras, *Armorial*, vol. 3, p. 331–333.

already active in Geneva in the late 1450s.⁷ Another Janin (II), possibly a son of Janin (I), was admitted to the bourgeoisie of the city in 1482. He was a cloth merchant, certainly a very wealthy one, since his admission tax was fixed at forty florins (whereas a common rate was seven florins) plus three *aunes* (yards) of green fabric for the Ordinary Council table.⁸ During this period, members of this family continuously held seats on the city councils: Janin (II) was a councillor for many years; his son Jean was a member of the Ordinary Council from 1506 to 1512 and was finally elected syndic in 1513. Étienne, Janin's (II) grandson, sat for the first time on the Ordinary Council in 1518 and in the following year, as we have seen, he became syndic – probably thanks to his role in the rapprochement with Fribourg.⁹

In 1526, Geneva contracted a second *combourgeoisie*, this time including Fribourg and Bern. However, Étienne de La Mare was no longer among the partisans of a Swiss alliance and had joined the Mammelus, the party opposing a “Swiss turn”. For this reason, Bonivard in his *Chroniques* qualified him as a turncoat.¹⁰ The following year, he was sentenced to death in absentia and his property was seized. The trial involved nearly fifty of the main members of the Mammelus. Étienne de La Mare's shifting allegiances call for more explanation.

The first part of this chapter will analyse in detail the political rapprochement of Bern and Fribourg with Geneva and Lausanne, and show how a particular type of alliance treaty – the *combourgeoisie* – was instrumental in the Swiss drive towards Lake Geneva. From the perspective of the two cities on this lake, closer political ties with the Swiss cantons were a response to the growing instability of the duchy. The rapprochement ended with two *combourgeoisies*, signed in 1525 (with Lausanne) and 1526 (with Geneva). The alliances were immediately contested by the bishop and a portion of the urban elites, and led to the intensification of the factional conflicts that are at the core of the second part of the chapter. This part focuses on the case of Geneva, which experienced more intense factionalism – which

7 RC 1, p. 168, 181, 286 and 317.

8 Covelle, *Le livre des Bourgeois*, p. 88. The numbering of the members of the de La Mare family is my own. According to de Foras (*Armorial*, vol. 3, p. 333), the father of Janin II was a certain Pierre, a burgher of Geneva. This raises a problem since the burghership was transmitted to heirs. If Pierre already had the burgher's rights, Janin would not have needed to ask for them in 1482. So, either Pierre was not Janin II's father, or he was not a burgher of the city. The Genevan *aune* was equivalent to 1.188 m (Caesar, “Économie urbaine”, p. 203, n. 37).

9 RC 6, 291, 332; 7, 7, 61, 119, 239; 8, 216 and Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 121 and 302.

10 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), vol. 2, p. 256: “il tourna son mantel”. On Bonivard see also *infra*, p. 196–197.

has left abundant archival materials. I will look particularly at the leaders of the factions and their relationships with their lords (the bishops and the duke) and seek explanations for why people adhered to one or another of the factions. Far from the old nationalistic and patriotic narrative, the Eidguenot faction looked at the Swiss option not as a source of liberation from the “tyrannical yoke” of feudal and princely “oppression”,¹¹ but saw it simply as an alternative to the Sabaudian and episcopal powers, a way to better ensure protection of the city and also a solution for its economic crisis. Moreover, many individuals and leaders of the faction increasingly saw the bishop and the duke as obstacles to their personal careers and social rise. Democratic ideals were largely absent from the mind of the Eidguenots, and only existed in an idealised narrative created in the nineteenth century of the end of episcopal and Sabaudian rule. From that point of view, Étienne de La Mare’s convoluted political path reflects Geneva’s troubled relations with the Swiss and Savoy, as well as the intricacies of European factional struggles at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a complex scenario that stands at the heart of this second chapter.

The Swiss Drive towards the Lake Geneva Region

Swiss territorial expansion and its power to attract new followers at the beginning of the sixteenth century went hand in hand with increasing political instability around the Sabaudian frontiers, both south and north of the Alps. Instability was also the result of the active French pressure on its eastern border and its rising rivalry with the empire, sometimes deeply affecting the Sabaudian court, as the life of René of Savoy illustrates.

Known as the *Grand Bâtard*, René was in fact the illegitimate son of Duke Philip II (1496–1497) and the half-brother of Duke Philibert II (1497–1504). When Philip II became duke in 1496, he legitimised René and Philibert II accorded him a great deal of power: René received many strategic regions of the duchy as apanages. In particular, he controlled fiefs in the Bresse and the Bugey, close to the Franco-Burgundian frontier, and south of the Alps, he received Sommariva Perno and Verrua, close to Asti (under French sovereignty) and the Marquisate of Monferrato, respectively. Most importantly, he became *lieutenant général* and was the de facto ruler of the duchy; the duke was little interested in politics and was of weak character.

11 This vision, as we will see, was part of the Eidguenot propaganda to justify what was, from the point of view of the bishop, nothing more than a rebellion against his legitimate authority.

In 1501, thanks to his marriage to Anna Lascaris, the only heir of the small county of Tenda, he acquired this small but strategic territory controlling an Alpine pass between France and Italy (see map 2).¹²

René of Savoy promoted an active pro-French politics, helping King Louis XII in his military campaign in Italy. His ambitions and actions quickly catalysed anger against him and the French faction within the Sabaudian court, but his rise was checked by Duke Philibert II's marriage with Margaret of Austria (1501), which was a first step towards a more imperial-oriented policy in the House of Savoy. The duchess could not stand the Grand Bâtard's power and influence over her husband. Rumours circulated about secret talks he had with Bern, Solothurn and Fribourg. In 1502, he was found guilty of treason and his Sabaudian fiefs were confiscated. René decided to flee the duchy and entered the service of the king of France. After his condemnation, the county of Tenda – still in his possession – became a dangerous enclave of French influence within the Duchy of Savoy.¹³ When Charles II acceded to the Sabaudian throne in 1504, the situation was still tense and, for many years the new duke, knowing the possible danger coming from France, tried to maintain good relations with René, in particular helping him in his territorial difficulties with Margaret of Austria relative to their claims over the Bresse.¹⁴

France was also putting pressure on the frontier further north; everything was unsettled on the western borders of the empire around the Franche-Comté.¹⁵ A new war involving France was always on the horizon, and the Swiss in particular feared that the king of France would occupy Neuchâtel and use it as a base for an attack. Neuchâtel had long-standing combourgeoisies with Bern and Solothurn, which had been regularly renewed.¹⁶ More recently, the county had also sealed similar alliances with Fribourg (1495) and Lucerne (1501).¹⁷ Swiss fears of a French invasion had heightened in the wake of the marriage of the Countess Jeanne of Hochberg to Louis d'Orléans-Longueville. The countess found the French court increasingly appealing and resided mostly in the territories of her husband, barely coming

12 Merlotti, "Savoia Tenda, Renato di", in *DBI*.

13 Gentile, "Les batârs princiers", p. 403–404; Brero, *Rituels dynastiques*, p. 617, and Cozzo, "Lascaris, Anna", in *DBI*.

14 Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 487–492. See also Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche*.

15 Scott, *Swiss*, p. 96–102. On the relationships between Neuchâtel and the Swiss, see also Morerod *et al.*, *Histoire du Canton de Neuchâtel*, p. 131–137. What follows on Neuchâtel is derived from these two publications.

16 See table 6.

17 Gasser, *Die territoriale Entwicklung*, p. 65.

to Neuchâtel. In 1512, rumours of a French invasion circulated widely and the Swiss decided to anticipate any possible threat by occupying the county (27 June–3 July).

However, only a portion of the county was occupied by the Swiss: the lordships of Colombier and Valangin, in particular (almost half of the county), remained independent.¹⁸ Moreover, the status of the ancient county remained a source of debate among the Swiss for many years. In 1514, with most of the cantons in favour of a common lordship, Bern, Fribourg, Solothurn and Lucerne argued that their *combourgeoisie* took precedence. Four years later, discussion arose again about the status of the conquest.¹⁹ In the end, Neuchâtel became a common lordship of the Swiss cantons, but only until 1529.

The conquest of Neuchâtel did not end the tensions. The year 1513 witnessed a series of military failures for France: the defeat in Novara (6 June) gave the Swiss control of Milan and, in the north, the alliance of Henry VIII of England with the emperor was followed by a new campaign and the loss of the cities of Thérouanne (23 August) and Tournai (23 September). The Swiss had been watching Dijon and Burgundy closely since 1512 at least. At the same time that Neuchâtel was occupied, the Diet discussed plans to invade Burgundy, but the reluctance of some cantons delayed the operation. It was only in August 1513 that the campaign began, when a Swiss-imperial contingent of some 37,000 soldiers moved towards Dijon. The city capitulated after a few days of siege and a treaty was signed on 13 September by the governor of Burgundy, Louis de La Trémoille. The king, however, was dissatisfied with the terms of the treaty and refused to ratify it.²⁰

The Swiss felt betrayed and directed their anger towards Geneva. The president of the Parlement of Dijon, Imbert de Villeneuve, was in Geneva at that time, and Bern and Fribourg managed to convince the municipal authorities to arrest and incarcerate him (30 November). The Swiss cities were insistent that Imbert de Villeneuve should be held hostage and taken to Bern to ensure that the treaty of Dijon would be respected. The Genevan syndics and the bishops' officials, however, were embarrassed and worried about possible military intervention by France, while the duke of Savoy tried (unsuccessfully) to negotiate the release of this high French official. Finally, on 22 December, after nearly a month of negotiations, embassies

18 Bern renewed the *combourgeoisie* with Valangin in 1522 (see table 6). The first treaty dated back to 1401 (cf. *RQBE*, I.3, p. 353).

19 Scott, *Swiss*, p. 98–99.

20 On the Dijon expedition and its planning, see Schibler, "Dijon, expédition de" (23 April 2004 version), in *e-DHS* and Vissière, Marchandisse and Dumont, eds., 1513. *L'année terrible*.

and letters, Bern and Fribourg succeeded in taking de Villeneuve with them as a prisoner.²¹ The episode was certainly a minor event in comparison to the many conflicts and wars raging across Europe in those years, and, in the end, had few practical consequences. France never intervened, probably fearing a reaction of the Swiss, and Imbert de Villeneuve was later released after his ransom had been paid. Nevertheless, the incident revealed the difficulties that Geneva and Savoy faced in countering the interference of France and the Swiss Confederation. In addition, Geneva was increasingly becoming a strategic place that neither the Swiss nor the French dared to occupy, fearing the reactions of the other party.

Despite these tensions and fears, the first years of Charles II's reign witnessed another rapprochement with the French king, and the duke was able to maintain a sort of balanced policy between France and the empire for two long decades, until the Peace of Cambrai (1529).²² During the campaign of 1512–1513 in northern Italy, French troops freely marched through the duchy, prompting the indignation of the Swiss, who had signed a 25-year alliance with Savoy in 1512.²³ In 1515, the same scenario was repeated, with the French and the Swiss occupying part of Piedmont. As Bonivard vividly summarised it, Piedmont was a game board where the Swiss and the French played their *tric et trac*.²⁴ However, the Swiss defeat at Marignano and the Perpetual Peace with France (1516) changed the balance of power. Francis I no longer needed to affect a conciliatory attitude towards Savoy, instead adopting a more aggressive policy. In 1517, building on some quarrels about ecclesiastical jurisdiction (part of the Duchy of Savoy was under the French archbishoprics of Lyon and Grenoble), the king enjoined Charles II to surrender the Bresse, Vercelli and Nice. The details and arguments of both parties need not detain us – the duke quite obviously refused. What is important is that Francis I threatened war and that conflict was averted only thanks to Swiss intervention.²⁵ It is unclear whether Francis I was ready to wage war against Savoy or whether his threats were only bluff. To contemporaries, war

21 This affair has been analysed, and some of the relevant documents edited, by Fazy, "Une question d'extradition" and Kohler, "L'ambassade en Suisse".

22 Merlin, "Il Cinquecento", p. 27.

23 Freymond, *La politique*, p. 30–46. The duke was required to pay 50,000 crowns to the Swiss. The treaty had been concluded with only eight cantons: Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Zug, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel and Schaffhausen (see table 6, *EA*, III/2, p. 641–642 and ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 4, no. 6).

24 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 70. Trictrac was a board game similar to modern-day backgammon.

25 Freymond, *La politique*, p. 46–52 and Merlin, "Il Cinquecento", p. 6–7.

certainly seemed to be a realistic possibility, and for Savoy, the bolstering of ties with the Swiss Confederation – thanks to the 25-year alliance treaty signed in 1512 – was the best bulwark against French expansionism. In the end, Savoy and Geneva shared the same fate: caught between stronger and aggressive neighbours, they were doing their best not to anger any of them. The clash between France and the empire and the Italian wars had proved that Savoy, both north and south of the Alps, was unable to resist granting free passage through the Alps, which was the key to France. Since the eleventh century, these passes had been a keystone of the power and the strength of Savoy;²⁶ now they were mainly a source of trouble.

North of the Alps, Charles II also had to face pressure from the Swiss and their allies: particularly Bern, Fribourg and the Valais, where power was shared between the bishop of Sion and the Dizains, the territorial division of Upper Valais acting as a sort of communal organisation. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Valais had formed a *combourgeoisie* with the inner cantons of Lucerne, Uri and Unterwald, and it was considered to be an associated member of the entire confederation. The bishop of Sion and the Dizains had close ties with Bern as well, and signed many alliance treaties with the city on the Aare (in 1446, 1465 and 1500).²⁷ The alliance had been particularly effective during the Burgundian Wars and allowed the Valais to conquer the Sabaudian Valais, also called Lower Valais (see map 3). The possession of Lower Valais remained disputed and a source of tension. Negotiations with the bishop of Sion, often with the mediation of the Swiss cantons, were numerous, as shown in the intense diplomatic activity of the bishop of Lausanne and the Sabaudian Ambassador Aymon de Montfalcon in 1489–1506.²⁸ Savoy did not formally recognise the loss until 1528.²⁹

Savoy and the Swiss (Bern and Fribourg in particular) had a long and complex history of alliances and wars, as we have already seen in the first chapter. In the climate of uncertainty and instability of the Italian Wars, alliances and *combourgeoisies* assumed a crucial role. Sabaudian diplomacy considered the Swiss the best allies possible,³⁰ and during the years 1517–1518, the Sabaudian court also saw stronger relations with Bern and the entire

26 Tabacco, “La formazione”.

27 Zenhäusern “Valais. 2.1 – Structures seigneuriales au Moyen Âge” (4 April 2022 version) and Würigler, “Confédération” (8 February 2012 version), in *e-DHS*.

28 Pibiri, “Aymon de Montfalcon”.

29 Gasser, *Die territoriale Entwicklung*, p. 127.

30 This at least was the advice of Claude de Seyssel when, around 1516, he wrote a short text arguing for the conquest of the Duchy of Milan by Charles II. The advice is published in Carutti, *Storia della diplomazia*, vol. 1; the passage on the Swiss is p. 537–538.

Swiss Confederation as an effective way to restrain Fribourg's territorial ambitions.³¹

Since the end of the Burgundian Wars, the foundation for these diplomatic relationships was the treaty signed in 1477 by the Duchess Yolande,³² renewed – sometimes with modifications – during every new reign.³³ At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Solothurn also gradually entered the network. In 1502, the city sealed a first treaty with Savoy and in 1504, at the accession of Charles II to the throne, it signed a renewal, separate from the one Bern and Fribourg signed that same year with the duke. Again, in 1509, the duke concluded two separate treaties (on 19 and 22 March).³⁴

The renewal with Bern and Fribourg in 1509 introduced a significant modification. After negotiations lasting almost two months, the new treaty added a clause specifying that no one could receive as burghers people who had a quarrel or judicial case with the counterparty, nor grant *combourgeoisie* to each other's subjects (regardless of whether or not they took up permanent residency).³⁵ In fact, the duke had complained that Fribourg and Bern were acting "against the duty of friendship and alliance" they had with him.³⁶ This complaint was clearly a consequence of the protection the two cities had offered to the Sabaudian secretary Jean Dufour by granting him burgher's rights.³⁷ Dufour had forged a testament of Charles I implying that Savoy owed 200,000 florins to Bern and 150,000 to Fribourg resulting from their military help in Saluzzo. Since Fribourg and Bern were willing to believe the forgery, despite the fact that its falsity had been widely recognised, Dufour's fraud, which was followed by a second one in 1510, troubled Swiss–Sabaudian relations for many years.³⁸

31 Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 441–442.

32 Published in *RQBE*, I.4.1, p. 543–551.

33 Renewals were signed in 1483, 1490, 1496, 1498 and 1504 (see table 6 for archival references). In 1504, the treaty was renewed in Bern by procuration of the Sabaudian Ambassador Jean-Amédée Bonivard. The document preserved in Turin is a sealed letter from Bern and Fribourg acknowledging the renewal. Similarly, Bern's archives preserve the sealed letter of the Sabaudian ambassador (cf. *EA*, III, 2, p. 299, no 197).

34 The treaty with Bern and Fribourg was signed on 22 September, and that with Solothurn on 26 November (cf. table 6).

35 ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati con gli Svizzeri, pag. 4, no. 2. Published in *PS* 9, p. 504–506. See also, on the negotiations, *RQBE*, I.4.1, p. 680–681. The duke widely communicated the ban at the Estates of his territories north of the Alps, summoned to Chambéry on 19 May (*PS* 9, p. 508).

36 *PS* 9, p. 503.

37 See also *infra* p. 86–87, about some of the same protections granted to Genevan citizens.

38 A summary of this affair can be found in Scott, *Swiss*, p. 89–95.

Strictly speaking, these kinds of clauses were not new. Restrictions on granting citizenship to foreign burghers were common in *combourgeoisies* already in the thirteenth century.³⁹ Since the fifteenth century, the alliance between Savoy and the two cities of Bern and Fribourg had included an article containing a ban on receiving the subjects or inhabitants of each of the parties as burghers unless they took up permanent residence in the city or in the duchy. This clause can already be found in the charter sealed in 1412, and was repeated in 1477.⁴⁰ Moreover, in his *Statuta Sabaudiae* of 1430, Amadeus VIII also inserted an article stipulating that no one could take any of his subjects under his protection (*salvagardia*) and that his subjects could not seek out any protection other than that of the duke.⁴¹ The *Statuta* used the classical term *salvagardia* (i.e., protection). During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the counts of Savoy backed the forming of urban communities by conceding them the *salvagardia*, often to counter the bishops' power, as they did, for instance, in Geneva in 1285, and similarly in Lausanne and Lyon.⁴² This kind of prohibition was not unique to Savoy. The Golden Bulls issued by the emperors in 1356 and 1431 firmly forbade the practice. However, Swiss cities, due to a certain customary autonomy they had gained, continued to accept foreign burghers (*Ausbürger/Pfahlbürger*).⁴³

It is clear, however, that the clauses, sometimes expressed in a general way, could be bypassed, and that further precision was thus necessary. In 1517, Savoy negotiated a new and more detailed clause. This time not only particular individuals ("particulares, subditos vel incolas") were forbidden to take a city's burghership without the consent of their superior, but also "communitates, civitates, villagia seu oppida".⁴⁴ The amended clause was clearly directed not only against individuals, but also against municipal institutions. The charter was dated 3 December and this time included Solothurn as well, but it was at first signed by Bern only. Solothurn only signed the charter in 1521 but Fribourg staunchly refused to accept the new agreement; the chart that has been preserved still shows only the seals of Solothurn and Bern, with Fribourg's vellum tongue lacking the city's seal.⁴⁵

39 For example, in the *combourgeoisie* that Fribourg sealed in 1326 with the *sire* of Vaud, Louis de Savoie (see Utz Tremp, *Histoire de Fribourg*, p. 30).

40 *RQBE*, I.3, p. 132–133 and *RQBE*, I.4.1, p. 545–546.

41 *Statuta Sabaudiae* (1430), III.3.1. Cf. Amman-Doubliez, ed., *La Loi du Prince*, vol. 2, p. 268–269.

42 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 21–22.

43 Isenmann, *Die deutsche Stadt*, p. 148–152.

44 ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, pag. 4, no. 10.

45 *RC* 9, p. 481 and *EA* IV/1, p. 3.

The new precision and Fribourg's resistance were clearly motivated by its policy of attempting to secure a *combourgeoisie* with Lausanne and Geneva.

In fact, the drive towards the Lake Geneva region of 1517–1519 was essentially the result of Fribourg's policies. This is not surprising since the city's expansionism had been blocked mainly by Bern, as the failure to control the region around Lake Biel (1386–1388) and the war of 1447–1448 had unquestionably proven.⁴⁶ The situation during the early sixteenth century confirmed this framework. We have already seen that the region around Lake Neuchâtel offered no room for a single canton's appetites. Also, in 1517, Bern and Solothurn actively secured other alliances on their own. Bern renewed its own *combourgeoisie* with the commune of Neuchâtel on 9 August (in a still-troubled context arising out of the entire county's status following the Swiss invasion), and Solothurn signed a *combourgeoisie* with Montbéliard on 13 September. The alliance with Besançon in 1518 was the result of a joint policy of Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn. The west and the north were thus blocked for Fribourg, which could only act in agreement with its neighbours. In this rapidly shifting political configuration, the three cities decided to sign a new *combourgeoisie* (21 October 1517),⁴⁷ confirming that the reinforcement of particular alliance networks alongside the Swiss Confederation was still fundamental. For Fribourg, expansion was henceforth possible only to the southwest (see map 4) by forming alliances with Lausanne and Geneva and playing on the internal conflicts between the bishops and the citizens.

In Lausanne, the relationships between the bishop and the city government had already been tense during the episcopate of Benoît de Montferrand (1476–1491), as we have seen in chapter 1. New frictions arose during the 1510s, with the conflict reaching an unprecedented peak in 1517 under the new Bishop Sébastien de Montfalcon. In early November, the two parties appointed Charles II as mediator, and the duke promulgated his sentence on 4 December, putting an end to the conflict. As this sentence reveals, the bishop complained about the many acts committed against his sovereignty, and in particular, he contested the negotiations that the citizens had begun with Fribourg aimed at a *combourgeoisie*. The sentence obliged the citizens to cease their negotiations and to acknowledge the clause the duke had just signed with Bern, and theoretically with Solothurn and Fribourg, concerning foreign burghers.⁴⁸

46 Utz Tremp, *Histoire de Fribourg*, p. 32–42 and 97–98.

47 See table 6 for these treaties.

48 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 99–115. The arbitration is published in *SDVD*, B.1, p. 393–397.

This arbitration is also especially interesting because the duke of Savoy affirmed that he was acting as the “perpetual imperial vicar” and “protector” of the church of Lausanne. The vicariate had already been granted by the emperor (and successively revoked) twice at the end of the fourteenth century,⁴⁹ but on 15 October 1503, Emperor Maximilian I again granted the title of imperial vicariate to Philibert II.⁵⁰ The vicariate stipulated that all Sabaudian bishops had to swear an oath to the duke of Savoy and that this abrogated the episcopal privileges of imperial immediacy. The duke’s jurists believed that the vicariate also applied to Lausanne and Geneva, making the citizens of these cities *mediati* (i.e., the subjects of lords that were vassals of the duke). When the ducal jurists forbade foreign burgherships in the *Statuta* of 1430, they specified that the article applied to “omnes et singuli subditi nostri immediati et mediati”.⁵¹ The clause of the treaty of 1517 sealed with Bern and Fribourg stated only that foreign burgherships were forbidden to “particulares, subditos vel incolas”, but clearly for the Sabaudian jurists, *subditi* meant *immediati et mediati*.

Charles II achieved even more since he was able to place the inhabitants of Lausanne under his protection and receive a formal recognition of his lordship as imperial vicar from them, with the bishop’s rights reserved.⁵² The citizens were certainly not very confident in the effectiveness of the arbitration in their dispute with the bishop. Given the fact that their planned combourgeoisie with Fribourg had been halted, at that time the protection offered by Savoy probably seemed to be the best, if not the only, option available.

Sébastien de Montfalcon, the bishop, immediately contested the sentence, arguing that the text was not consistent with the negotiations he had had with the duke and with the fact that he had been granted the title of vicar of Lausanne in 1510, a title that annulled that taken by the duke. Knowing that he needed support, he turned to Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn. Bern again took the opportunity to intervene, as in 1480, and to act as protector of the church of Lausanne.⁵³ The Swiss cities commanded the citizens to renounce

49 See *supra*, chapter 1, p. 41.

50 The privilege of 1503 is still preserved (ASTo, Corte, Diplomi imperiali, mazzo 9, no. 5) and has been published by Guichenon, *Histoire généalogique*, vol. 4, p. 468–462. The vicariate was later again confirmed 5 August and 7 November 1518 (ASTo, Corte, Diplomi imperiali, mazzo 10, n° 6 e n° 7), and again by Emperor Charles V on 3 May 1521, 4 December 1528 and 13 March 1530 (cf. *RC* 11, p. 583–585).

51 *Statuta Sabaudiae* (1430), III.3.1. Cf. Amman-Doubliez, ed., *La Loi du Prince*, vol. 2, p. 268–269. See also *supra*, p. 82.

52 ASTo, Corte, Paesi, Vaud, Baronie, paq. 4, no. 19 and no. 20.

53 Cf. *supra*, chapter 1, p. 56.

their allegiance to the duke of Savoy and to submit to the bishop, their sole legitimate lord. After almost a year of resistance, the citizens, who were divided over the issue, were forced to accept the Swiss view, and on 10 October 1518, the bishop obtained from the Lausannois the annulment of their fidelity to Savoy.⁵⁴ While this first attempt by Lausanne and Fribourg to form a *combourgeoisie* failed, the Swiss cities strengthened their influence due to the bishop's need for help against Savoy. The lengthy conflict of 1517–1518 shows how much the bishop was compelled to pursue a policy of equilibrium with the Swiss: the *combourgeoisie* was dangerous for his suzerainty, but their protection was necessary against Savoy. The citizens also had to balance their allegiance in the struggle against the bishop: while in 1517, the Fribourg option seemed to be the best one to the majority of them, once the bishop called for Swiss help, the Lausannois were forced to turn to Savoy. The conflict and the swings in allegiance also suggest that the citizens were probably divided about the policies that followed. Unfortunately, the archives contain few sources that would allow us to better understand this discord, which should probably be seen as an indication that there were no structured, violent factions within Lausanne. The conflict stayed on a legal and political level.

In contrast, Fribourg's policy with regard to Geneva went further and triggered a long and harsh factional conflict among the city's elites.⁵⁵ As in Lausanne, the rapprochement came as an initiative of some citizens and was the consequence of the tensions existing between the commune and the Sabaudian princes.⁵⁶ The early years of Charles II's reign, apart from military operations in Chablais (1506), were relatively calm for Genevans and the duke spent most of his time in Piedmont. By 1507–1508, in part because of the Dufour affair, Charles II became increasingly preoccupied with his domains north of the Alps.⁵⁷ During these years, the Genevan municipality often protested about the administration of justice by the Sabaudian vidomne and his infringement on municipal liberties – the *franchises*.⁵⁸ In 1509, the commune opened an inquiry against Jean Trolliet, vidomne since 1506, for his “excesses and extortion”, particularly concerning fines he had imposed. Trolliet was eventually replaced on 28 December.⁵⁹ History repeated itself

54 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 115–125.

55 I presented an initial analysis of this conflict in my “The Prince and the Factions”.

56 For more personal reasons for these conflicts, see the second part of this chapter.

57 Marini, *Savoïardi e Piemontesi*, p. 325–331. For the war in the Chablais, see *supra*, chapter 1, p. 70–71. The duke made his first official visit to Geneva (*joyeuse entrée*) on 6 April 1508 (RC 7, p. 14).

58 On this official, see *supra*, chapter 1, p. 40.

59 RC 6, p. 289; RC 7, p. 85, 108 and 112; Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), p. 34–37, who asserts that Trolliet was not appreciated because he was not a Genevan.

some years later with the new vidomne Aymon Conseil. In 1513, a jurisdictional quarrel with the commune led to a popular tumult and Conseil was even arrested for misconduct.⁶⁰ The situation remained highly explosive for several weeks and Charles II came to town to express his dissatisfaction. The vidomne was finally released, but relationships between the duke and the commune remained tense. It would be wrong to see these cases as unique to Geneva or conclude that Charles II initiated an aggressive policy against Genevans through the vidomne. Complaints about the administration of justice by ducal officials were numerous within the principality and one of the usual requests for reform made by the Estates.⁶¹ In the same year, the duke had to face the opposition of the cathedral chapter and the commune concerning the new bishop.⁶² As we have seen, the canons, supported by the commune and the Swiss, had elected Aymon de Gingins, but Charles II ultimately managed to obtain the see for his candidate Jean de Savoie. And two years later, the chapter and the commune prevented the bishop from selling his jurisdiction over the city to Charles II. This affair remains obscure, but it is certain that, in the first instance, Charles II had obtained a papal bull that the commune and the chapter successfully annulled. Once again, the House of Savoy failed to obtain full sovereignty over Geneva.⁶³

The commune's defence of its jurisdiction and the manoeuvres to back Aymon de Gingins were led by some prominent citizens who would later become leaders of the Eidguenot faction and who were seeking a *combourgeoisie* with Fribourg. Among them were Jean Taccon, Besançon Hugues and particularly Philibert Berthelier, who led the investigation against Trolliet, spearheading the tumult of 1513 and the opposition against the "Sabaudian" bishop Jean de Savoie. Fearing the duke's anger, Berthelier, Hugues and Taccon, along with three other citizens, obtained the burghership of Fribourg during the summer.⁶⁴ Their move was not a novelty; in 1507, another Genevan citizen at odds with the duke, Amé Lévrier, sought and obtained help by becoming a burgher of Fribourg.⁶⁵ And we have seen that the ducal secretary Jean Dufour had also sought refuge in and help from Fribourg.

Support from Fribourg materialised over the course of the summer of 1517. The bishop arrested and tried Jean Pécolat, an associate of Berthelier and

60 On this affair, Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 48–51.

61 Marini, *Savoiardi e Piemontesi*, p. 338–339 and Merlin, "Gli Stati". About princely reforms, see also *infra*, chapter 5.

62 See *supra*, chapter 1, p. 59–60, for details.

63 Cf. Naef, "Claude d'Estavayer", p. 120–121 and Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 67–69.

64 The list in RC 8, p. 290, n. 1. On Hugues and Berthelier, see Borgeaud, "Philibert Berthelier".

65 Van Berchem, "Amé Lévrier".

the other Eidguenots. The trial revealed a plot by Berthelier to assassinate the bishop.⁶⁶ It remains unclear whether this was a show trial intended to fabricate evidence against Berthelier or whether a real plot had been planned. Pécolat's trials ushered in an era of political trials that would continue until the mid-sixteenth century.⁶⁷ On 28 July 1517, the bishop issued an arrest warrant and Berthelier decided to leave the city, taking refuge in Fribourg. By the beginning of August, Fribourg had begun to intercede for Berthelier, its burgher, proclaiming his innocence.⁶⁸

We lack information on how the *combourgeoisie* had been negotiated between Fribourg and some of the Genevans. What is certain is that only a portion of the elite were in favour of an alliance, and given the delicacy of the affair, the negotiations remained discreet. European ambassadors were nevertheless aware of the Genevan attraction to the Swiss. Around August 1517, the well-known Venetian chronicler and politician Marino Sanudo recorded in his diary rumours that Geneva and Constance wished to become Swiss cantons.⁶⁹ Negotiations probably began during Berthelier's exile. Precisely at that time, Lausanne was discussing the option of turning Swiss, and it is therefore possible that their example inspired Berthelier or that Fribourg suggested the option to him. Some other prominent members of the Eidguenot faction were often in Fribourg at that time. Étienne de La Mare was officially sent to Fribourg at the end of December, but the goal of his mission, besides some business related to the Berthelier affair, remains unclear.⁷⁰

The rapprochement became publicly known only on 7 January 1519 when Fribourg admitted eighty-five Genevans as foreign burghers.⁷¹ Such a great number of admissions was normally a first step before a formal *combourgeoisie*,⁷² and Bern, perfectly aware of the problem, immediately wrote to Fribourg to ask that it await further discussions with the duke of Savoy before admitting the Genevans.⁷³ Negotiations nevertheless carried on.

One month later, on 6 February, Besançon Hugues, one of the Eidguenots' main leaders, presented a draft of the *combourgeoisie* before the city's

66 Two copies of the trial exist: AEG, P.C., 1^e série, n° 188 and ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27. Galiffe, *Matériaux*, t. 2, p. 29–93 translated many passages of the Genevan manuscript. On Berthelier, see also *infra* p. 93–96.

67 See also the next section and *infra*, chapter 4 (on the trials during 1534–1536).

68 RC 8, p. 168–172.

69 *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, vol. 24, p. 566: “si voleno far cantoni di Sguizzari”.

70 RC 8, p. 276, n. 4.

71 The list in RC 8, 290, n. 1.

72 Würbler, “Combourgeoisie” (16 February 2005 version) in *e-DHS*.

73 RC 8, 290, n. 1.

General Council for approval. He explained that Fribourg wished to grant the bourgeoisie to the entire commune, not only to specific individuals.⁷⁴ Hugues explained that the treaty did not infringe on the bishop's jurisdiction or on the city's *franchises*, and that no tribute was necessary to conclude the alliance. Although two out of four syndics opposed the combourgeoisie (Pierre Monthion and Claude Vandel), the majority of the council accepted Fribourg's offer. In a letter sent to Fribourg's authorities, the Genevans affirmed their willingness to be "good burghers and true friends".⁷⁵ The letter also reveals that Fribourg had suggested that the alliance could be extended to the city of Solothurn, an eventuality the Genevans appreciated.⁷⁶

Both the bishop and the duke of Savoy immediately contested the possible alliance and turned to the Swiss Diet. Charles II invoked the previous treaties he had signed with the Swiss cantons in 1512 and the treaties and clauses with Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn in particular (1509 and 1517), emphasising that neither of the contracting parties could receive the other party's subjects as burghers nor take them under its protection. For their part, Fribourg's and Geneva's municipal authorities argued that such claims were legally unfounded because Genevan citizens could not be considered subjects of the duke.⁷⁷ Moreover, the combourgeoisie – they argued – was not a new one but simply a renewal.⁷⁸ The reasoning behind these claims needs to be clarified.

It is no surprise that Jean de Savoie, as bishop and lord of the city, contested the right of his subjects to negotiate a combourgeoisie. The first combourgeoisie with Bern and Fribourg, sealed in 1477, had been concluded between the bishop and these two cities,⁷⁹ but now the citizens were acting without the bishop's agreement. And in 1518, the bishop of Lausanne also disputed the right of this city's citizens to ally with Fribourg.

74 No text of this draft is preserved, and we only know the general substance of it thanks to the minutes of the General Council which reported Hugues's speech (RC 8, p. 289–291). Some historians wrongly believed that the combourgeoisie had already been sealed, and that Besançon Hugues presented the charter to the General Council. Cf. Naef, "L'occupation militaire", p. 49, n. 2, who discusses the possible sources of this misunderstanding.

75 RC 8, 291–293: "bons borgois [sic] et vrays amys".

76 We do not know whether discussions between Solothurn and Fribourg had already started, or whether Fribourg's proposal was only a hypothesis. Solothurn's role during these years has not been studied and little has been preserved in the Genevan archives. The fact that only Bern and Fribourg concluded the combourgeoisie of 1526 explains the fact that Solothurn's position has received little attention from Genevan historians. See also *infra*, p. 92.

77 RC 8, p. 296–298.

78 EA, III/2, 1143.

79 Edited in *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 47–52. The treaty expired, as intended, at the death of the bishop (1482).

The reasons for the duke's reaction are less clear at first glance. How could Charles II claim that the Genevans were his subjects? The response lay in the title of imperial vicar. As we saw, the duke used an argument based on this title in Lausanne and he also had already used the title in Geneva some months earlier (in April–May 1518) during the trial of André Navis and Jean Bidelmann – two Genevans accused of conspiring against the bishop. Charles II and his entourage believed that the title of imperial vicar gave the duke supreme jurisdiction over Genevan citizens, just as over any other Sabaudian subject.⁸⁰

Whether this interpretation of the 1517 treaty and the imperial vicariate was correct can be debated. It is less important to assess the legitimacy – or illegitimacy – of the ducal claims than to grasp contemporary perceptions. It must be emphasised that the situation was legally complex and that the vicariate was subject to different interpretations.⁸¹ In other words, legal uncertainty offered the parties substantial room for manoeuvre. The Swiss Diet gathered for the first time in Bern on 21 February and then on 17 March in Zurich, and asked Fribourg to renounce its plans for a *combourgeoisie* and for the Genevans to remain under the bishop's authority.⁸² The legality of the alliance seemed dubious to the Diet, which suggests that Charles II's claims to apply the vicariate to Geneva were not entirely unfounded, or at least not easy to refute. It is also true that, besides the legal implications, more pragmatic considerations certainly played a decisive role: the Diet's desire to avoid war with Savoy and Bern's reluctance to start a conflict over a treaty that was favourable only to Fribourg, which was, after all, a Bernese regional rival.⁸³

Despite the Diet's decision, the Eidguenots and Fribourg continued their attempts to seal the *combourgeoisie*. This defiance provided the duke of Savoy with a good reason to intervene. Charles II entered Geneva with an impressive army of some seven to eight thousand armed men, and on 11 April summoned a General Council.⁸⁴ For their part, the Swiss sent eighteen ambassadors to enforce the Diet's decision without incident. These ambassadors were among the most influential members of the ruling elite of Bern,

80 ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27: see in particular art. 3, 4 and 5 (fol. 29v–30r). On these trials, see *infra*, p. 91 and 95.

81 The precise legal value of the vicariate was also a matter of dispute between the duke and the imperial court. Cf. Tabacco, *Lo Stato sabauda*, p. 59–66.

82 EA, III/2, p. 1137 (letter *m*) and p. 1143–1144.

83 Cf. Scott, *Swiss*, p. 105.

84 On this intervention, see Naef, "L'occupation militaire". For the minutes of this General Council, see RC 8, p. 316–318.

Fribourg, Solothurn and Zurich, a sign of the affair's great importance. The official act of renunciation recognised the duke's right to act as "perpetual vicar of the Holy Empire" and accepted the decision of the Swiss Diet. The attempt to form an alliance with Fribourg was finally abandoned.⁸⁵

In April 1519, the vicariate did not grant the duke his desired sovereignty over Geneva, but it allowed him to annul the *combourgeoisie* and gave him an opportunity to present himself as a good prince who brought peace to the city by eradicating factionalism. Charles II and Jean de Savoie's fight for control of the city continued, and on 27 August 1519, they deposed the four syndics and the Ordinary Council. Among them, Étienne de La Mare and Jean Baud were *Eidguenots*, as were at least eight of seventeen councillors.⁸⁶ The bishop then appointed four new syndics and subsequently all of the city councillors were replaced. Charles II, again acting as imperial vicar and as a mediator appointed by the citizens, also enacted new statutes, including a reform of the election process for syndics. The two princes justified their actions by arguing that the previous election had been illegal and that a reform was necessary to end the factional struggles. In fact, the imperial vicariate granted the duke the power to enact new statutes and intervene in municipal affairs.⁸⁷

Although the official documents present Charles II's intervention as a mediation to restore peace, the reality was more complex. The princely intervention, probably also the result of the wish of the Sabaudian faction (the so-called *Mammelus*) to take control of the situation, had been accompanied by a more assertive policy. Not only did Charles II enter the city with an army – an unprecedented event in recent Genevan history – but the duke and the bishop had also made use of political trials to enforce the deposition of the syndics and councillors. One of the principal architects of the *combourgeoisie*, Philibert Berthelier, was accused of sedition and conspiracy against the bishop and was arrested and brought to trial. A short trial ensued: interrogated for the first time on 22 August, Berthelier was executed the following day, just a few days before Charles II's mediation.⁸⁸

85 This act is printed in *RC* 8, p. 317–318, n. 3.

86 The list of councillors is in *RC* 8, p. 293. Cf. with Genevans who obtained the burghership in January 1519 (*RC* 8, p. 290, n. 1). The *Eidguenot* councillors were Besançon Hugues, Pierre Lévrier, Amédée Malliet, Jacques Neveux, Jean Philippe, Henri Pollier, Hilaire Richardet, and Nantermet Tissot.

87 See the act of deposition executed by the bishop *RC* 8, p. 345–351. See also *infra*, chapter 3, p. 127–138, for a more detailed analysis of princely actions against urban factionalism within the duchy.

88 Van Berchem, "La mort".

The Sabaudian officers beheaded Berthelier on the square in front of the castle on the Rhône. The spectacle was intended for the citizens, to make clear who was the real lord of the city. According to Bonivard, the executioner went through the city showing Berthelier's head and warning the Genevans: "Look at the head of Berthelier the traitor! You all learn the lesson!"⁸⁹

The Sabaudian officers then placed Berthelier's head on a pole close to the bridge on the river Arve, on the road leading south. This practice had in fact become common, and the choice of the site was not random. In the previous year, in April 1518, André Navis and Jean Bidelmann (alias Blanchet), two Genevans, had been arrested in Piedmont and put on trial.⁹⁰ The goal was to find (or fabricate) evidence against Berthelier. On 18 September 1518, the ducal officers found them guilty of sedition and conspiracy: they were part of a plot organised by Berthelier to assassinate the bishop.⁹¹ Navis and Bidelmann were condemned to death and beheaded. The sentence also stipulated that their heads and parts of their bodies should be exposed at the two main entrances to Geneva: at the Croix de Cornavin, where the road from Switzerland entered the city from the north, and on the Arve Bridge.⁹² On 3 October, the two heads with two arms were exposed close to the Augustinian priory, at the bridge.⁹³ We cannot dismiss Charles II's mediation as illegal since his title of imperial vicar entitled him to act as such. His acts were nevertheless accompanied by a campaign of terror that convinced many not to protest.

His success would not last. From early 1525, both the pro-Swiss factions in Lausanne and Geneva again began secret negotiations with Fribourg, Bern and Solothurn to sign a *combourgeoisie*.⁹⁴ Things remain partially unclear, but it is true that Charles II's intervention had not been able to completely eradicate the factions. The prince and the bishops probably thought that unnecessary harshness would not have been effective in eliminating the factions, and no collective exiles were pronounced, leaving the factions intact. In 1525–1526, things went differently – the treaties were officially sealed.

89 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 168.

90 The original proceedings are preserved (ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27), as is the *duplum* (AEG, P.C. 1^e série, n° 192). This second copy is, however, incomplete. See Galiffe, *Matériaux*, vol. 2, p. 166–211, who worked on the Genevan copy and translated some portions of the proceedings.

91 On this plot, and generally on Berthelier, see the next section.

92 ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27, fol. 48r–49v.

93 RC 8, p. 258–259. It is not clear if Navis and Bidelmann's heads were still at the bridge in August 1519 when the Sabaudian officers placed Berthelier's head there. Cf. Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 169 and RC 9, p. 103, n.1.

94 For Lausanne see Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 131–165; for Geneva, a detailed account of these negotiations is provided by Naef, *Fribourg au secours*.

Lausanne concluded the combourgeoisie on 7 December 1525 and Geneva on 28 February 1526.⁹⁵ Although negotiations once again involved Solothurn as well, this city withdrew during the course of the negotiations. Why Solothurn withdrew is unclear: perhaps French pressure, the desire to have a less Bern-dependent policy, uncertainty about the legality of the alliances, fear of the Sabaudian reaction, or more probably a mixture of all these reasons.⁹⁶

Once again, the legality of the treaties was debatable and Charles II invoked the same arguments as in 1517–1519. This time, however, the situation had become more complicated and serious for Savoy: Lausanne and Geneva had managed not only to sign the treaty, but also to include Bern, the real regional power. The combourgeoisies of 1525–1526 ignited a long series of negotiations between the parties – this itself is a sign of the legal uncertainty and complexity of the affair.⁹⁷ In fact, the treaties were also legally problematic with regard to the bishop's rights. Despite some initial protests, the combourgeoisie with Lausanne involved relatively little conflict: no factional struggles erupted (although a Sabaudian party certainly existed in the town), Bishop Sébastien de Montfalcon and Charles II seemed quite defeatist,⁹⁸ and the duke was clearly more bothered by the Genevan situation, which proved to be especially intricate.

Factions in Geneva

The history of early sixteenth-century Savoy north of the Alps was undoubtedly heavily shaped by the diplomatic relations between the duke and the Genevan municipal authorities. Nevertheless, the course of events, in particular individual admissions to the burghership in Fribourg, provides a glimpse of the fact that behind institutions, the historian finds human beings, with their own characters, personal stories and ambitions. We need then to look at their paths as individuals, the reason for their involvement in urban factions, and the way some of them were able to use a city council to advance their faction's goals.

95 Treaties printed in *SDVD*, B.1., p. 54–58 and *SDGE*, t. 2, p. 236–245.

96 Amiet, *Solothurnische Geschichte*, vol. 1, p. 437–438; Poudret, *La Maison*, p. 150 and Freymond, *La politique*, p. 93–94 (during 1526–1530, Francis I generally supported Charles II's claims and negotiations to annul the combourgeoisies). See also *infra*, p. 99–104, both on Solothurn's attitude and on the manner in which the two combourgeoisies were secured.

97 Negotiations only achieved a partial solution with the two treaties of Saint-Julien (19 October 1530) and Payerne (31 December 1530), see *infra*, chapter 3, p. 144–147, for more details.

98 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 163–173.

Philibert Berthelier was no doubt the main architect of the 1519 attempt to agree a *combourgeoisie* between Fribourg and Geneva. The “national” Genevan historiography of the early twentieth century treated him as a hero: the “first martyr of Genevan independence” and one of the “fathers of the *combourgeoisie*” with Fribourg.⁹⁹ This historical interpretation was mainly the consequence of the fact that Geneva became a full member of the Swiss Confederation in 1815, and the early sixteenth-century Eidguenots were later considered to be the new canton’s forefathers.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, modern historians had underestimated the legitimacy of the imperial vicariate.¹⁰¹ Berthelier’s “martyrdom” had thus been interpreted as the price he paid for his fight against the duke of Savoy and his unlawful desire to gain full sovereignty over the city. Berthelier’s resistance was a fight for the defence of civic liberties against princely tyranny.

Yet Philibert Berthelier was a complex figure whose “canonisation” began at a very early stage. The trial against him certainly contained many irregularities, or at least did not follow the ordinary procedure.¹⁰² The four syndics and some members of the Ordinary Council were normally in charge of the examination of accused criminals, leading the trial and sentencing them, a responsibility granted by the *franchises* (art. 12).¹⁰³ The bishop, however, had the possibility to take charge of the case (art. 14), as he did with respect to Berthelier.¹⁰⁴ The trial, albeit grounded in law, was extremely short, and Berthelier, as we have seen, was sentenced only a day after his arrest. The sentence had definitely been predetermined, but we should also view the procedure employed in the light of late medieval judicial practices involving *lèse-majesté*. A short procedure, grounded on exceptions, and the uses of torture were part of institutional violence used to reestablish legitimate authority.¹⁰⁵ On that same day, Berthelier was beheaded inside the city, in front of the castle on the Rhône – and not on the hill in Champel, outside the city walls, where criminals judged in Geneva were usually executed by

99 Borgeaud, “Philibert Berthelier”, p. 12 and Van Berchem, “La mort”, p. 33.

100 Santschi, “Genève et les Suisses”. For the nineteenth-century process of “Swissification”, see also Herrmann, *Genève*. In 1909, in front of the tower of the former episcopal castle on the Rhône Island, where Berthelier had been beheaded, the canton placed a statue of Berthelier and it renamed the little square after him (the plaque still presents him as a “Hero and Martyr of Genevan Independence”).

101 For example, Van Berchem, “Amé Lévrier”, p. 24.

102 A history of criminal justice in late medieval Geneva is sorely lacking. For a short overview of the functioning of justice, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 113–119.

103 *SDGE*, t. 1, p. 190–237.

104 Van Berchem, “La mort”, p. 34–40.

105 Chiffolleau, “Le crime de majesté”, p. 622–623, and 631.

the castellan of Gaillard. Berthelier's trial was a political tool wielded by the bishop and the duke of Savoy to affirm their power.

Much of Charles II's reputation as a tyrant derives from contemporary propaganda. When, during the autumn of 1525, the Eidguenots were negotiating the second *combourgeoisie*, they made wide use of the Berthelier episode and of the other political trials, stating that Charles II "martyred and 'gave the rope to' [i.e., tortured] many poor burghers without reason" and he "tyrannised many others".¹⁰⁶ Berthelier's "martyrdom" was also part of the civic consciousness of the Eidguenot faction, as it was carefully constructed as the party grew in strength. On 23 August 1526, the anniversary of Berthelier's execution, and after the *combourgeoisie* had been signed, a group of a hundred citizens led by one of the leaders of the faction, Jean Baud, asked the authorities to promote a general procession within the city with the participation of all the clergy and liturgical offices in the Augustinian church where Berthelier had been buried, probably since 1521.¹⁰⁷ Jean Baud asked the syndic to pray for the soul of Berthelier, who had died "for the *respublica*" and "for the preservation of the liberties and *franchises*" of Geneva. The attempt to create a civic cult was rooted in a society in which Genevans were "heirs to a late medieval Christianity saturated with sensibilities related to martyrdom."¹⁰⁸ Certainly, Berthelier was not a religious martyr, but for the Eidguenots there was no doubt: Berthelier had died for a righteous cause and was therefore a martyr. They preserved his head as a relic that deserved an appropriate veneration and civic cult.¹⁰⁹

Berthelier's life nevertheless suggests that his fight was not simply motivated by a desire to preserve the common good of the citizens. During his trial, Jean Pécolat affirmed that he had heard Berthelier saying: "The castellan of Peney and [Jean] Portier put me in disgrace with my lord the bishop"¹¹⁰ and that Berthelier frequently said that the bishop had taken the castellany of Peney away from him.¹¹¹

Berthelier had been appointed castellan of Peney in 1513.¹¹² The castle was the seat of the *mandement* of Peney, one of the territories surrounding

¹⁰⁶ RC 10, p. 562 and 564.

¹⁰⁷ RC 10, p. 231. On the burial site, see RC 9, p. 103, n. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Gregory, "Persecutions and Martyrdom", p. 267.

¹⁰⁹ On this topic, see Kantorowicz, "*Pro patria mori*"; Contamine, "Mourir pour la patrie"; Housley, "*Pro Deo et patria mori*"; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead*, p. 180–182; Billoré and Lecuppre, eds., *Martyrs politiques*.

¹¹⁰ ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27, fol. 3v ("Le chatellain de Pigney et [Jean] Porteri m'ont mys la male grace de Monseigneur de Geneve"). Jean Portier was secretary at the vidomne's court and later became the secretary to Bishop Pierre de La Baume. See also *infra*, chapter , p. 157.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, fol. 6r.

¹¹² Galiffe, *Notices*, vol. 1, p. 11.

Geneva over which the bishop exercised some temporal rights (see map 5).¹¹³ The reason for Berthelier's removal is not known. Was his dismissal the reason for his anger towards the bishop and some of his officers? We can also observe that similar evidence can be found in Bonivard's chronicles, with a different narrative, perhaps showing that Berthelier's anger about Peney was justified. According to Bonivard, Berthelier had not been discharged against his will – he voluntarily and publicly renounced his office as castellan of Peney. He did so during one of the conflicts with the vidomne, when he and other citizens holding offices from the bishop were accused of being fonder of the bishop's pensions than of the civic liberties. Bonivard relates the episode in a highly theatrical way: Berthelier came to a meeting with the vidomne carrying his letter of appointment and, when accused of preferring the service (and benefitting from the pension) of the bishop than fighting for municipal liberties, he publicly tore it up as proof of his loyalty to the commune.¹¹⁴ All of this is very doubtful, and it is more plausible to suppose that Bonivard transformed the loss of the office (and the subsequent anger), from a dismissal by the bishop into a voluntary and "patriotic" act.

The trials of Navis and Bidelman reveal some other interesting particulars. It appears that the Sabaudian officers feared a new Dufour affair and suspected that Berthelier had forged documents in his possession. As for the supposed plot against the bishop, it is not easy to understand the real extent of these suspicions. The interrogations of Bidelman and Navis suggest that maybe rumours were circulating in Geneva,¹¹⁵ and Berthelier's exile in Fribourg certainly recalled Dufour's escape and rekindled old fears. Also, since these were trials whose goal was to fabricate evidence against Berthelier, it is not easy to manipulate all of this information. Political trials had to be plausible and if the accusation failed to be believable, the authors of the trials failed in their goal of creating simulated justice.¹¹⁶ We might think that even if the plot to assassinate the bishop was fabricated, Berthelier's anger about his removal as castellan of Peney made the plot plausible.

Berthelier may have had other reasons for being at odds with the duke of Savoy. He and his family were not Genevans. Philibert was born, probably

113 Piguet, "Peney" (27 November 2009 version), in *e-DHS*. The bishop of Geneva also had temporal rights over two other *mandements*: Jussy and Thiez. For further details, see La Corbière, Piguet and Santschi, *Terres et châteaux*.

114 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1551), t. 2, p. 37–38, 101–102, and 112.

115 ASTo, GE, cat. 1, paq. 9, n° 27, fol. 5r.

116 Villard, "Faux complots", p. 532.

around 1462, in Virieu-le-Grand, a fief of René, the Grand Bâtard.¹¹⁷ During the years 1500–1502, he appears in René's entourage, accompanying him during embassies or interceding with him on behalf of the Geneva Commune.¹¹⁸ The Grand Bâtard frequently sojourned in Geneva during the 1490s and had on many occasions pleaded the Genevan cause about the fairs and about a fiscal quarrel with the duke of Savoy.¹¹⁹ When René, following his disgrace at the Sabaudian court, entered into the service of the king of France, Berthelier accompanied him and served his master during the military campaign in Italy. Berthelier was back in town in late 1503, and his relationship with the Grand Bâtard seems to have ended there. The motives for this rupture remain, once again, unknown.

It is interesting to note that Berthelier's political life at the service of the Genevan municipality began immediately after René's fall. In 1505, he sat on the Council of Fifty and during the following years he held many official duties from the commune.¹²⁰ In 1512, his political rise was complete and he was co-opted as a councillor on the Ordinary Council for the first time. From that date, he sat on the council every year until his flight to Fribourg in 1517.¹²¹ The Grand Bâtard's disgrace certainly closed a door for his social ascension within the Sabaudian country. His civic commitments in Geneva were thus necessary for his social and political elevation. Berthelier appears not to have been an isolated case. A number of other charismatic figures shared similar biographical paths, with personal business and quarrels – rather than civic commitment and “democratic” political ideals – as a more reasonable explanation for their commitment to either of the factions.

François Bonivard was among the eighty-five Genevans collectively admitted to the burghership of Fribourg on 7 January 1519, and was certainly among the first Eidguenots. As with Berthelier, the Genevan national historiography of the nineteenth century portrayed him as a champion in the fight for civic liberties against Savoy, and Lord Byron made him a romantic hero in his poem published in 1816, which strongly helped shape his fame. Nevertheless, materialistic explanations and personal grudges played an important role as well. In fact, Bonivard's family originally had close ties with the House of Savoy. His great-uncle Urbain (died 1499) and his uncle Jean-Amé (died 1514) were both councillors to the dukes, and had, among

117 Naef, *Bezanson Hugues*, p. 39, n. 3.

118 *RC* 6, p. 33; *DHBS*, t. 2, p. 138; Callet, *Philibert Berthelier*, p. 8–24.

119 *RC* 5, p. 397, 429, 431, 467, 450, 479. On these fiscal issues, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 155–159.

120 Borgeaud, “Philibert Berthelier”, p. 8–9.

121 *RC* 7, p. 239–240, 317, 396; 8, p. 22, 85 and 144.

other ecclesiastical benefices, the rich abbey of Notre-Dame in Pinerolo and the Cluniac priory of Saint-Victor in Geneva. Jean-Amé also possessed the priory of Payerne.¹²² However, at the death of his uncle Jean-Amé, Bonivard obtained only the priory of Saint-Victor. Payerne went to another canon of Geneva, Jean de la Forest,¹²³ and Jean de Savoie (the bishop of Geneva since 1513) obtained Notre-Dame in Pinerolo. It is quite possible that Bonivard wanted to secure his uncle's entire heritage and that the loss especially of the abbey in Pinerolo made him angry at the bishop and the duke of Savoy, the latter of whom was the main person responsible for securing these benefices for others.¹²⁴ In fact, in his *Chronicles*, Bonivard's description of Jean de Savoie is certainly not flattering; he writes with much anger, portraying him as a lustful and tyrannical prelate and insinuates that the bishop poisoned his uncle Jean-Amé and forged some acts in order to obtain the benefice of Notre-Dame.¹²⁵ In the end, more than a patriot, Bonivard was a man obsessed with his benefices, as is also clearly demonstrated by his tireless struggle to recover Saint-Victor, which he lost in 1519 and never recovered.¹²⁶

Étienne de La Mare, whom we already met at the beginning of this chapter, also followed a winding path, leading him from a commitment to the Eidguenots in 1519 to his exile in 1526 as a Mammelu. According to Bonivard, his change in alliance was the fruit of a quarrel with Jean Philippe, who had married one of his sisters, but the reasons and the link between these two facts remain obscure, although we know that Philippe was an Eidguenot.¹²⁷ Like Berthelier, de La Mare had begun to gravitate into the Sabaudian orbit and in 1513, he received letters of nobility from Charles II.¹²⁸ Four years later, he married Yolande de Gingins, from a powerful noble family of the region. Her first cousin was Aymon de Gingins, the unfortunate cathedral chapter candidate for the episcopal see of Geneva in 1513, whom we have also already met. At that time, Aymon had the backing of the Swiss and the commune.¹²⁹

122 On Urbain and Jean-Amé, see *HS* III/2, p. 306–310 and 459–460. On François Bonivard, *HS* III/2, p. 310–320 is still the necessary starting point. See also Caesar, “Bonivard, François”.

123 *HS* IV/1, p. 184–185.

124 Galiffe, *Matériaux*, vol. 1, p. xxv; Berghoff, *François de Bonivard*, p. 54–61; *HS* III/2, p. 315, n. 13; Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2, p. 54–56 and 186–187.

125 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), t. 2 p. 64, 71–79 and Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1551), t. 2, p. 27 and 55.

126 *HS* III/2, p. 311–314.

127 Cf. Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1551), t. 2, p. 270 (“variantes”). On Jean Philippe, note in Baechler, *Le Petit conseil*, t. 2, p. 525.

128 Mottier, “La rupture”, p. 226–229.

129 Cf. *supra*, chapter 1, p. 59–60.

Was this the reason Etienne chose the Eidguenot party? We do not know, but it seems plausible.¹³⁰ Besides Bonivard's allegations about his quarrel with Jean Philippe, it is difficult to explain Etienne's switch to the Mammelu faction. However, it is possible that family disputes were in fact the main reason: while Aymon de Gingins stayed in town after the combourgeoisie of 1526 and became vicar of the bishop the next year, François de Gingins, a cousin of Aymon's, joined the Sabaudian Confraternity of the Spoon in 1527, a league of noblemen backing the duke of Savoy in his attempt to seize control of Geneva.¹³¹

Interestingly, some of the Eidguenots, and especially the leaders, were from families only recently established in town: Philibert Berthelier was from Vireu-le-Grand and permanently settled in town only at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Bonivards were a Sabaudian noble family straddling both sides of the Alps; François arrived in Geneva only in 1514, taking possession of his benefice of Saint-Victor. The same is true for other prominent Eidguenots. Besançon Hugues, one of the charismatic leaders who negotiated the combourgeoisie of 1526, came from a family that acquired the bourgeoisie only in 1477.¹³² And Amé Lévrier – another prominent Eidguenot executed after a show trial in Turin – also came from a family that acquired the burghership possibly only during the last quarter of the fifteenth century.¹³³ These newcomers came to town with some social capital and their arrival expanded their possibilities for social ascension. Their rise within the municipal institutions was not an exceptional fact. This was common in Renaissance Geneva: throughout the fifteenth century, access to the municipal offices was relatively open and changes to the ruling elite the norm.¹³⁴

Looking at the Lévrier family, other paths emerge. Pierre Lévrier, Amé's father, had been the ducal secretary, held offices for the bishop and was a member of the municipal ruling elite.¹³⁵ His son, before becoming a committed Eidguenot, had ties to a ducal official in Turin and began his career as a judge within the episcopal administration of one of the most pro-Sabaudian Genevan bishops: Jean de Savoie.¹³⁶ Again, this was a typical

130 His brother Jean junior was among the Genevan citizens admitted to the burghership of Fribourg in January 1519 (cf. *supra*, p. 87).

131 *HS I/3*, p. 185 and Mottier, "La rupture", p. 227, n. 28. See *infra*, chapter 3, p. 143–144, for more details.

132 Naef, *Bezanson*, p. 25.

133 Van Berchem, "Amé Lévrier", p. 3–4.

134 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 93–98.

135 Cf. *SDGE*, t. 2, p. 89, and Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 60, 65–66 and 301–302.

136 Cf. Van Berchem, "Amé Lévrier", p. 8–11.

profile of Renaissance Genevan urban elites, for whom three career paths were available: the city, the diocesan administration and the Sabaudian court. And the same remarks apply to Bonivard, Hugues and Berthelier, all of whom, before joining the Eidguenot faction, gravitated around Sabaudian and episcopal offices. What changed is that, for various reasons, all of these leaders, with the notable exception of Hugues, saw their rise within the Sabaudian or episcopal milieus halted, and thus had reasons for personal resentment towards the bishop or the duke of Savoy. The Swiss choice was therefore not only a “civic choice”, but also a new path for pursuing social ascension.

The positions and power these leaders were able to obtain in a relatively short span of time, as well as the success of the Eidguenots, calls for further explanation. How was it possible for the Eidguenots to conclude a *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg in 1526 after the setback of 1519? A first answer is that propaganda and a certain charismatic attitude of some of the leaders seem to have played an important role.¹³⁷ Reading the course of the events, especially those that led to the new *combourgeoisies* of Bern and Fribourg with Lausanne and Geneva in 1526–1526, one is struck by the sudden changes and unexpected turns.¹³⁸ As for 1518–1519, it is noteworthy that the new diplomatic negotiations with Lausanne and Geneva in 1525–1526 were led by Fribourg. Bern and Solothurn took a very cautious attitude, certainly aware that the difficulties that arose in 1519 with the duke of Savoy were still a possible cause of conflict.¹³⁹ The situation was particularly complex for Geneva, mainly due to the Eidguenots’ political activity in Fribourg and Bern during the autumn of 1525.¹⁴⁰ Solothurn in particular was sceptical and unsure about the real extent of the Sabaudian “tyranny”. On 8 October 1525, the Small Council of the city wrote to Bern that reports by Solothurn’s ambassador suggested that the Eidguenots were exaggerating the exactions of the Sabaudian officers. Solothurn’s councillors also suggested that Fribourg was supporting the Eidguenots because of their hatred for Charles II and their financial quarrels with him.¹⁴¹ Bern was also mindful

137 With Jaeger (*Enchantment*, p. 9 and 26), this charisma can be defined as “a kind of force and authority exercised by people with an extraordinary personal presence” which “ordinarily presents itself via some kind of performance”.

138 I have already discussed, in a more concise form, some of the ideas presented here in “Popular Assemblies”.

139 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 142–143 and Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 62–63.

140 Caesar, “The Prince”, p. 110–111.

141 In December 1525, Fribourg was still trying to obtain 15,000 golden *écus* (as stipulated in 1519) from the duke of Savoy. This sum constituted war reparations that the duke of Savoy had agreed

of the fact that the Eidguenots were carrying out an intense and partially misleading propaganda campaign. On 12 October, the city wrote back to Solothurn, informing them of the mounting ire aimed at the duke of Savoy among the Bernese populace within the city and in the countryside. Bern had also already alarmed the duke with rumours that were widely circulating among the Swiss cantons concerning his “cruelties” directed towards the Genevans.¹⁴² On 23 October, Bern’s authorities had to write to their subject communities in the Oberland, warning them that some rebellious Genevans were falsely accusing the duke of Savoy and stating that since they were nothing more than ordinary troublemakers, they were not to be trusted.

We do not know precisely what kind of arguments the Eidguenots were circulating among the Swiss and among Bern’s peasants. They almost certainly included the “martyrisation” of Berthelier, Bidelmann, Navis and Lévrier and the portrayal of Charles II as a “tyrant”, the latter an argument that had been invoked before the city council.¹⁴³ Possibly the turmoil of the Peasants’ War, which reached Bern and its territories in April and May 1525, also played a role. Genevan arguments portraying the duke of Savoy as a tyrant persecuting poor burghers and disregarding municipal liberties were heard by people who had already been alerted by similar discourse coming from southern Germany.¹⁴⁴ The Eidguenots’ propaganda had also been facilitated by some familiar linkages. On 9 February 1526, anxious Bernese councillors wrote to Fribourg when armed troops from Gessenay (a mountainous region south of Bern) marched towards Geneva to aid the Eidguenots, potentially triggering a war against Savoy. The fact is explained by political ties: the community of Gessenay had a *combourgeoisie* with Bern, and at the end of the fifteenth century and in the first decades of the sixteenth century was quite autonomous. Moreover, the Offischers, a prominent Eidguenot family living in Geneva but native of Gessenay, were involved in the expedition and played a central role in spreading anti-Sabaudian rumours.¹⁴⁵

Ultimately, Bern decided to support Fribourg’s position, while Solothurn adopted a more prudent attitude and chose not to sign the *combourgeoisie*. It is not totally clear what exactly made Bern’s government decide to sign the *combourgeoisie*. At the end of 1525, the Small Council was still officially

to pay following Fribourg’s military intervention attempting to preserve the *combourgeoisie* in 1519 (cf. Naef, “L’occupation militaire”, p. 63–65).

142 Letter dated 11 October 1525, printed in *RC* 10, p. 565–566.

143 Cf. *supra*, p. 93–94 and *RC* 10, p. 583.

144 Cf. Brady, *Turning Swiss*, p. 39–41 and Blickle, *Die Revolution*. A similar situation occurred again in 1535 when peasants from Bern wanted to rescue Geneva from the Sabaudian threat. Cf. Santschi, “Les mandements”, p. 360–371.

145 Caesar, “The Prince”, p. 110–111.

opposed to it.¹⁴⁶ Possibly, Bern's cautious attitude was also the result of the activities of Sabaudian pensioners within the council.¹⁴⁷ The final decision to accept the alliance came from the Great Council (also called the Council of Two Hundred).¹⁴⁸ This council was particularly hostile towards Charles II and inclined to believe the rumours the Eidguenots were circulating.¹⁴⁹ Also, some weeks before, between 27 November and 7 December 1525, the *combourgeoisie* with Lausanne had already been formally accepted and signed. Here again, in Bern, the Great Council had taken the lead in this decision.¹⁵⁰ Thus the similarity of the situation – two episcopal cities whose bishops held imperial immediacy – provided a good argument for signing a second treaty with Geneva in early February 1526. It also appears that, at least in part, the idea of supporting civic liberties against feudal oppression played a role within Bern's Great Council.

The power of these kinds of large councils during the process of approving a *combourgeoisie* appears important and deserves further reflection, as the Genevan case shows. In February 1526, Besançon Hugues and the Eidguenots returned to Geneva to secure the community's final approval of the treaty. The ratification took place in two meetings. In the first stage, the Council of Fifty¹⁵¹ was summoned for Saturday, 24 February, to hear Hugues's speech and learn about the content of the *combourgeoisie*.¹⁵² However, according to the city secretary, more than 300 people were in attendance at the council

146 Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 214–215.

147 Scott, *Swiss*, p. 109 and Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 143. There were pensions of various kinds. On the one hand, there were official pensions, paid by the duke as part of the alliance treaties he had with the Swiss. On the other hand, many "personal" pensions were granted to individuals for their lobbying activities within the city councils. Sometimes war compensations could take the form of annual payments and then be labelled in the sources as "pensions". The precise extent and role of Sabaudian pensioners in Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn has never been studied, and would certainly deserve an in-depth analysis. Archival evidence might be found in ASTo, SR, Inv. 16 (the General Treasurer's accounts) and ASTo, Corte, *Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno*, *Obblighi e quietanze* and *Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero*, *Traités avec les Suisses*. For the importance of pensions in the Swiss cities, see Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, p. 90–138; Körner, *Solidarités*, p. 110–116, Rogger, "Mit Fürsten"; Rogger, *Geld, Krieg und Macht* and von Greyerz, Holenstein, Würgler, eds., *Soldgeschäfte*.

148 Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 214.

149 Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 90, quoting a letter of Bern's Small Council.

150 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 147–151.

151 A sort of intermediary council, between the Ordinary Council and the General Council, summoned to vote on exceptional matters. The composition and the frequency of its meetings varied greatly during the first decades of the sixteenth century. For more details, cf. Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 89–91.

152 RC 10, p. 202–207.

meeting. Jean Balard, a member of the ruling elite, noted in his journal that they were close to the Eidguenots and that the council became a sort of informal General Council.¹⁵³ The purpose was certainly to exert pressure and obtain a sort of preapproval of the treaty. The citizens were in fact assembled a second time the following day. This time, the authorities summoned the regular General Council, which comprised all the city's householders, and Besançon Hugues again gave his speech supporting the *combourgeoisie*.¹⁵⁴ Hugues's speech and the community's subsequent approval of the treaty were documented by the city secretary in detail.

Hugues's harangue opened with a highly dramatic and rhetoric-filled story of the adventures that brought the Eidguenots to Fribourg to escape the Mammelus and the duke of Savoy:

Gentlemen, as you know, about five or six months ago, on 15 September 1525, after the Feast of the Holy Cross, we left the city in a great hurry, taking different paths and without exactly knowing where each of us was nor where we should go in order to avoid the rage of the very illustrious prince *Monseigneur* [the duke] of Savoy. [...]. Gentlemen, it was not easy, since the archers and the servants of the aforesaid lord, the Monseigneur of Savoy, pursued us as far as Saint-Claude, and from Saint-Claude to Besançon, and even further. For that reason, we had to journey night and day, in the forest, and with the rainfall, without knowing where we could take refuge. However, considering that we had some merchant friends in Fribourg, we headed toward that place.¹⁵⁵

Hugues continued his story by reporting on the successful negotiations with Bern and Fribourg, and then displayed the parchment constituting the *combourgeoisie*, to which the seals of Bern and Fribourg had been affixed:

[...] this bourgeoisie, that has been concluded thanks to their good will [i.e., Bern's and Fribourg's], we hounded and obtained at our own expense, in the name of the entire community of this city of Geneva. And you see here the letters well-sealed and well-bulled with their great seals. It is set

¹⁵³ Balard, *Journal*, p. 51. The secretary also asserted that the council had been summoned *admodum generale* (RC 10, p. 202). Jean Balard kept a journal of events in Geneva from March 1525 to October 1531. The journal is not so much a chronicle but consists of personal minutes and observations of the city council meetings. In fact, Balard had been a syndic in 1525 and 1530, and he sat on the Ordinary Council for many years.

¹⁵⁴ RC 10, p. 207–210.

¹⁵⁵ RC 10, p. 204–205. Original text in French, all translations are my own.

down in German, but I am going to tell you the essentials, article after article, without lying about anything.¹⁵⁶

Hugues then provided a translation and summary of the *combourgeoisie* and concluded his speech.¹⁵⁷ At that point, Girardin Bergeyron, one of the city's syndics, addressed the population, asking:

"Gentlemen, do you want to approve, accept and ratify the bourgeoisie?" And almost everyone answered: "Yes! Yes!" Afterwards, the syndic asked again: "Those gentlemen who want the bourgeoisie raise their hands as a sign of ratification." And that said, only a few did not raise their hands, most saying "We want it and approve it!"¹⁵⁸

This first plebiscite was followed by a show of hands, which was less a proper vote than simply a pro forma ratification of the decision that had already been taken by the plebiscite. The use of the plebiscite in relation to the treaties should be seen as a way of approving them without engaging in debates which might have inflamed the factional conflicts and, from the Eidguenots' perspective, create a risk that the *combourgeoisie* would be revoked. Not surprisingly under the circumstances, on 23 May 1529, the Council of Two Hundred ratified a ruling which forbade debate on the *combourgeoisie* on pain of death.¹⁵⁹

The way in which the *combourgeoisie* was presented to the community raises some questions. Facing such an important decision, we might have expected a different presentation of the alliance; however, it appears that no one asked to review the act and that there was no discussion of the articles that had been briefly summarised and translated by Besançon Hugues. Simon Teuscher has demonstrated that during this period the materiality of official acts, the way in which they were presented, and the reliability of the person presenting them, were of more weight than their actual content.¹⁶⁰ In fact, Besançon Hugues showed the council the parchment and stressed that the treaty had been "well-bulled", showing the great seals as proof. Also, his somewhat dramatic story should be seen as intended as evidence of

¹⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 205.

¹⁵⁷ The original sealed parchment that Hugues displayed to the population was in fact written in German. The document is still preserved in the Genevan archives: AEG, P.H. 964.

¹⁵⁸ RC 10, p. 208. The secretary recorded that only six people (members of the Mammelus) voted against the *combourgeoisie*.

¹⁵⁹ RC 11, p. 262–263.

¹⁶⁰ Teuscher, *Lords' Rights*, p. 166–196.

the validity of the *combourgeoisie*, and not as a simple theatrical tool used to move the crowd. His story was the narrative of persecuted people who sought refuge and protection from the duke of Savoy, presented as an unjust and violent prince. During the speech, Bern and Fribourg were described as “true protectors of the ecclesiastical cities” (i.e., Geneva and Lausanne), and their actions were characterised as the only way the Swiss were able to “give rest and peace within the city”. This explanation was necessary to prove that the Swiss were not trying to inflame the city’s factional struggles, but rather that they simply desired to restore peace and protect the city from the duke of Savoy.¹⁶¹ This argument about restoring peace was exactly the same argument that the duke had used in 1519 to annul the first attempt at a *combourgeoisie* with Fribourg. Ultimately, the speech and the displaying of the parchment as a sort of civic relic must be considered to have been a part of the processes of ratification and promulgation.¹⁶² Recent research on late medieval Italian factionalism has suggested that storytelling was not simply a “tool of propaganda”, a way to convince people. It was also an essential component in building the identity of the faction. Sharing a story, creating boundaries between “us” and “them”, could strengthen the group and thus its collective action.¹⁶³

After the return of the Eidguenots’ leaders and the ratification of the alliance with the Swiss, many families started to worry about its repercussions. On 26 February 1526, a tumult against the Mammelus erupted in Geneva, and some families and individuals fled the city in fear of their lives.¹⁶⁴ The exact number of fugitives remains difficult to determine: according to Jean Balard’s journal, some twelve people had already left in March. They adopted the same tactic the Eidguenots had used around 1519: some of them went to Bern and Fribourg, trying to find support from those who had been against the new *combourgeoisie* and pushing for the dissolution of the treaty recently sealed.¹⁶⁵

After this first outbreak of violence, the situation remained relatively calm within the town until late summer 1526. At that time, debates over

161 RC 10, p. 205.

162 The same kind of ritual was adopted, for example, to promulgate the Statutes of Savoy in 1430 in Geneva and Chambéry (*SDGE*, vol. 1, p. 321–324) and, later, for the ratification of the Payerne judgement in 1531 (*RC* 12, p. 49–50). The Payerne judgement (31 December 1530) was the arbitration decision of the Swiss cantons concerning the legality of the *combourgeoisie* of 1526. It took the form of a parchment with eleven seals (*AEG*, P.H. 1055). See also *infra*, chapter 3.

163 Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, p. 19.

164 Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 259.

165 Balard, *Journal*, p. 55.

the legality of the *combourgeoisie* had resurfaced, and its permanence was still quite uncertain. After all, a new Sabaudian “restoration”, as in 1519, was not an unlikely event. By September, political energy rose again: on 6 and 7 September, the city councils decided to strip burghership rights from those who had left and were “plotting” with the duke of Savoy in attempting to annul the *combourgeoisie*. The decision was the result of tension and popular pressure: at the Council of Fifty, many people attended who were not members of the council and the decision during the General Council was taken among quarrels and confusion.¹⁶⁶

Faced with these troubles, Fribourg and Bern took a cautious stance and insisted several times – in March, and twice during August and September – that the Eidguenots allow the Mammelus to return to the city and that they not start criminal proceedings as a way of restoring peace among the elites.¹⁶⁷ The two cities wanted to avoid being considered a source of factionalism. They also feared that actions of dubious legality taken against the Mammelus or punishments against them might trigger renewed military intervention by the duke. Few possibilities worried the Swiss Diet more in 1526 than a war with Savoy. The Eidguenots in Geneva replied that readmitting the Mammelus would be a dangerous source of division that might reignite the internal factional conflicts.¹⁶⁸

Events accelerated again with the Cartellier-Servel affair.¹⁶⁹ A rich cloth merchant, François Cartellier, a native of Bourg-en-Bresse, acquired burghership in 1502, and became syndic in 1516 and then again in 1521. The Eidguenots, who considered him to be a leading Mammelu responsible for Berthelier’s death, arrested him on 23 December 1526 and put him on trial.¹⁷⁰ Initially, the bishop granted him pardon, as was within his power as lord of the city, but popular pressure forced the syndics to continue the trial. On 9 January 1527, the authorities also arrested Jacques Servel, another suspect whose name appears in the interrogation reports of Cartellier, and immediately put him on trial.¹⁷¹ The interrogations of Cartellier and Servel enabled the authorities to draw up a list of twenty-eight people suspected of

166 RC 10, p. 237–238. See also the account given by Balard, *Journal*, p. 71–72 and Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1551), p. 277.

167 RC 10, p. 218–219, 233, 245.

168 Balard, *Journal*, p. 63.

169 A summary in Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 26–34. The trial against Cartellier is AEG, P.C., 2^e série, no 138. Partial analysis in Galiffe, *Matériaux*, vol. 2, p. 233–268.

170 Cartellier sat on the Ordinary Council every year from 1517 to 1525, with the only exception of 1519 (he joined the council that year only after the Sabaudian restauration in August). Cf. table 7.

171 The trial against Jacques Servel is AEG, P.C., 2^e série, no. 137.

having actively plotted in 1519 to annul the *combourgeoisie* and submit the city to the duke's authority.¹⁷² This list was the legal basis for the collective trial against the Mammelû party that began on 12 July 1527. Once again, Bern and Fribourg asked the commune to show mercy towards Cartellier, Servel and other people accused of treason.¹⁷³ Their pleas were finally successful: Cartellier was released on 28 April 1527 and returned to his hometown of Bourg-en-Bresse. Jacques Servel was also released some months later, in July, according to the Sabaudian officers and thanks to Fribourg's intercession.¹⁷⁴

Apart from shedding light on the aims of Bern and Fribourg, which were attempting to avert war with Savoy, the Cartellier-Servel affair reveals that the Eidguenots were not a homogeneous party: on the one side, there was a moderate wing, the *évesquains* led by Besançon Hugues. On the other side, there stood a more popular and radical wing, the *communaire*s, who were in favour of punishing everyone suspected of collusion during the period 1519–1525 and of seizing their property; this wing was led by Baudichon de La Maisonneuve, the Vandel brothers, Jean Pécolat and Pierre de La Thoy, all of them early Eidguenots. The *communaire*s advanced their views by stirring up popular pressure, either during the General Council or through demonstrations before large crowds.¹⁷⁵

Certainly, Bern's promise of maintaining the *combourgeoisie* gave assurance to the more radical wing of the Eidguenots. The news of this promise arrived in town with the Genevan ambassadors on 31 August¹⁷⁶ and sparked the disturbance of 6 and 7 September. The acceleration of events and the decision to proceed with a criminal trial were certainly the result of the radical wing's actions. Moreover, Pierre de La Baume's attitude and his willingness to pursue a moderate policy towards the Mammelûs fuelled the fear of some of the

172 See Cartellier interrogations of 12, 19 and 21 January (AEG, P.C., 2^e série, no. 138, p. 72, 89 and 94) and Servel interrogation of 3 April (AEG, P.C., 2e série, no. 137, p. 27). They explicitly named twenty-eight suspects: Pierre and Antoine de Versonnex, Pierre Monthion, Jaques Servel, Léonard du Pont, Pierre Joly, Michel Nergaz, Guillaume Danel, Hugonin Fabri, Antoine de Fonte, Dominique Varember, Bernardin Varember, Pierre Vieux, Jacques Furjon, Mathieu Lucian, François Testu, Humbert Bernard, Étienne *Biollesii*, François de Leamon, Claude Porta, Pierre Fernex senior, Pierre Fernex junior, Jean Bourdon, André Girard, Jean Boissons, Pierre Jacquier, Jean Bovier and François Forneract, and added that the total number of people involved was about forty or fifty.

173 RC 10, p. 311, n. 21 and 352, n. 1 and Freymond, *La politique*, p. 93–94.

174 RC 10, p. 617.

175 Cf. Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 27–41, 145–152; Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), p. 6–15. The name *communaire*s derived from politics based on popular (the *commun*) support. The *évesquains* were those more inclined to find a compromise with the bishop (*évêque*).

176 Cf. RC 10, p. 233 n. 1.

Eidguenots. It is no mere accident that the criminal proceedings started during the days of 13–15 July 1527 when the city seemed more in danger than ever.¹⁷⁷ Bern and Fribourg were negotiating for at least some of the Mammelus to be reintegrated and to recover their property.¹⁷⁸ A new Sabaudian restauration was a real threat, or at least many wanted to believe this and have it believed: it was therefore necessary to eliminate every possible colluding enemy.

The collective trial involved fifty-two witnesses interrogated during 24–27 July 1527 about events that took place during the Mammelus government of 1519–1526.¹⁷⁹ The long procedure ended with a sentence, approved by the Council of Two Hundred on 21 February 1528 and officially pronounced the same day.¹⁸⁰ The syndics condemned forty-seven Mammelus in absentia for their “conspiracies, seditions, and treasons against the person of our very reverend and feared [*redouté*] lord and prince [the bishop] and against his authority and jurisdiction, as well as against the *Franchises* and liberties of the city.”¹⁸¹ The Mammelus were condemned to be beheaded and their bodies divided into four parts to be placed in four prominent places of the city as a warning for everyone. The sentence also stated that all their properties and goods in Geneva should be seized and sold. Finally, the syndics, as judges in the trial, also decided that the names of the condemned must be engraved in a stone to be placed in a preminent spot in the city for future and perpetual memory, so that none of their descendants could be elected as a syndic, councillor or officer of Geneva.¹⁸²

The prosecution of the Mammelus was not motivated by politics alone. Economic reasons must also be taken into account. During autumn 1526, the commune’s finances were still highly disrupted by the cost of the troubled annulment of the combourgeoisie in 1519: the military events of that year had cost 18,000 florins, a huge sum corresponding to four to six times the average of the commune’s ordinary income.¹⁸³ The deficit was normally

177 See also *infra*, chapter 3 p. 142 about the rumours that circulated about a possible kidnapping of de La Baume and an invasion of the city by Sabaudian troops.

178 EA, IV/1a, p. 1150–1151.

179 AEG, P.C., 2^e série, n° 228bis, p. 2–8 (list of witnesses), p. 10–207 (interrogations). See table 7 for details about the people convicted.

180 RC 11, p. 9.

181 AEG, P.C., 2^e série, n° 228bis, p. 257–262 (sentence).

182 On 31 December 1528, the Ordinary Council decided to inscribe their names on three pillars to be erected in three main places within the city: Molard, Bourg-de-Four and Saint-Gervais (on the *rive droite* of the Rhône), RC 11, p. 174 and 322.

183 Some 14,000 florins had been paid directly to Fribourg. The commune’s average income during these years was between 3,000 and 4,500 florins. On these financial issues, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 194–211 and p. 311–312.

satisfied by loans and the levying of *gabelles* (indirect taxes) on wine, meat and salt.¹⁸⁴ In September 1526, time had come to pay back many loans, and a *gabelle* on wine was imposed.¹⁸⁵ According to the journal of the syndic Balard, during the General Council of 6 September, some people proposed taking an inventory of the property of the fugitives and using it to repay the loans instead of levying a *gabelle*. The proposal was dismissed because it was illegal without a formal judgement.¹⁸⁶

The trial and condemnation of February 1528 thus offered the possibility of legally seizing many houses, barns and lands within the city and in the suburbs. Many goods were also seized in merchants' houses and stores. In Dominique Varember's *apotheca*, for example, the authorities seized woollen cloths and fustians coming from his town of origin, Chieri.¹⁸⁷ The same happened with other Mammelus merchants whose boutiques and ateliers were full of valuable items. All of these properties and goods were later sold or rented out at great profit to the commune. The sale was so large that the general treasurer had to create new registers for the administration of all the transactions.¹⁸⁸ In 1529, the sale brought in the enormous sum of 25,410 florins for the commune's treasury.¹⁸⁹ During 1531–1533, the selling and renting was still going on. For these three years, the seized goods brought in 14,476 florins, representing forty-four per cent of the commune's income for those years. Perrin Peyrolier, the wealthy merchant we previously encountered in chapter 1, had property that amounted to thirty per cent of the total proceeds.¹⁹⁰ The goods of the Mammelus benefited not only the commune. Many houses in the city's best neighbourhoods (such as the Madeleine) were sold at advantageous prices. According to Bonivard, the three people chosen to make the inventories and administer the sales took advantage of the opportunity to steal property and money.¹⁹¹ In the end, the prosecution of the Mammelus was not only a political necessity to prevent the harm the city would suffer from factional struggles, but it was also driven by financial opportunities, both for the commune and for

184 About the *gabelles*, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 248–255.

185 RC 10, p. 235–237.

186 Balard, *Journal*, p. 71 and RC 10, p. 236–238.

187 AEG, P.C. Annexes, n° 1bis, fol. 25v. Chieri and the Piedmont were important centres for the production of fustians, see Nam, *Le commerce*, p. 359–360. On the Varember's commercial activities, see also *supra*, chapter 1, p. 36–37.

188 AEG, Finances M, n° 20 and P.C., Annexes, n° 1, 1^{bis} and 1^{ter}. For similar sales in 1534–1536, see *infra*, chapter 4, p. 165–166.

189 AEG, Finances M, n° 20, fol. 71r.

190 AEG, Finances M, n° 21, fol. 123v–139v and 142rv.

191 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), p. 26.

private individuals. This might also explain why the list of the banished included some people who were not at the forefront of politics.

In fact, some presences and absences in the list of people condemned in 1527 are intriguing. As we saw, Perrin Peyrolier was among those banished – but his brother Perceval was not. Yet Perceval Peyrolier had been elected a syndic on two occasions (in 1497 and 1502) and sat many years on the Ordinary Council, almost every year between 1500 and 1519.¹⁹² After that date, his political life became more discreet and we know that he was among the people who left the city in 1526 after the comeback of the Eidguenots and the *combourgeoisie* with Fribourg and Bern.¹⁹³ He was thus certainly a Mammelu and one might have expected to find him among the condemned.

Claude Acquineaz is another Mammelu prosecuted in the trial of 1527. The Acquineazes were a family of Italian merchant bankers who settled in Geneva around 1450.¹⁹⁴ Claude kept a low political profile: he sat only occasionally on the Council of Fifty. Guillaume, probably Claude's brother, had a more active political life: he became councillor for the first time in August 1519, after the "Sabaudian restoration", a syndic in 1521, and he sat again on the Ordinary Council in 1523.¹⁹⁵ However, he was not among the Mammelus condemned in 1527. After 1523, he disappears from the sources. We do not know whether he left the city at that moment or later, but in 1528, he (unsuccessfully) asked for permission to come back.¹⁹⁶ This suggests that he had to leave (as a political exile?), even if one can wonder about the reason for his absence in the collective trial of 1527.

It remains unclear why Perrin Peyrolier and Claude Acquineaz were among the Mammelus put on trial, but not their relatives who played a more substantial political role and also fled the city as "Mammelus". It would certainly be simplistic to define "political" solely in terms of sitting on the city's main councils. In fact, twenty-five out of forty-seven (ca. fifty-three per cent of) Mammelus condemned in 1528 never held a major political office within the commune.¹⁹⁷ The course of the events, from the *combourgeoisie* of February 1526 to the beginning of the judicial procedure in July 1527, offers some possible answers: solutions to the commune's financial problems and the possibility of seizing goods have to be considered possible.

¹⁹² Baechler, *Le Petit Conseil*, p. 524.

¹⁹³ RC 10, p. 280.

¹⁹⁴ DHBS, vol. 1, p. 369.

¹⁹⁵ Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 302; RC 8, p. 355 and 9, p. 263.

¹⁹⁶ RC 11, p. 119.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. table 7 for details.

As seen in the Eidguenot propaganda and in the criminal trial of 1527, the Mammelus are clearly portrayed as a homogenous faction: the enemies of civic liberties, seeking to cause the city to submit to the duke of Savoy. But, as we just saw, politics was not the only explanation – we need to be aware that political trials were a good opportunity to invent a culprit and shape the character of a faction according to the propaganda.¹⁹⁸

Historians working on factions sometimes have trouble clearly identifying a faction and its members. More easily identifiable are the charismatic figures leading a protest or giving voice to the grievances of the community, but what of factions?¹⁹⁹ Who exactly were the Eidguenots and Mammelus? The latter have received little attention in Genevan patriotic historiography, which had continued to influence authoritative syntheses of the twentieth century.²⁰⁰ They were the traitors, people wanting to sell the city to the duke of Savoy. That they endured a historical *damnatio memoriae* is no wonder. Their social composition has been variously appreciated, although never fully established. Jean-Antoine Gautier, who finished the first version of his *Histoire de Genève* in 1713, noted that merchants were numerous among the Mammelus.²⁰¹ Henri Naef, possibly the most important historian writing on early sixteenth-century Geneva, suggested that both of the two factions were in fact very heterogeneous, noting the difficulty of establishing any clear socio-professional patterns for either of them.²⁰² More recent historiography has, however, assumed a more clear-cut portrait: the Eidguenots “constituted a relatively homogeneous faction. [...] They came from families of up-and-coming active merchants, while their opponents [the Mammelus] were from milieus already at the top, retired from trading and related to episcopal or ducal officials”.²⁰³ What can we reconstruct from the archival evidence?

After the combourgeoisie of 1526, many Mammelus left the city; some were sentenced to death in absentia. The trial documents preserved (1527–1528) permit us to identify forty-seven people, and the sources preserved allow us to determine the occupations of thirty of them: six notaries (twenty per cent of the people condemned), seventeen merchants (thirty-six per cent) and five

198 Cf. Jouanna, “Conclusions”, p. 665–666.

199 For the methodological problems, see Caesar, “Did Factions Exist?”.

200 For instance, Guichonnet, ed. *Histoire de Genève* and Dufour, *Histoire de Genève*.

201 Gautier, *Histoire de Genève*, vol. 2, p. 87.

202 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 1, p. 129–130.

203 Monter, “De l’évêché”, p. 132. Cf. also Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, p. 44. Same judgement in Dufour, *Histoire de Genève*, p. 38.

craftsmen (eleven per cent).²⁰⁴ Gautier's and Naef's insight was correct: this was a mixed group, with a substantial presence of merchants. Mammelus cannot be reduced to members of a "conservative" faction composed of people without any interest in the city's commercial wealth. What mainly differentiates them from the Eidguenots was that they considered the duke of Savoy – and not the Swiss cities – the best guarantee for the city's wealth.

Some other remarks can be made by considering a particular case, that of Sébastien Grangier. In October 1526, the Eidguenots imprisoned Grangier and Pierre Durand, both suspected of being Mammelus, and brought criminal proceedings against them. Grangier, a burgher of the city and a simple barber-surgeon, was interrogated by the four syndics and some councillors on 17 October. He had been seen talking with several notorious Mammelus, which sufficed to make him look very suspicious. When asked why he had spoken with these persons, Grangier admitted to being part of their faction (which he defined as a *secta*).²⁰⁵ When the syndics asked him what kind of sect the Mammelus were, Grangier answered that they were those who wanted the duke of Savoy to become the supreme lord of the city. But he also added quite a surprising admission: he was not of the same opinion. How could one admit to being a Mammelu, define them as those who wanted the duke to be the prince of the city, and at the same time, distance oneself from their political ideal?

We should first bear in mind that Grangier gave these answers during a criminal trial where he faced a possible death sentence for treason. He therefore had to remove any suspicion of conspiring against the city's liberties; hence, his desire to distance himself from overly compromising political goals. However, his links with the Mammelus were known and probably hard to deny. The question, then, is not so much whether Grangier lied about his political ideas, but why the syndics and councillors considered his answers to be reasonable and consistent. What did it mean to be a Mammelu? Could one be a Mammelu without wanting the duke of Savoy as lord of the city? Sébastien Grangier himself answered these questions. When the syndics asked him the reason for his political relationships, he explained that he was a Mammelu "because it was within Savoy that he was making a living". For many early sixteenth-century Genevans, the Duchy of Savoy was simply the hinterland where they worked. For such people, political continuity represented peace and tranquillity. Grangier's trial reveals the existence

204 AEG, P.C., Annexes, n° 1, n° 1bis. See table 7 for details. The seventeen people for whom it is not possible to establish an occupation represent thirty-six per cent of the total.

205 *Secta* could also mean, at that time, a party or a faction, without any religious connotations.

of “moderate” Mammelus who supported the duke but wished to retain the city’s independence.

In many ways, just how much the Mammelus were ready to sacrifice civic liberties is debatable. Since the end of the fourteenth century at least, Genevans had learned how to deal with the House of Savoy.²⁰⁶ The dukes were a necessary ally for the recovery of the city’s lost prosperity, as we have seen,²⁰⁷ and an alliance with Savoy did not necessarily mean selling the city to the duke. In September 1525, the Genevan Ordinary Council, dominated at that time by the Mammelus, faced pressure from the duke of Savoy, asking them to recognise his sovereignty. The council answered that the only lord of the city was the bishop, and that neither the emperor nor his vicar (that is, the duke of Savoy) held any jurisdiction over the city.²⁰⁸ While for a part of the ruling elite, Bern and Fribourg appeared to be new and more convincing political partners, for many, a more conservative policy was preferable. Since the Burgundian Wars, Bern and Fribourg had proved to be troublesome neighbours, whose military appetites were a constant threat. However, the trials of 1527–1528 changed the situation and people’s relationships with the duke of Savoy. After being convicted and banished, the Mammelus’ only realistic option to recover their power (and return to Geneva) was to support the princely attempt to gain the submission of the city. Ultimately, the trial created the Mammelus, and the way they were presented during the proceedings, including the charges against them, became a reality only after their condemnation. The trial transformed the Mammelus into a radical party whose only hope was to support Charles II and back his plans to gain full sovereignty over Geneva

Many of the rich merchant families who attempted to restore the vitality of the Genevan fairs and the city’s former splendour were forced to leave. What happened to these banished families is a blank page in Genevan history. Many of them did not go far, since they owned property in the nearby region. Étienne de La Mare and his wife moved to his fief in Vanzy, some thirty kilometres southwest of Geneva.²⁰⁹ In 1528, despite being sentenced to death in absentia, he – and probably many of the other exiled Mammelus – still nurtured hopes of a comeback. A new political reversal, like the one

206 Cf. Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*.

207 Cf. in particular *supra*, p. 65.

208 Balard, *Journal*, p. 14 and Naef, *Fribourg au secours*, p. 100. This idea relied on the so-called Golden Bull, a false imperial bull stating that the bishop of Geneva had no superior lord. The forgery was only proved during the nineteenth century. Sixteenth-century Genevans were convinced of the authenticity of this document. Cf. Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 70.

209 Mottier, “La rupture”, p. 227–228.

that brought back the Eidguenots in February 1526, was not a utopian dream. After all, uncertainty about whether the *combourgeoisie* would last was high and negotiations between the Swiss, Savoy and the cities of the Lake Geneva region on the validity of the alliance continued for many years after 1526 – as we shall see in the next chapter.

3. Princely Policies amidst Rising Uncertainty

Abstract: Piedmontese cities like Cuneo and Mondovì were marked by urban factionalism and, as a consequence of geopolitical regional instability, the local elites also explored alternatives to Sabaudian rule. However, unlike regions north of the Alps, Piedmont's factionalism was rooted in clientelism and family conflicts and was closer to the actions of modern political parties. The second section of this chapter analyses princely responses to factionalism, especially among jurists, theologians and counsellors, who viewed factions as a threat to peace. While most advocated strong action, Claude de Seyssel promoted a pragmatic approach, influencing Duke Charles II's policies. The final section highlights how, after 1526, combourgeoisies only intensified disputes and negotiations and plunged Sabaudian political life deeper into factional struggles and juridical imbroglios.

Keywords: factionalism, Piedmont, diplomatic negotiations, Claude de Seyssel, juridical disputes

When Louis of Savoy-Achaea died in December 1418, he had no legitimate heirs. Piedmont, which was an apanage of this cadet branch of the House of Savoy, thus returned to the princely dominions, under the direct suzerainty of Duke Amadeus VIII.¹ Like the territories north of the Alps, these new lands bordering the Alps were mostly rural. The episcopal see of Mondovì was the only city with a population of at least 10,000 by the end of the fifteenth century. The other *civitates* – the episcopal sees of Turin, Vercelli, Ivrea and Asti – were rather sparsely populated centres; many Piedmontese towns did not even

¹ For bibliographical references to Renaissance Savoy, see also *supra*, chapter 1, p. 42. On this transition, see Buffo, *La documentazione*, p. 96–100. Some years later (in 1424), Piedmont again became an apanage and Amadeus VIII gifted it to his heir, the young prince Amadeus.

break the threshold of 5,000 inhabitants (table 3): they were mostly small towns – or, as Italian historiography calls them, “near-cities” (*quasi città*).²

Table 3. The Sabaudian urban landscape in Piedmont³

City	Inhabitants	Date
Chieri	7,500 ⁴	1497
Cuneo	3,000	1443
Fossano ⁵	5,000	ca. 1500
Ivrea	5,000	ca. 1500
Moncalieri	3–4,000	ca. 1500
Mondovì	10–11,000	1498
Pinerolo	3–5,000	ca. 1500
Savigliano	3–5,000	ca. 1500
Turin ⁶	6,300	1488
Vercelli (belonging to Savoy from 1427)	5,000	ca. 1500
Asti (belonging to Savoy from 1531)	5–6,000	ca. 1500

Albeit small, these towns, together with the surrounding rural communities, formed a dense network and retained a substantial degree of administrative and political autonomy.⁷ The Sabaudian princes were required to constantly negotiate with the local urban elites. Princely legislation had to respect local statutes, and the towns had considerable power to decide whether or not to approve the duke's requests for extraordinary contributions (*subsides*).⁸ The dukes were not completely powerless, however, and Piedmontese towns were not tiny islands of urban independence. From the beginning of their domination, the Sabaudian princes asserted their right to inspect and reform local statutes, as shown by the case of the reforms of the statutes of Ivrea in 1433 by ducal commissioners.⁹ Princely authority was normally

2 *Quasi città* were those urban centres that were not *civitates* (a title formally reserved to episcopal cities), but had developed complex social structures and political institutions. The concept was popularised by Chittolini, “*Quasi città*”. On these small towns and their demographic evolution, see also Ginatempo, “*La popolazione*” and Chittolini, “*Urban Population*”.

3 Unless otherwise specified, these data are from Ginatempo and Sandri, *L'Italia delle città*, p. 61–68.

4 Allegra, *La città verticale*, p. 19 reports 10,000 inhabitants for Chieri in 1515.

5 Fossano reached 8,000 inhabitants in 1550.

6 Gravela, *Il corpo*, p. 57.

7 See Barbero, “*The Feudal Principalities*”.

8 Castelnuovo, “*Principi e città*”, 1996 and Barbero, “*The Feudal Principalities*”, p. 193–195. On the Three Estates, see *infra*, chapter 5, p. 200–208.

9 Castelnuovo, “*Principi e città*”, p. 90.

represented within the cities by a local governor – variably called *vicario*, *podestà*, *capitano* or *castellano*.¹⁰ And given the fact that the dukes were often in their residences north of the Alps, Piedmont was administered through a captain or lieutenant general representing the prince.

In case of necessity or unrest, the duke also frequently appointed special governors and commissioners charged with mediating and resolving conflicts within a given town or region. Most of the time, these princely envoys were members of the Sabaudian nobility (in many cases prelates). Two typical examples of these influential mediators are the bishop of Lausanne, Aymon de Montfalcon (1443–1517) – whom we met in the previous chapter – and the bishop of Belley, Claude d'Estavayer (1483–1534/35), who was one of the most influential ducal councillors of Charles II.¹¹ Another noteworthy example is Claude de Seyssel (ca. 1450–1520), who was possibly the most important of these Sabaudian prelate-councillors of the early sixteenth century.¹² The nature of his “political” commitments – providing services for both the dukes of Savoy and the king of France – and his “ecclesiastical” career as bishop of Marseille (1511–1517) first, and then as archbishop of Turin until his death in 1520, were not uncommon for Sabaudian prelates.¹³ What made Claude de Seyssel special, apart from his political stature, was his intense involvement in almost all of the main Sabaudian affairs: the Dufour forgeries, relationships with the Swiss, the European war theatre, and local factional struggles on both sides of the Alps.

This chapter focuses in particular on the years 1526 to 1532, which for the entire Duchy of Savoy were marked by growing political instability. The first part of the chapter will deal with urban factionalism in Piedmont, especially in Cuneo and Mondovì. The Piedmontese case will allow us to see how uncertainty deeply affected political life south of the Alps. In fact, similarly to the situation around Lake Geneva, geopolitical instability made the Sabaudian western border fragile and determined the political choices of the Piedmontese urban elites. Factional struggles also arose in Piedmontese cities because a portion of the ruling elite was looking for a better option than traditional Sabaudian rule. Nevertheless, unlike what we observed in the regions north of the Alps, these cities had a longer tradition

10 Barbero, “The Feudal Principalities”, p. 183.

11 Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 80. On Claude d'Estavayer, Andenmatten, “Claude d'Estavayer” and Naef, “Claude d'Estavayer”.

12 The most informative work on de Seyssel is still Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*. On his political and historical works, see also Boone, *War and Eichel-Lojkine*, ed., *Claude de Seyssel*.

13 See *infra*, p. 139–142, on the career of Pierre de La Baume and, more generally, on Sabaudian bishops, see also *infra*, chapter 5.

of factionalism, which was rooted in the clientelism that was typical of Italian factions.

The second part of the chapter offers a deeper look into princely reactions to factionalism and princely attempts to better control turbulent urban centres. In particular, I will analyse the opinions of jurists, theologians, preachers and ducal councillors on urban factions. Their judgements, with few exceptions, were identical: factions were evil and the duke had to act as a good prince by eradicating them. However, the archival sources preserved permit us to observe how there were sometimes discrepancies between the theory of princely power – and the “ideal image” of a good prince – and ducal policies related to factionalism. In particular, Claude de Seyssel proposed a more nuanced view and a more pragmatic approach to factions, which influenced some of the policies of Duke Charles II.

The last section of the chapter will bring the reader back north of the Alps and show how the *combourgeoisie* of 1526 only served to increase conflict and uncertainty. The legal validity of the treaty became the subject of many – endless – negotiations that failed to offer a solution to what had increasingly become a juridical imbroglio. Faced with a very unstable geopolitical situation and urban factionalism, the policies of the dukes of Savoy were, as we shall see, largely ineffective on both sides of the Alps, failing to find a solution to political uncertainty.

An Unhealable Hereditary Hatred in Piedmontese Towns

An enquiry into the urban factionalism of Renaissance Piedmont stumbles directly into the historiographical impasses that I have already underlined, which have made the years 1451–1559 a “silent century”.¹⁴ Moreover, for this period, urban political history has long been the poor stepchild of Piedmontese historiography, particularly regarding the place of cities within the apparatus of princely power.¹⁵ While some good publications have appeared since the beginning of the twenty-first century,¹⁶ much remains to be done compared to other regions of central and northern Italy.¹⁷ Recent historiography on northern Italian cities has underlined the extreme vitality

14 Cf. *supra*, Prologue, p. 23.

15 Grillo, “L’età Sabauda”, p. 166, and Castelnuovo, “Principi e città”, p. 78–79.

16 Particularly Comba, ed., *Storia di Cuneo*; Comba, ed., *Storia di Fossano* and Gravela, *Il corpo della città*.

17 Cf. Chittolini, *L’Italia delle civitates*.

of factions and the use of the terms “Guelph” and “Ghibelline” during the Quattrocento and the first decades of the sixteenth century.¹⁸ Factional struggles were not mere family fights for political pre-eminence and control of economic resources in towns. Factional divisions emerged not only during moments of conflict, but in many cities factions were a legitimate form of government, similar to modern parties. As such, they gave the prince a “privileged channel of communication with the territory”, as Andrea Gamberini has observed about the late medieval Duchy of Milan.¹⁹

If we turn to Sabaudian Piedmont, we can observe an analogously intense activity of factions. In contrast to the dominions north of the Alps, Piedmontese factionalism was a much more widespread and longstanding phenomenon. In 1418, Amadeus VIII inherited territories in which the conflicts between Guelphs and Ghibellines had marked many towns since the thirteenth century. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, conflicts were mainly fuelled by rivalries between the princes for control of Piedmont, Saluzzo and Monferrato, as shown by the cases of Turin, Vercelli and Cuneo.²⁰ In Vercelli, factional struggles erupted again during the years 1402–1404, following the unexpected death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and the collapse of Milanese power in this frontier region.²¹ The Ghibelline faction, led by the Tizzoni family, offered the city up to Monferrato, while the Avogadro family and their clients at the head of the Guelphs attempted a *dedizione* – a spontaneous submission – to Savoy. It was only in 1427 that Vercelli became a Sabaudian city. But once again, regional instability and the necessity for factions to find a prince-protector determined political life within the city.

In contrast, the reign of Amadeus VIII was one of relative peace and internal cohesion. Factionalism did not erupt again until the second half of the fifteenth century when both the internal Sabaudian crisis and – some years later – European turmoil began with the Burgundian Wars.²² The Italian Wars and the constant threats coming from foreign troops greatly increased the instability of northern Italy. Commercial activities were among the main concerns for urban elites, and, facing financial distress, the dukes tried to increase fiscal pressure on their towns, often with mixed

18 See especially Gentile, ed., *Guelfi e Ghibellini*; Ferente, “Guelphs!”; Taviani, *Superba Discordia*; Gentile, *Fazioni al Governo*; Gentile, “Factions and Parties”; Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi* and Taviani, *Lotte di parte*.

19 Gamberini, *The Clash*, p. 181.

20 Comba, ed., *Storia di Torino*, vol. 2, p. 162–168, 238–241 and Grillo, “*Regnando*”, p. 496.

21 Barbero, “Signorie e comunità rurali”.

22 Cf. *supra*, chapter 1, p. 45–48.

results. On some occasions, Charles II faced relentless resistance from Piedmontese towns, and he failed in his attempt to establish a permanent army for the protection of this part of the duchy. The Estates cited economic reasons for their opposition, but the fear that the army could turn into a tool for the oppression of urban liberties was its real cause.²³ Facing these difficulties and increasing princely pressure, many cities entered a new phase of factionalism in which elites were divided about the policy to adopt concerning the preservation of urban autonomy. And in some cases, the option of accepting a new ruler, a new protector, surfaced.

Mondovì, a peripheral centre within the duchy, caught between Saluzzo, the Republic of Genoa and the Marquisate of Monferrato, provides a good vantage point on these issues. Because of this geographical position and its status as an episcopal see, the city was of vital strategic importance. During the fifteenth century, Sabaudian domination was on some occasions disputed, and members of the elite regularly tried to negotiate a *dedizione* to the Marquisate of Monferrato. Dissatisfaction grew on top of the existing factional struggles; it was partly fuelled by the marquis of Monferrato trying to exploit the city's internal divisions.²⁴

In 1467, as part of its eastward expansion efforts, Savoy launched a new war against Monferrato and Milan. In Mondovì, a plot to surrender the city to Monferrato, led by about ten people, was discovered. The duke sent his marshal, Claude de Seyssel (1427–after 1480), who had already proven his military capacity during the French War of the Public Weal.²⁵ The revolt did not last and order was restored rapidly by the banishment of the principal protagonists, but in 1480, Sabaudian officers discovered a new plot. This time, princely repression was harsher – the leader, a certain Costanzo Vitale, was sentenced to death and beheaded. His head was later exposed in Mondovì as a warning for the entire populace.²⁶ New periods of unrest regularly troubled the city around 1491–1493, 1496, 1503–1504, 1516 and again in 1526.²⁷

Factional conflicts reached an apex during the year 1530, when for many months – from carnival to the end of the year – the city witnessed a long succession of street fights, arson, looting and homicides between the factions.

23 Marini, *Savoirdi e Piemontesi*, p. 344–348.

24 Gabotto, *Lo Stato sabaudo*, vol. 1, p. 465–466 and 491–495.

25 Gabotto, *Lo Stato sabaudo*, vol. 1, p. 103–118, and Rosso, “Seyssel, Claudio”, *DBI*. He is not to be confused with his son, also named Claude (ca. 1450–1520).

26 Gabotto, *Lo Stato sabaudo*, vol. 1, p. 267–270.

27 Concerning the political situation in Mondovì, see Comino, “I Ferrero” and Comino, “Al timone”.

At the end of the year, some inhabitants wrote two supplications to the duke of Savoy relating the facts and asking for pardon. Charles II – trying to put an end to the discord – finally remitted the crimes, but some of Mondovì's inhabitants involved in the troubles were required to pay the considerable sum of 1,200 gold *écus*.²⁸ The supplications described some of the violence in detail, and the many crimes reported reveal that among the people leading the disorder were two members of the local elite: Antonio della Vivalda and Tommaso de Bruno. The first impression given by these narratives of the events is one of endemic violence and family feuds, but no clear reason for this long series of crimes is clearly apparent in the documents.

What happened after the troubled year of 1530 is not entirely clear due to a lack of documentation. We know that the Sabaudian officers arrested the Ghibelline leader, Tommaso de Bruno – probably sometime around the beginning of 1532 – and put him on trial. Unfortunately, only a portion of the proceedings has come down to us: de Bruno's interrogation from 9 to 13 April 1532.²⁹ These are nevertheless quite valuable since they reveal that the tumult of 1530 was more than a conflict rooted in family enmities and rivalries for political power within the city. De Bruno was one of the leaders of the local Ghibelline faction and was accused of having plotted to poison the Sabaudian governor, to expel the main Guelph families, and finally to place the city under the control of the duke of Mantua.

The troubles were thus not merely a local problem; rather, they were clearly fuelled by regional instability and by the old question of the possession of Monferrato. In fact, in June 1530, the Marquis Bonifacio IV died and Monferrato came under the rule of his uncle Giovanni Giorgio Paleologo, who was, however, in poor health and unable to govern. The duke of Mantua, Federico II Gonzaga, who coveted the marquisate, believed that the new prince was “highly disordered and drank considerably”, and also that he was “rotten inside”. The fight for succession had just begun, bringing instability to the region, since Savoy and Saluzzo aspired to control the marquisate as well.³⁰ The disorder of the year 1530 was also the fruit of the political alternatives that Mondovì's elites had available to them. Many families in fact never appreciated Sabaudian rule and were supportive of the Gonzaga's expansion into their territories. As is often true in such cases, it is difficult to

28 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 187, fol. 72r–74v and ASTo, Corte, Paesi, Paesi per A e B, 19 Mondovì, fascicolo 31.

29 ASTo, Corte, Paesi, Città e provincia di Mondovì, Città di Mondovì, Mazzo 1, Fascicolo 27 (not foliated).

30 Raviola, *Il monferrato gonzaghese*, 2003, p. 3–36 (“disordinatissimo et beveva assai”; “marcido dentro”, p. 3).

assess the true extent of the Ghibelline plot. What is certain is that Sabaudian officers took the threat seriously, as de Bruno's trial proves.

A year after de Bruno's trial, on 30 April 1533, Giovanni Giorgio Paleologo died without leaving heirs. The emperor sent troops and appointed Antonio de Leyva as governor of Monferrato. Among the people counselling de Leyva was the apostolic protonotary Marino Ascanio Caracciolo. On 3 June 1533, he wrote to Charles V suggesting that he should not take any draconian measures and should apply an even-handed policy with respect to the factions. The reason for this was that Monferrato's neighbours were "engaging in practices" with the local elites,³¹ and had an interest in stirring up the situation.³² Caracciolo was in fact right, for the duke of Savoy had sent René de Challant to the border with Monferrato, asking him to drum up support among the local elites for Sabaudian claims over it. The move was also a consequence of rumours about Saluzzo raising troops for an invasion of the marquisate.³³ Charles II had to worry about the support the king of France was giving to Saluzzo in his attempts to reduce Sabaudian – and imperial – influence in the region.³⁴ In 1535, the situation was still tense in Mondovì because of latent conflicts among members of the various factions,³⁵ and René de Challant was still "practising" in order to obtain fealty from the cities and nobles of Monferrato.³⁶ As a matter of fact, the uncertainty lasted until 1536, when Emperor Charles V finally gave the marquisate of Monferrato to the Gonzaga. As one can see, the larger regional and European turmoil affected the troubles present at the local level, with factions using the classic terms "Guelphs" and "Ghibellines".

The usage of these somehow "old" and supra-regional terms was not a Piedmontese peculiarity. During these years, the two terms of Guelph and Ghibelline were widely used all across northern Italy, with the opposing factions splintering many cities. Interpreted from a European perspective, the Guelphs were mainly those supporting French policies, while the Ghibellines were associated with the imperial side. This is not to say that there was necessarily a "supra-regional" Guelph (or Ghibelline) party or that cities were coordinating their struggles.³⁷ In

31 "Practice" was a word with many connotations in Renaissance political language, all relating to discussions and secret plots. Cf. Ferente, *Gli ultimi Gueffi*, p. 31–34.

32 Raviola, *Il monferrato gonzaghesco*, 2003, p. 6.

33 Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 72.

34 Freymond, *La politique*, p. 113.

35 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 172, fol. 7r–8r.

36 Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 72, n. 96.

37 For examples, see the studies collected in Gentile (ed.), *Gueffi e ghibellini*, and the case of the Val Lugano, where belonging to the Guelphs or the Ghibellines reflected factional struggles between pro-French and pro-Swiss inhabitants (cf. Moretti, *Da feudo a Baliaggio*, p. 271–272).

Piedmont, factions generally had meaning within the political life of cities and were not coordinated among one another.³⁸ Moreover, Guelph and Ghibelline were highly flexible terms, and their usage was a complicated mix of familial tradition, European politics and local/regional frameworks. Families, or some of their members, could be of a Ghibelline tradition, but join with the French king if this best served their interests. Sometimes individuals could join and use the prestige of one faction on a local level, without having any real intention of supporting French or imperial schemes.

A good example of the intricacies of factional identities and of the difficulties in interpreting them is provided by the long report written by the Venetian secretary Gian Giacomo Caroldo in 1520 about the Duchy of Milan and its neighbours. When describing the political situation of each city, Caroldo specified their orientation by labelling them as mainly Guelph or mainly Ghibelline, and sometimes offering the names of the most prominent families in each faction.³⁹ Caroldo reported, quite interestingly, that the duke of Savoy, although a Guelph, supported Ghibelline families whenever this was useful for achieving his goals.⁴⁰

This assessment of Charles II's European positioning was not entirely accurate, but Caroldo correctly grasped the ducal policies towards factional struggles. In fact, during the 1510s and 1520s, Charles II tried to keep a neutral policy with respect to the conflict between the French king and the emperor (who remained his direct suzerain). In 1521, his marriage to Beatrice of Portugal – a cousin of Emperor Charles V – was an important step in the direction of the imperial camp, but not a decisive one, as many historians too often assume. In fact, during the period of conflict between Francis I and Charles V, French troops were often granted passage through Sabaudian lands. As Jacques Freymond showed, during the 1520s the relations between France and Savoy, although sometimes tense, were not those of enemies. It was not until 1531 – when the duke accepted the County of Asti from Charles V – that he took a definite stance in favour of the imperial side, turning the king of France into a dangerous enemy.⁴¹

Caroldo also stated that Mondovì was “entirely ruined by the parties.”⁴² In this case, his analysis was accurate. In Mondovì, as we have seen, the ruling elite was divided between those favouring the duke of Savoy (the

38 Grillo, “*Regnando*”, p. 518.

39 Edited in Albèri, *Relazioni*, vol. 11, p. 301–330. On Caroldo and his report see, Arcangeli, “*Appunti su guelfi*”.

40 Albèri, *Relazioni*, p. 325.

41 Freymond, *La politique*, p. 102–110.

42 Albèri, *Relazioni*, p. 325: “*tutto ruinato dai partiti*”.

Guelphs) and those supporting the duke of Mantua (the Ghibellines). The way in which the factions defined themselves in Mondovì during the 1530 tumult is revelatory of these intricacies. While the Guelphs used to shout "Savoy! Savoy!" and unfurled a banner with a white cross (the symbol of the House of Savoy), the Ghibellines cried out "Spain! Spain!", thus identifying themselves as "imperial", more than as Mantuans.⁴³ It is not entirely clear why the Ghibellines used this label, especially since at that date Charles II could not be considered an enemy of the emperor. We can possibly see a hint of the still fluid situation and the ambiguities of the Sabaudian policies, which could be perceived as Guelph and pro-French, as Caroldo did a decade earlier. These kinds of impasses reveal less about a clear choice of parties and more about the difficulties faced by contemporary observers in attempting to assess the situation. Ultimately, they are a sign of the uncertainty of political life in this period.

Regional and European instability certainly influenced local political conflicts, but urban factional struggles were coloured by local peculiarities and familial conflicts as well. Mondovì and Cuneo⁴⁴ are well-documented cases, but less-documented factional struggles clearly emerged in other Piedmontese cities, such as Pinerolo,⁴⁵ Chieri,⁴⁶ Vercelli,⁴⁷ Savigliano,⁴⁸ and Fossano.⁴⁹ In Chieri and Fossano, the conflicts among the elites were mainly about control of the urban councils, and factional rivalries were fuelled by the complexity of the rural setting, where communities were "robustly organised and capable of obtaining franchises or statutes through continuous political dialogue with the lords".⁵⁰ Rural magnates, some of whom were part of the urban nobility as well, controlled most of these communities.

However, it is difficult to clearly define the boundaries between factions and family clientele and to understand the reason for a faction's involvement in plots and acts of violence. The long tumult of 1530 in Mondovì reveals that the Ghibelline faction was often able to raise contingents of sixty to eighty armed men and that they may have received help from Cuneo, Peveragno and Fossano and from the Marquisate of Ceva and Monferrato as well,

43 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 187, fol. 74r.

44 Grillo, "Regnando".

45 Gabotto, *Lo Stato sabaudo*, vol. 2, p. 37–39.

46 Allegra, *La città verticale*, p. 181–182.

47 Merlin, "Biella e Vercelli", p. 12.

48 Merlin, *Il Cinquecento*, p. 44.

49 Comba, "Nella dominazione".

50 Barbero, "The Feudal Principalities", p. 179.

denoting a quite substantial regional network.⁵¹ Sources on the unrest of 1530 often describe complaints concerning many swordsmen, outlaws and bandits coming from outside the city and taking part in the violence.⁵² Were these people acting as Ghibellines or were they in the service of Antonio della Vivalda and Tommaso de Bruno? Whether they were motivated by political reasons, a sense of belonging to a larger Ghibelline faction or simply by family clientele is very hard to tell; it was probably a mix of these reasons. When Charles II enacted some brief articles for the pacification of Mondovì, on 30 April 1533, he forbade the citizens to rally armed groups of “relatives, friends and adherents” in public.⁵³ In the end, a faction could be a mixed group, with people joining the fight for different reasons.

Whether familial or factional, conflicts in sixteenth-century Piedmont generated a stream of writings sent to the prince. We can classify these sources into two main types of documents, supplications and memorials, which are often the terms one can read in the documents themselves. This documentation is quite fragmented and sometimes hard to interpret.⁵⁴ Part of the difficulty lies in their nature – they were very often anonymous documents, preserved without precise dates. What they have in common is that they address the prince directly – this is the reason why they are preserved in the registers of the ducal secretaries – and lay out a series of factual statements.⁵⁵ From that point of view, they should not be considered as two distinct categories of documents. In fact, the term “supplication” is somewhat misleading. Granted, contemporaries might label a document as such, but most of the time the supplication – the demand – is only a small portion of the text, normally the last few lines. Most of the supplications preserved are in fact long recitations of events and wrongs committed by the people denounced in the supplication. Similarly, the memorials preserved are also long recitations of crimes and wrongs that people addressed to Charles II in order to obtain redress.

As such, these memorials and supplications certainly tell us about events, but mostly they give us an idea of the writers’ conceptions of the prince and

51 ASTo, Corte, Paesi, Città e provincia di Mondovì, Città di Mondovì, Mazzo 1, Fascicolo 27 (not foliated).

52 For example, ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 187, fol. 72r–72v.

53 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 151, fol. 135r–136r.

54 On supplications see especially, Würgler, “Voices”; Nubola and Würgler, eds., *Suppliche e gravamina*; Nubola and Würgler, eds., *Forme della comunicazione*; Nubola and Würgler, eds., *Operare la resistenza*; Medieval Petitions and Bercé, *La dernière chance*.

55 See for example ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 187, fol. 118r–177r (1516), Protocolli dei notai, SR 142, fol. 176r–177v (1516), and Protocolli dei notai, SR 187, fol. 72r–74v (1530).

his power. Obviously, there is some rhetoric in these documents, and it should not be forgotten that one of the aims of these requests was to reduce the influence of the rival faction. However, the fact that supplicants invariably asked Charles II to intervene as a peacemaker restoring justice, reminds us of the importance of these qualities for a Renaissance prince. As for the political clash between parties, familial conflicts greatly contributed to creating a climate of endemic violence and were the cause behind some portion of the supplications, which created political dialogue between Charles II and the Piedmontese elites.

In 1530, while Mondovì was riven by the conflict between Guelphs and Ghibellines, Charles II's secretary received four supplications from members of one wealthy family: Tapparelli di Lagnasco.⁵⁶ The first supplication told of homicides and violence going back to the end of the fifteenth century. The petitioner reminded the duke how his uncle Corrado and his brother Gherardo had been murdered during a family feud in Savigliano. In fact, already in the 1480s, the Tapparelli di Lagnasco family had been torn apart by an inheritance-related conflict between the different branches, involving various contentious lawsuits and at least one homicide.⁵⁷ The petitioner also asserted that many attempts to overcome resentment had been made, but in the end, peace remained an illusion. And with a certain rhetorical dejection, he considered the hatred between the families to be "hereditary and unhealable".⁵⁸

As was common for supplications,⁵⁹ the anonymous member of the Tapparellis underlined that peace had become impossible and asked the prince to intervene.

Although they [the Tapparellis' enemies] are now straining to cover and mediate with sweet words and by showing great dolour for what they have done – while I have no doubt they are very happy about it – and moreover by interposing mediators and witnesses, they request peace, I claim that I can rightly reject this peace for I am absolutely sure that I can never trust any of them again for the rest of my life.⁶⁰

56 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 147, fol. 196r–201r. For information about the family during the sixteenth century, see Genta, Pennini, and De Franco, eds., *Une très-ancienne famille*.

57 Archivio Opera pia Tapparelli D'Azeglio, Fondo 6: Tapparelli di Lagnasco, Serie 3, Sottoserie 1, nos 28, 29, and 30.

58 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 147, fol. 196v.

59 Shaw, "Writing to the Prince", p. 72.

60 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 147, fol. 196v: "Ben che adesso se affatichano di coprir et medicar cum dolce parole et cum dimonstrar gravissimo dolor di haver facto quello dil che non dubito

The goal of the supplication was to prevent the adverse party from securing a false peace that they would use to act freely to perpetrate further violence. The petitioner recalled how his uncle and brother had been ambushed and killed by a member of their family that they believed they were at peace with. Moreover, the supplicant could seek the prince's compassion by underscoring his "just dolour" and all the injustices against his honour.

A supplication might tell only part of a story and might involve a biased narrative, so that its real intention is sometimes hard for historians to discern. However, these documents established a link between the petitioners and the prince, who could intervene in the name of justice and peace. In this, Caroldo was right – Charles II could support both factions according to his interests. We therefore now need to seek a better understanding of the Sabaudian prince's policies towards factions and their foundation within the political thought of the sixteenth century.

The Good Prince against Factionalism

Beginning in the thirteenth century, a wide range of Italian jurists, preachers, chroniclers and literary men discussed the role of factions within the cities of the peninsula.⁶¹ By the end of the fifteenth century, with a few exceptions,⁶² criticism of factionalism was almost unanimous. Within the Sabaudian principality, Giovanni Nevizzano (ca. 1490–1540) issued a strong condemnation in the fourth book of his *Sylva nuptialis*, a treatise mainly devoted to marriage and first printed in Lyon in 1516.⁶³ Giovanni Nevizzano was certainly among the most prominent Sabaudian jurists during the first half of the sixteenth century. He studied in Pavia and Padua under Giason del Maino and Filippo Decio, and in 1511 became a doctor *in utroque iure* at the University of Turin, where he also taught.⁶⁴ The *Sylva nuptialis* quickly

che non siano contentissimi et cum questo interponer mediatori et testimonii come rechiedono la pace quale io mi pretendo poter iustamente reffutar, essendo certissimo de non podermi fidar mai più nel resto di mia vita di alcun di loro."

61 See in particular Hyde, "Contemporary Views", p. 58–86; Bruni, *La città divisa* and the works quoted *supra*, n. 18.

62 For example, Pietro Barozzi, bishop of Padua (born 1441). Cf. Dessì, "Predicare e governare", p. 137.

63 Giovanni Nevizzano, *Sylva nuptialis in qua ex dictis modernorum per regulam et fallentias plurime questiones quotidie in practica occurrentes...*, Lyon, Jean de Moylin, 1516, (USTC 200051). On Nevizzano's discussion of factionalism, see Rossi, "... *partialitas in civitate*", who however wrongly states that the first edition was printed in Asti in 1518.

64 Feci, "Nevizzano, Giovanni", in *DBI*.

became an editorial success, with twenty-two editions in the sixteenth century;⁶⁵ as early as 1524, Nevizzano had produced a new and partially revised edition.⁶⁶

Nevizzano's treatise was encyclopaedic in nature and punctuated with digressions that were often only loosely connected with the main topic of marriage. A discussion about the opportunity to marry a woman *de aliena natione* offers Nevizzano the occasion to provide a long reprobation of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. His condemnation of partisanship relies on two main ideas: first, factions often lead to sedition and rebellion, and for this reason, they are a great danger for the prince; they are a *crimen laese maiestatis* that runs counter to the common good. But factionalism is also a mortal sin caused by the vice of pride (*superbia*) and a cause of division among citizens.⁶⁷ Thus, Nevizzano's reflection on factions appears to be as much political and moral as legal.

Such a blend of arguments was not new, and we should regard it as part of a common political language in northern Italy since the Quattrocento. It was a language that transcended learned treatises. In 1449, some of the communities of Lake Como wrote to their lord, the duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, to denounce violence and factionalism in their region. In the letter, factionalism is described as a form of "disordered love" (*amore desordenato*) arising from a "partial appetite" (*appetito parziale*). These were ideas drawn from scholastic theology and penitential literature going back to the thirteenth century, such as Thomas Aquinas's *Summa*,⁶⁸ or Guillaume Peyraut's *Summa de vitiis et de virtutibus*.⁶⁹ Peyraut's work, written between 1236 and 1249, was probably the most influential treatise used by preachers and popularised the classic notion of the seven deadly sins. Some 500 medieval manuscripts of Peyraut's work are extant,⁷⁰ and from 1475 to 1500, eight different editions and around 460 copies have been preserved.⁷¹

And it was precisely through this literature and through its use by preachers that sin, crime, pride, disordered love and factional struggles

65 Asti (1), Geneva (2), Lyon (11), Paris (1), Venice (7). All data from USTC.

66 Nevizzano, *Silva nuptialis*, Lyon, Jean de Moylin [et] Vincent de Portonariis, 1524, (USTC 155618). All subsequent references are from this edition.

67 Rossi, "...*partialitas in civitate*", p. 86–98.

68 Gentile, "Discorsi sulle fazioni", p. 407–408.

69 Wenzel, "The Continuing Life".

70 For the evolution of the seven deadly sins and the importance of Peyraut, see in particular Casagrande and Vecchio, *I sette peccati capitali*.

71 Data from USTC (the editions are no 747670; 747671; 747672; 747673; 747674; 992532; 992533 and 201767).

were inextricably bound together. Dominicans and Franciscans such as Vincent Ferrer, Bernardino of Siena and James of the Marches were among the most active and reputed preachers to employ this material.⁷² At the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Piedmontese cities were still troubled by factionalism, the princely fight against it received strong support from the preaching campaigns of Vincent Ferrer. Ferrer certainly preached emphatically about the necessity to avoid factionalism in many Piedmontese cities, and was most likely in Cuneo during Lent 1406.⁷³ Many decades later, the commune asked another well-known preacher of the times, the Franciscan Angelo Carletti, to preach against factions, in 1476 and 1492.⁷⁴

It therefore comes as no surprise that the reader finds many theological *auctoritates* in the *Sylva nuptialis* and that Nevizzano shows a clear predilection for members of mendicant orders that were active especially in Lombardy and Piedmont, mostly from Observant branches.⁷⁵ Nevizzano quotes the works of three Dominicans: the well-known Archbishop Antonin of Florence (1389–1459), Giovanni Ludovico Vivaldi († after 1520) and Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio (1456/57–1527) and of five Observant Franciscans: Angelo Carletti di Chivasso (ca. 1414–1495), Michele Carcano (1427–1484), Bernardino Busti (ca. 1450–1513), Thomas Illyricus (1484–1528) and Michele Dominici (active during the 1520s).⁷⁶ Giovanni Nevizzano's *auctoritates* remind us that is not possible to draw a clear divide between a “medieval” and a “new sixteenth century” preaching and theology.⁷⁷ The moral theology that one encounters during the first half of the sixteenth century, and a portion of the juridical thought informed by it, is still very medieval in nature.

Among the authors quoted by Nevizzano in 1524, the Observant Franciscan friar Michele Dominici deserves special attention for his treatise on moral theology dealing especially with factionalism, printed in Turin in 1522: *Questio*

72 Among the sizeable body of literature, see Dessi, “Predicare e governare” and Dessi, “La predicazione francescana”. On Piedmont, Gaffuri, “Predicatori”.

73 Gaffuri, “*In partibus*”.

74 Grillo, “Letà sabauda”, p. 160–162.

75 On the Observant reform see, Mixson and Roest, eds., *Companion to Observant Reform*. More specifically for the Sabaudian territories, see Pierregrosse, “Foyers et diffusion” and Gaffuri and Barale, “L'Osservanza minoritica”.

76 Nevizzano, *Sylva nuptialis*, fol. 93r–93v. For more information on these preachers and theologians, the entries in the *DBI* and in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* are a good starting point. For Franciscan authors, the database compiled by Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest (<https://franciscanauthors.rich.ru.nl/index.html>) is also very useful.

77 On that point, see especially Roest, “Franciscan Preaching”.

contra diabolicas partialitates guelforum et gibellinorum.⁷⁸ Very little is known about Dominici besides the fact that he was a *magister* in theology and was either from Pinerolo or possibly living in the Piedmontese convent of Pinerolo around the early 1520s.⁷⁹ Dominici's treatise is relatively short – a quarto format of twenty folios – and has survived in only seven copies.⁸⁰ Dominici asserts that those who are involved in and in favour of factionalism are committing a mortal sin because factionalism goes against natural, divine and human law. The treatise is in fact a commentary on the Ten Commandments, and Dominici makes little reference to contemporary events. Interestingly, when giving examples of Italian cities that have suffered particularly due to factionalism, he names Mondovì alongside Genoa, Milan, Perugia, Piacenza and Assisi.⁸¹

Michele Dominici wrote his *Questio* for Charles II. The dedicatory letter and the last part of the treatise are in fact an exhortation to the duke of Savoy, reminding him that the good prince must extirpate factions and eliminate divisions among his subjects. Almost literally quoting Cassiodorus,⁸² Dominici advises Charles II that what does most credit to a prince is the care for civic harmony – *concordia*, a central notion in the political thought of the late Middle Ages and the core of the common good.⁸³

The only real historical reference is drawn from the reign of Amadeus VIII, whose policies in “eradicating partialities” were – according to Dominici – “good and praiseworthy”.⁸⁴ Dominici reminds Charles II that in 1399 his

78 Michele Dominici, *Quaestio contra diabolicas partialitates guelforum et gibellinorum siue alio quocunque nomine nuncupatas...*, Impressum Taurini: per Ioannem Angelum & Bernardinum fratres de Sylua, 1522 die V mensis Martii (EDIT 16 – CNCE 17584). Cf. also Bersano Begey, *Le cinquecentine*, vol. 1, p. 360.

79 Sbaralea, *Supplementum*, p. 543. The *Commentaria in Porphyrium* attributed to him, and supposed to have been printed in Turin in 1521, has not been found. Caffaro, *Notizie e documenti*, does not mention him. Nevizzano simply quotes a “frater Michael Dominicus de Pinerolio”. It is not clear whether Pinerolo is his origin or the location of his convent.

80 Città del Vaticano, BAV, R.G.Teol.IV.2352(int.2) and R.I.IV.1810(int.5); Genova, Biblioteca provinciale dei Cappuccini di Genova, 1 CINQUE XXo 1356; Paris, BnF, K-1852; Perugia, Biblioteca comunale Augusta, ANT I.I 604; Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, CORS 173 C 1 (3); Torino, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MSC 296/7. I worked on the copy conserved in Turin.

81 Dominici, *Quaestio*, fol. 4r.

82 Dominici, *Quaestio*, fol. iv: “Decet regalis apicis curam generalitatis custodire concordiam, quae ad laudem regnantis trahitur, si ab omnibus pax ametur; quid est enim, quod principem melius praedicet, quam quietus populus, concors senatus totaque res publica morum nostrorum honestate vestita?”, cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I.23.

83 Cf. Jansen, *Peace and Penance*, p. 61–86.

84 Dominici, *Quaestio*, fol. 19v: “Bonus et laude dignus fuit modus ad extirpandas partialitates quem tenuit vir illustrissimus Amedeus comes Sabaudie”.

ancestor Amadeus VIII had successfully eradicated Guelphs and Ghibellines from the Piedmontese town of Rivoli, some ten kilometres east of Turin, thanks to his wise legislation. In fact, the count promulgated an edict stipulating that perpetrators of homicides in factional struggle must be fined 300 gold florins – a heavy punishment – and that no “composition” (negotiation of the amount of a fine) would be granted.⁸⁵

How should we understand the message of the *Questio contra diabolicas partialitates*? After the first edition of 1522, no further editions are known. And besides Nevizzano’s quote in his revised version of the *Sylva* in 1524, one can question the influence of this treatise on contemporary thought. The value of the *Questio contra diabolicas partialitates* lies less in its possible influence, than in the fact that it expresses a common opinion: a general condemnation of factions on the grounds that they were detrimental to civic unity and the common good.⁸⁶ For Nevizzano, Dominici is also representative of the idea that the prince was the source of what was deemed legal and that his main duty was to maintain, or restore, peace. This idea also emerges from the supplications I previously analysed.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that jurists, moral preachers and theologians from the mendicant orders were not the only sectors of Sabaudian political society forging ideas about the ideal prince and his tasks. Bishops and archbishops were among the closest councillors of the duke, and were often involved in the daily routine of politics. We therefore need to grasp their point of view about factions if we want to fully understand their relationship with the princely power.

Yet this is not an easy task, as the political activity of Sabaudian prelates in the early sixteenth century has yet to be addressed by historians.⁸⁷ Most prelates never wrote political treatises, but this is not to say that they did not have, or express, political ideas. Understanding their policies and their positions would require going through their numerous letters and dispatches to the dukes of Savoy. It is possible, however, to offer an initial suggestion as to how they judged factions: they had a pragmatic view, dictated by their activity as prelates and princely councillors.

From that perspective, Claude de Seyssel and his well-known treatise on government written in 1515 – *La Monarchie de France* – are no exception.⁸⁸

85 ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 67, fol. 257r–265v. Dominici wrongly states that it was promulgated on 11 December. In fact, the edict is dated in Chambéry, 16 December 1399.

86 Cf. Skinner, *The Foundation*, vol. 1, p. 57–65.

87 A good recent biographical study is Andenmatten *et al.*, eds., *Aymon de Montfalcon*.

88 The *Monarchie* was first printed in Paris in 1519 (*La grant Monarchie de France composée par missire Claude de Seyssel...*, Paris: Pour Regnault Chauldiere, 21 juillet 1519). A modern edition

Certainly, Seyssel shared a common intellectual background with Nevizzano, for he also studied in Pavia under Giason del Maino, and during the period from 1484 to 1498 he studied, and later taught, civil law in Turin.⁸⁹ However, he conceived his treatise in a peculiar manner. In the prologue, addressed to King Francis I of France, Seyssel states that he decided to write:

since I had not the opportunity and a suitable occasion of informing you and of orally reporting about numerous significant matters which I managed [...] it seemed to me a duty to give you, at least, some written sketch, not only of what I handled, but also of what I heard.⁹⁰

According to Seyssel's own words, more than as a reflection on the nature of kingdoms, the *Monarchie* is to be read as a general "dispatch" dealing with the current affairs of the kingdom. However, this is certainly part of the usual rhetoric used in prologues by authors professing their "inability" to write a good book, and the manuscript prepared for the king is quite expensive, certainly not a formal diplomatic dispatch. But, as Seyssel made plain in his prologue, the *Monarchie* was based on his personal experiences; it was no speculation.⁹¹ It was a work "summarising decades of political experience".⁹² Thus, the *Monarchie* maintains a constant pragmatic emphasis and must be read against the background of Seyssel's diplomatic missions and negotiations.

Although Seyssel dedicated his work to the new king of France, Francis I, and his reflection mostly deals with the Kingdom of France, in many ways the *Monarchie* also draws on Seyssel's political activity in Savoie. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that during the period from 1498 to 1517, although formally serving the king of France, Seyssel never ceased to be a Sabaudian councillor.⁹³

Claude de Seyssel explicitly addressed the problem of factions in the last chapter of the fifth part of *La Monarchie*.⁹⁴ In line with the thinking of

is Claude de Seyssel, *La Monarchie*. All quotations are from this edition. On Claude de Seyssel see also *supra*, p. 80.

89 Boone, *War*, p. 30–34.

90 Claude de Seyssel, *La Monarchie*, p. 32: "non aiant eu l'espace et le loisir de vous informer, et faire rapport de bouche de plusieurs grans affaires que j'ay maniez, [...] m'a semblé debvoir à tout le moins vous faire quelque gect par escript, non pas tant seulement de ce que j'en ay manié, mais encores de ce que j'en ay entendu".

91 Boone, *War*, p. 76–83.

92 Boone, *War*, p. 49.

93 Cf. Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 183–184 and 331.

94 Claude de Seyssel, *La Monarchie*, p. 177–180, entitled *Comme l'on se doibt gouverner es pais qui vivent en partialite*.

his times on the subject of factionalism, Seyssel argued that princes must try to eliminate factions,⁹⁵ and if they could not be eliminated, then they must at least prevent them from operating openly, especially concerning matters of the state and common good.⁹⁶ In the second part of this short chapter, however, Seyssel takes a very pragmatic approach which was a departure from most contemporary works on the subject. He stated that if it was impossible to eradicate factions, and if one faction was supporting the prince and the other challenging his power, the duke could support the one favouring him, according to his interests. Seyssel was certainly aware that this was an unusual position and concluded, somewhat defensively: "All good princes and politicians have done so, and [this] is not contrary to divine law".⁹⁷ The reference to divine law was addressed directly to all of those jurists and theologians, like Nevizzano and Dominici, who considered factionalism – and a prince's support for it – to be a crime and a sin.

Seyssel also provided some tangible examples of what it meant to support a faction. The prince must select people from the preferred faction to hold office or serve as dignitaries.⁹⁸ This unusual advice regarding urban factionalism was probably strongly connected with Seyssel's own political experiences. In 1496, as ducal commissioner, he participated in one of the numerous attempts to pacify the factions in Mondovì; his commission promulgated a few short-lived statutes that failed to stem the violence. Notably, one measure taken by Seyssel was a ban on using party names⁹⁹ – a way to ensure that factions could not operate openly, as Seyssel had suggested in the *Monarchie*.¹⁰⁰

There was nothing novel or innovative about this ban.¹⁰¹ Already in 1403, both Amadeus VIII of Savoy and Ludovico of Acaia promulgated statutes that banned the use of the terms Guelph and Ghibelline in public to avoid riots and street fights.¹⁰² Following persistent factional conflicts within the ruling elite, in 1407, Henri de Colombier – acting as the Sabaudian governor south of the Alps – enforced a similar ordinance in Cuneo.¹⁰³ And back in

95 *Ibidem*, p. 178: "tacher par tous les moiens qu'il peut d'esteindre lesdites parcialitez".

96 *Ibidem*, p. 178: "doibt à tout le moings garder que telles parcialitez ne se monstrent point descouvrement. Surtout es choses qui concernent l'Estat et le bien publique".

97 *Ibidem*, p. 180: "Ainsi ont faict tous bons princes et policiens et ne repugne à la loy divine".

98 *Ibidem*, p. 178: "en preferant les gens d'icelle en offices, dignitez, charges et proffiz".

99 Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 45–46.

100 Claude de Seyssel, *La Monarchie*, p. 178: "ne se monstrent point descouvrement".

101 Cf. for a similar measure in Siena, Shaw, *Popular Government*, p. 11 and Ferente, *Gli ultimi Gueffi*, p. 231–232, for cases in other Italian Renaissance cities.

102 Edited in Buraggi, "Gli statuti" p. 10–11 and Datta, *Storia dei principi*, p. 285–287.

103 Grillo, "L'éta sabauda", p. 137.

Mondovì, a new reform of the communal statutes was enacted again in 1516, with statutes that forbade saying “Tu es Guelfus” or “Tu es Gibellinus”.¹⁰⁴

This brief survey of bans of the use of the terms Guelph and Ghibelline reminds us that princely legislation and especially reform of communal statutes were among the main instruments in the hands of the princes. Cuneo's statutes were reformed in 1407, 1516 and 1535,¹⁰⁵ and those of Mondovì in 1491, 1496, 1516 and 1520.¹⁰⁶ In most cases, reforms attempted to find new rules for the election of the city councils and of some of the main officials that would attempt to prevent civil conflicts.

When, in 1407, Henri de Colombier reformed the communal statutes of Cuneo, he ruled that councillors must be equally distributed between the two factions. This was not simply a pragmatic decision – it would have been impossible to eliminate factions immediately – but an acknowledgement that factions were part of the regular government of the city.¹⁰⁷ A century later, the new reform adopted the same criteria, not attempting to eliminate partialities but to achieve a balance. The new statutes of 1516 also granted more power to the princely officials (governors and vicars), who acted not only as representatives of the duke, but were also the guarantors of public peace.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in Mondovì in 1533, in taking measures to restrain factional struggles, Charles II insisted that the governor and his officials were responsible for justice and order. No one could gather armed men or protect people involved in homicides and riots, but all were required to inform the Sabaudian officials.¹⁰⁹

The constant need for reforms is a sign of the difficulties of finding good and stable solutions to this problem. However, from a Sabaudian point of view, these reforms were a way to control the urban elite and a means for them to intervene in the internal affairs of the communes. As part of these reforms, Charles II and his entourage insisted on the prince's image as a peacemaker and a source of justice. In the same year that Michele Dominici published his treatise, Charles II partially reformed the *Chambre des comptes* and clearly stated that “the duty of a true Prince and Lord is to give order and provide for the administration of justice”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 149, fol. 6r.

¹⁰⁵ Grillo, “L'éta sabauda”, p. 158–175.

¹⁰⁶ Comino, “I Ferrero a Mondovì”, p. 124–131.

¹⁰⁷ Grillo, “L'éta sabauda”, p. 137–138.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁹ ASTo, Protocolli dei notai, SR 51, fol. 135r–136r.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Merlin, “Gli Stati”, p. 513: “... l'ufficio di vero Principe e Signore è dar ordine e provvedere all'amministrazione della giustizia”.

These problems were not unique to Piedmont. If we travel back across the Alps, we observe very similar patterns, especially during the first Genevan crisis of 1519. Charles II, as we have seen, entered the city with his troops in April and by the end of August, with the help of the bishop, he had deposed the four syndics and the Ordinary Council. The first goal was clear: eradicate the Eidguenots and form a new, more Sabaudian-oriented council.¹¹¹ On 1 September 1519, Charles II also imposed a reform of the *franchises* and enacted new statutes, including a revision of the process of electing the four syndics.¹¹² To justify his actions, he cited his title as imperial vicar and the fact that, as he asserted, both the bishop and the citizens had asked him to pacify the city. The duke also reminded the people that “the task of a good prince is to promote and maintain peace, unity and concord in all his lands”.¹¹³

A link with Seyssel's policies can be made in this case as well. In fact, during the last years of his life, Seyssel was closely involved in the political struggles in Geneva and was probably Charles II's closest councillor. In a letter concerning the struggles between Mammelus and Eidguenots dated 15 June 1519, Seyssel advised the prince to

use both your and the lord bishop of Geneva's grace towards them in general, especially to all those who will behave humbly and whom we can trust; as for the others, who will be more suspicious [to us], it will be necessary to limit their authority, if possible, remove them from the city, and prevent them from going to the land of the Leagues, and especially to Fribourg.¹¹⁴

Fears of another Dufour affair were still quite alive and the attempt to sign a *combourgeoisie* showed the danger represented by Fribourg.¹¹⁵ In these circumstances, those who could be trusted were the Mammelus, the party favourable to the duke. The “more suspicious” individuals were obviously

111 See *supra*, chapter 2, p. 90 and also the act of deposition made by the bishop RC 8, 345–351.

112 Edited in *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 212–217.

113 *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 213: “devoir de bon prince, qui doit estre de promouvoir et entretenir paix, union et concorde en tout ses pays.”

114 Edited in Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 638: “user tant vous que monseigneur de Genesue, de bonté envers eulx en general et encores en particulier envers tous ceulx qui viendront a humilite et desquelz l'on pourra prendre fiances; et des aultres qui seront plus suspectz s'en assurer le mieulx qu'on pourra et les oster de la s'il est possible et garder qu'ilz n'aillent point au quartier des Lignes, surtout à Fribourg”. The term Leagues (“Lignes”) was commonly used at that time in French to refer to the Swiss. The “monseigneur” is the bishop of Geneva.

115 Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 85–92.

the leaders of the Eidguenots. Seyssel's advice was clear: if possible, they had to be removed from the political scene. As we saw in chapter 2, some were removed in the most literal sense by trials and death sentences.

In fact, not every Eidguenot was removed. The first article of Charles II's reform stated that six councillors had to be included in the new Ordinary Council: two of the former syndics – Etienne de La Mare and Louis Plonjon – and four other councillors: Pierre Corne, Pierre Taccon, Denis Dadaz and Jean Louis Ramel. They all were committed Eidguenots. The duke only said that these six had to be part of the Ordinary Council because this was his will and out of “good respect”.¹¹⁶ Charles II was probably trying to keep a certain balance by allowing some of the Eidguenots – possibly a moderate wing – to participate in political life.

Charles II and his officers probably also believed that the trials against Berthelier, Navis and Bidelmann were sufficient to keep the Eidguenots from signing a new *combourgeoisie*. Moreover, the prince and the bishop, enacting a mild reform in August–September 1519 – in fact no one was banned from the city and the main Eidguenots, as we saw, were still in town – could hope that they were pacifying the city and gaining the support of those who were more moderate and who – as Seyssel suggested – “will behave humbly”. The fact that Etienne de La Mare became a *Mammel* in 1526, although we can only speculate about his reasons, shows that the duke's policy was realistic. A change of factions was not an unlikely event among the urban elites of sixteenth-century cities.

In 1519, Claude de Seyssel and the duke underestimated the extent of the Genevan affair. In his letter to the duke dated 15 June, Seyssel argued that the *combourgeoisie* had been signed on the instigation of just a few people. As he stated, some Fribourgeois had been “practised by some evil people” and convinced to offer an alliance to the Genevans.¹¹⁷ This term “practice” reappears; as in Sabaudian Piedmont, political life was threatened by the scheming of a small number of people. Italian princes, including to some extent the duke of Savoy, lived in constant fear of plots.¹¹⁸ That the duke and his councillors saw – distortedly so – the events in Geneva as a plot is not surprising. This was also why they could think that removing one of the leaders such as Berthelier might have been enough to end these “practices”.

However, for almost a year, the situation remained tense. The six chosen councillors refused to sit on the Ordinary Council or to hand over their

116 *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 213: “ainsi nous plaît par bon respect”.

117 Edited in Caviglia, *Claude de Seyssel*, p. 637: “praticqués par aucuns meschans de gens”.

118 Cf. Boucheron, “Theories et pratiques”, and Villard, “Faux complots”.

accounts.¹¹⁹ It was only in February 1521 that a reconciliation, led by Besançon Hugues, took place,¹²⁰ and two years later, after new elections in February 1523, many Eidguenots, notably Besançon Hugues, joined the council again.¹²¹ In fact, the princely policy left room for the Eidguenots to return.

We can obviously speculate about to what extent the reconciliation was a way to cover their real intentions and prepare the *combourgeoisie* of 1526. But it is probably no coincidence that, after they had gained control of the political arena, the Eidguenots opted for harsh repression, putting on trial a significant portion of the *Mammelus* and banishing them from the city in 1527. We have seen that trials were necessary to legally seize the *Mammelus*' goods. Certainly, the Eidguenots had also learned a lesson from the princely policies to address factionalism. Removing only a few individuals was a risky move for it left space for a reversal of the situation. More than the leaders had to be removed from the political scene in order to maintain power within the city.

Interestingly, in 1526, Besançon Hugues presented the *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg as the only way to bring peace and end factionalism.¹²² This in fact seems to be the general interpretation of the alliance that the ruling elite adopted, as the notes in Jean Balard's journal suggest.¹²³ Exactly like the prince, the Eidguenots had to avoid accusations of stirring up factionalism, and they therefore presented themselves as pacificators of the city. During the first phase of the Eidguenots' repression of 1526–1527, Bern and Fribourg – pushed by the other Swiss cantons – tried to intercede, asking that the *Mammelus* and their families should be readmitted to the city to “live in good peace”.¹²⁴ However, Besançon Hugues and the other leaders replied that it was precisely their banishment that had brought peace and that readmitting them could bring back disorder and division.¹²⁵ Bern and Fribourg had to take care to avoid accusations of being the cause of factionalism within the city as well, and presented themselves as “good

119 *RC* 8, p. 365, 368, 393, 395, 409 and 422.

120 *RC* 9, p. 41.

121 *RC* 9, p. 252–254.

122 Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 101–105.

123 Balard, *Journal*, p. 49–50.

124 Cf. *RC* 10, p. 611 (*journée* in Bern, 24 November 1526) and Strickler, *Aktensammlung*, vol. 1, 1878, p. 549 (letter from Bern to Geneva, 11 July 1527). See also Scott, *Swiss*, p. 112, n. 363, for negotiations over the fate of the *Mammelus* in 1527.

125 Balard, *Journal*, p. 61–63. From 29 March to 3 August 1526, the minutes of the councils are missing due to the absence of the city secretary Porral (cf. *RC* 10, p. 227). Balard's account is therefore an indispensable source for the period (on the nature of his journal see *supra*, chapter 2, p. 102 n. 153).

friends" aiming at peace.¹²⁶ In the end, every political actor, not just the duke of Savoy, was continuously concerned with being seen as a good ruler trying to end factionalism and to promote peace and concord among the citizens.

What we need to understand is that this was not simply an image problem or a rhetorical argument. Peace was a key concept widely used in negotiations. During the same years when Charles II and his officials were forced to deal with turbulence in Piedmontese cities like Cuneo and Mondovì, negotiations became particularly intense in his domains north of the Alps. For many years, especially during 1526–1534, political life and factional struggles became an endless succession of meetings and diplomatic discussions that we now need to explain and understand.

Endless Negotiations and Obscure Times

The duke of Savoy began contesting the juridical validity of the two *combourgeoisies* between Lausanne (1525), Geneva (1526), and the Swiss cities of Bern and Fribourg, just as he had done in 1518–1519. For more than four years, an endless series of negotiations and mediations called *journées* (days), established the rhythm of political life and relationships between the parties (table 4).¹²⁷ Besides these diplomatic gatherings, the city councils and the ducal court received countless letters from their ambassadors and officials informing them about events, rumours and the enemy's latest moves.

After the round of negotiations held on 21–24 November 1526 in Bern, the duke of Savoy accepted the loss of Lausanne and focused his efforts on Geneva. Many reasons explain why the duke quickly decided to give up on disputing the *combourgeoisie* of Lausanne. The city, as compared to Geneva, was certainly a minor centre, and the Savoy never really thought of Lausanne as their potential capital – as they did with regard to Geneva. Moreover, a Sabaudian party comparable to the Mammelus never formed in Lausanne, and the urban elite appears to have been quite closely aligned against the bishop and the duke.¹²⁸

126 Balard, *Journal*, p. 18.

127 I only considered the most important meetings where ambassadors from all the parties gathered. The editors of the *RC* published some materials and offered references to other sources, such as the *EA*. I have included some meetings that never took place because the various parties produced interesting memorials and instructions for their ambassadors relating to these "meetings". On these years, Gautier, *Histoire de Genève*, vol. 2, p. 228–341 and Naef, *Les origines*, t. 2, p. 247–264, are still useful. See also Scott, *Swiss*, p. 111–125.

128 Poudret, *La Maison de Savoie*, p. 160–164.

Table 4. Principal negotiations between Savoy, Geneva, Bern and Fribourg concerning the combourgeoisie of 1526

Date	Negotiation	Sources
20 March 1526	Diet in Lucerne	RC 10, p. 233
7–12 April 1526	Negotiations in Bern	RC 10, p. 595–598
10 August 1526	<i>Journée de Bienne</i>	RC 10, p. 601–603
21–24 November 1526	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 10, p. 606–613
8 April 1527	<i>Journée d'Hermance</i>	RC 10, p. 340 n. 2
15 April 1527	<i>Journée de Bourg-en-Bresse</i>	RC 10, p. 347 n. 1
28 April – 1 May 1527	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 10, p. 352 n. 1 and p. 368 n.1
19 June 1527	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 10, p. 406 n. 1
28 July 1527	<i>Journée de Nyon</i> (cancelled)	RC 10, p. 441 n. 2
22–23 August 1527	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 10, p. 458 n. 1
11–12 May 1528	<i>Journée de Payerne</i>	RC 11, p. 65 n. 1
14 June 1528	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 11, p. 81 n. 2
19 July 1528	<i>Journée de Payerne</i> (cancelled?)	RC 11, p. 99 n. 2
24 August 1528	<i>Journée de Payerne</i> (without Savoy)	RC 11, p. 113 n. 1
9 February – 4 March 1529	Negotiations in Saint-Julien	RC 11, p. 198 n. 2
28 April 1529	<i>Journée de Bern</i>	RC 11, p. 252 n. 1
15 June – 3 August 1529	Negotiations in Payerne ¹²⁹	RC 11, p. 271 n. 2, 275–278, 281 n. 1, 284, 293, 304 n. 1 and 310, n. 1
19 October 1530	Treaty of Saint-Julien	RC 11, p. 494 n. 1
31 December 1530	Arbitration of Payerne	RC 11, p. 523 n. 1

In Geneva, the duke had probably not expected the first difficulties he encountered: in February 1526, a surprised Pierre de La Baume nevertheless did not take a clear position against the combourgeoisie. Historians have usually interpreted his hesitation as a sign of political incapacity, which ultimately alienated him from the citizens' support.¹³⁰ This is largely incorrect and does not take into account the way uncertainty affected the bishop's decisions. De La Baume was a member of an important noble family of the Bresse and probably a clever politician. Prior to his elevation to the Genevan see, de La Baume had been a close councillor to the duke, and he

¹²⁹ This long set of negotiations was interrupted and adjourned many times.

¹³⁰ For example, Segre, *Documenti*, p. 33 and Martinet, "La Baume, Pierre de" (13 November 2007 version), in *e-DHS* and *HS*, I/3, p. 113–114.

participated as a Sabaudian orator at the Fifth Lateran Council in 1515.¹³¹ These were probably the reasons that pushed Charles II to choose him as bishop for Geneva in 1522.

Unfortunately for Charles II, de La Baume also proved to be jealous of his prerogatives and rights as a prelate. Historiography has too hastily assumed that since the dukes of Savoy had been granted a papal indult in 1452 giving them the right to appoint bishops in their own principality, Genevan bishops were no more than their political creatures. It is true that from 1452 to 1536, four of nine Genevan bishops were members of the House of Savoy, and the other five were from noble families that were vassals of the duke. Nevertheless, as we have already seen, the dukes faced substantial difficulties imposing their candidates on the communes and on the cathedral chapters in Lausanne and Geneva,¹³² and apart from Jean de Savoie (1513–1522), the bishops never behaved as puppets in the hands of the prince. They had their own political agendas and ecclesiastical careers to pursue. In the instructions to his ambassador in Rome dated 26 September 1526, Charles II complained about “his” bishops’ ambitions. The ambassador was tasked with informing the pope that Sabaudian prelates “wanted to act like princes” and never stopped “belittling his [the duke’s] authority and the devotion that the subjects had for him, in order to appropriate it”. In another letter to his ambassador, Charles II used harsh words concerning Pierre de La Baume: the bishop worried only about his glory and was driven solely by ambition.¹³³

In fact, it must be kept in mind that Geneva was not necessarily de La Baume’s ultimate aim. During 1528–1529, ducal officers informed their prince several times that the bishop was manoeuvring at the court of the king of France to obtain a better episcopal see and that he was also trying to obtain the cardinalate.¹³⁴ This was nothing new on the shores of Lake Geneva; other bishops before him had, during the fifteenth century, been able to exchange the Genevan see for a more valuable one.¹³⁵ Ultimately, if we judge his abilities by the measure of the ecclesiastical career he pursued, we must recognise in him a successful prince: in 1530, he became coadjutor to the archbishop of Besançon with the right of succession (and he duly

131 Minnich, “The Participants”, no. 31. The list edited by Minnich has *Petrus de Baonia*, who is to be identified with Pierre de La Baume. Cf. Benoît, *Histoire de l’abbaye*, vol. 2, p. 294.

132 See *supra*, chapter 1, p. 56–61.

133 Both partially edited in Segre, *Documenti*, p. 32, n. 6.

134 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 169 and Segre, *Documenti*, p. 192–193.

135 For example Jean de Bertrand (bishop from 1408 to 1418), Jean de Rochetaillé (1418–1422) and Domenico Della Rovere (1482), cf. *HS*, III p. 95–97 and 106.

became the archbishop in 1541). In the meantime, in 1539, he also succeeded in becoming a cardinal. In the end, de La Baume's inactivity and hesitation must be attributed more to his ambitions and to a locally complex situation than to his lack of capacity.

Pierre de La Baume's failure to protest loudly in February 1526 was a tacit acceptance of the *combourgeoisie* and became an important argument for the Eidguenots and the Swiss facing Charles II's protests. On 14 November, tired of the ambiguous situation, Charles II asked the bishop to take a clear position against the *combourgeoisie*. The episcopal ambassador's answer is revealing: the bishop was not favourable to the *combourgeoisie*, "however, his desire was completely to maintain his rights and pre-eminence in his Church".¹³⁶ In fact, Charles II's attempts to gain control over Geneva and Lausanne were still based on his claim to act as the imperial vicar, a claim that was a threat not only to the *combourgeoisie*, but also to the episcopal jurisdiction. De La Baume was caught in a political dilemma: acceptance of the *combourgeoisie* would have been an excessive renunciation of part of his suzerainty, whereas support for Charles II would have meant submission to the Sabaudian vicariate. Even before the eruption of the Swiss imbroglio, on 17 November 1525, Emperor Charles V had written from Toledo, asking de La Baume and Sébastien de Montfalcon (the bishop of Lausanne) to obey the duke and take an oath of fidelity.¹³⁷ Thus, de La Baume did not wait because he was unable to take a decision; his unwillingness to take a clear stand was in itself a decision, probably the one permitting him, in the immediate wake of the *combourgeoisie*, to maintain his own rights.

In early April 1527, the Sabaudian and episcopal ambassadors met in Bourg-en-Bresse, for an unsuccessful round of negotiations about these issues.¹³⁸ Facing Charles II's growing irritation, Pierre de La Baume tried to secure a more comfortable position and he decided to take the initiative to join the *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg.¹³⁹ The choice was not a completely unnatural one: as we have already seen, in 1477, Bishop Jean-Louis de Savoie had signed a *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg, and Lausanne's Bishop Benoît de Montferrand (1476–1491) had also played the Swiss card against the Sabaudian claims.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Letters edited in *RC* 10, p. 609.

¹³⁷ Segre, *Documenti*, p. 7.

¹³⁸ Segre, *Documenti*, p. 32–37 and *RC* 10, p. 347, n. 1, p. 352, n. 2 and p. 389 n. 1. Aside from the problem of the imperial vicariate, de La Baume and Charles II were also at odds concerning the vidomnate, the right to coin and jurisdiction over the priory of Saint-Victor.

¹³⁹ *RC* 10, p. 381 n. 2.

¹⁴⁰ See *supra*, chapter 1, p. 83–84.

This sudden move surprised the duke of Savoy, who manoeuvred at the *journée* in Bern on 19 June 1527 to avoid having the bishop join the *combourgeoisie*. Charles II gained the support of the king of France, who was still trying to win the duke over from the imperial side. Sabaudian and French ambassadors loosened their purse strings. After all, as suggested by the French ambassador, “money makes everything happen” in the Swiss cantons. These efforts were effective and Pierre de La Baume’s request was rejected.¹⁴¹ Bern and Fribourg’s decision was more political than legal. Accepting the bishop would certainly have strengthened their stance about the legality of the act: after all, de La Baume was still the lord of the city. Nevertheless, maintaining peace with Savoy and France was more important, and accepting the bishop would have probably been a risky form of defiance.

In fact, on 13 July 1527, rumours circulated of possible Sabaudian military intervention, like in 1519. The duke was believed to have planned to kidnap, and possibly even to assassinate, de La Baume. Whatever the reality, the bishop firmly believed that he was in danger. On 15 July, before the General Council, he asked again for admission to the *combourgeoisie* and took an oath to be “a good and loyal burgher of Bern and Fribourg.”¹⁴² Despite these rapprochements, the atmosphere remained tense. During the night of 1 August, fearing for his safety, de La Baume decided to leave the city. Ducal attempts to assassinate him were still a possibility, or at least the prelate believed so. Moreover, the factions were all fighting their deadly power game. As we have seen in chapter 2, part of the Eidguenots faction was increasingly hostile to the bishop’s preference for a moderate policy towards the Mammelus. During the months following the *combourgeoisie*, retaliation against the Mammelus had begun and a more radical wing of the faction had surfaced. The climate of uncertainty and the difficulties of understanding the bishop’s real intentions certainly contributed to the harsh conflicts that followed the *combourgeoisie* of 1526. Pierre de la Baume did not set foot in Geneva for six years (1527–1533), governing instead from his residence at Arbois (in Franche-Comté), some one hundred kilometres from Geneva. De La Baume’s hesitation and lack of collaboration, as well as his absence, would not make the intense diplomatic efforts of the Sabaudian ambassadors easier.

As in 1519, the duke of Savoy and his jurists argued that the *combourgeoisies* violated the alliance he had with the Swiss cantons. Charles II again invoked the clause of 1509, whereby neither of the two parties was permitted

141 Balard, *Journal*, p. 114; RC 10, p. 406 n. 1.

142 On these events, see Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 34–44 and RC 10, p. 406–443.

to receive subjects of the other party as burghers. He also contested the right of the Genevans to sign a *combourgeoisie*, since the lord of the city was the bishop and the duke held the title of imperial vicar. The emperor supported this view as well: in April 1526, Charles V wrote to the Genevans asking them to renounce an alliance with Bern and Fribourg and be satisfied with the protection granted by him and his vicar, the duke of Savoy.¹⁴³ The confederation applied additional pressure to abolish the alliances. The right of the citizens to conclude an alliance without the consent of their bishop in fact remained dubious and many cantons feared a war with Savoy. Moreover, the treatment of the exiled Mammelus was a constant source of irritation for the duke. Thus, other Swiss cantons believed that the only way to ease tensions, and avoid a military conflict with Charles II, was to abolish the *combourgeoisie*.

At various times, the Genevans and the duke of Savoy felt that the negotiations were becoming useless and that nothing could be settled, as the duke wrote with a certain disappointment to one of his ambassadors in August 1528.¹⁴⁴ Thus, military pressure often accompanied the *journées* and was a fact of life in most of the post-1526 years. Since their escape from the city, the Mammelus had tried to recover their power with the aid of the duke of Savoy. In 1526, the duke imposed a blockade, which had to be lifted following pressure exerted by Bern and Fribourg. In October 1527, some Sabaudian noblemen formed the Confraternity of the Spoon.¹⁴⁵ Their goal was to subdue the city and restore the duke of Savoy's pre-eminence, and they were backed by the exiled Mammelus. The confraternity mainly operated as a guerrilla force, sometimes capturing Genevans, sometimes seizing their goods, but mostly putting military pressure on the city. It unsuccessfully tried to conquer the city for the first time in March 1529.

Once again, the highly uncertain situation and the military operations made the search for security more urgent. Many discussions surfaced about renewal of *combourgeoisies* and establishing new networks of alliances. On 15 July 1530, Bern and Fribourg renewed their alliance, and some days later, the duke managed to secure an alliance with Fribourg only.¹⁴⁶ In 1530, the situation grew increasingly difficult to control. The emperor, preoccupied with other, more difficult issues, was powerless. Charles V

¹⁴³ RC 10, p. 601.

¹⁴⁴ RC 11, p. 110 n. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 161–168, 179–185, 192–193. The name was taken from the symbol chosen: a silver spoon. This confraternity still awaits its historian and little is known about its real extent and its “confraternal” nature. See also Andenmatten, “Manger les Genevois”.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. table 6.

confirmed the duke of Savoy's title as imperial vicar on two occasions (in 1528 and 1530),¹⁴⁷ but ultimately, he was powerless within the region, and contemporaries were well aware of his incapacity. On 11 May 1530, Hugues Vandel, one of the most prominent Eidguenots, wrote from Bern to his brother Robert in Geneva relating the news and diplomatic efforts of the previous months. The emperor, as he stated, was not a source of worries because Bern – and Hugues himself – considered him “an old dog and nothing more”.¹⁴⁸ The tensions led to a second siege by the knights of the Spoon in early October 1530.¹⁴⁹ This second attack prompted a reaction from Bern and Fribourg, joined by Solothurn, which sent troops to free Geneva and defend their *combourgeois*. The military operations lasted for a few days only: Genevan suburbs were plundered, as were some convents in the region. Peace was signed in Saint-Julien (19 October 1530), but a second round of negotiations proved necessary to discuss many unresolved issues; the Swiss Diet met with ambassadors of the parties involved in Payerne at the end of the year and acted as mediator. The discussion led to the so-called Arbitration of Payerne (31 December 1530).¹⁵⁰

A first point to underline is that the arbitration had been necessary because of the juridical complexity of the situation. In order to prove their rights at Payerne, the Eidguenots brought with them some forty original documents from their archives.¹⁵¹ Among these documents, the Genevans presented the so-called Golden Bull. The bull was a fabricated *vidimus* of an imperial charter issued by Frederik II in 1162;¹⁵² it was only during the nineteenth century that historians were able to demonstrate that the Golden Bull was a forgery. The bull stated that the bishop had no superior lord, not even the emperor; Geneva was an independent city. The document was not a surprise for the Sabaudian court – already in December 1525, while negotiating the *combourgeoisie*, Bern informed Charles II that the Genevans had presented “one bull by the Emperor Frederick which shows that sole authority over Geneva was given to the bishop of Geneva”.¹⁵³ On 10 January 1526, in arguing against the Sabaudian legists, the Eidguenots claimed that Geneva was “only subject to the Monseigneur of Geneva, our

147 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 48.

148 RC 11, p. 618.

149 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 1 247–256.

150 EA IV/1b, p. 863–869 and 1516–1562.

151 Caesar, “Popular Assemblies”, p. 140–142.

152 Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 71–72.

153 Edited in RC 10, p. 574: “une bulle de l'empereur Friderich contenant la superiorité de Genesve estre donnee à l'esvesque de Genesve.”

good bishop and lord, and not to any other person".¹⁵⁴ To the Eidguenots, the vicariate was a serious threat to the city's independence, and the only way to refute it was to declare the city independent from the emperor's authority.

One of the points debated most extensively at Payerne was the possession of the vidomnate – the episcopal Sabaudian officer who took an important part in dispensing justice in Geneva. The problem went back to Pierre de La Baume's manoeuvres following the signing of the *combourgeoisie* in 1526. In fact, in July 1527, to strengthen the loyalty of his subjects, de La Baume also granted them the power to judge quarrels between two burghers, thus abandoning an important part of the civil jurisdiction to the commune. Formally this largely undermined the prerogatives of the vidomne, who was also responsible for executing a portion of the criminal law. Starting from this privilege, the Eidguenots began to challenge the appointment of the Sabaudian vidomne, considering the office as forfeit,¹⁵⁵ and in 1529 they instituted a new office of lieutenant of justice replacing the vidomne.¹⁵⁶ Charles II obviously disputed this change, and the reaction of the citizens was more than sceptical.

At Payerne, the Swiss Diet decided on some compromises: the arbitration recognised the validity of the *combourgeoisie*, but also of the duke of Savoy's right over the Genevan vidomnate. Nevertheless, the parties were unwilling to recognise unfavourable clauses, and the arbitration became merely another juridical element within negotiations that continued until the Treaty of Saint-Julien in 1603.¹⁵⁷

Tom Scott has vividly underlined the extent to which financial problems fuelled the conflicts between Savoy and its opponents. Military operations were always the occasion for demands for war-related damages and financial compensation. Failure to pay was a valid reason for further invasions or confiscations of mortgaged territories. Bern, Fribourg and Geneva asked for war-related damages and in 1530 the arbitrators in Payerne ordered Charles II to pay 21,000 gold *écus* to the three cities.¹⁵⁸ The situation was more complex, however, since financial tensions also arose between the two Swiss cities and Geneva. In fact, Bern and Fribourg asked for 77,000 gold florins as payment for their military aid.¹⁵⁹ This was a powerful reminder of how asymmetric the

¹⁵⁴ Edited in *RC* 10, p. 583: "seullement subjecte à Monseigneur de Geneve, nostre bon eveque et seigneur, et non à aultre".

¹⁵⁵ *RC* 10, p. 423–427. De La Baume later tried to revoke this privilege, but could only retain jurisdiction over churchmen. On the vidomne, cf. also *supra*, chapter 1, p. 40.

¹⁵⁶ *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 271–279.

¹⁵⁷ Caesar, "Government".

¹⁵⁸ Scott, *Swiss*; in particular for these years, p. 99, 114–116, and 121–122.

¹⁵⁹ Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 261.

combourgeoisie could become. The treaty provided that reciprocal military aid was due in the event of danger. It also stipulated that the cost had to be paid by the party asking for such assistance. Clearly, in 1526, the clause went only in one direction since the military powers were Bern and Fribourg, and Geneva had neither an army nor the power to muster one.¹⁶⁰ This situation was not new. Already in 1519, Fribourg asked for an enormous sum for its help, destabilising Geneva's finances.¹⁶¹ This time, the financial pressure reached an unprecedented peak: the sum requested by Bern and Fribourg corresponded to approximately seven times the ordinary income of the commune.¹⁶²

In the end, the Arbitration of Payerne was unable to reach a solution for these many problems, and the situation remained relatively unchanged until the joint French–Swiss invasion of Savoy in 1536. From a strictly juridical point of view, no party was able to demonstrate its rights or to refute the adverse party's arguments. The arbitration attempted to reach a compromise, but the complexity of the alliance always left room for new talks, and any failure to comply with any of its clauses – very often the non-payment of the sums owed by one of the parties – was sufficient reason for the opposite party to not abide by its commitments. This state of the facts practically reduced the power of the Arbitration of Payerne and, more generally, of similar mediations.

The reasons for the unsuccessful diplomatic endeavours of these years, and particularly of Payerne, lay not only in juridical complexities, but also in the chaotic regional situation. The spread of the Reformation among the Swiss cantons and the resulting internal conflicts added much uncertainty to the situation. I will deal with these issues in the next two chapters. For the time being, I will clarify only a number of major issues. One of the first consequences of the confessional divide was the creation of the so-called Christian combourgeoisies, a large regional network of Reformed cantons and cities formed beginning in 1527 and involving Bern, Constance, Zurich, Basel, St. Gallen, Bienne, Mulhouse, Schaffhausen and Strasbourg. This network was superimposed upon the existing networks.¹⁶³ This new configuration prompted other negotiations, with each party angling to bolster its own position. Around 1527, Valais and Geneva negotiated a combourgeoisie that was never sealed, but that put Sabaudian officers on high alert.¹⁶⁴ And

¹⁶⁰ *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 239.

¹⁶¹ Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 107.

¹⁶² AEG, Finances M21, fol. 142r–142v.

¹⁶³ Cf. table 6 and Stucki, "Combourgeoisies chrétiennes" (17 December 2003 version), in *e-DHS*,

¹⁶⁴ *RC* 10, p. 341 and Luisier, "Un problème".

later, in 1530, rumours circulated widely of a possible Catholic alliance between Savoy, Milan and Valais as a response to the growing influence of the Reformed cities.¹⁶⁵

After the Second Territorial Peace, which ended the Second Kappel War and marked the victory of the Catholic cantons (20 November 1531), the end of the *combourgeoisie* with Lausanne and Geneva seemed near at hand to almost every contemporary observer.¹⁶⁶ On 5 December, Sabaudian ambassadors wrote with palpable excitement about the end of the Christian *combourgeoisies*. The following day, they informed Charles II that Bern was facing serious protests from its rural areas, which were asking the authorities to put an end to the drive towards the Lake Geneva region and to annul the *combourgeoisies* with Lausanne and Geneva. And on 11 December, the rumour spread that Bern and Fribourg had renounced their alliances with the two episcopal cities.¹⁶⁷ This hearsay ultimately proved to be untrue, but as one can easily observe, a mix of negotiations, the continual formation of new alliances and various rumours greatly determined the political life of the late 1520s and early 1530s, affecting the decisions of the relevant actors. These are signs of the extreme uncertainty of the period and of the difficulties political actors were required to face when taking decisions. For the entire year of 1532, the Eidguenots lived in constant fear that Bern and Fribourg would renounce the *combourgeoisie*.¹⁶⁸ In the end, only Fribourg withdrew in 1534,¹⁶⁹ but the danger of Bern also leaving remained high until 1536.

The situation of these years is best summarised in a letter by Amy Girard, an important Eidguenot who often acted as Genevan ambassador to Bern and Fribourg and during the various *journées*.¹⁷⁰ On 28 October 1528, Girard wrote from Bern on the consequences of the adoption of the Reformation by the Bernese authorities and particularly concerning the unrest in the Oberland: "May God by His grace appease the situation; things are very obscure".¹⁷¹ I will now endeavour to shed light on this darkness and grasp the way in which confessional issues compounded factional conflicts and exacerbated the political situation.

165 RC 11, p. 461 n. 1.

166 RC 12, p. 619 n. 2.

167 RC 12, p. 582–583.

168 Many letters attesting to this fear appear in AEG, PH 1078 and RC 12 "Notes complémentaires".

169 Cf. *infra*, chapter 4, p. 157.

170 On Girard, see DHBS, vol. 3, p. 424; Baechler, *Le Petit Conseil*, t. 2, p. 453–454; Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, t. 1, p. 227–228 and Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 188 n.1. Many of his letters to the Genevan authorities are preserved in AEG, PH 1014 (partially edited in Galiffe, *Matériaux*, vol. 2).

171 Van Berchem, "Les rapports", p. 95: "Dieu par sa grâce y veuille appaiser; les choses sont fort obscures".

4. Genevan Confessional Struggles: Factions and Criminal Trials

Abstract: Confessional conflicts deeply affected Geneva during the 1530s. The formation of an Evangelical community resulted in the confession-alisation of politics and of factional struggles. By 1534, the Swiss factions (the Eidguenots), now leading Geneva, repressed the Sabaudian-Catholic faction (the Penneysans) primarily through criminal trials and banishments. The Penneysans, entrenched in a number of castles in the Geneva countryside, countered with similar strategies. However, all these trials were motivated more by politics than by religion; the Genevan confessional struggles of these years, preceding the final shift to the Reformation, cannot be reduced to a narrative of people being persecuted for the sake of religion, as sixteenth-century propaganda from both factions often did.

Keywords: Geneva, factionalism, criminal trials, Early Lutherans, confession-alisation

The Arbitration of Payerne failed to resolve the Genevan imbroglio, and political uncertainty continued to grow during the 1530s. The spread of the Reformation within some major Swiss cities – foremost Zurich (1525) and Bern (1528) – made the situation even more complex. Bern, in particular, supported itinerant preachers such as Guillaume Farel (1489–1565) and their actions in the western part of their regional network of alliances; Neuchâtel, Lausanne and many towns of the Pays de Vaud, and Geneva witnessed intense preaching campaigns.¹ It is important to remember that the spread of new Evangelical ideas happened during a time of intense political crisis, as we have seen. Thus, religious dissent became another factor contributing to regional instability, and the already existing, complex network of alliances

¹ Würgler, “Politique, militaire, medias”. On Farel, two recent overviews are Van Raalte, “Apostle of the Alps” and Bruening, “Guillaume Farel”.

was forced to deal with a new factor. We will look in detail at the response of the duke of Savoy and at reforming policies in the next chapter. Here I will concentrate on the spread of the Reformation on the local level and how this affected factional conflicts.²

In Geneva, the growth of Evangelical ideals among some citizens slowly led to open confrontation between supporters of the old and new faiths. During a first phase, up to the summer of 1532, the first “Lutherans” – as contemporary sources call them – were relatively discreet.³ From that time on, and especially during 1533, the climate changed radically: numerous violent street riots involving many hundreds of people, and some murders, greatly troubled the city. As we have seen, Pierre de La Baume was absent during 1527–1533, governing from Arbois and more worried about the *combourgeoisie* and his jurisdiction. When he finally returned to Geneva in July 1533, he found a very chaotic situation and, fearing for his life, decided to leave just two weeks later.⁴ The climate of civil war pushed the bishop to open a criminal prosecution some months later, in March 1534, thus ushering in a long phase during which most of the factional struggles became a conflict fought by means of criminal trials. On the one side were the *Peneysans*: exiled Genevans committed to the bishop and the duke of Savoy. Their core members were the *Mammelus* condemned in 1527, but they were joined by exiles and fugitives over the ensuing years. The *Peneysans* established their headquarters in the episcopal castle in the *mandement* of Peney (cf. map. 5), which earned them the sobriquet given by their enemies. From this fortified position they captured committed *Eidguenots* and suspected Lutherans, while on the other side, the opposing faction imprisoned and put on trial members of the episcopal-Sabaudian faction who had not managed to

2 On the early Reformation in Geneva, Ammann, “Oberdeutsche Kaufleute” is still useful, and Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 69–312 offers the best-informed narrative of events. However, this second volume was posthumously published and the second part (narrating the events from the summer of 1532 to March 1534) is unfinished and without footnotes. Moreover, Naef in many parts strongly relies on Antoine Froment’s *Actes et Gestes* without the necessary critical distance. For a more regional overview, see Léchoy, *Une histoire de la Réforme*, p. 67–78; Benedict, “The Spread” and the articles in Solfaroli Camillocci *et al.*, eds., *La Construction*. For the bishops’ and the dukes’ reactions to the spread of the Reformation, see *infra*, chapter 5.

3 The term “Lutheran” was widely used within the Duchy of Savoy to refer to Evangelical people regardless of their beliefs, which were most of the time fluid, lacking doctrinal coherence and far from Luther’s theology, as was also the case for France and the Low Countries (cf. Monter, *Judging*, p. 83 and Duke, *Reformation*, p. 18).

4 Pierre de La Baume was also abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Claude and prior of the Benedictine priory of Arbois. On his politics after the *combourgeoisie* of 1526, see *supra*, chapter 3, p. 139–142.

escape or decided to remain in Geneva. This second wave of criminal trials, following the first wave of 1517–1527, ended with the conviction and death of Nycod de Prato, the bishop's fiscal procurator and one of the Penneysans' leaders, who was executed on 8 December 1536.⁵

Early Genevan chroniclers have left vivid accounts of these years and of the numerous trials.⁶ Antoine Froment (1509–1581) – a disciple of Guillaume Farel and one of most virulent Evangelical preachers in Geneva during 1532–1533 – wrote a short chronicle, which was meant to be an addendum to Bonivard's chronicles.⁷ Froment wrote from a teleological and providentialist perspective: the Reformation was inevitable because of divine providence.⁸ He presented the Penneysans' fighting and factional struggles of these years as essentially a religious conflict.⁹ One of his chapters dealt particularly with the trials and those “executed for the sake of religion by the Penneysans [...]”.¹⁰ According to Froment, many Genevans had been condemned to death “as heretics and Lutherans”.¹¹ Froment focused particularly on Antoine Richerme, beheaded in 1535 “without cause or reason, except that he was from Geneva”,¹² and on Pierre Gaudet, a priest

5 See *infra*, p. 181–184 for more details. Some of these trials were at the heart of a Master's seminar I taught at the University of Geneva during the spring of 2017. I wish to thank all the students in the seminar for their work and useful questions: Louis Romaneschi, Elia Von Rotz, Mélissa Maspoli, Elena Cors, Anaïs Mansouri, Laurent Perret, Clara Magalhaes Silveira, Alexandre Stefaniak, Catalina Roth, Clotilde Faas and Noemi Pezzutto.

6 For the period 1534–1536, which is not covered in Naef's unfinished work, the best view is Santschi, “Les mandements”. A good short presentation is Monter, *Calvin's Geneva*, p. 29–63. Unfortunately, Naphy's account of early Genevan factionalism (*Calvin*, p. 12–52) is not entirely reliable and is based too much on outdated historiography: Ménabréa, *Histoire de la Savoie* (wrongly cited as *Histoire de la Suisse*); Oechsly, *History of Switzerland*, and the very problematic Gaberel, *Histoire de la Réformation*. Gaberel was often imprecise, manipulated primary sources and even forged texts (cf. on this Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 80 n.1, 83, 102 n.1, 138 n.3 and 315 n.1).

7 On Bonivard and his chronicles, see *supra*, chapter 1, p. 61.

8 Antoine Froment is an interesting figure and deserves more research. On him, see Gross, “Les raisons d'un bannissement”. The most recent overview of sixteenth-century Genevan chroniclers is Dami, “Histoire officielle”. Froment's chronicle was (imperfectly) edited in the nineteenth century: Froment, *Les actes et gestes*. Revillod edited AEG Mss. Hist. 5, which is a draft by Froment with many corrections and marginal notes (that Revillod did not edit) and is certainly not a definitive version. In fact, Froment, like Bonivard, never received permission to publish his chronicle from the civic authorities. He mainly worked on his *Actes et gestes* in and around the 1550s and many incomplete versions of it still exist (I am grateful to Nicolas Fornerod who shared this information with me; he is currently working on Froment's chronicle and the manuscript tradition).

9 See, for instance, Froment, *Les actes et gestes*, p. 181.

10 Froment, *Les actes et gestes*, p. 171: “Excutés pour cause de religion par les Penneysans”.

11 *Ibidem*, p. 171: “...comme heretiques et Lutheriens”.

12 *Ibidem*, p. 174: “...sans cause ne rayon, sinon pource qu'il estoit de Geneue”.

of the Order of Knights Hospitallers of Saint John, executed “because he was married, and had renounced the Mass and all the Papacy”.¹³ Gaudet is also celebrated by Jean Crespin (1520–1572) as the first Genevan “martyr” in his well-known *Histoire des Martyrs* (1554), published many times under different titles. From Crespin’s point of view, the Penneysans only wanted “to persecute those who supported the Gospel party”, and for this reason, they condemned and burned Gaudet “without any trial, but with the manners and the rage of bandits”.¹⁴

Another well-known chronicle of the time is that of Jeanne de Jussie, a Poor Clare from the Genevan convent. Jeanne de Jussie also dealt at length with the city’s internal troubles and left an account of the death of Jacques de Malbuisson, one of the leaders of the Sabaudian-Catholic party. In the eyes of this nun, Malbuisson was condemned because he was a “good and true Catholic” and he was therefore also a martyr.¹⁵ Both Froment and Jeanne read factional struggles mainly as religious events. However, archival sources, and particularly the criminal trials still preserved in the Genevan archives, present a more complicated portrait.

The first section of this fourth chapter looks at the forming of the early Evangelical community in Geneva and shows the importance of the Bernese influence in this community. The combourgeoisie of 1526 and Bern’s shift to the Reformed faith in 1528 made religion a political affair, with politics becoming confessionalised. Interestingly, the confessional choice for the new Evangelical faith and the Bernese option never fully coincided, and not every Eidguenot joined the Evangelical community. In fact, Fribourg’s choice to stay Catholic made the Swiss option “religiously fragmented” and the confessionalisation of factionalism added another layer of complexity to the already chaotic political situation. The second part offers an analysis of the repression of the Sabaudian, and now also Catholic, faction by the Eidguenots, who were by 1534 definitely leaders of the city. As for the conflict against the Mammelus (1519–1527), the conflict was largely fought by means of criminal trials and subsequent banishments. The last section offers a specular vision of the Genevan factional conflicts and analyses how the Sabaudian faction – the so-called Penneysans – also led an intense campaign of repression against those Eidguenots who could be seized and put on trial.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 173: “...pource qu’il estoit marié, et auoit renoncé à la messe et à toute la Papauté”.

14 Crespin, *Histoire des martyrs*, p. 306: “persecuter ceux qui tenoient le parti de l’Evangile”; “... sans autre forme de proces, mais par forme et rage de brigans”. See also *infra*, p. 179–180. Gaudet was tried by the Inquisition.

15 Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 107.

These last two sections will demonstrate how religious arguments played little role in the trials. Politics remained at the forefront, explaining why many Eidguenots who stayed Catholic could oppose some of their Genevan co-religionaries who were Sabaudian and thus enemies. The divide ran down a political line, not necessarily a religious one.

Criminal trials and the confessionalisation of factions are one of the most neglected aspects of Genevan history and they are the substance of this chapter, which demonstrates that ultimately, the Genevan confessional struggles of these years preceding the final shift to the Reformation cannot be reduced to a narrative of people persecuted for the sake of religion and condemned as heretics, as Jeanne or Froment suggested.

The Early Evangelical Community

Although it is difficult to have a clear understanding of the origins, nature and size of the early Evangelical community in Geneva, there is no doubt that by 1526–1528 a small group of Lutherans was more or less openly active in the city. Luther's works were certainly circulating in Geneva by the 1520s. In 1524, Amé Lévrier, a prominent leader within the Genevan urban elite (whom we already met in chapter 2) and one of the first Eidguenots, admitted under interrogation by Sabaudian officers in prison to possessing some of Luther's work and showed some sympathy for him.¹⁶ By 1526, other members of the urban elite – such as the rich merchant Baudichon de La Maisonneuve and Jean Lullin, a wealthy and politically powerful innkeeper – showed traces of the new belief acquired from the German merchants they frequented. Some of their practices broke with tradition: Baudichon and Lullin ostensibly ate meat during Lent and at other prohibited times. Baudichon also argued that God did not require Lent, confession was madness since priests could not absolve, the Mass was an abuse and monastic life was useless, arguing that monks should be sent to plough the fields.¹⁷

Following the *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg of 1526, and the ensuing political turmoil, the city had – as we learned in chapter 3 – increasingly intense diplomatic relationships with these two cities. These relationships were an opportunity to build close ties with some of the Bernese elite and to come into contact with Evangelical ideas. The Vandel family provides a

16 Van Berchem, "Amé Lévrier", p. 18–19.

17 Baum, *Procès de Baudichon*, p. 138–141. On these first contacts with German merchants, see Ammann, "Oberdeutsche Kaufleute".

good example. Hugues Vandel, who acted as a quasi-permanent Genevan ambassador in Bern during the late 1520s and early 1530s, was the youngest of four brothers and an early sympathiser with Evangelical ideas. In 1530, the son of the Bernese Protestant chronicler Valerius Anshelm came to Geneva and was sent to Robert Vandel, Hugues's brother, in order to learn French. Probably also thanks to his presence in the Swiss city, one of Vandel's brothers and Claude Savoye – another member of the ruling elite and also among the first Genevan Lutherans – sent their sons to be educated in Bern.¹⁸ The initial spread of Evangelical ideas thus appeared to be linked also with members of the ruling elite, who were in contact with Swiss and German territories through their trading networks and for diplomatic reasons. However, in early 1527, Lutherans were probably still few, and they maintained a discreet presence within the city, as suggested by the pessimism in a letter to Zwingli by the Bernese ambassador Thomas von Hofen, who complained about the numerous monks and priests opposing the Evangelical ideas in the city.¹⁹

The year 1528 marked a first important turning point, for two reasons: Bern officially adopted the Reformation (on 7 February 1528) and the increasing political tensions described above contributed to a wider circulation of people – and ideas with them – in the Lake Geneva region. In fact, the political conflicts with the duke of Savoy and the bishop led to many military interventions by Bern and Fribourg in order to “rescue” the city from Sabaudian interference and protect the *combourgeoisie*. At the end of October 1528, a contingent of nearly 100 soldiers, mainly from the Gessenay,²⁰ arrived to help their *combourgeois* in the fight against the Sabaudian nobles allied in the Confraternity of the Spoon.²¹ The contingent stationed itself on the right bank of the lake, in the Genevan faubourg of Saint-Gervais. According to the duke of Savoy and his entourage, the Swiss came not only for military help, but also “to make those of the city join their Lutheran sect”.²² In fact, the rumour circulated that an Evangelical sermon had been given in the parish church of Saint-Gervais.²³ Extant sources do

18 Cf. Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 145–149, 152, 212–213 and 245. On Valerius Anshelm, Flückiger, “Anshelm, Valerius” (7 June 2002 version), *e-DHS*.

19 Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs*, vol. 2, p. 9–11.

20 On troops from this region, see *supra* chapter 2. Soldiers from Gessenay came again in 1532 (*RC* 11, p. 76).

21 See *supra*, chapter 3, p. 143 n. 145 for bibliographical references.

22 *RC* 11, p. 150 n. 4, and p. 581: (“fere condescendre ceulx de la cité à leur secte leuterienne”). The fear was not unrealistic, for Bern was acting in a similar way in Neuchâtel and in the Pays de Vaud; see Würgler, “Politique, militaire, medias”, p. 139–146.

23 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 169–172.

not reveal if these were only rumours, but some observers deemed that the situation was changing. Guillaume Duduc, the lieutenant of the vidomne, writing to one of the ducal secretaries on 13 December, informed the court that the "Lutheran sect" was growing and that tensions with the canons of Saint-Pierre's Cathedral were mounting, which was "a fact that has never been seen before".²⁴

These first contacts and the examples of the Swiss soldiers also brought the earliest incidents of public violence. Between March and April 1529, while the Bernese troops were in the region, the first known episode of iconoclasm took place in the Genevan suburbs.²⁵ At that time, a statue of Saint George was destroyed by some Genevans and the ducal officers interpreted this action as a sign that Genevans were "willing to follow the Lutheran sect".²⁶

Some months later, preachers were active in town again, yet still not openly. According to the Sabaudian marshall René de Challant, Evangelical preachers were secretly teaching in some houses and converting people during October and November 1529. It is possible that Guillaume Farel made a first brief appearance in the city, but no formal proof of this exists.²⁷ In any case, these activities were certainly encouraged by members of the elite, such as Baudichon de La Maisonneuve and Hugues and Robert Vandel, for some of the Lutherans on trial in 1534 (whom we will meet soon) confessed to having heard sermons in the houses of Baudichon and of Jean Taccon.²⁸

By 1530, actions by the early Evangelicals were becoming increasingly visible in public. During Lent 1530, a group of people contested the Dominican preacher during his sermon and forced him to eat meat with them, mocking him by saying that the Gospel of Luke required him to do this.²⁹ The Swiss campaign of October 1530 again brought troops from Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn, as well as some soldiers from Neuchâtel, some of whom had probably recently converted.³⁰ The Swiss had come to rescue their

24 Letter partially published in *RC* 11, p. 170, n. 1.

25 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 191–194. For bibliography on iconoclasm in Geneva during 1530–1536, see *supra*, chapter 1, p. 63 n. 120.

26 Quoted in Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 194: "de vouloer ensuyvre la sette [*sic*] lhutérienne".

27 *RC* 11, p. 331 n.1, and p. 608–613 and Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 214–221. On René de Challant, see Vester, *Transregional Lordship* and *infra*, chapter 5, p. 193–196.

28 AEG, P.C. 2/318, p. 5 and P.C. 1/213, p. 11–12. Jean Taccon was an important member of the ruling elite, having served many years in the Ordinary Council (later called the Small Council). He was among the leaders of the Eidguenot faction and was assassinated in 1539. On Jean Taccon see *DHBS*, vol. 6, p. 449.

29 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 235–236 and *RC* 11, p. 427 n. 1 and p. 432 n. 2. The reference is to Luke 10:8.

30 Würbler, "Politique, militaire, média", p. 141.

combourgeois from the harassment of the Confraternity of the Spoon, and for many weeks, Geneva and the surrounding region witnessed numerous acts of iconoclasm and desecration of churches. Once again, soldiers brought preachers: the Bernese chaplain Kaspar Megander (1495–1545) preached every day in Saint Pierre's Cathedral.³¹

The following two years were mostly shaped by the negotiations I have already discussed in chapter 3 and by the Second War of Kappel, relegating religious dissent within the city to the background. The summer of 1532 marked another step. At that time, the small Lutheran community had grown and become more daring. On 9 June, Geneva had its own Affair of the Placards, two years before Paris. Little is known about this episode, which is only retold by later chronicles that are sometimes contradictory.³² According to Jeanne de Jussie, some "large printed placards" were posted on church doors in Geneva, "stating all the principal claims of the perverse Lutheran sect".³³ Jeanne and other chroniclers also told of a street brawl which took place that day as a result of the placards being posted, and which involved Jean Goulaz – one of the early Lutherans at that time – and the canon Pierre Werly.³⁴ Some weeks later, the city councils had to intervene to forbid the schoolmaster Claude Bigottier – who was close to Farel – from preaching without the authorisation of the episcopal vicar.³⁵ From that moment on, the early community became more overtly active and Geneva entered a second phase, which started with the arrival of preachers such as Guillaume Farel, Antoine Saunier, Antoine Froment and Garin Muète in October–November 1532.³⁶

31 Van Berchem, "Une prédication", p. 153.

32 See the excerpts collected in *RC* 12, p. 102, n. 1. On this affair, see Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 315–322, who demonstrates that the placards were not directly linked with the indulgence proclaimed that year by Pope Clement VII for the wars against the Turks. It is possible, as Naef suggested, that the placards closely followed the content of a short pamphlet titled *Les grans pardons et indulgences...* printed by Pierre de Vingle around 1533 (see GLN 15–16 5319). In fact, the Genevan chronicler Michel Roset wrote that the 1532 placards were about a "grand pardon general de Jesus Christ" (Cf. *RC* 12, p. 103n). See also, for the printing activities of Guillaume Farel and Pierre de Vingle, Szczech, "Un groupe en polémique".

33 Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 71.

34 In fact, the city councils had to address a brawl between Goulaz and Werly (cf. *RC* 12, p. 107–108 and 154) even though the reasons are not made explicit.

35 *RC* 12, p. 111. On Bigottier, see Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 322–332 and on the Genevan schools, see also Caesar, "Écoles urbaines".

36 Farel, Saunier and Olivétan (who accompanied them) were quickly expelled on 4 October 1532. Farel only came back more than a year later, on 20 December 1533. Froment and Muète arrived at the beginning of November 1532. On these events and people, see Van Berchem, "Une prédication", p. 151–157.

The years 1533–1534 were characterised by public sermons and increasing violence among citizens.³⁷ By 1533, the witnesses of street riots between “Catholics” and “Lutherans” often reported groups of 150–300 persons from each group. The situation worsened noticeably after two murders in the street. On 4 May 1533, a large tumult resulted in the death of Canon Pierre Werly, who was a Fribourgeois; this provoked the anger of Fribourg, a valued ally that was already worried about the spread of “Lutheranism”. At the beginning of July, Pierre de La Baume returned to Geneva to restore order and to find Werly’s murderers, but, as in 1527, fearing for his own life, he decided to leave the city at night after only two weeks. Some months later, a second murder definitively plunged the city into troubled times.

On 3 February 1534, a brawl broke out in the cathedral quarter and Nicolas Bergier, a Lutheran, was killed. The bishop’s secretary, Jean Portier, was arrested, tried and put to death on 10 March for his involvement in the murder and for treason. In fact, the investigation also revealed that de La Baume had decided to appoint a governor of Fribourg to eradicate Lutheranism from the city. The bishop and Fribourg had alienated the Eidguenots, who interpreted the move as an act against the city’s independence and the *combourgeoisie*, and the conflict took another turn with an inevitable escalation.

Fribourg withdrew from the *combourgeoisie* in May 1534, in light of the fact that Genevans had gone too far in supporting the new Evangelical ideas, leaving Bern as the only *combourgeois*. Many Genevans, especially those involved with the bishop and Portier’s failed plot, had left the city during the first half of 1534; they joined those already exiled, thereby enlarging the Sabaudian faction. Hostilities and a partial blockade of the city, with the aid of the duke of Savoy and noblemen from the Confraternity of the Spoon, established the rhythm of the following months and years. The fugitives – as contemporary sources called them – and the duke of Savoy made a serious but ill-fated attempt to conquer Geneva by arms during the night of 30–31 July 1534. As a result of this failed surprise attack, many individuals who had colluded with the Sabaudian faction left the city. Most took refuge in the surrounding countryside, where the bishop still possessed three castles and controlled some small territories – the so-called *mandements*³⁸ (see map 5). Peney Castle, some ten kilometres west of Geneva,

37 The most detailed account is Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 383–480. Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, p. 29–63 is still a good short synthesis of the period. The period 1534–1536 would warrant a more detailed inquiry into Evangelical preaching. Much information is in RC 12 and 13. On Franciscans and some converted priests, see *infra*, chapter 5, p. 220–221.

38 The *mandements* of Jussy, Thiez and Peney were small castellanies possessed by the bishop of Geneva as part of his temporal rights. Each *mandement* had a castle and the bishop appointed

became the headquarters of the Genevans united in the Sabaudian – and Catholic – faction. The various failed attempts to retake control of the city by the bishop, the duke of Savoy and their Genevan partisans during the first half of 1534 ignited a new and substantial wave of criminal trials in Geneva against the Catholics and the Sabaudian party, and in Peney Castle against the Lutherans and the members of the Bernese faction. Before I turn to these trials, I will look back at the events of the years 1526–1534 and at the various individuals who made up the early Evangelical community in Geneva.

Shortly after the Affair of the Placards, in 1532, the “Lutherans” in Payerne sent a letter dated 9 July to their Genevan “good brothers and friends in Jesus Christ”, with congratulations on their strong and active faith. Guillaume Farel did the same, in a letter sent from Morat on 26 July asking the Genevan community to keep the faith despite the insults and the animosity directed against them.³⁹ Even though they did not refer to the Affair of the Placards explicitly, both letters were almost certainly a consequence of it. In any case, they clearly show that by 1532 the first Lutherans were more than a collection of individuals linked by friendship or commercial or diplomatic relations; they formed an Evangelical community, well established and in contact with other small communities in these Sabaudian Swiss francophone territories.

According to traditional historiography, which still influences the most recent overviews, Evangelical ideas came to the French regions under Sabaudian influence in three main ways: through merchants, through reformer-preachers and through printing.⁴⁰ This picture needs to be partially corrected. While the importance of merchants and of the first zealous and virulent preachers has been clearly demonstrated, most recent works have questioned the role of printing during the early years (1526–1532). Compared with the role that *Flugblätter* had in the German area, printed pamphlets and other printings were of limited importance during the early Reformation in Geneva.⁴¹ However, looking at the Genevan events, what is especially striking is the role played by soldiers. Carlos Eire has already shown the importance of iconoclasm for the spread of the Reformation,⁴² and Bernese

a castellan to administer justice and collect revenues. The castles also had military importance, controlling the territory surrounding Geneva. The villages of Céligny, Genthod and Neydens belonged to the *mandement* of Peney.

39 Edited in Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs*, vol. 2, p. 426–431 and 435–441.

40 See *supra*, n. 150 n. 2.

41 The same is true for theatrical representations, which played an important role in Bern. On all this, see Würzler, “Politique, militaire, média”, p. 135–138.

42 Eire, *War against Idols*, p. 122–132.

troops were certainly the vector through which Genevans discovered (and imitated) these practices. Moreover, as we have seen, the first Evangelical sermons in Geneva were organised when the Bernese troops came into town, and the role of Farel as a Bernese agent is well established.⁴³ It would be incorrect, however, to limit the Bernese influence to these two aspects.

According to François Bonivard's chronicle, contacts with soldiers were one of the main reasons for the spread of the new Reformed ideas in town. His chronicle suggests that the first Evangelical ideas did not take hold only by imitating iconoclasm or listening to sermons, but also through discussions and exchanges with the Bernese troops. Bonivard concluded that many young Genevans shared the company of the Bernese soldiers because the latter "told them things that were more pleasant to them, slandering the pope and all his brigade, who were forbidding the eating of meat on Fridays, Saturdays, on vigils and during Lent".⁴⁴

The role of these soldiers is still understudied, but some evidence suggests that they were crucial in conveying ideas about the new practices and protests against the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁵ Similar phenomena were observed throughout the French-speaking part of Switzerland during the same years. In the autumn of 1528, some fifty harquebusiers from Lausanne were sent to help Bern during a revolt in the Oberland. On their return, the episcopal officers wrote with some concern to the bishop, pointing out that these men had returned from this campaign "strongly Lutheran".⁴⁶ In a similar way, in La Roche-sur-Foron, a bourg some twenty-five kilometres southeast of Geneva, there were reports of unrest: some officers who had spent time in Germany were converting people to the new doctrines.⁴⁷

Given the political and juridical complexities resulting from the com-bourgeoisies, many members of the ruling elites frequently had to travel far from the city. Many Genevans thus had the opportunity for long stays in Bern or Zurich, and their diplomatic assignments allowed them to establish important contacts. Diplomacy thus became another important factor for the establishment of the first regional networks of early Evangelicals and for the spread of ideas. In 1530, Hugues Vandel wrote from Bern to his brother

43 See *supra*, n. 1 for references.

44 Bonivard, *Chroniques* (1563), p. 68: "leur parloient de choses à eux plus playsantes, medisantz du pape et de toute sa brigade qui deffendoient de manger chair le vendredy, le samedy, le vigiles, la caresme".

45 See similar remarks on Italy in Peyronel Rambaldi, "Propaganda evangelica", p. 24–25.

46 Gilliard, "Les débuts", p. 7.

47 Baud, ed., *Le diocèse*, p. 108. In 1526, preachers accompanying the Swiss troops delivered sermons in Piedmont and Saluzzo, cf. Jalla, *Storia della riforma*, p. 24.

Robert that he had been in Zurich meeting Zwingli, where he received a “great welcome”.⁴⁸ More generally, epistolary exchanges, as we have seen, were instrumental in keeping the network active. The sixteenth century was certainly the age of printing, but it should not be forgotten that manuscript letter writing also grew exponentially.⁴⁹ Some of the correspondence of early Lutherans is especially useful because it reveals the principal leaders of this first Evangelical Genevan community. In a well-known letter dated 18 November 1532 from Farel to Garin Muète, one of the preachers active in Geneva in the early 1530s,⁵⁰ Farel explicitly asked Garin to greet seventeen people whom he considered quite active in the new faith (see table 10).

Farel's letter thus gives a valuable hint about the core group of the first early Lutherans in Geneva. Yet the letter gives only an incomplete image of the community. For instance, Baudichon de La Maisonneuve, certainly one of the main leaders of the community, is not mentioned; we can only speculate why.⁵¹ That said, the persons mentioned by Farel were among the most active Lutherans and they may have constituted a sort of leading group. A month later, the syndics and the Ordinary Council summoned four of them – Claude Bernard, Claude Paste (*alias* Salomon), Amédée Perrin and Jean Goulaz – formally asking them to stop favouring Froment's preaching.⁵² A prosopographical analysis provides some interesting information about the political profile of these people.⁵³ Apart from Robert Vandel, who had been syndic in 1529 and who sat on the Ordinary Council in 1530–1533 as secretary of the commune, and Amédée Porral, who was elected syndic in 1523 and also sat as a secretary during 1526–1527, the others did not hold important political responsibilities, such as syndics or members of the Ordinary Council (later the Small Council), which formed what could be considered the executive function, or the political heart, of the city. However, they were almost all at various moments members of those intermediary councils that were created and modelled on the Swiss system: the Council of the Two Hundred (created in 1526) and the Council of Fifty (sometimes summoned as a Council of Sixty). The Council of the Two Hundred, in particular, became powerful as it gained the power to choose the syndics

48 RC 11, p. 455, n. 1.

49 Petrucci, *Scrivere lettere*, p. 87–110.

50 Published in Herminjard, *Correspondances des réformateurs*, vol. 2, p. 435–441 and 459–462.

51 He was clearly at the head of the small community in 1533, when 21 Evangelicals wrote to Bern to give their version of the murder of Canon Werly. The letter is published in RC 12, p. 599–560.

52 RC 12, p. 180.

53 For remarks about the lack of sources for a good prosopographical approach to Genevan factions, see *supra*, Prologue, p. 17.

and the councillors of the Ordinary Council. The two other councils had a long and intermittent life from the mid-fifteenth century and were usually summoned during periods of crisis to take decisions without assembling a General Council of all burghers.⁵⁴

Hence, many of these early Evangelicals played an active role, notably by lobbying and pressuring the Bernese councils. The years 1526–1536 saw a flow of letters and embassies attempting to justify the positions of each party.⁵⁵ The city councils also worried about this pressure and lobbying activity, which was ambiguous and dangerous for the city. Many embassies mixed official ambassadors from the commune – mainly charged with negotiations concerning the *combourgeoisie* – and those representing the Evangelical community, who were also members of some of the city councils.⁵⁶ The situation was often ambiguous and the commune tried to refrain from such mixed delegations. In March 1533, for instance, the Ordinary Council asked Baudichon and Claude Paste (*alias* Salomon) to avoid further contact or correspondence with Bern.⁵⁷ In Bern, a similar prudence was exercised, with division amongst the elite about the correct policy to follow. Often Bern had to write to the Genevan authorities and to the Peneysans asking them to refrain from violence and from conducting trials.⁵⁸ As in 1526, Bern had to avoid accusations of stirring up factional struggles, an argument often invoked by the Sabaudian party with the Swiss Diet.⁵⁹

It is important to realise that the forming of an Evangelical community and its subsequent lobbying activity added uncertainty and confusion to the situation, since this group did not coincide with the Eidguenot party. Granted, both groups favoured strong ties with Bern, but for different reasons. Among the early Eidguenots, many supported maintaining the alliance with both Bern and Fribourg, and Fribourg's withdrawal from the *combourgeoisie* was more than a confessional matter. The first consequence was a weakening of Geneva's network of alliances. The fracturing did not cease when Geneva adopted the Reformed faith in 1535–1536. On 24 July 1536, Jean Balard – an eminent member of the ruling elite, who had been syndic in 1525 and 1530 – had to explain his reluctance to attend sermons before the syndics and the councillors. He simply, but firmly, explained his position: "I

54 On the origin and functioning of these councils, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 82–91.

55 Some of these letters have been published in the *Registres du Conseil*.

56 See, for example, RC 12, p. 595–596.

57 RC 12 p. 241 and 249.

58 Santschi, "Les mandements", p. 348–350.

59 Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 105.

want to live according to the Gospel of God,⁶⁰ but I do not want to follow it through the interpretation of some individuals, but in accordance with the interpretation of the Holy Spirit, through Holy Mother the Universal Church in which I believe.”⁶¹ Balard was not alone in his choice. Other important members of the elite, among the “fathers” of the *combourgeoisie* of 1526, took a similar stand. On 4 September 1536, Claude Richardet, who had sat on the Ordinary Council since 1509 and had been syndic in 1517, 1525 and 1531, facing critics of his absence from the sermons, “furiously answered that no one could command his conscience”.⁶² Other eminent members of the ruling elites, committed Eidguenots and many times syndics or councillors, such as Jean-Louis Ramel, Pierre Lullin, Jean Philippe, Girardin de la Rive, Étienne Pecolat and Boniface Offischer, also vigorously affirmed their liberty of conscience and protested against the obligation to attend Evangelical sermons.⁶³ Others preferred to leave the city, especially after Fribourg abandoned the *combourgeoisie* and the city councils were increasingly dominated by Evangelicals: among those leaving were Amy Girard (a leading figure of the *combourgeoisie* of 1526), Nicolin Ducret, Pierre Bienvenu and Pierre de Malbuisson.⁶⁴

In the end, the fact that the Eidguenot party did not entirely coincide with the Evangelical community increased divisions within the ruling elite and added considerable complexity to the political situation. The trials of the years 1534–1536, to which I now turn, were profoundly rooted in this situation.

The Repression of the Sabaudian-Catholic Faction

The failed assault of 30–31 July 1534 elicited a fierce reaction from the syndics and the city councils, now firmly dominated by the Eidguenot party. As for the fight against the Mammelus, criminal trials ending with banishments, death sentences and the seizure of property within the city were one of the

60 A clear reference to the decision taken on 21 May by the General Council, which officially adopted the Reformed faith, with everyone promising to live “in this holy Evangelical law and word of God” (*RC* 13, p. 576).

61 *RCC* 1, p. 82–83.

62 *RCC* 1, p. 79 and 129.

63 Cf. *RCC* 1, p. 129 and Baechler, *Le Petit conseil*, vol. 2, p. 522. Richardet and Offischer fled the city in 1540 after the Articulants’ Affair (cf. *RCC* 6/2, 920). Offischer was allowed to return in 1544, see Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation*, p. 85.

64 Baechler, *Le Petit conseil*, vol. 2, p. 449, 453–454, 469 and 490.

principal weapons. For over two years, the Genevan authorities pursued those they regarded as enemies and traitors. The Genevan archives still preserve thirteen criminal procedures involving 202 people, which allow us to better understand the composition of the Sabaudian-Catholic faction.⁶⁵ As we have seen, many Genevans, especially those involved with the bishop and Portier's failed plot, had left the city during the first half of 1534, and the unfortunate assault of 30–31 July put many others on the road to voluntary exile. When the criminal prosecutions began, some leaders of the Sabaudian party, such as Thomas Moine and Michel Guillet, were thus absent,⁶⁶ many of them trying to reconquer the city, manoeuvring, as Penneysans, from the episcopal castles in the *mandements*.

Within the city, repression began with the imprisonment of Jean Boccard (3 August 1534), a cheesemaker who helped the Penneysans in the failed attack of July. But Boccard was only a minor figure, and the prosecution gained intensity with the arrest on 14 August 1534 of Jacques de Malbuisson, one of the leaders of the Catholic party who had stayed in Geneva. Three months later, the city councils began a trial in absentia against four other leaders of the party: François du Crest, Thomas Moine, Jean Levrat junior, and Jean Blanc. In late 1534 and the first months of 1535, the authorities patiently collected information about other fugitives. At the end of April, a trial began in absentia against the remaining principal Penneysans, totalling thirty-seven individuals. Between June and July 1535, many sentences were handed down. Jacques de Malbuisson was condemned to death and beheaded on 17 July and the principal Penneysans were sentenced to death in absentia, with a huge fine of 400,000 gold *écus* being imposed.⁶⁷

A second wave of trials followed the invasion of the Duchy of Savoy in January–February 1536 by the Swiss and French troops.⁶⁸ With a rapid campaign, the Bernese army conquered the Sabaudian Pays de Vaud in January and entered Geneva on 2 February. By April, all of the territories north of the Alps had fallen into French and Bernese hands. Most of the

65 See table 9 for details about these trials and their chronology.

66 *RC* 12, p. 456 n. 1 and p. 550 n. 3.

67 These collective fines against the Genevan Penneysans (and the same is true of the fine of 600,000 golden *écus* of 1536, cf. *infra*, p. 167) were extremely high, an almost unpayable sum (to compare: during these years, the ordinary annual receipts of the communal finances barely reached 4,000 golden *écus*). Also, because the Penneysans were absent from the city, the Genevan authorities had very little hope of actually receiving payment of these fines. They do not in fact represent real fines; we should understand them as a kind of demonstrative punishment. They were probably also a way to legalise the seizure of all of the goods of the condemned people, with these seizures being meant to satisfy the fines in light of the fugitives' absence.

68 On these events, see Santschi, "Les mandements", p. 380–391.

territories south of the Alps would follow a similar fate, and Charles II took refuge in Nice. Some of the prisoners that had been imprisoned for a long time, such as Jean Boccard, were sentenced soon thereafter, and in June, a second collective trial began, involving 151 defendants. It ended like the previous one, with a huge collective fine of 600,000 gold *écus* to be covered by property seizures, and with some death sentences. Once again, the trial had directly targeted people who had fled the city and were considered traitors. This second wave ended with the trial and beheading (on 8 December 1536) of Nycod de Prato, the episcopal prosecutor in charge of many trials against the Peneysans, who had been captured during the Swiss-French campaign.

Compliance with the Treaty of Saint-Julien and the Arbitration of Payerne (1530) was still being debated, with none of the parties involved accepting these treaties in full and all rejecting unfavourable articles. The Genevan imbroglio was frequently on the agenda of the Swiss Diet: Sabaudian and Genevan ambassadors pleaded their cause at the Diets held in Lucerne (12 January, 9 February and 4 March 1535) and in Baden (13 April and 8 June).⁶⁹ Yet the talks always ended without a solution. Moreover, Bern became increasingly distant. In a letter read aloud on 22 March at the Ordinary Council, the Bernese informed their *combourgeois* that the negotiations were at a standstill. The situation was very tense, as Bern made plain: "We could not come to your aid or rescue you, for it is not a reasonable thing that we should forsake our country, which is in danger of war, to rescue you."⁷⁰ The situation seemed so desperate that on 30 March and then again on 6 May, Genevans tried to take Peney Castle by surprise: the attacks turned into a military and political fiasco. The castle was not captured, and Bern became furious. In fact, among the conditions regularly set by the Diet was a request to halt violence and harassment of the opposing party. On many occasions, Bern had reminded both the city authorities and the Peneysans to refrain from violence.⁷¹ Moreover, Bern had made the diplomatic effort of asking the duke of Savoy to stop harassing the Genevans. They now had to dispel any doubts about their possible involvement in the affair and being behind the never-ending factional struggles within the city.⁷²

All-out war involving the Swiss cantons and Savoy had been a threat in the background for almost the entire period between 1530 and its effective

69 On these frantic months, see Santschi, "Les mandements", p. 352–360.

70 Letter published in *RC* 13, p. 176 n. 4: "ne vous pourrions estre en ayde, ne secourir, pourtant que n'est chose raysonnable que deussions delaisser nous pays estants en dangier de guerre pour vous secourir."

71 See, for instance, letters sent on 17 and 31 October 1534 (AEG, P.H. 1111 and 1112).

72 Santschi, "Les mandements", p. 357.

outbreak in 1536. Since the work of Charles Gilliard, it has been acknowledged that Bern's reluctance to help the Genevans and remove the Sabaudian-Peneysan harassment was motivated by the intricacies of the situation and the risk of a large-scale war involving the emperor and the Catholic cantons. In the end, the move by King Francis I of France to take the city is what pushed the Bernese to act.⁷³

This was the backdrop for these trials: months of increasing political instability, marked by rumours and uncertainty. The final sentences handed down in June–July 1535 were mainly the consequence of the worsening situation: having lost much support and possible political options disappear, the Eidguenots and the Evangelicals needed to prevent their enemies from returning to the city. After Fribourg's withdrawal, the *combourgeoisie* was in greater danger than ever, and Genevans lived in perpetual fear that Bern would also renounce it and ultimately renew its alliance with Savoy, an eventuality that was under discussion. The Eidguenots thus had a clear understanding of their difficult position and the instability of the political situation, always on the verge of dramatic changes.

In particular, the debt owed to the Bernese was a constant threat, and neither the *combourgeoisie* nor their common Evangelical faith could restrain Bern's appetite. In fact, compensation played a substantial role in the negotiations between Savoy, Bern, Fribourg and Geneva following the Arbitration of Payerne. In July 1532, Geneva still owed the huge sum of 19,000 gold *écus*, and in January 1534, Bern was pressing for payment of a part of the sums due, asking for 9,900 gold *écus*. In the end, the Genevan authorities were not able to retire their debt to Bern until 1537; they did so by combining various loans and selling some of the property and goods seized from the Peneysans.⁷⁴

Diplomacy had led nowhere, the attempts to seize Peney in 1534 had failed, and the Bernese conquest of 1536 added another threat. It was due to this worsening situation that the Eidguenots had no other choice than to pursue judicial violence and hope for better times. Like the trial against the Mammelus in 1527, the new wave of prosecutions against the Peneysans was an opportunity to seize property. Many of the Peneysans were wealthy merchants, as shown by the inventories of their property.⁷⁵ It should also be

73 Gilliard, *La conquête*, p. 25–151. See also on the conquest, Scott, *Swiss*, p. 133–155 and Vester, *Transregional Lordship*, p. 77–82.

74 Santschi, *Crises*, p. 104–105, Körner, *Solidarités*, p. 231–234 and Scott, *Swiss*, p. 122–129.

75 AEG, P.H. 1116. This is particularly the case for François Regis and his son, Thomas Moine, and François du Crest.

considered that the city's finances were heavily burdened by the construction of new fortifications, substantial expenses for assuring the city's ability to conduct surveillance, and, mainly, the large sums still due to Bern for its rescue in 1530.⁷⁶ Already on 4 August 1534, the Ordinary Council clearly stated that all property of the fugitives was to be inventoried and sold at the highest price to satisfy the demands of the city's creditors.⁷⁷

By mid-1536, the general treasurer of the commune had brought in around 1,480 gold *écus* from selling only a portion of the Peneysans' movable property.⁷⁸ In addition, many houses, lands and vineyards were sold, rented or used as collateral for loans within the city, amounting to around 3,636 *écus* in 1536–1537.⁷⁹ Martin Köner has drawn up a list of forty-two individuals whose property was rented or used as collateral for raising loans in 1536–1537: a comparison with the list of people condemned during the criminal trials in 1527 and then in 1535–1536 reveals that among them were eleven Mammelus and eighteen Peneysans.⁸⁰ These are rough estimates, for the sources do not allow for a full reconstruction of the property seized and its financial impact, but they are certainly lower than the total sums brought in. Financial pressure certainly played a major role in the numerous criminal convictions handed down in these years, with the property seized fitting into the struggle to fulfil Bern's financial requests and keep the city independent.

The many trials allow us to draw a collective portrait of the Peneysans. As for the Mammelus, Genevan historiography has considered that Peneysans' loyalty to the bishop and the House of Savoy was mostly a social matter: wealth, power and honour depended on their ties with these two princes and on the offices held.⁸¹ However, once again, there was apparently no clear social divide and the party appears quite mixed if we judge by their occupations (see table 8). If we look at the first wave of trials ending in 1535 which involved the most committed Peneysans, we observe that some of

76 In 1534, the commune spent 4,322 florins in order to guarantee the city's security and ability to conduct surveillance (*RC* 13, p. 642). On the fortifications, see La Corbière, ed., *Genève, ville forte*. On finances, see Monter, *Studies*, p. 11–14; Mottu-Weber, "Dans les coulisses", and Körner, *Solidarités*, p. 231–241.

77 *RC* 13, p. 29.

78 Mottu-Weber, "Dans les coulisses", p. 6.

79 During the same years, considerable sums also came from the ecclesiastical properties. In 1536–1537, the treasurer obtained some 4,400 *écus* from various sales and rentals (Körner, *Solidarités*, p. 237–241).

80 *Ibidem*, p. 240 (table 56), see also tables 7 and 8 (thirteen people cannot be clearly identified, or it is possible that they were condemned in other now-lost trials, or that they simply fled the city).

81 For instance, Santschi, *Crises*, p. 10.

the leaders were definitely connected to local nobility and had close ties especially to the episcopal administration: Nycod de Prato was the episcopal fiscal prosecutor, Michel Guillet was lord of Monthoux (a small lordship in the Genevan countryside), and Perceval de Pesmes was a nobleman and squire of the bishop.⁸² We also find Dominique Suchet, a doctor of law and member of the Episcopal Council, as well as Claude de Furno, a doctor of law and the head of the episcopal administration in exile at Gex (since 1534).⁸³ But others were simple notaries, cobblers, merchants or shoemakers. Nor were these categories exclusive. Many noblemen were also merchants; this was the case for Michel Guillet, for instance.

The second collective trial in 1536, with 151 defendants, presents some difficulties for our understanding of the Penneysan-Sabaudian faction, since it also targeted many people who had fled the city in the preceding years but whose involvement with the Penneysans was limited or even non-existent. In fact, the accusations lodged against these defendants included their failure to comply with municipal ordinances that forbade burghers from leaving the city and abandoning their duty to defend the city. This second collective trial ended with a sentence that found these people guilty of “treason, conspiracy and wars” against the city and sentenced them to pay a huge fine of 600,000 gold *écus* to be covered by their seized property.⁸⁴ The syndics also pronounced a death penalty against Marin de Versonnex and fifteen other people who had been heavily involved with the Penneysans and with the failed assault of July 1534.⁸⁵

It is hard to establish exactly why only sixteen people were sentenced to death or to determine the exact involvement of all those convicted. Certainly, there were some Penneysans among the individuals that were only fined. François Tissot, a simple hatmaker, and Pierre de Chavannes had been found guilty of having actively taken up arms alongside the Penneysans.⁸⁶ The notary Etienne Macheret, who had a reputation for dishonesty, was found guilty of conspiring with Nycod de Prato and other leaders of the Penneysans and of having robbed and destroyed Genevans’ houses and barns in the countryside near the city controlled by the Penneysans.⁸⁷ More examples could be cited.

82 On some of these noblemen, see Mottier, “Les Genevois”.

83 On him, see Perrilat, “Claude Dufour”.

84 AEG, P.C. 1/308, no. xvii.

85 AEG, P.C. 1/308 (cf. also table 9): Pierre Ballexert, Hugoz Bertier, Nicolas Chamot, Pierre Cherdon, Claude and Georges Des Champs, Nycod Ferrier, Hemoz and Jean Folz, Truffin Gerbel, Pierre Jacquier, Michel Levrat, François Perret, Claude Rosset, *alias* Rolet, and Thomas Trossier.

86 AEG, P.C. 1/308, no. ix (“Les articles contre les cités”), art. 197–199 and 306–307.

87 *Ibidem*, art. 170–173.

From the trial record and the articles of accusation, thirty-three of these individuals can be identified as committed Penneysans.⁸⁸ However, these individuals were not included among those who received death sentences, possibly because the syndics deemed that the seizure of their properties and the fine was sufficient punishment.

In many cases, the authorities exhibited no doubt about the fate the Penneysans deserved. Marin de Versonnex and Claude Biollesii – both convicted in 1536 – were sons of Mammelus who had already been convicted and banished in 1527 (Antoine de Versonnex and Étienne Biollesii), but, at that date, the authorities had not seized their fathers' property and had allowed them to stay in town. This fact is mentioned in the articles of the accusation against the sons, and the trial accused them of disregarding the mercy that had been granted to the fathers.⁸⁹ The case of Conrad Hugues, the son of Besançon Hugues (one of the fathers of the *combourgeoisie* of 1526 and a leader of the *Eidguenots*),⁹⁰ was highly emotional. Conrad was a canon of the cathedral chapter of Geneva and during the troubled years of 1534–1535 he had taken refuge in Fribourg. He was also among the Penneysans tried in 1536. We can sense all the reprobation of the Genevan authorities when they stated, in the first article of the charges against him, that “he had become other than his father and he had ‘practised’ and plotted against the city”.⁹¹ Despite his conviction, and hoping that his illustrious ancestry could help him, Conrad Hugues tirelessly tried for more than three years (1536–1539) to obtain pardon and to come back to Geneva. In many letters written to the city councils, he asked them to consider “the kindness you had for our late father” and argued that if he, Conrad, had been at fault, it was only due to his “inexperience, youth and the persuasion of some of my relatives”.⁹² The Genevan authorities never allowed him to return: in their final decision of 8 February 1540, they stated that that no pardon was possible in his case.

The city councils showed more clemency for some other people convicted in 1536: almost certainly the charges were less serious and their status as Penneysans and enemies of the city more questionable. Their principal fault had been to leave the city and not assist in its defence, as required by their status as burghers. Some of them were allowed to come back by paying a reduced fine, although most of them were barred from holding public

88 See tables 8 and 9 for details.

89 AEG, P.C. 1/308, no. ix (“Les articles contre les cités”), art. 26 and 206.

90 See *supra*, chapter 2, p. 98–106. On Conrad Hugues, see Naef, *Bezanson Hugues*, p. 142–163.

91 AEG, P.C. 1/308, no. ix (“Les articles contre les cités”), art. 91: “a praticqué et machiné contre la ville”. On the term ‘practice’, see *supra*, p. 122.

92 Quoted in Naef, *Bezanson Hugues*, p. 150 and 153.

office – a sign that suspicion had not been completely erased.⁹³ In some cases, people who were certainly Penneysans and who had taken up arms against the city (but were only sentenced to a fine during the trial) were also permitted to come back: this was the case for Mermet Baud,⁹⁴ the printer Gabriel Pomard,⁹⁵ and Étienne Macheret.⁹⁶ We can only attempt to grasp the pain and uncertainty that many individuals and their families endured, sometimes for many years. On Tuesday, 25 September 1537, the wife of Étienne Macheret petitioned the council, possibly with regard to their seized property that was being sold.⁹⁷ And again on 30 July 1538, Macheret begged the authorities for re-admission to the city. Not until late 1538, in exchange for a sum of money, were he and his family finally granted the right to return to Geneva. He probably did not recover all his property, and he appears to have been in financial difficulties since the syndics agreed to reduce his fine due to the fact that he had “a heavy burden of children”.⁹⁸

Étienne Macheret's case is a powerful reminder that in these political and religious factional struggles, men were not alone: their families, wives and children were also involved and deeply affected. While it is a promising avenue for scholarship, the role of women in factional struggles is still insufficiently studied.⁹⁹ Jeanne de Jussie offers numerous vivid scenes. On many occasions, Jeanne depicts women as good Catholics resisting their “wicked” Lutheran husbands.¹⁰⁰ During the street tumults of 1533, many “well armed” women fought against the Lutherans, with many throwing rocks, and “along with the women there were at least seven hundred children between twelve and fifteen years old who were determined to do their duty with their mothers”.¹⁰¹ Jeanne's allegations should be taken seriously since when the Council of Two Hundred promulgated ordinances (on 30 March 1533)

93 For instance, Barthélemy Faulson, Claude Jacon and Jacques Villaret (*RCC* 1, p. 217, 230, 263; 2, p. 5).

94 *RCC* 1, p. 217 and 230.

95 *RCC* 1, 72 and 240. Pomard, however, after a brief return to Geneva between September and December 1536, definitively went back to Annecy, where he became a burgher in 1537. Pomard had been accused of publishing the *Deploration de la Cité de Genesve* (GLN 15–16 5047), a poem opposing the sermons of Farel, Froment and Viret (cf. Gaullieur, “Etudes sur la typographie”, p. 125–128). The text had actually been printed in Lyon by Pierre de Sainte-Lucie.

96 *RCC* 1, p. 56, 65, 133–135 and 252.

97 *RCC* 2, p. 313 and 336.

98 *RCC* 3, p. 355 and 525: “az grosse charge d'enfans”.

99 Gentile, “Factions and parties”, p. 322.

100 For instance, Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 112–113 and 117–118.

101 *Ibidem*, p. 78. Again, some months later, in December, Jeanne recorded similar scenes (*ibidem*, p. 90).

to re-establish order within the city after the first street riots, it explicitly stated that married men had to notify their wives and children of the new ordinances so that no one would infringe them.¹⁰² This is a clear sign that women and children had also been involved in the tumults.

The trials and the fact that many Genevans had fled the city brought women back to the forefront. In fact, initially, only the husbands had left, leaving their wives and children to take care of their property. During 1534–1536, the city councils often dealt with wives asking to keep their goods or homes. Claudia Moine, the wife of Thomas, one of the Penneysan leaders, had to fight to keep the family property from being seized by the municipal authorities. She went many times before the syndics and the councillors, asserting that she bore no responsibility for her husband's acts and that the seized goods and property were also hers due to marriage. Her action was partially successful since, in 1535, the Ordinary Council decided that some of these goods were to be returned to her.¹⁰³ Claudia Moine's case was not unique, but many Genevans believed that allowing families of the Penneysans to stay in town was dangerous. On 6 April 1535, the Ordinary Council decided to expel the families and wives of the Penneysans because they were a threat to the city and were potential supporters of external enemies.¹⁰⁴ This decision had to be repeatedly confirmed, with new trials plunging other families into uncertainty.¹⁰⁵ The subject was debated again, and on 15 March 1536, the city authorities decided to wait for the end of the criminal procedures to expel families, since there was no real danger and their property had been inventoried.¹⁰⁶ The final fate of these wives remains uncertain and is in most cases unknown. Many, if not most, had certainly left the city already. Their fight to preserve their family property, as well as their participation in the street tumults, remind us that wives (and children) were not passive bystanders to the factional struggles, but active participants in those troubled times.

There is one last issue that must be addressed. I have used the term "Sabaudian-Catholic party/faction", but it is difficult to determine how much of a role was played by religious hatred and confessional struggles during the trials. And in a sense, identifying a "Catholic party" – fighting against a Lutheran one – is partially misleading. The course of events definitely

¹⁰² *SDGE*, vol. 2, p. 543.

¹⁰³ *RC* 13, p. 28, 34, 69 n. 4, 98, 249, and 253.

¹⁰⁴ *RC* 13, p. 187.

¹⁰⁵ For instance, *RC* 13, p. 382 (13 December 1535) and p. 479 (7 March 1536).

¹⁰⁶ *RC* 13, p. 494.

made Penneysans not only a Sabaudian but also a Catholic party, but not every Catholic joined the party or left the city. Similarly, as we have seen, not every Eidguenot turned out to be a faithful Evangelical.¹⁰⁷

Certainly, many of the convicted Penneysans were also strong Catholics and took an active part in the street fighting during the years 1533–1534, and before the city councils against Evangelical preachers such as Farel. This was true for leaders like Jacques and Pierre de Malbuisson, Marin de Veson-nex, Thomas Moine, Barthélemy Faulson, François du Crest and Perceval de Pesmes.¹⁰⁸ Others, like Michel Guillet, who in July 1534 became the leader of the Penneysans, were less involved in the confessional struggles and had a more political role.¹⁰⁹ During the second half of the 1520s, Michel Guillet was close to the Eidguenots and Besançon Hugues, but later he appeared to be above all a faithful servant of the bishop. He fled the city after Portier's failed plot.¹¹⁰

In that respect, the Penneysans' trials reveal little about the religious divide, and confessional charges were nearly absent from the trial records. For the first collective trial of 1535, of 103 articles of accusation against the Penneysans, only two (nos. 13 and 14) were about the religious divisions: Michel Guillet was accused of calling all those opposed to him "Lutherans" and using this term to rally everyone in the city against them.¹¹¹ All the other articles were about the harassment of the city, the conspiracy with the duke of Savoy and the failed plot of July 1534. Similarly, confessional struggles were virtually absent from the second collective trials of 1536. The only trace was when Roland Raymond was charged with having helped the Dominican preacher Guy Furbity during Advent 1533, with some witnesses hearing him say, "Good father preach boldly! Say everything against those Lutheran dogs!"¹¹² Jacques de Malbuisson's trial, which according to Jeanne de Jussie had been conducted on religious grounds, appears essentially to have been a political one. The leader of the Sabaudian-Catholic party in town was interrogated initially on a set of forty-two articles, then on another set of sixty-six. Only a few of the questions were about his hatred of Lutherans or his involvement

107 Cf. *supra*, p. 136.

108 Cf. *RC* 12, p. 242, 264–265, 406, 493. On these tumults, see also Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2 p. 393–430 and 469–494.

109 *RC* 13, p. 456, n. 1.

110 Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 43, n. 3, p. 492–493.

111 AEG, P.C. 1/296, Register B, n^o 22.

112 AEG, P.C. 1/308, no. ix ("Les articles contre les cités"), art. 70–71. Furbity was a member of the Sabaudian priory of Montmélian and was sent to Geneva as a preacher to fight the spread of the Evangelical ideas. His violent attacks against the early Genevan "Lutherans" and his sermons greatly upset Bern, which threatened to withdraw from the combourgeoisie if Furbity did not recant and apologise.

in Furbity's preaching – an affair that was more political than religious since its main consequence had been to jeopardise the *combourgeoisie* with Bern.¹¹³ The Portier affair, the failed assault of July 1534 and more generally the actions by the *Peneysans* against Geneva were at the heart of the trial; the final sentence convicted him of treason.¹¹⁴

The slight weight of confessional struggles in these criminal proceedings goes hand in hand with the never-ending negotiations of these years. Reading the numerous letters and memoirs exchanged between the Swiss cantons, the Sabaudian ambassadors and the Genevan factions, we see that religious problems rarely surfaced.¹¹⁵ While the duke did ask the Genevans to remain loyal to their old faith during the negotiations in Thonon (27 November–15 December 1534), those talks mainly revolved around the *combourgeoisie* of 1526, respecting the Arbitration of Payerne (1530), and acts that did not respect the terms of those treaties. During the following Diet in Lucerne (9 February 1535), Bern made it clear that the only points up for debate were the Treaty of Saint-Julien and the Arbitration of Payerne.¹¹⁶

Confessional arguments would have added little to the problems created by these proceedings, and evidence of conspiracy and attacks against the city were infringements on the promises made by the duke not to harass the city. Bern (and Geneva) had to deal with the Diet, in which Catholic cantons carried some weight (especially in the aftermath of the Protestant defeat at Kappel in 1531). Moreover, at times the emperor intervened – with no effect, admittedly – and the Bernese had to justify their policies. However, what is interesting are the arguments put forward by both parties: the emperor asked for peace to be maintained and viewed the spread of Protestantism in Geneva (and its support by Bern) as a source of unrest and troubles. And Bern had to make clear that its involvement in Genevan affairs was due to the *combourgeoisie* and harassment by the duke of Savoy, who did not wish to respect the treaties of Saint-Julien and Payerne. Ultimately, confessional trials would have been disregarded by many and considered an unwanted source of unrest.¹¹⁷

What is important to understand is that the trials were not simply internal affairs. In the face of the complex web of alliances existing at the time, trials

113 AEG, P.C. 1/288, p. 27–31 and 65–80.

114 *Ibidem*, p. 199–200.

115 See for instance the documents published in *RC* 13, p. 579–640.

116 *RC* 13, p. 608–609 and 612.

117 See for instance a letter to Bern from Léonard de Gruyères, official of Besançon and imperial ambassador (30 January 1536) and the Bernese response (23 February 1536), published in *RC* 13, p. 633–636.

could be used as legal evidence during the endless negotiations that I have described in the previous chapters.¹¹⁸ Among the forty-four documents that the Genevan Eidguenots carried to Payerne in 1530 to establish their rights was the sentence handed down in the Mammelus trial.¹¹⁹ In the preparations for the Diet to be held in Lucerne on 10 January 1535, the Genevan Ordinary Council sent an embassy to Bern with precise instructions: the ambassadors must explain that the people imprisoned and undergoing trial in Peney – whom we will encounter soon – were prosecuted because of their Evangelical faith and not for any other crimes.¹²⁰ Here, Genevan authorities were probably trying to foster some confessional solidarity, but they were also, and probably mostly, making a point: the trials the Penneysans were holding at the episcopal castle and that they were using during the negotiations were unlawful and without any political justification. For the same purpose, the Genevan ambassadors went to Bern in August 1535 with a copy of the trials of Jacques de Malbuisson, François Espaula, Perceval de Pesmes, Pierre Baud and Jean Regis: these trials were proof, at least so Genevans believed, that the conflicts were not *persecutions* fuelled by religious divisions but *prosecutions* of criminals and traitors.¹²¹

The syndics and the councillors were aware of the fragility of confessional solidarity. The events following the Bernese invasion of 1536 also showed that confessional ties between the city on the Aare and Geneva could be quickly forgotten. Not only did Geneva risk becoming a subject city, but Bern did not hesitate to support the Penneysans' claims since they were living in the Genevan countryside, which was now mostly under Bern's sovereignty (see map 6). On many occasions, Bern intervened to support some old claims by Genevan citizens about property that Genevan authorities had seized or about disputed rights and to defend people who were now Bernese subjects. Bern supported the Penneysans Mermet Baud, Jacques Bel, Louis Matheri and Jean Lyffort, and the former Mammelu Jean Bovier, irritating the syndics and councillors that notified it of the fact that these were traitors (and enemies of Bern as well) condemned by the courts.¹²² Bern also vigorously and insistently intervened for three months asking for the liberation of Perceval de Pesmes and Pierre Baud, both condemned as Penneysans in

118 See *infra*, p. 182 about the use made of the trials held by the Penneysans.

119 Sordet, "Recherche", p. 124. See also, on this episode Caesar, "Popular Assemblies", p. 140–41.

120 RC 13, p. 116.

121 RC 13, p. 293, n. 2; see table 9 for details about these trials.

122 See the many Bernese letters sent in 1536 to Genevan authorities: RCC 1, Pièces annexes nos. 3, 7, 9, 22, 23, 25, 31, 42, 47, 51, 52, 55, 57, 75, 79, 82, 83, 119 (1536). Bovier is here spelled as "Bonnier". On that case, see also Santschi, "Les mandements", p. 414–415. Cf. also *infra*, Epilogue, p. 227.

1536.¹²³ On 15 April 1536, thanks to Bernese pressure, the two men were freed and not condemned to death (they were only stripped of their political rights).¹²⁴ Perceval de Pesmes was the squire of the bishop and one of the leaders of the Sabaudian-Catholic party, but the family had also acquired the burghership of Bern and was related to the powerful Diesbach family.¹²⁵

Should we therefore conclude that the spread of the Evangelical faith and confessional fractures did not play any role? That would certainly go too far: confessional divisions did exist and sparked hatreds that played a role in these political conflicts. However, historians are at pains to try to weigh the importance of the various factors. In her narrative of the execution of Jacques de Malbuisson, Jeanne de Jussie gave an account of the speech that Malbuisson made just before being beheaded:

*Messieurs, I go to my death here purely for the love of my God, because I never committed any offence deserving of death; and if I had wanted to be an Evangelical, I would not have died. But I declare that I am dying in my worthy ancestors' religion and just as they did, except that I have not been given the holy sacraments.*¹²⁶

Whether or not Malbuisson really gave this speech is of secondary importance here; according to Jeanne, he was a martyr (or at least she decided to present him as such), not a victim of political strife. For Jeanne, the fact that Jacques de Malbuisson had not received the sacraments was part of his persecution. Nevertheless, we should not neglect narratives of martyrdom simply because they are shaped by the ideology or belief of their authors.¹²⁷ In fact, Jeanne's narrative is correct insofar as we know that during March 1535, while still imprisoned, Malbuisson asked to attend Mass and to make his confession, which the syndics and councillors refused, probably fearing a possible escape.¹²⁸

Ultimately, we do not necessarily need to try to reconcile the two versions since both – fear of escape and confessional hatred – probably played a role. They also serve as a reminder that these events were lived and interpreted

123 Cf. table 9.

124 *RC* 13, p. 423, 426, 481, 483, 515, 530, 532 and 540. The trials are in AEG, P.C. 1/300 and 1/303, and the granting of clemency is in P.C. 2/363.

125 See *supra*, chapter 1 on Pierre de Pesmes (the lord of Brandis) and Mottier, "Les Genevois", p. 8, 19 and 25.

126 Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 107.

127 Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 26.

128 *RC* 13, p. 177, 181.

differently according to one's role, history, family ties or culture. They were part of the complexity of those uncertain times: for Jeanne, Jacques de Malbuisson was a martyr, as were Claude Pennet, Jean Portier and Pierre de Werly.¹²⁹ And many Catholics in town probably thought the same.¹³⁰

Clearly Jeanne's chronicle was imbued and shaped by a religious and apocalyptic interpretation of these years – and it should not be forgotten that Jeanne wrote after the events, during the first half of the 1540s when Geneva was already a Reformed “citadel”. Narrating the street riots of March 1533, Jeanne acknowledges that “in those troubled times, there was so much hostility between the two parties that the child turned against his father and the mother against her daughter.”¹³¹ The observation is correct in a sense, for we know that some families split. Jeanne certainly had in mind Blaisine Varember, the only Genevan Poor Clare to embrace the Reformation and the daughter of Dominique, the wealthy Mammel merchant convicted in 1527. Conrad Hugues, whom we have briefly met, would be another good example.¹³²

However, Jeanne's chronicle was not a simple history of a reality she had observed. Her interpretations of the facts were clearly shaped by her biblical culture. The passage on families being torn apart is a clear echo of Jesus's long speech in the Gospel of Luke (12:53) about the end times. Again, historians need to move away from a simple positivistic point of view in trying to distinguish reality from falsity. This is not to say that any critical analysis of sources is useless, of course. But it seems more interesting to grasp the way people lived and interpreted these facts. In the end, the plural voices arising from the past about Jacques de Malbuisson's trial are a good example of the climate of troubles, fear and uncertainty that accompanied the waves of trials during the years 1534–1536. The many trials held at Peney also shaped those feelings.

Early Lutherans on Trial

Between 1526 and 1536, supported by the Sabaudian nobility and the duke, the Mammel and later the Peneyans continuously harassed Geneva, trying to force the city to capitulate. Genevans suffered from the various

¹²⁹ Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 83–84, 97–98.

¹³⁰ François de Mandallaz, one of the bishop's fiscal procurators, expressed similar feelings in a letter to Nycod de Prato, in which he told him of the execution of Malbuisson (AEG, P.H. suppl. 125).

¹³¹ Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 77.

¹³² Cf. *supra*, p. 168.

blockades and seizures of cattle, and people travelling to and from the city were in constant danger of being robbed. The conflict against the Eidguenots and the Evangelical party also took the form of judicial violence, with many people captured in the countryside being put on trial. Following the Portier affair and his execution (10 March 1534), Pierre de La Baume understood that he was definitely losing control of his city and that he needed to regain control. He asked his fiscal procurator Nycod de Prato to prosecute Lutherans and eradicate factionalism. On 28 March 1534, de Prato initiated proceedings against nine persons involved in the factional struggles and suspected of adhering to the Evangelical movement.¹³³ Some months later, on 10 August, the procurator gathered some secret information – the starting point for a criminal procedure against 16 people who were the leaders of the Evangelical party at that time: Jean Philippe, Michel Sept, Amédée de Chapeau Rouge, Jean Amédée Curtet, Jean Ludovic Blecheret, Jean Coquet, Baudichon de La Maisonneuve, Claude Paste (*alias* Salomon), Amédée Porral, Amédée Perrin along with Mermet *de Calcibus* (*alias* Jacard), Antoine Richerme, Girard Chabod, Henri Noël, Benoît Dadaz and Gaspard Neyrod, who were already among those on the list of 28 March.¹³⁴ The procurator also drafted a list of 176 people suspected of adhering to the Lutheran party.¹³⁵

In this case, confessional boundaries played a more open role from the outset. That de La Baume directed his fight against the early Lutherans is not astonishing, since it was among his duties as bishop. But the choice also had some political underpinnings: by not lumping together Lutherans and Eidguenots, who, as we have seen, shared a common pro-Bernese orientation but not necessarily the same religious beliefs, de La Baume could hope to maintain good relations with some of those whom he still considered to be his citizens. We should probably interpret his choice as an act of political prudence.¹³⁶ Undoubtedly, in his efforts to retain sovereignty over the city, de La Baume needed to align with the duke of Savoy. However, relations between the bishop and Charles II were not always those of close and friendly allies, and the tensions over lordship of the city that arose in 1526 were still simmering in the background. What would have happened if the duke had succeeded in annulling the combourgeoisies between Geneva, Lausanne

¹³³ AEG, P.C. 1/293.

¹³⁴ RC 13, p. 591.

¹³⁵ RC 13, p. 591–594. Among them, only Claude Salomon and Amédée Porral were already listed in Farel's letter of 1532 (see table 10).

¹³⁶ During the same years, Fribourg showed similar prudence in prosecutions against "heretics", imposing fines or exile most of the time, and avoiding executions when possible. Cf. Binz-Wohlhauser, *Katholisch Bleiben?*, p. 101–121.

and the Swiss? What about the old question of the imperial vicariate? These were certainly questions that worried the bishop.¹³⁷

Around 10 July 1534, one of the Sabaudian ambassadors involved in the endless negotiations with the Swiss informed the duke of an exchange he had had with Pierre de La Baume. The bishop had manifested his intention to return to Geneva and rule the city as was his duty and right, and this was not a new intention. However, de La Baume added a reflection that would worry the duke, as the Sabaudian ambassador wrote: he did not think that the Bernese would impede him in this plan; after all, the bishop remarked that “in the *combourgeoisie*, and in every *abschied* and treaty, the Bernese always wrote about him and his Church, reserving his jurisdictions and pre-eminence.”¹³⁸ That the bishop might still be looking to join as a *combourgeois*, as he had attempted to do in 1527, was not implausible, and Charles II probably knew this. In the end, it is useful to remember that sovereignty over the city involved a latent conflict between the duke and de La Baume. Thus, de La Baume could not regain control of the city at any cost, and as in 1526, he still needed the support of the ruling elite against the designs of Charles II. In that configuration, because the factions were not evenly divided into two clearly opposing blocs, the bishop would do better to act as a prelate fighting against suspected Lutherans, rather than against Eidguenots.

However, ultimately, the bishop's actions did not result in a collective trial in absentia against all those people, as had been the case for the Mammelus and Peneysans. Of these sixteen people, the episcopal officers only managed to arrest a small number, and generally not the main leaders. Baudichon de La Maisonneuve had been arrested in Lyon on 26 April 1534 and put on trial by the local authorities – almost certainly due to pressure from the bishop and the duke. On 28 July he was found guilty of heresy, but then under pressure from Bern, the French court released him and he was able to come back safely to Geneva.¹³⁹ Other Genevans were not so fortunate. In August and September 1534, the Peneysans were able to capture Mermet de Calcibus *alias* Jacard, Antoine Richerme, Girard Chabod, Benoît Dadaz and Gaspard Neyrod; Henri Noël was arrested some months later in April 1535 (see table 11).

Why these events occurred is not entirely clear. Certainly, many things changed beginning in March 1534: Fribourg had withdrawn from the

¹³⁷ On de La Baume's political strategies, see *supra*, chapter 3 p. 139–142.

¹³⁸ Published in *RC* 13, p. 583–584.

¹³⁹ *RC* 12, p. 532 n. 1 and *RC* 13, p. 62 n. 4. The trial is published in Baum, *Procès*. See also Naphy, “Catholic Perceptions”.

combourgeoisie in May and after the failed assault on the city on 30–31 July, many people had left the city and the episcopal administration was exiled and scattered across many places: mainly Gex, Peney and Thiez. De Prato and the Peneysans could thus only arrest those who risked venturing outside the city walls, in a countryside firmly controlled by the Peneysans. The trials could also have been conducted in absentia, as the Eidguenots had done against the Peneysans. Why this option was not chosen is more difficult to say. Legal procedure mattered, and as we have already seen, we cannot dismiss all these procedures as political or show trials. Factual information and depositions by witnesses were necessary to inform trial proceedings. In August 1534, only four witnesses gave testimony, and this mainly consisted of offering a list of people suspected of being Lutherans, with few precise charges. Three other individuals gave their testimony on 2 January 1535, but little was added, with these new witnesses simply stating that some people were involved in iconoclasm and that the houses of some Catholics had been vandalised. But the charges were vague and not directed against specific people.¹⁴⁰ The rather long interval between the first four witnesses and the other testimonies is a clue that witnesses were lacking. In the end, the information was probably too vague to substantiate a collective trial in absentia.

Yet there is probably another explanation. The episcopal officers and the Catholic party suffered from the same problems encountered by the Genevans prosecuting the Peneysans. This chess game, involving the Swiss, Savoy and the emperor, had to be played on a strictly juridical-political board: religious dissent was a slippery slope. No one wished to bear responsibility for religious persecution or for proselytism. As we have seen, on several occasions, the Swiss Diet asked the actors not to upset the religious balance. Thus, as for the Eidguenots, the Peneysans and the episcopal officers had to find political and juridical arguments to condemn the people imprisoned. This is probably why the first prosecutions of March and August 1534 did not expand into collective trials. The bishop began his judicial offensive as a prosecution of people suspected of Lutheranism. Pragmatism and the complex, quite unstable, situation transformed them into political trials, where religion played a minor role.

During their captivity in the episcopal castles of Thiez and Peney, these early Lutherans were put on trial and repeatedly interrogated. The trials were conducted by the episcopal officers in exile within the *mandements* and in Gex. The lead prosecutor, mainly in charge of conducting the investigation

140 Cf. RC 13, p. 590–594.

and interrogations, was Nycod de Prato. As the fiscal procurator of the bishop, he was responsible for the clergy (due to the *privilegium fori*), but he could also judge laity when crimes were committed against the bishop or ecclesiastical patrimony.¹⁴¹ Claude Grossi, the ordinary judge for the three episcopal *mandements*, acted as the second main officer supporting de Prato. The Genevan Lutherans were thus judged by ordinary episcopal justice; these were not heresy trials conducted under the direction of the inquisitors.¹⁴² The only individual who underwent a proper heresy trial in the Genevan region was Pierre Gaudet, a former priest whom we will encounter later on.

During the first interrogations of the five individuals arrested between August and September 1534, the Peneysans inquired about their actions within the city. What appears is that religious charges played a minor role. Certainly Richerme, Dadaz, Chabod, Noël and Neyrod were accused of having listened to the prohibited sermons of Farel and Viret, of iconoclasm or of having eaten meat during prohibited times, such as on Fridays or during Lent. These were minor charges, not crimes. Just like the trials against the Genevan-Sabaudians conducted within the city, most of the questions and subsequent accusations were about political and legal matters. De Prato formulated twenty-five articles of accusation against Henri Noël, but only three concerned his attendance at Evangelical sermons (arts. 6–9), and thirteen (arts. 10–22) were about his participation in the street riots of 1533, the murder of Werly, and about conspiring against the bishop's sovereignty. In the end, de Prato asked for a conviction for the crime of lèse-majesté.¹⁴³ Similar observations arise from articles of accusation in the trials against Benoît Dadaz¹⁴⁴ and against Antoine Richerme, who was interrogated at length about a plot to poison Pierre de La Baume and who was finally sentenced for conspiracy against the bishop's authority.¹⁴⁵

The trial records also reveal that even the questioning about religious matters was conducted for a juridical reason, and not really on doctrinal grounds. No doubt Lutherans were seen as heretics – and the same Lutheran preachers often called the bishop or the Catholic clergy “heretics” – but when Henri Goulaz was asked about his attendance at Farel and Viret's preaching, the episcopal officers asked him if he knew that those preachers had no

141 The best account of the episcopal officers and the structure of the diocesan government is still Binz, *Vie religieuse*, p. 85–101.

142 As is wrongly stated in Santschi, “Les mandements”, p. 333.

143 AEG, P.C. 2/319, p. 17–24.

144 AEG, P.C. 2/318, p. 33–41.

145 AEG, P.C. 2/350, not foliated (sentence published in RC 13, p. 614–615).

rights to preach and that the bishop had prohibited people from hearing them. When asked about the confessional riots of 1533, the judges stressed that they involved murders and public violence, not doctrinal issues.¹⁴⁶ And the forty-nine articles of accusation written by de Prato were mainly to prove that Goulaz acted against the bishop's suzerainty. Articles 1–7 were about de La Baume's rights and jurisdiction and Goulaz's status as a Genevan subject of the bishop; articles 8–10 stated that no one could preach in the city without the bishop's authorisation and that in 1533 an ordinance had been issued prohibiting public or secret preaching without the bishop's consent and that everyone was forbidden from attending such sermons.¹⁴⁷ Goulaz was also accused of having helped the preachers (arts. 11–16). Following all this, article 17 concludes that he was a rebel. The following articles dealt with street riots and the trials conducted in Geneva against the Sabaudian-Catholic party, which were – according to the episcopal officers – unlawful (see esp. arts. 25–26). Some articles (arts. 42–46) dealt with more religious accusations: accusing Goulaz of having stopped attending church services or of having eaten meat during Lent. But these are not the principal charges, and they appear among other accusations, such as having pillaged churches and stolen silver plates and vases from them (arts. 37–41). Finally, article forty-seven condemned him for *lèse-majesté*.¹⁴⁸

The whole procedure had been instigated for the purpose of prosecuting early Lutherans but it evolved into trials against criminals who were being mainly judged for political treason. From that point of view, the policies were the same as for the trials conducted within the city against the Sabaudian-Catholic party. Confessional charges were nearly absent because they were not useful for the legal prosecution, not because they did not play a role in shaping the factions or fuelling hatred. In the end, the only individual tried for heresy by the Inquisition was the former Hospitaller Pierre Gaudet, burned near Peney on 28 June 1535, and later celebrated by Froment and Crespin as one of the first Genevan martyrs, as we have seen.¹⁴⁹

Other people were arrested in 1535 (see table 11). Some were imprisoned out of fear of espionage, and the trials revealed that they were not Lutherans or involved in the political turmoil of the prior years. This was the case for Claude Pictard, who was eventually hanged because the trial revealed he was a thief.

146 AEG, P.C. 1/293, p. 11–13, 16 and 23.

147 On 20 November 1533, after many tumults related especially to Farel's preaching, de La Baume had ruled that no one could preach without his consent (or that of the vicar). Cf. *RC* 12, p. 395.

148 AEG, P.C. 1/293, p. 35–40 (accusatory articles).

149 Mercier, "Le procès".

Another suspected spy, Jacques Badel, was released after two days, since nothing particular emerged. Fear of spies or people suspected of trying to poison wells seems to have been constant during this period. On 25 July 1535, the Penneysans arrested what they saw as a suspicious woman. Her interrogation revealed that she was Claudia, the wife of Antoine Richerme, long imprisoned at that time. She told the episcopal officers that she had come to see her husband since she heard that Gaspard Neyrod's mother had done the same.¹⁵⁰

The numerous interrogations that have been preserved in these trials reveal that these criminal procedures were a way to collect information about the situation within the city and about charges that could be used against those who stayed within the city walls. The number of persons' names emerging from these procedures is very high: frequently the people arrested were forced to confirm the Lutheran identity of long lists of names, their involvement in the street tumults of 1533 and their participation in the plot to overthrow Pierre de La Baume. It must be remembered that during the same years, negotiations between all the parties about the old question of the *combourgeoisie* of 1526, the *vidomnate* and respecting the Payerne arbitration were still ongoing. Ultimately, the trials reflected these preoccupations.

During the military campaign of 1536, Nycod de Prato was captured and he was taken to Geneva on 18 November 1536.¹⁵¹ His trial is particularly interesting since it reveals some of the reasons behind the actions and trials led by him and the Penneysans against the early Lutherans.¹⁵² De Prato was interrogated at length, from 18 November to 7 December, an important aspect of his second trial. In fact, he had already been condemned in absentia (13 July 1535) and the sentence stipulated that anyone returning to Geneva after this condemnation should be executed. In their second sentence (8 December 1536), the syndics recalled that he was sentenced to death and was to be beheaded after the first trial. So, this second trial, from a legal point of view, only confirmed the first sentence. His long interrogations were thus motivated by other reasons that we shall now endeavour to understand.

Many questions concerned his contacts within and intelligence about the city. Certainly, one goal was to discover hidden enemies. It is worth remembering that members of the Sabaudian-Catholic party condemned in the second collective trial were trying to obtain pardons, stating that

150 About Pictard, Badel and Richerme, see AEG, P.C. 2/355 and 2/322. In 1534, the episcopal officers arrested and interrogated Nicolas de La Croix and Jean Picard, coming from Paris and suspected to be Lutherans and in possession of counterfeit money (see AEG, P.C. 2/323).

151 *RCC* 1, p. 217.

152 AEG, P.C. 1/311.

they were not Peneysans. One initial result of de Prato's interrogations was the arrest and trial of Jacques Bronges, a Genevan who, de Prato's answers revealed, was implicated in the failed assault of July 1534 and who was ultimately sentenced to death and beheaded as a traitor on 31 January 1537.¹⁵³ De Prato named many other people, and no doubt this trial was a powerful tool in the hands of the ruling elite. The trial revealed, for instance, that Jean Lyffort, among those sentenced on 10 November 1536, was a close collaborator of Michel Guillet.¹⁵⁴ Lyffort had already tried to negotiate his return for a sum of 100 *écus*, but de Prato's revelation probably resulted in him being permanently banished from the city, and in 1539, he was holding the office of lieutenant of the Bernese *bailli* of Thonon.¹⁵⁵

A second set of questions were about the criminal procedures conducted in the episcopal castles at Peney and Thiez. At stake was the lawfulness of these prosecutions. The Genevans were attempting to demonstrate that all these trials that the Peneysans used during the negotiations to assert their rights and those of the bishop were invalid. In fact, de Prato also confessed that the trials were political instruments to be used in Bern against the Eidguenots and that without a death sentence the trials were not taken seriously in Bern and were therefore useless.¹⁵⁶

We thus find that the following peculiar situation obtained: during 1534–1536, both parties conducted trials in order to defeat the adverse faction and assert their rights – trials were instrumental in the negotiations with the Swiss and Sabaudian ambassadors. This is certainly one reason why everyone tried to follow proper procedures and why these trials were not show trials. Their number and the lengthy interrogations conducted in many of them are proof that procedures were followed. They were the basis for property seizures, and given the uncertainty of the situation and a possible comeback of the exiled always on the horizon, the proper legalities were needed. In the end, these criminal trials, although involving factions that were also shaped by confessional struggles, were a far cry from the French heresy trials where people were actively prosecuted for doctrinal reasons, condemned and burned at the stake.¹⁵⁷

This is not to say that religious divisions did not play any role. Certainly, they fuelled the hatred and violence that partially influenced the

¹⁵³ AEG, P.C. 1/310.

¹⁵⁴ AEG, P.C. 1/311, fol. 22v–24r.

¹⁵⁵ RCC 1, p. 77 and 3, p. 647–648.

¹⁵⁶ AEG, P.C. 1/311, fol. 16v, 18 and 20v.

¹⁵⁷ See Monter, *Judging*.

prosecutions. In some cases, individuals from both factions were imprisoned for long periods of time (even more than a year) and the trials were frozen for many months.¹⁵⁸ Those prisoners were held in captivity as hostages, and on many occasions, the Peneyans and the Eidguenots discussed prisoner exchanges. An important attempt took place in mid-July 1535. On 13 July, the Council of Two Hundred discussed a proposal from the Peneyans to release eight prisoners in exchange for eight of the Catholic-Sabaudians that were still imprisoned in Geneva: among them were some of the factional leaders such as Jacques de Malbuisson and Perceval de Pesmes.¹⁵⁹ The council rejected the offer, and on the same day, the sentence against the Peneyans was handed down. Four days later, Malbuisson was sentenced as well, and he was beheaded on the same day. These executions sparked a desire for revenge, and relatives pressed for it, just as they pressed for prisoners to be exchanged.¹⁶⁰ De Prato confessed that Richerme's execution by the Peneyans on 3 August 1535 was in part a consequence of Malbuisson's death and that his brother Pierre had pressed the bishop for retaliation.¹⁶¹

Certainly, the intricate situation both in Geneva and in Peney resulted in conflicts that were grounded in different reasons – political and religious – according to the individuals or groups involved. Within the city, the fight against the Peneyans was a fight for the independence of the city and preservation of the *combourgeoisie*, but also a fight against Catholicism. However, as we have seen, Lutherans and Eidguenots did not necessarily form one single faction. Outside the city, matters could also vary, from a political orientation and loyalty to the bishop – after all, he was still the legitimate lord of the city – to the desire to pursue Lutheran heretics and avenge family members.

This blurry situation affected factional struggles as well as people's lives during these years. The adverse faction, and the parents of the victims, could offer different interpretations about motives, which in part remained probably unclear even to contemporaries. In many cases, the actors, due to a lack of information, could be uncertain about the outcome of a given trial and about the reason for an execution. We can have little understanding of how these months were lived: long trials, families split and constant rumours of war made the lives of many people very unstable, always on the verge of

¹⁵⁸ See tables 9 and 11.

¹⁵⁹ *RC* 13, p. 261. Another attempt to exchange prisoners took place in November 1535 (*ibidem*, p. 362).

¹⁶⁰ For instance, *RC* 13, p. 42, 90, 117–118, 207 and 223.

¹⁶¹ AEG, P.C. 1/311, fol. 20r–v.

sudden dramatic change. All this certainly exacerbated the situation and the desire for vengeance.

However, some questions are left unanswered by this local instability and climate of judicial violence fuelled by numerous trials. What is puzzling is the slow reaction of Pierre de La Baume, who decided to start pursuing Lutherans only in March 1534, by which time the situation had already deteriorated significantly. It is now necessary therefore to take a closer look at the bishop's reaction and gain a better understanding of Charles II's attitude towards the specific problem of Lutheranism and his policies of reform of his duchy.

5. Competing Reforms

Abstract: This final chapter investigates the reactions of authorities – both secular and ecclesiastical – north of the Alps against those who, by the mid-1520s, were increasingly perceived as heretical advocates of reform. Looking at the responses of the duke of Savoy, the Three Estates and Sabaudian bishops, the chapter shows that factional struggles were more than a simple series of internal urban clashes. They were also a clash between competing voices demanding reforms and seeking geopolitical stability. While the spread of the Reformation generated the confessionalisation of factions, loyalty to the duke of Savoy or to the bishops also had political grounds and was deeply rooted in their roles as “good administrators”.

Keywords: ducal reform policies, Three Estates, bishops’ pastoral care, Reformation

In June 1522, the renowned preacher François Lambert travelled through the Duchy of Savoy, giving sermons in most of the cities he visited.¹ Born in Avignon around 1486, Lambert had entered the Observant Franciscans in 1502 and had become a prominent preacher. He was certainly a zealous advocate of the moral reform supported by his order, even to the point that by the end of the 1510s he had become dissatisfied with the laxity among his fellow friars and briefly considered joining the Carthusians. In 1522, he was sent to Germany on an assignment to deliver letters to a superior, and he travelled through the Duchy of Savoy and the Swiss Confederation, certainly stopping in Aix-les-Bains, Geneva, Lausanne, Fribourg, Bern, Zurich and Basel. In some of these cities, he preached as a *predicator apostolicus*. After his departure from Basel, he decided to change his programme and went to Wittenberg to meet Luther. On his way, he abandoned the Franciscan

¹ On François Lambert, and especially his preaching and conversion in 1522, see Moser, “Franz Lamberts”; Müller, *Franz Lambert*; Fraenkel, ed., *Pour retrouver* and Delcorno, “Between Pulpit and Reformation”. What follows has its origin in these studies.

habit, changed his name to Johannes Serranus, and in 1523 was married in Wittenberg.

As Pietro Delcorno has shown, Lambert's conversion cannot be placed at a precise moment, but was a gradual process, punctuated by important events. His journey through Savoy and Switzerland certainly played a crucial role. His encounter with many Reformed preachers stimulated his ideal of moral reform: the public disputation he had in Zurich with Zwingli and the encounter in Basel with Conrad Pellican, himself a reformed Franciscan at that date, were both pivotal. His conversion was, however, not a linear process from Franciscanism to Evangelicalism. More interestingly, the various appreciative commentaries on Lambert's preaching emerging from the sources are highly descriptive of the blurred identities of some of the actors involved in religious change during the years 1520s–1530s, showing how debates around religious reforms could have added layers of complexity to an already uncertain political society.

During his travels through Savoy and the Swiss Confederation, Lambert certainly stopped first in Aix-les-Bains, but we do not know whether he preached there. In Aix, an anonymous person recommended him to the well-known physician and humanist Cornelius Agrippa, who was at that time practising in Geneva, showing that Lambert was perceived as an interesting person among the humanist and reform-oriented circles active in these regions (the anonymous person in Aix introduced him as an *evangelicae veritatis praedicator*).² He arrived in Geneva at an unknown date between June 5 and June 17. It is not entirely clear whether he delivered a public sermon, although this is highly possible, since later in Bern, Berthold Haller wrote a letter of recommendation for him, stating that he had taught the "Christian truth" before the bishop.³

Lambert then went to Lausanne. Here the bishop, Sébastien de Montfalcon, welcomed him as an Observant Franciscan, but a portion of the clergy saw some of his teachings as being heterodox. It is possible that this had mostly to do with inner tensions among the Franciscans. In fact, the Franciscan convent in Lausanne had remained with the conventual branch of the order and perhaps the friars – fearing for their convent? – were the main critics of Lambert's sermons.⁴ Nothing is known about his stay in Fribourg, and no hostility towards his preaching is recorded.

2 Quoted in Delcorno, "Between Pulpit and Reformation", p. 121.

3 Cf. Delcorno, "Between Pulpit and Reformation", p. 122. The *RC* (vol. 9) do not record his time spent in Geneva, and Naef does not provide any evidence for the hypothesis that he preached twice in the cathedral (Naef, *Les origines*, t. 1, p. 337).

4 Cf. *HS* V/1, p. 328–331.

In Bern, his sermons were perceived to be Evangelical in nature. According to Haller:

his teaching was Christian in all its parts: on the Church, on the Ministry, on the Sacrifice, on the “traditions” (*traditiunculis*) of the Roman Pope and the Bishops, on the falsity of religious and on the hypocritical superstitions.

Haller also commented that “These things are not strange for us; however it was astonishing to hear this from a French Franciscan Observant friar because they usually convey all sorts of superstitions”.⁵ Ultimately, the attendees were uncertain of the content of sermons they could expect since this content did not always conform to the preacher’s religious affiliation. In Zurich, Lambert was also welcomed as a Franciscan, but his teachings, especially on the Virgin Mary and the saints, were considered too Catholic and were not appreciated, which led to a public disputation with Zwingli.

Recalling these events later on, François Lambert presented his stop in Zurich as part of his conversion, although he still retained the habit at that time. Zwingli was apparently not entirely convinced of the consistency of Lambert’s conversion. Even after his complete conversion, it would be wrong to consider him a “pure Lutheran”, since he never abandoned some of his Franciscan identity and preaching techniques. And his later life shows that it would be wrong to put him in a definitively clear “Evangelical” category. In 1525, he dedicated his theological treatise *Farrago* to the bishop of Lausanne, Sébastien de Montfalcon, and in 1530, shortly before his death, he wrote to Martin Bucer revealing his profound dissatisfaction with the results of his pastoral zeal. Subsequently, he considered going back to Switzerland and asked Bucer (and Capito) to help him in this plan:

Moreover, if I were among the Swiss, it would be possible to inform the Bishop of Lausanne with friendly letters, who has been a dear friend of mine, and the people of Lausanne and Geneva, who heard me teaching. [...] Therefore, Bucer, please, you and Capito take care of looking if there is any chance for me to find a place where I can teach people.⁶

Aside from the highly rhetorical tone of the letter, it is very interesting that Lambert probably still saw the bishop of Lausanne – who was certainly not

5 All quotes are from Delcorno, “Between Pulpit and Reformation”, p. 122.

6 Translated and quoted in Delcorno, “Between Pulpit and Reformation”, p. 131.

suspected of “Lutheranism” – as a reform-oriented man. Lambert experienced a mixed reception from both the Evangelically oriented and from Catholics, who interpreted his message in various ways. Rejection and appreciation did not follow a clear divide between orthodox Catholics and the Evangelically oriented. Moreover, Lambert followed no linear path and saw himself primarily as a reformer and preacher. In the end, his life and choices remind us that calls for reform – and the way people interpreted them – were part of the uncertainty affecting those years.

At this point I have to warn the reader: this last chapter will not discuss how late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century debates and policies with respect to reforms of the church and society fed into the Protestant Reformation.⁷ I aim instead at showing how the dukes’ and bishops’ reactions to the spread of “Lutheranism” in the Sabaudian territories north of the Alps should be read in the context of the factionalism and regional geopolitical uncertainty I have analysed in the previous chapters. This is the main reason I will concentrate on the francophone parts of present-day Switzerland prior to 1536: in these regions, urban factions underwent a process of confessionalisation. Elsewhere the archives either do not provide evidence of harsh confessional struggles or the presence of small Evangelical groups, or the spread of Evangelical ideas did not affect the factional conflicts.

Before the 1540s, in many parts of the principality, such as *Savoie propre*, Bresse and valleys such as Maurienne and Tarentaise, the spread of the “Lutheran sect” – as sources called it – was probably limited and did not lead to the formation of small Evangelical groups like in Geneva or in some of the other towns of what is now Romandy.⁸ In the Valle d’Aosta and in Piedmont the situation was to some extent different. As was the case north of the Alps during the 1520s, Luther’s ideas and writings were circulating there. In Chieri in 1528, a Carmelite friar was suspected of preaching Lutheran ideas. In Valle d’Aosta and Turin, particularly in university circles, the new ideas had taken a certain hold. However, it remains difficult to determine whether small communities formed before 1536.⁹ In Cuneo, for instance, a city with intense factional struggles that I analysed in chapter 3, it is only by 1540, after the collapse of ducal authority and the French conquest, that a small Evangelical group was established.¹⁰ And the Waldensians

7 See also my historiographical remarks *infra*, Epilogue, p. 232–236.

8 Guichonnet, *Nouvelle histoire*, 1996, p. 197.

9 Jalla, *Storia della Riforma*, p. 14–43.

10 Bianchi, “Fra ortodossia”, p. 396.

remained mainly a rural and Alpine phenomenon with no connections to urban factionalism.¹¹

Thus, the main goal of this final chapter is to show how, in Sabaudian territories north of the Alps, the emergence of factions adhering to the bishops and to the duke of Savoy can also be explained because of their character as “good administrators”. As they emerge from the archival evidence, the prince and the Sabaudian prelates appear to have been actively engaged with reformations of various kinds. Violent confessional factionalism erupted at a relatively late moment, as we saw in the last chapter, and even at that time, the factions’ (or individuals’) reasons for adhering to the House of Savoy or to the bishops (who were, after all, the legitimate lords of Lausanne and Geneva) cannot solely be understood in terms of religious conflicts and loyalties to the old faith.

Thus, this chapter primarily seeks to analyse the attitudes of the Sabaudian bishops and Charles II with respect to the calls for and policies of reformation, in the broadest sense of this term, and relate them to factionalism. The first part of the chapter will deal with the reactions of authorities – both secular and ecclesiastical – north of the Alps against those who, by the mid-1520s, were increasingly perceived as heretical voices of reform. I will then look at more general discussions and attempts to reform the principality by the duke of Savoy and the Three Estates. Finally, because Sébastien de Montfalcon’s sympathetic attitude towards a figure such as François Lambert suggests his interest in topics connected with the reform of the church, we will try to get a better understating of how Sabaudian prelates engaged with the governments of their dioceses.¹²

Ultimately, factional struggles involved more than a simple series of internal urban clashes, and thus, if we are to fully understand their nature, they need to be placed in a larger geographical and temporal framework. Factionalism was more than ever a political affair, with religious conflicts growing from the soil we now need to examine.

11 Cf. Cameron, “The Reformation”, p. 33.

12 Unfortunately, the history of ecclesiastical institutions and of reform policies on both sides of the Alps between the period 1450–1536 still needs to be written. The religious and ecclesiastical history of this period suffers from the same lack of attention I have underlined in the prologue, a difficulty which is in a sense also generally applicable to Europe, as the difficult historiography on the Fifth Lateran Council demonstrates (cf. the remarks in Andenmatten *et al.*, eds., *Aymon de Montfalcon*, p. 9–10). In the present day, the division of the Duchy of Savoy between three nations, each with its own historiographical traditions, still poses considerable difficulties. For the dioceses of what is now Switzerland, the volumes edited in the collection *Helvetia Sacra* are the necessary starting point. For France, a good (but superficial) synthesis has been published in the *Histoire des diocèses de France*. For Piedmont, see Nada Patrone, *Il medioevo in Piemonte*, p. 237–270, Comba, ed., *Storia di Torino*, vol. 2 and Rosso, “Cultura religiosa”.

Reactions to the Spread of “Lutheranism”

Suspensions of the Lausanne clergy about François Lambert’s “heterodox” preaching were probably also linked to their fear of the spread of what people in Savoy were calling the “Lutheran heresy”. In fact, during the first half of the 1520s, Evangelical ideas coming from the Swiss towns and southern Germany were starting to circulate within the northern parts of the Duchy of Savoy, and an Evangelical community formed and gradually grew in Geneva – as we saw in chapter 4 – and in some other towns, such as Avenches, Payerne and to a lesser extent Lausanne. However, it can be observed that, within the Duchy of Savoy and the towns firmly under Sabaudian rule, the preachers’ actions were largely unsuccessful. Before 1536, not a single Sabaudian town north of the Alps adhered to the Reformation or saw the formation of Evangelical communities.¹³ Until 1536, when the Reformation was imposed by the conquerors in the wake of the Bernese invasion, we should consider the Sabaudian francophone territories as a case of a failed Reformation.¹⁴

The underlying reasons for this failure remain in great part difficult to understand; Charles Gilliard – whose research still provides much information – had to admit that explanations were hard to find.¹⁵ Despite its dense network of small towns,¹⁶ the Pays de Vaud was mostly rural, and as in Valais and the rural regions surrounding Fribourg and Bern, the population proved very hostile to the ideas of the Evangelical preachers.¹⁷ In other cases of “failed Reformations”, Sundar Henny has observed that although religious convictions mattered, “their chances of survival in any given place or region depended in no small measure on external factors”.¹⁸ For the towns within the Duchy of Savoy, the evolving complexity of political relationships and the actions of Bern and Fribourg became the most important external factors.

It is not by chance therefore that Evangelical communities within the Pays de Vaud only formed in territories that shifted to Bernese jurisdiction

13 Even though Geneva, Payerne and Avenches had strong ties with Savoy, they were largely autonomous; we cannot understand them as Sabaudian in a strictly juridical way. See *infra*, p. 194–199 for details.

14 On failed reformations in Switzerland, see Henny, “Failed Reformations”, who does not however discuss the Pays de Vaud, since the Reformation was eventually introduced there in 1536.

15 Gilliard, “Les débuts ... Lausanne”, p. 272–273.

16 Ammann, “Über das Waadtländische”.

17 Bruening, *Calvinism’s First Battleground*, p. 93–131. On the disputation of Lausanne (1536) and the general context, see also Flückiger, *Dire le vrai*.

18 Henny, “Failed Reformations”, p. 290.

(sometimes jointly with Fribourg) after the Burgundian Wars – such as the common lordships of Grandson and Orbe, and the *mandements* of Aigle.¹⁹ Evangelical communities also formed in Payerne, Avenches and Lausanne, three cities that had *combourgeoisies* with Bern and Fribourg (Avenches only with the latter) but also depended, to various extents, on the bishop's and the duke's jurisdiction.²⁰ Thus, unsurprisingly, the spread of the Reformation prompted the bishop and the duke to react.

The first measures taken by the Sabaudian authorities to eradicate the new "heresy" were discussed by the Estates of Vaud.²¹ On 23 May 1525, the Estates promulgated a statute which forbade the possession of Luther's works and any discussion of his theses. Compared to other European regions, this action was taken at a relatively late date, which is likely a sign of a lack of penetration of the Evangelical ideas into the Sabaudian territories.²² This measure was certainly not driven by an unreasonable fear alone. Sabaudian officers had already found evidence that Luther's writings were circulating among the urban elites, as revealed by the interrogations of the Genevan Amé Lévrier, arrested in 1524 in the context of local factional struggles.²³ The decision was certainly also connected to apprehension about social unrest and a possible spread of the Peasants' War, since in fact the uprising had reached the Bernese countryside in April.²⁴

However, until 1528, apart from this measure, there were almost no reactions by either the princely authorities or the bishops. The Estates of the French part of the duchy met in Chambéry on the nineteenth of February of 1528, just a few days after the Disputation of Bern (which ended with the city's official adoption of the Reformation), to prevent the proliferation of Evangelical ideas.²⁵ Before the assembly of nobles, churchmen and representatives of the towns, the duke and his officers reminded the audience that the Estates had been summoned to preserve the faith and peace within the duchy. The Estates were reminded of the unrest and troubles caused by the Peasants' War and warned about the "great miseries, exterminations

19 Bruening, *Calvinism's First Battleground*, p. 111.

20 For the now-Swiss territories, many overviews in Burnett and Emidio, eds., *Companion*. On the spread of the Reformation in Lausanne and the Pays de Vaud, see Bruening, *Calvinism's First Battleground*, p. 93–131. Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", and Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Pays de Vaud", are still useful. See also references in chapter 4, *supra* p. 150 n. 2.

21 See the next section for details about the Estates.

22 Bruening, *Calvinism's First Battleground*, p. 104–105.

23 Van Berchem, "Amé Lévrier", p. 18–19.

24 See von Rütte, "Paysans, guerre des (1525)" (3 February 2016 version), in *e-DHS*; Bonjour, *Die Bauernbewegungen* and, for a map of the unrest, Zanolli and Walter, *Atlas historique*, p. 97.

25 Documents concerning this assembly have been printed in *PS* 9, p. 599–608.

and ruins of poor Hungary, which was thus persecuted and mistreated by the Turks, by divine permission, as can be presumed from this error [i.e., Lutheranism] from which they were the first to suffer".²⁶ The measures taken in 1525 were then confirmed again by the Estates in 1528. The limited action taken by local authorities up to that time is not surprising. We have already seen that beginning precisely in 1528, the situation had worsened, especially in Geneva and Lausanne, and Evangelical preaching was a new reality that had to be dealt with.²⁷

Reading the extant sources (i.e., the decisions taken by the Estates of Vaud, and more generally by the Estates of Savoy north of the Alps), we are left with the impression that the fight against the spread of the Reformation was of lesser importance than other problems. Compared to other matters, Lutheranism was not the subject of substantial debate during the following years. In 1532, the Estates of Vaud met in Morges (25 June) and the ducal officers reiterated the necessity to fight against the spread of the Evangelical sect, as they called it.²⁸

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the duke and the local political elite were unaware of the problem and its possible consequences. Although the first preachers were acting secretly and Sabaudian officers had to rely on rumours, there was much apprehension about the spread of the new religious ideas. In December 1529, the Sabaudian captain of Yverdon expressed concern about the many merchants frequenting the Swiss Confederation and territories affected by "Lutheranism".²⁹ Similarly, in the same month, Bishop Sébastien de Montfalcon wrote to the duke worried about possible new campaigns by Farel and about the real religious zeal of his subjects in Lausanne: "The fire is not well covered; on the contrary, there are still some secret practitioners living in hope and waiting for the moment to strike. And hearing this, I dare not move from here."³⁰ One wonders whether the bishop of Lausanne had in mind his neighbour Pierre de La Baume, who had fled Geneva in 1527.

The lack of response by the Estates was not due to an underestimation of the risk, for Charles II decided to concentrate his efforts on coordinating

26 PS 9, p. 599: "grans misères, extermination et ruynes de la pouvre Hongrie qui a esté ainsi persécutée et mal tractée du Turch par la permission divine comme l'on peut véritablement présumer à cause de ce erreur [i.e., "Lutheranism"] don't ilz furent les premiers actaintz..."

27 See *supra*, chapter 4, p. 154–155.

28 PS 13, p. 443–444.

29 Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 105.

30 Quoted in Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", p. 264: "le feu n'en est pas bien couvert, ains encore y a aucuns secrets praticiens vivant en espérance et attendans leur coup. Et ce entendant, je n'ose bouger d'ici".

and supporting the actions of the bishops of Lausanne and Geneva. From the very beginning, the duke and the prelates were well aware that the spread of Lutheranism might have a substantial political impact. The ducal officers and ambassadors in Bern and Fribourg were convinced that Farel's preaching and the Bernese support for it was a move to gain political influence in the region. It must be remembered that during those years, the *combourgeoisies* and political *imbroglios* were the main sources of discussion and negotiation. Around December 1528, Savoy's marshal René de Challant wrote in worried terms to Charles II: Farel's preaching in Lausanne was a manoeuvre of the Swiss faction that was pushing to maintain the *combourgeoisie* and a way to "withdraw the temporal power from the bishop". René also suggested that a shift towards Lutheranism could help Lausanne's ruling elite pursue its objectives and overcome inner political divisions by means of religious unity.³¹

The ducal reaction was thus not a simple struggle for the preservation of the "true" religion. Political calculations stood behind his actions: Lutheranism was a threat to the bishops' power within the cities of the Lake Geneva region, and might have given Charles II hope that the Bernese religious shift would bring the bishops back closer to him.³² In 1531, during a new *journée* in Payerne, Bern made renewal of the *combourgeoisie* with Lausanne and Geneva conditional on the freedom of preaching for Farel and other Bernese preachers. At that time, Genevan and Lausannois burghers did not accept this demand but were still able to maintain the alliance. However, the fact that politics and the spread of the new ideas were not separate matters was not a secret to anyone. External observers as well, often quite astute in their judgements of the political situation, interpreted the spread of Evangelical ideas in Geneva and Lausanne as a direct consequence of the *combourgeoisie* with Bern, as did the Milanese ambassadors in Lucerne in 1533.³³

The bishop of Lausanne reacted, supported by the decisions of the Estates and the duke, mostly with counter-preaching and imprisoning suspected Evangelical preachers, as he did in 1528 when the Franciscan Jean Clerc, suspected of being a Lutheran, was incarcerated.³⁴ However, sources leave the impression that this conflict was not particularly intense, and in fact information on it is relatively scant. In many places, Farel and Froment were

31 Letter quoted in Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", p. 256–257.

32 On Pierre de La Baume, see *supra*, chapter 3, p. 139–141.

33 Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 111.

34 Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", p. 260 and Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 98. On popular resistance, see mainly Bruening, *Calvinism's First Battleground*, p. 93–131.

insulted by the local population – and sometimes even risked their lives; these reactions played a major role in the fight against the spread of the new faith. Popular resistance had been strong enough for the bishop to rely on it. According to René de Challant, the Lausannois were not interested in criticism of the Mass or the worship of saints, but were attracted to preaching against vice and the authority of prelates.³⁵ Ultimately, at least a portion of the message of the Evangelical preachers did not appeal to everyone.

The fact that, compared to Geneva, the situation in Lausanne did not lead to harsh confessional struggles among the burghers also explains the relatively calm situation. The Evangelical community remained small and was not very active. This was a consequence of the same dynamics taking place on a more strictly political level. We have seen that Charles II's fight against the *combourgeoisie* was mainly a Genevan affair and that the Lausanne front was incomparably calmer.³⁶ The fact that political factionalism, which to a certain extent also existed in Lausanne, did not develop into outright fighting, with murders and criminal trials, as was the case in Geneva, explains, at least in part, the religious calm. In the end, factionalism played a lesser role in Lausanne, both on the political and confessional levels, but it is difficult to explain *why* this occurred. Certainly, Lausanne was a relatively small town – some 5,000 inhabitants at that time – and the commune was weaker than the Genevan one: a single commune had existed only since 1481.³⁷ The lower level of municipal autonomy and probably a less-developed communal consciousness than in Geneva add some possible explanations.

Payerne is another case worth looking at.³⁸ This town had a rather complex juridical situation; it was formally under the authority of the local Cluniac priory, but since 1314, the House of Savoy had obtained the advocacy of the priory, and Payerne had become, at least in part, a Sabaudian town. The advocate was very often the bailiff of Vaud, who had a lieutenant representing him in town. Savoy also granted franchises to the burghers, and since the middle of the fourteenth century the town had had *combourgeoisies* with Bern and Fribourg. Following on the formation of a small Evangelical community, conflict between factions divided the town during the 1530s. The *combourgeoisie* with Bern and Fribourg prompted parallel embassies and negotiations with the two cities: the Catholics seeking help from

35 Cf. the letter quoted in Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", p. 257.

36 See *supra*, chapter 3, p. 138.

37 Thévenaz Modestin, *Un mariage contesté*.

38 Cf. *HS*, III/2, p. 391–460.

Fribourg and the Evangelicals relying on Bernese support. The unstable situation trapped Lausanne's bishop and Charles II in a political dilemma. As Catholic lords, it was their duty to fight the Evangelical preachers and prevent the growing influence of the Bernese. But especially during 1534–1535, it was clear that Fribourg also had its own political agenda, and that – as with Bern – confessional struggles were a good opportunity to increase its influence within the region. In 1535, the Fribourgeois did not attempt a military conquest only because of the opposition of the other Catholic cantons fearing a new civil war after the two conflicts of Kappel.³⁹ The Fribourgeois manoeuvres of these years were a threat to the suzerainty of the bishop and the duke of Savoy, who therefore could not support the Catholic faction, thus limiting the effectiveness of the struggle against the Evangelical community.

In Payerne, the small Evangelical community never disappeared, and the town remained in a delicate balance until the conquest of 1536. These uncertainties and the overlapping of diverging interests explain the status quo: politics divided Catholics, who in Payerne remained the majority but could not count on Savoy or on the bishop, and who in the end failed to receive support from Fribourg. On the other side, the fear of a civil war between the Swiss cantons also held back Bern, which managed to impose the new faith only in 1536 when the military conquest became a reality.

Some ten kilometres to the north lay Avenches, another small town of a few hundred inhabitants that was part of the temporal possessions of the bishop of Lausanne.⁴⁰ The town was a rather distant exclave ruled by an episcopal castellan, and over the centuries, the burghers had won substantial political autonomy. In particular, they had had a *combourgeoisie* with Fribourg since the thirteenth century. When a small Evangelical community formed there, people sought help from Bern and tried to secure a *combourgeoisie* also with the city on the Aare. However, since Avenches already had a *combourgeoisie* with Fribourg, the Bernese adopted a cautious policy, refusing to sign a *combourgeoisie* that could have been interpreted as taking an overly aggressive attitude in a region that was under Fribourgeois influence. As for other towns, 1531 and the defeat of the Reformed cantons at Kappel put a temporary end to religious change, and Avenches remained

39 On the situation in Payerne during the years 1529–1535, the best account is still Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 117–133.

40 On the bishop's temporal possession, see Morerod, *Genèse*. The small amount of information that is available about the local Evangelical community is in Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 114–117.

largely Catholic, siding with the winning party. Its confessional choice was probably also a political one.

Things were somewhat different in Geneva. As we have seen, the city endured harsher factional struggles and remained Charles II's main political objective. Following concerns about a clandestine and mysterious preacher working in Geneva in October 1529, René de Challant suggested to his master that he send preachers to Geneva so that the citizens could see "the error into which they would fall by adhering to the faith of Lutheran preachers". He also suggested choosing the lector of the Franciscan priory of Chambéry and organising his visit with Pierre Farfein, the auxiliary bishop of Geneva, former guardian of the priory of Chambéry and, since 1523, guardian of that of Geneva.⁴¹ The duke also asked Pierre de La Baume to provide some "good preachers – men of letters and of virtues – in order to preach in opposition to preachers and practitioners of the said sect".⁴² The choice of a Franciscan preacher was not by chance, as the priory of Chambéry enjoyed a strong reputation and the House of Savoy had established privileged links with the order, both with the Conventuals and with the Observant branch in many towns.⁴³

Some months later, during Lent 1530, the counter-preaching was entrusted to a Dominican. After a difficult beginning, the sermons proved successful; René and the castellan of Gaillard sent the duke reports about the success of this preacher against the Lutherans.⁴⁴ According to the Sabaudian officers, some Lutherans brought Bibles, which the Dominican made them burn publicly. In addition, some of the locally well-known leaders of the Lutheran party, such as the Vandel brothers and Claude Roset, went to confession and received communion at Easter, an act which, according to René, surprised many people in Geneva. Were these repentances sincere or were they only the product of skilful staging?

Catholic preaching, and particularly Observant preaching of the first decades of the sixteenth century, has for a long time been considered (and often was) ineffective in the face of the virulence and biblical knowledge of the early itinerant Evangelical preachers. Recent historiography argues for

41 *RC* 11, p. 341 n.1 and p. 610 letter *b*. Farfein was also Charles II's confessor, cf. Zenhäusern, "Farfein, Pierre" (24 October 2005 version), in *e-DHS*,

42 *RC* 11, p. 611: "ordonner bons prescheurs, gens de lettre et de vertu, pour prescher à l'opposite des precheurs et praticqueurs de ladite secte". For the meaning of practice/practitioner, see *supra*, chapter 3 p. 122.

43 Cf. J.-P. Leguay, "Urbanisme et ordres mendiants" and Pierregrosse, "Foyers et diffusion". on mendicant preaching before the Reformation in Geneva, see Morenzoni, "Vincent Ferrier".

44 *RC* 11, p. 432 n. 3. The quotations come from these two reports.

a less pessimistic view,⁴⁵ and therefore invites us to lend serious credence to the possibility that the counter-preaching of 1530 was successful. In any case, it is important to emphasise that the officers of Savoy did not fail to interpret these gestures as an important defeat of the Evangelical party in Geneva. René enthusiastically wrote that most of the people who had embraced the new faith had abandoned the “Lutheran sect” and that every Genevan would soon be “a good Christian.” Whatever the reality, Sabaudian officers were optimistic.

The activity of the first preachers and the Affair of the Placards (1532) also led to reactions by the pope, Emperor Charles V and even Fribourg – the latter wrote to the duke and to Genevan authorities urging them to take measures against the spread of Lutheranism.⁴⁶ Already in 1530, Clement VII had appointed Cardinal Louis de Gorrevod, the bishop of Maurienne, as legate *a latere* in Savoy in charge of the prosecution of the Lutherans. In 1531, he sent a nuncio – Braccio Martelli – to advise Charles II and levy financial assistance to fight the heresy (and the Turks).⁴⁷ In fact, especially de La Baume seemed to many contemporaries too laxist and his reaction too weak. His officers in Geneva were obviously acting against the preachers, organising counter-preaching, expelling Farel and his companions in 1532, and two years later forbidding anyone from preaching the “holy scriptures or the holy Gospel” without the bishop’s authorisation.⁴⁸ But no strong action against the leaders of the party was undertaken before 1534, at a time when the situation was, as we have seen, already out of control.

It is worth remembering that, unlike the bishop of Lausanne, Pierre de La Baume was absent from the city during these crucial years, residing most of the time in Arbois or in Saint-Claude, and that he was more worried about his sovereignty. The letters he sent to his officers in Geneva show that he was mainly concerned with the problem of the combourgeoisie and the recovery of his rights over the city: religious problems were a minor issue, in his view. Surely de La Baume’s absence from the city, although he remained in close contact with his officers, did not help him to grasp the local situation. Writing to the official (judicial vicar) of Besançon, in January 1534, when the situation was already complicated, he acknowledged that the reason why he had taken little action against the early Lutherans

45 Roest, “The Observance”. See also Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 210–225.

46 On the affair, see *supra*, chapter 4, p. 156 and letters edited in RC 11, p. 628–629; RC 12 p. 573–574; Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs*, vol. 2, p. 421–424 and 424–426.

47 HS I/3, p. 127; RC 12, p. 116 n. 2 and Feci, “Martelli, Braccio”, in *DBI*. His action had little impact, however, and he resigned in 1532.

48 AEG, P.H. suppl. 112.

was that he thought that the situation would sort itself out, thus recognising that he had underestimated the danger.⁴⁹

It should also be noted that the situation was constantly evolving and that the bishop had some reasons to be confident. For many years, the Lutheran community remained small and some of the actions taken seemed successful, such as the counter-preaching in Lent 1530. The bishop and his partisans, encouraged by the Fribourgeois, might also have thought that the Bernese propaganda would stop. The Second Peace of Kappel (20 November 1531) put an end to the spread of the Reformation in Switzerland, and the pendulum was now swinging to the Catholic side. The Swiss Diet constantly reminded the cantons that they should avoid religious propaganda and refrain from actions that could ignite a new war. Moreover, during the years 1532–1534, Bern and Fribourg were reluctant to renew their alliance with Geneva, to the extent that both the bishop and the duke were confident about the possibility of fully recovering their authority and rights.⁵⁰ So there was no need for massive numbers of prosecutions, which would probably have been difficult to pursue in any case. It must be remembered that early Genevan Lutherans were, first and foremost, subjects of a bishop trying to maintain his sovereignty over the city. A large-scale action against the Lutheran faction would have worsened the climate within the city. In other words, for many years, the eradication of the Evangelical community was understandably not among de La Baume's priorities; instead he preferred to control the situation and focus on the juridical problem of the *combourgeoisie*. The religious divisions became a priority when the confessionalisation of the factional struggles turned into a threat to his jurisdiction and grip over the city in 1534, as chapter 4 has demonstrated.

What can we learn from these cases and from the reaction of the duke and the bishops? A first fact worth noticing is that the four urban centres where an Evangelical community formed shared a common political profile: from a juridical point of view, the duke of Savoy was not the lord of these cities: Geneva and Lausanne were episcopal cities, Avenches belonged to the bishop of Lausanne, and Payerne was under the suzerainty of the local Cluniac priory. However, apart from Avenches, the House of Savoy had some rights in each of these cities, and relations between the bishop and the local communes were also quite complex and tense. This was an entangled situation that was made worse by the fact that the burghers of these cities were able to secure *combourgeoisies* with Bern and Fribourg,

49 *RC* 12, p. 619. The bishop left Geneva in 1527, see *supra*, chapter 3, p. 142.

50 In fact, Fribourg renounced the *combourgeoisie* on 10 May 1534. Cf. *supra*, chapter 4, p. 157.

which had since 1528 been separated by faith. Ultimately, the web of political relationships determined a very unstable balance and political events were the key factor in the shift. Somehow, an Evangelical community was able to form where there were many competing political actors and no one could gain supremacy, thus giving each party some room to manoeuvre. Where the power of the Sabaudians and the bishop was firmer, Evangelical communities did not take root. From that point of view, it is not surprising that Payerne and Geneva, where the communes were more independent and the bishop more distant, saw stronger Evangelical communities take shape.

A second point worth mentioning is that even though, starting from 1528–1529, the activities of the Evangelical preachers became more intense, problems related to ecclesiastical reform had been a source of debate for quite a long time within the duchy, and some solutions had already been implemented. In 1528, the duke and his court linked the fight against heresy to the necessity to avoid factionalism and improve the administration of justice in his law courts, and proposed that there be a discussion of a reform of the *Statuta Sabaudie* (promulgated by Amadeus VIII in 1430).⁵¹ According to the duke, it was necessary that “justice be strong everywhere to punish and extirpate this heresy”.⁵² The fight against heresy, in the duke’s view, was more than a simple doctrinal problem and had to do with the necessity of reforming all of society. Thus, to look only at the actions of preachers such as Farel, the formation of Evangelical communities and the reaction against the spread of the Reformation would give us too narrow a perspective. We therefore need to pay closer attention and listen to the various voices asking for reform.

Reforming Society: The Estates and the Duke

On 19 June 1532, Charles II wrote to one of his officers that he was confident that the spread of the Reformation in Payerne was over:

I am leaving from here, where I have given good order to everything that needed to be done, which was not without difficulty. But, with God’s help, things have been brought back into order to such an extent that my subjects here remain reformed and brought back to our holy faith and to my obedience. And in order to ensure and complete everything and to

⁵¹ On this legislation, see Caesar and Morenzoni, eds., *La Loi du Prince*.

⁵² PS 9, p. 600: “justice soit partout forte pour pugnir et extirper ceste hérésie”.

prevent similar annoyances from happening again, here or elsewhere, I am going to hold the Estates of this country where the reformation of the ordinances and statutes will be carried out in such cases as are necessary against all those who would wish to prevaricate in any way.⁵³

Quite obviously, when Charles II wrote that his subjects “remain reformed”, he simply meant that his reforms had brought them back firmly to Catholicism. Similarly, the “reformation of the ordinances and statutes” was nothing really new. In fact, as we will see, legislative reform activities had quite a long history within the duchy. Charles II's letter prompts us to pay closer attention to a political actor that had become essential during these troubled decades: the Estates.

Already in 1476, a ducal councillor made the Sforza ambassador aware that “although they [i.e., the Piedmontese] have a prince, nevertheless, in every important case, it is the Three Estates which deliberate, make decisions and govern this country”.⁵⁴ The statement was in part exaggerated and it would be wrong to believe that the prince was powerless in the hands of the representatives of the Estates. It is true, however, that by the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the parliamentary assembly of the Three Estates had become a prominent voice within Sabaudian political society and that the duke of Savoy could not avoid their opinions and requests.⁵⁵

As with many other similar parliamentary assemblies, extraordinary direct taxation was at the origin of the meeting of the duchy's Three Estates, starting from the fourteenth century.⁵⁶ The duke needed to obtain the Estates' approval to levy a subsidy, and by the end of the fifteenth century, they were summoned on average every three years to grant the prince the financial assistance he requested, which was generally necessary to

53 Letter quoted in Gilliard, “Les débuts ...Vaud”, p. 127: “Je m'en pars d'ici où j'ai donné bon ordre en tout ce qu'était à faire, [ce] qui n'a été sans peine. Mais, à l'aide de Dieu, les choses sont tellement remises que mes sujets d'ici demeurent réformés et réduits en notre sainte foi et en mon obéissance. Et pour entièrement assurer et parachever le tout et éviter que semblables fâcheries n'adviennent plus, ici ni ailleurs, je m'en vais tenir les Etats de ce pays où se fera la réformation des ordonnances et statuts en tel cas nécessaire contre tous ceux qui voudraient aucunement prévariquer.”

54 Quoted in Barbero, “The Feudal Principalities”, p. 194.

55 The Three Estates of the Duchy of Savoy still await their historian. An impressive number of sources have been published in the thirteen-volume collection by Armando Tallone (*PS*). Concerning the Estates of the Pays de Vaud, see Tappy, *Les États*. For the politics of the Estates at the end of the fifteenth and in the first decades of the sixteenth century – with a special focus on Piedmont – see Koenigsberger, “The Parliament of Piedmont” and Merlin, “Gli Stati”.

56 On these assemblies, the standard synthesis is now Hébert, *Parlementer*.

support military operations.⁵⁷ This was not a negligible amount of help; for instance, in Piedmont during 1492–1533, the Estates granted the enormous sum of 2,686,200 florins, on average 61,050 florins per annum.⁵⁸ Without the financial contributions of the Estates, war would have not been sustainable for the ducal treasury.

Meetings of the Estates of the whole duchy were rare; more frequently, the duke summoned the Estates for the Piedmontese territories and for his *patriae* north of the Alps separately (with the Valle d'Aosta meeting with the latter). Moreover, the duke could summon some smaller “regional” Estates for those parts of the duchy enjoying greater autonomy, such as the Pays de Vaud and the Bresse. In theory, the Three Estates were a meeting of representatives of the nobility, the clergy and the towns. However, in practice, the Estates were more often reduced to an assembly representing the urban elites. Since the clergy had broad fiscal exemptions and the nobility's armed participation in wars led to a different level of taxation, subsidies were mainly discussed between the duke and the cities.⁵⁹

The Estates were also part of the increasing divide between the two parts of the principality: the Italian-Piedmontese and the francophone territories north of the Alps. Although the geopolitical instability of the Italian peninsula played an important role in Sabaudian politics, as we have seen, Charles II was certainly more occupied – and worried – about his power in the northern regions of his principality, which were increasingly caught between Swiss and French expansionism.⁶⁰ In that context, reforming the duchy became a task that could not be delayed and part of the princely policies for the strengthening of his power. Local and regional elites were aware of these issues, and by the end of the fifteenth century, the Estates north of the Alps were using these meetings to discuss bigger problems and ask the prince to take measures. On the Piedmontese side, the Estates were more concerned with the struggle for their autonomy and they took a lesser role in the reform of the duchy.⁶¹

The Estates did not produce their own archives and minutes of the debates are almost non-existent.⁶² However, during the second half of the fifteenth

57 An overview of taxation in the Duchy of Savoy is Hébert and Caesar, “Provence and Savoy”.

58 Koenigsberger, “The Parliament of Piedmont”, p. 65.

59 *Ibidem*, p. 31.

60 Cf. *supra*, chapter 1, p. 45–48.

61 Merlin, “Gli Stati”, p. 507.

62 *PS* 1, p. xlv–xlviii. Some minutes that have been preserved: *PS* 9, p. 601–604 and *PS* 13, p. 108–110. Tallone's edition, which is a “cut and paste” from a wide range of sources, does not contain any reflection on the nature of the sources produced.

century, and increasingly during the early sixteenth century, some trends emerged. By this date, it became normal for the Estates to submit a list of requests to the duke. Normally called *capitula* (chapters) or *doléances* (grievances), most of the time the lists alternate between articles and the ducal responses in a sort of fictitious dialogue between the prince and his subjects.⁶³ The growth of this type of document is a sign of the increasing political weight of the assembly. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Estates had become not only a meeting to grant financial assistance, but also a central venue of Sabaudian political society, discussing a wide array of topics. The clearest sign of this increasing importance is the fact that, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the ducal secretary Jean Vulliet had to begin a *Registrum capitulorum Statuum* by copying part of the *capitula* and other documents.⁶⁴ Archival practices had to adapt to the new political reality.

Virtually nothing has been written about the way in which Sabaudian towns preserved the sources produced by the Estates' meetings. Judging from the extensive material edited by Armando Tallone, it seems, however, that communes on both sides of the Alps did not develop a proper archival series connected with the Estates. Information can be found in various "standard" series of the urban archives: the accounts, minutes of the council meetings (the Italian *ordinati*), and series with copies of letters and various charters granting privileges. The sources preserved give us hints about the grievances submitted and the decisions taken, but unfortunately completely obscure the actual debates.

A reform of law courts and restraints on abuses by ducal officers are certainly among the most common requests made on both sides of the Alps, and they surface at almost every meeting. This was not a novelty within the Sabaudian duchy, and their never-ending character raises questions about the Estates' effectiveness and the prince's capacity to reform his administration. To some extent, these *doléances* fit into the usual tensions between communal administration and princely offices, and it is usually difficult to grasp the real extent of the problems. The fact that Renaissance dukes undertook various reforms is a sign that the complaints of the urban delegates were not completely groundless. Whatever the extent of these

63 This kind of document is also typical of other late medieval parliamentary assemblies, such as those in Portugal, Castille, Languedoc, Provence and Dauphiné. Cf. Hébert, *Parlementer*, p. 491–496.

64 ASTo, C, Materie economiche, Materie economiche per categorie, Demanio donativi e sussidi, m. 1, fasc 10.

conflicts, it is nevertheless clear that Sabaudian parliamentary assemblies affirmed their capacity to participate in the reformation of the duchy, imposing, at least partially, their own political agenda and demands.⁶⁵

The Estates in both Piedmont and Savoy frequently asked that princely officers respect the legislation and in particular the *Statuta Sabaudiae* of 1430. And the duke regularly promised that it was his intention to have his legislation applied by his officers.⁶⁶ The *Statuta Sabaudiae* had been promulgated in 1430 by Amadeus VIII and they were the basis of the Sabaudian legislation during the following decades – although the prince had to respect local *franchises* and *coutumes*, particularly in Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta, the Pays de Vaud, and the Bresse. Although this legislation came to be known as the *Statuta Sabaudiae*, in 1430 it was already intended to be the basis for a general reform of the whole duchy, as reflected in its official title: *Compendium statutorum generalis reformationis Sabaudie*. This impressive corpus was composed of five books with 361 articles, a prologue and a final clause. The bulk of the reform was in the second book (230 articles), which deals with officials and the functioning of justice.⁶⁷

During the period from the 1470s to the 1530s, the dukes and the regents promulgated many series of new statutes and ordinances intended to correct certain problems and answer the requests of the Estates for better justice and curbs on abuses by ducal officials. The princes ensured a wide dissemination by promoting the printing of their legislation, both in Turin and Geneva.⁶⁸ Some of these new statutes were explicitly referred to as “reformations” of the old *Compendium* or part of the Sabaudian legislation. This was particularly the case for some statutes of Yolande (*Reformatio statutorum super causarum acceleracione*, 1477), the statutes of Duke Philibert II (*Reformatio et statuta nova*, 1503), and Charles II's legislation of 1513 (*Statuta nova ... cum reformatione et ampliacione aliorum precedentium*).⁶⁹

65 The term *reformatio* (or its French equivalent *reformation*) is sometimes explicitly used, but was rare: *PS* 5, p. 256 (1479), *PS* 9, p. 521 (1513), p. 527 (1513), p. 556–557 (1517).

66 See for instance, *PS* 5, p. 257, 260 (1479); *PS* 9, p. 383, (1483), p. 417 (1487), p. 428 (1489); *PS* 6, p. 35 (1490), p. 268 (1511).

67 The text is printed in Amman-Doubliez, *La Loi du Prince*, vol. 2. For studies on the *Statuta* of 1430, see Morenzoni and Caesar, eds., *La Loi du Prince*. A good general overview of Sabaudian legislation is Soffietti and Montanari, *Il diritto*. Unfortunately, historians have been more interested in books one (dealing with moral-religious reform and the Jews) and five (on sumptuary laws). The reform of offices and judicial functioning would certainly deserve deeper analysis.

68 Caesar, “L'imprimerie” and Caesar, “Il principe”.

69 References are taken from the 1530 edition of the Sabaudian statutes (EDIT16 – CNCE 31502), which contains the *Compendium* of 1430 and later additions: [*Statuta Sabaudiae*], Turin, Bernardino Silva, 27 September 1530, fol. 52v–61v, 67r–72r.

In the era of Amadeus VIII, the Estates had not been part of the legislative process. Things changed somewhat beginning in the 1510s.⁷⁰ The statutes of 1513 were of particular importance and had been prepared by a meeting of the Estates held in Annecy from 29 September to 1 October, which submitted a “memorandum of what is to be done for the reformation of justice and observation of the lord’s statutes”.⁷¹ As often before, the Estates complained about the lengthy procedures in the tribunals and about the abuses by princely officers that “plunder and gnaw at the poor people”.⁷² From a juridical point of view, the Estates did not promulgate the statutes of 1513 – the duke and the *consilium cum domino residens* did so on 10 October – but many of the points discussed during the Estates, especially about a reform of legal procedures, became part of the new statutes.

These various adjustments created a complex legislative corpus comprising many successive layers and they were insufficient to solve the problems. Or at least the Estates believed so and continued to ask for reforms and submit their *doléances*. In 1528, the Estates gathered in Chambéry and again denounced the princely officers’ many abuses, asking the duke to enforce the *Statuta Sabaudiae* of 1430. This time, the delegates also asked the duke to “enlarge the statutes through [the Estates’] advice”,⁷³ and reminded him of the need for a French version of the legislation.⁷⁴ The requested translation was certainly realised by the ducal jurists at some point during these years, but it remained a draft that was never officially promulgated, since no copies of the text have survived and no official act of promulgation is known.⁷⁵

Despite this failure, the Estates of 1528 were a turning point, and the duke and his entourage decided to undertake broader legislative reform as well. After five years, the Sabaudian jurists were able to submit a new sizeable body of legislation.⁷⁶ Charles II decided to submit the text to the Piedmontese Estates for approval, but the communes were suspicious and worried about maintaining their privileges, in particular regarding the exercise of justice by local officers.⁷⁷ The legislative reform entered a dormant phase, and it is not completely clear why discussions did not

70 On this point, see Tallone’s introductory remarks in *PS* 1, p. ccxxxix–cclv and *PS* 8 p. liii–lxx.

71 *PS* 9, p. 521.

72 *PS* 9, p. 524 and Caesar, “Statuts ducaux”.

73 *PS* 9, p. 600: “les amplifier par leur advys”.

74 *PS* 9, p. 620–621.

75 On these problems, see Fuhrer, Morerod and Nicod-Wirthner, “La traduction”.

76 The project has been studied: Patriarca, *La riforma* (about the Estates of 1528, see esp. xvi–xxi).

77 Merlin, “Gli Stati”, p. 517–518.

continue. Certainly, the duke was not in a position to upset the cities by reducing their privileges and pushing his requests too far (their financial assistance was still necessary). In the meantime, north of the Alps, the Genevan imbroglio and tensions with the Swiss were absorbing much of the prince's attention. Legislative reform, albeit important, became less and less a priority. In the end, the reform of 1533 remained a draft, and the invasion of 1536 put an end to the ducal ambitions of renewing legislation with the prestige of his ancestor Amadeus VIII, the great Sabaudian legislator.

Justice, legislation and ducal officers were not the only targets of the urban complaints. Quite interestingly, on many occasions, the Estates asked the duke to take various measures to limit the prerogatives of ecclesiastical courts and fiscal privileges, to oversee the attribution of ecclesiastical benefices and to reform the church.

Difficulties and conflicts arising from the overlapping exercise of ecclesiastical and civil courts had a long history in the Duchy of Savoy. Already in 1430, when Amadeus VIII promulgated his *Compendium statutorum*, problems with regard to the relationships between ecclesiastical jurisdictions and the Sabaudian courts arose and prompted a reform of the freshly published statutes. The ducal jurists worked to correct the *Compendium* and a new amended version was finally promulgated in 1432.⁷⁸ Conflicts regularly resurfaced, both in Piedmont and north of the Alps, and the complaints of the Estates became part of their *doléances* about the poor functioning of justice.⁷⁹ Another source of never-ending debates were tax exemptions for the clergy. Urban delegates often protested that ecclesiastical goods constantly escaped municipal taxation. The Estates made vigorous complaints about the fact that the clergy was always acquiring new properties, thus reducing the communal tax base. The tax exemptions were also considered unjust because ecclesiastical institutions were not financing the new urban fortifications, which were also beneficial to them.⁸⁰ These were quite common problems; Sabaudian communes had a long history of conflicts and debates attempting to compel the clergy to contribute to urban taxation.⁸¹

Nevertheless, what was novel, and very interesting from our perspective, were the *doléances* pertaining to religious issues normally under the bishop's control that arose during the first decades of the sixteenth century. The

78 Morenzoni and Amman-Doubliez, "De l'élaboration".

79 Cf. for instance *PS* 5, p. 258 (1479), *PS* 9, p. 417 (1487), p. 557–558 (1517) and p. 608 (1528).

80 See, for example, *PS* 9, p. 414 (1487), p. 558 (1517) and p. 572 (1522). The Estates also participated, in 1522, in the reform of the *Chambre des comptes*, which resulted in long new statutes: *PS* 9, p. 576–586.

81 Cf. Caesar, "Small Towns".

assembly summoned in Chambéry in 1517 was a first important turning point. The town's delegates protested against the indulgence preachers, who were bringing "large amounts of money out of the said country [of Savoy]", and asked the duke to ban their preaching.⁸² Reading these *doléances* of 1517, it is not hard to hear echoes of Luther's invective against the collection of annates and indulgences, the proceeds falling into the "bottomless bag" of the Roman curia,⁸³ or to remark on the similarity with the *Gravamina der deutschen Nation*.⁸⁴

Other echoes, more distant in time and space, are also perceptible, and it is worth listening to them. Already in 1247, Saint Louis, certainly not an anticlerical king, nor hostile to Rome, vigorously complained that papal taxation was sapping the kingdom and the wealth of the French church.⁸⁵ In 1376, the English Parliament protested against the taxes and levies that the pope was raising in England, part of which were financing Gregory XI's Italian crusades. Parliament observed that because of papal taxation, "the money of the realm is badly carried away" and this was a source of "great destruction to the realm and its money".⁸⁶ And during the fifteenth century, French Gallicanism continually erupted against the economic rapacity of Rome. The Estates General of 1484, defending the French church and Louis XI's views about the Pragmatic Sanction, argued that it was necessary to "prevent a great deal of money from leaving the kingdom for Rome".⁸⁷ Examples could be easily multiplied, and it is not possible here to write a history of the anti-Roman polemics on the subject of crusade taxation or indulgences, but seen from the point of view of the Estates, Savoy shared some common ideas and political language with other parts of Europe, a political language that by the beginning of the sixteenth century had a long history.

The same Estates of 1517 also made a lengthy complaint about the administration of ecclesiastical benefices.⁸⁸ The main problem was the fact that many of these benefices – at least according to the delegates – were held by foreigners who were absent, and had been awarded to the highest

82 PS 9, p. 558: "grosses quantitez de deniers hors dudict pays".

83 *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520), quoted in Housley, *Religious Warfare*, p. 147.

84 Cf. Maissen, "Pourquoi", p. 108.

85 Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, p. 783–784.

86 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vol. II, London, 1783, p. 329: "la monoye de roialme malement emporté"; "grant destruction du roialme et de la monoye d'icel".

87 Quoted by Parsons, *The Church*, p. 21.

88 A first case occurred in 1479, when the Piedmontese delegates asked the duke to ban foreigners from obtaining benefices through expectative grace or other papal collation (PS 5, p. 259). Similar problems arose in France in 1517 as well, cf. Parsons, *The Church*, p. 33–36.

bidder. Consequently, ecclesiastical benefices were in the hands of clerics who were poorly educated and unable to instruct the faithful, “so that the people not only are not educated enough nor governed for the salvation of the soul and about our Holy Catholic Faith, and in that way they are easily led astray”.⁸⁹

The Estates asked the duke to take measures and described a very interesting programme. Charles II was asked to

exhort the reverend prelates that they must, each in his diocese, examine the parish priests or vicars of their said dioceses and those whom they find insufficient, they will repress and provide [the diocese] with learned and suitable people, all this to extirpate heresies, and for the instruction and increase of our Holy Faith. And also that they should visit all the priests in their dioceses and bring them before them or their clerks, to examine them, to know where they live and of what nation they are and how they live, and to compel them to live in the ecclesiastical state and habit. And that henceforth they repress the unbridled promotion which is made in the priestly state to the great scandal and vilification of the said priestly state and bad example to the people and secular state.⁹⁰

The Estates were demanding no more than for bishops to undertake the customary episcopal visitations in their dioceses and thus fulfil their pastoral duty. Similar complaints and requests were made again in 1528 at the time when the Estates were discussing the best way to eradicate Lutheranism. Once again, the delegates complained about vacant benefices being given to foreigners and to men of the curia in Rome, and asked that the duke compel the Sabaudian prelates to provide the parishes with priests “knowing and able to explain the Catholic faith and the ten commandments of the law

89 PS 9, p. 558: “tellement que le peuple non seulement n'est suffisamment instruit ne gouverné au salut de l'âme ne en nostre Sainte foy catholique, et par ce moyen est facilement seduict”.

90 PS 9, p. 558: “enhorter les reverends prélatz qu'ilz ayent chescung en son diocèse examiner les curez ou vicaires de leursdictes diocèses et ceulx qu'il ne trouveront suffisans les reprimer et pourveoir de gens savans et ydonées, le tout à extirpation des heresies, instruction et augmentation de nostre Sainte foy. Et aussi qu'il ayent à visiter tous les prebstres estantz en leurs diocèses et les faire venir pardevant eulx ou leur commis, iceulx examiner, sçavoir où il demeurent et de quelles nation il sont et comme il vivent, et les contraindre à vivre en estat et habit ecclesiastique. Et que doresenavant il repriment l'effrenée promotion qu'on faict en l'estat sacerdotal au grand scandalle et villipende dudict estat sacerdotal et mauvais exemple au peuple et estat seculier”.

of our mother the Holy Church, mainly every Sunday”.⁹¹ At that time, the problems of benefices and instruction by the clergy were clearly linked with the spread of Evangelical ideas. In December 1528, the Estates of Bresse were gathered and made similar requests for good priests, well-educated and living without concubines. They argued that immoral clergy “make the people murmur and often err in their faith”.⁹²

The Estates of 1517 and 1528 are remarkable in that the representative of the urban elites claimed to intervene in ecclesiastical matters, supervising priests’ instruction and morality, and generally asking for better pastoral care. The complaints of the Estates raise questions about the zeal of the bishops and the general conditions of the Sabaudian church. We shall now turn to the ecclesiastical policies enacted by bishops within the Duchy of Savoy.

The Bishops and Ecclesiastical Reforms

The Renaissance bishops were pivotal to the power of Sabaudian princes. We have encountered many of them in the previous chapters of this book. Prelates such as Aymon de Montfalcon, Claude d’Estavayer and Claude de Seyssel often played an important diplomatic role, dealing with factionalism on both sides of the Alps, the Swiss *combourgeoisies* and many other political issues. Understandably, Sabaudian historiography has depicted them as mere courtiers in the service of the dukes of Savoy, mostly dwelling on their political role.⁹³ The frequent absences from their cities – often motivated by service to the prince – were taken as a sign of their lack of pastoral zeal and an indication of the poor religious state of their clergy and flock. However, absence is not necessarily a good indication of a lack of willingness to reform a diocese, as is shown by the case of Georges de Saluces, bishop of Lausanne (1444–1461),⁹⁴ and by a figure such as Claude de Seyssel, who actively worked for (and wrote about) the reform of his diocese.⁹⁵ Similarly, the case of Pierre de La Baume has already demonstrated that prelates were not simply puppets in the hands of the prince and were not mere political creatures.⁹⁶ I will

91 *PS* 9, p. 603: “qui leur doyvent et sachent déseler la foy catholique et les dix commandementz de la loy de nostre mère Saincte église et principalement toutes les dimanches”.

92 *PS* 9, p. 628: “fayct le peuple murmurer et souvant errer en la foy”.

93 Good examples are Naef, “Claude d’Estavayer” and Uginet, “Compey, Jean de”, in *DBI*.

94 Modestin, “Georges de Saluces”.

95 Cf. Longo, “Claudio di Seyssel”.

96 On the reforming zeal of Renaissance French bishops, see the remarks in Matz, “La sainteté épiscopale”.

now attempt to shed light on the pastoral care they provided, the way they governed their dioceses and the religious side of their policies.

North of the Alps, the diocesan borders never fully matched those of the Duchy of Savoy.⁹⁷ The principality stretched across the diocese of Geneva and part of that of Lausanne (these were the two main and richest dioceses), the small Alpine dioceses of Maurienne, Tarentaise and Belley, and some parts of the dioceses of Sion, Grenoble and Lyon.⁹⁸ On the Piedmontese side, during the later Middle Ages, the Duchy of Savoy extended across the dioceses of Turin, Aosta, Vercelli, Ivrea and the recent one of Mondovì, created in 1388.⁹⁹ Relations between the church and the civil courts (princely and communal) were complicated by the fact that some of these dioceses depended on metropolitan sees not under Sabaudian control: Besançon for Lausanne and Belley and Vienne for Geneva; the Piedmontese dioceses were under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Milan until 1515 when Turin became a metropolitan see.

Pastoral visitations offer a first hint of the bishops' duties and activities. The initial, striking piece of evidence is that pastoral zeal and intensity could diverge widely from one bishop to another, from one diocese to its neighbour. From the beginning of the fifteenth century, Geneva had frequent visitations that were also carefully recorded and are still preserved, forming a rich and interesting series: 1411–1413, 1414, 1443–1445, 1470–1471, 1481–1482, 1516–1518 and 1531.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, Lausanne had only two visitations (both with preserved registers): 1416–1417 and 1453.¹⁰¹ No registers have been preserved in the archives for medieval Maurienne, Belley and Tarentaise.¹⁰² But for the latter, it seems that the bishops visited at least part of their diocese and the cathedral chapter in 1472, 1486, 1496 and 1509.¹⁰³ And the

97 A global overview, also with information on visitations, is in Berardo, "Les diocèses".

98 The metropolitan sees of the latter three dioceses were not under Sabaudian control and their bishops can therefore not be considered "Sabaudian". I have therefore decided to exclude them from my enquiry.

99 The episcopal city of Asti did not become Sabaudian until 1531.

100 See Binz, *Vie Religieuse*, p. 177–215 and Binz, *Les visites* for the edition of the first visitations. In 1531 the *doyenné* of Ceyzérieu was visited independently: La Corbière, ed., *Encadrer les pasteurs*.

101 Wildermann and Pasche, eds., *La visite*.

102 Cf. *Répertoire des visites*, t. 1, p. 221, t. 3, p. 59–63 and t. 4, Paris, 1985, p. 407. On these dioceses, see Lovie, *Les diocèses*.

103 Million and Miédan-Gros, eds., *Inventaire*, p. 666–671. No register for these visitations has been preserved.

bishops of Maurienne were also quite zealous, visiting parishes in 1437, 1442, 1446, 1485 and 1493.¹⁰⁴

South of the Alps, we find a similarly diverse situation. For Ivrea, after the visitation of 1346, no other medieval visitation is known.¹⁰⁵ Mondovì appears to have had only one visitation in 1494 and a partial one in 1515.¹⁰⁶ The diocese of Aosta, after a first half-century dense with visitations, saw the practice diminish with only two visitations in 1486 and 1528.¹⁰⁷ It is the city and diocese of Turin which mostly benefited from visitations by its bishops. After visitations made during the 1440s by the highly reform-oriented and zealous bishop Ludovico di Romagnano, Jean de Compey (1469–1482) also undertook at least one pastoral visitation during his episcopate. Some partial visitations took place in 1502–1503 and 1507–1508 under Giovanni Ludovico della Rovere.¹⁰⁸ Claude de Seyssel, during his brief archiepiscopate in Turin (1517–1520), visited some monasteries and probably the main centres in 1519.¹⁰⁹

Episcopal visitations would certainly deserve a close reading of the preserved registers and a more in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, this overview already discloses some trends and certain relevant aspects can be pointed out. A first important fact to stress is that pastoral care, in a broad sense, while limited in many ways, was not completely absent from the minds of many bishops, and in many dioceses, religious life cannot simply be described as having been in a state of crisis and abandonment.¹¹⁰ The rather numerous visitations show that some bishops, or their delegates, were active and that parishes were not neglected. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, Jean Gerson considered pastoral visitations to be the “hinge of all ecclesiastical reform”. This notion had often been reinforced, in particular by the Councils of Constance (1414–1418) and Basel (1431–1449). Pastoral visitations as a means of effecting reform (along with the synodal activity I will analyse later), with varying intensity in different parts of Europe, increased in importance in the fifteenth century, although we lack a general overview and many regions have still been insufficiently studied

104 Truchet, “Quelques pages”. The registers of these visitations are lost and it is difficult to reconstruct the scope of the bishops’ itineraries and the exact number of parishes visited. The last visitation appears to have been a general one (cf. Billiet, ed., *Chartes*, p. 313–314).

105 Vignono, ed., *Visite pastorali*.

106 Turchini, “Studio”, p. 147.

107 Colliard, *Atti sinodali*, p. 18.

108 On visitations in Turin and its bishops, see Briacca, ed., *Archivio arcivescovile*, p. 55–56; Comba, ed., *Storia di Torino*, p. 779; Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 371 n. 5 and Andenna, “Romagnano, Ludovico”, in *DBI*.

109 Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 392–395.

110 For Turin, see the judgement already offered by Caviglia, *Claudio di Seyssel*, p. 370.

or possess poor archival sources.¹¹¹ Compared to the German-speaking regions of the Empire, Savoy has left a good number of registers.¹¹² Visitations could be done by the bishop in person, but at times the vicar general or an auxiliary bishop was entrusted with the task, as was the case, for instance, for visitations in the Genevan diocese in 1470–1471, 1516–1518 and 1531.¹¹³ This is an important reminder that physical absence did not necessarily mean neglected pastoral care and that diocesan administration at the beginning of the sixteenth century was often solid, especially in vast dioceses like Lausanne and Geneva.¹¹⁴

Second, the preserved registers reveal that substantial attention was given during visitations to the material situation of churches, including their liturgical objects, not only to the instruction and moral situation of the clergy and parishioners. Throughout the fifteenth century, the Church insisted on the importance of the parish as one of the main centres of religious life for the faithful. Interest in buildings and in liturgical objects and books cannot be attributed solely to simple concern with “material problems” but instead demonstrates pastoral concern. The administration of sacraments and proper liturgy needed to occur in buildings that were in good condition and that had been supplied with proper liturgical books and objects. These were not secondary problems for Renaissance parishioners. Thus the cause of the problems plaguing the reforms cannot be reduced to the well-known reformation from above or to the unreformable character of bishops and secular clergy. Bishops frequently compelled local communities to undertake repairs. Many churches (and small chapels) were being continuously restored and embellished, and care for the buildings involved much more than simply repairing architectural deficiencies. Bartolomeo Vitelleschi, the auxiliary bishop of Geneva, showed particular zeal for churches and their interiors during his pastoral visitations (1443–1445), particularly the choir.¹¹⁵ Even some small Alpine parishes were provided with quite impressive frescoes. This was the case, for example, for the chapel of Saint Sebastian in Lanslevillard and the chapel of Saint Anthony in Bessans, both in the Maurienne valley.¹¹⁶ Between the late fifteenth century and the

111 Coulet, *Les visites*, p. 26–27, Mayeur et al., ed., *Histoire du christianisme*, p. 201–206 and Vuillemin, *Parochiae Venetiarum*, p. 604.

112 Cf. Morsel, “La faucille”.

113 La Corbière, *Encadrer les pasteurs*, p. 109.

114 Cf. *HS* I/3 and I/4.

115 Parent, “La réforme des églises”.

116 Lovie, *Les diocèses*, p. 70–71. Painted around 1460, the chapel of Saint Grat, in the *hameau* of Vulmix (Tarentaise), is another good example, cf. *Des saints et des hommes*, p. 222.

first decades of the sixteenth century, the chapels were decorated with cycles depicting the life of Christ (and of Saint Sebastian in Lanslevillard). On the other side of the Alps, the Piedmontese valley of Susa also saw intense pictorial activity during the period 1454–1530.¹¹⁷ The monumental research undertaken by the art historian Marcel Grandjean has shown the intensity of the building projects undertaken in the diocese of Geneva and in the Pays de Vaud during the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. Most parish churches were completely rebuilt, or at least underwent major repairs (particularly to the choir), often with the addition of chapels (private or confraternal). The phenomenon affected large cities as well as smaller towns and even rural villages.¹¹⁸ It would be wrong to see these territories as backward and lost in the middle of the Alps. The later Middle Ages and the Renaissance stand out as periods of active reform in the western part of the Alps, and the care for churches must be understood as “pastoral in stones and walls”,¹¹⁹ supporting the bishops’ activities and care.

The policies of the Sabaudian bishops are also illustrated by the convocation and holding of relatively frequent synods,¹²⁰ which needed to issue decrees and implement the decisions taken at provincial and ecumenical councils, sometimes adapting them to local necessities. In a decree issued in 1433, the Council of Basel recalled the necessity for the bishop to summon the whole diocesan clergy annually or biannually. It appears doubtful, however, that this level of frequency was achieved, as many cases indicate.¹²¹ For Geneva, the bishops summoned seven synods during the period of 1450–1536.¹²² In the diocese of Aosta, there is no evidence of synods from 1446 to 1504, but from that date onward, synods became frequent again: in 1504, 1516, 1517, 1521–1525, 1528, and 1532–1533.¹²³ In Turin, synods were also held at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in 1501 and 1514.

As with visitations, synods were not a simple means of governing; they were a way to reform the morality of the clergy, as the bishop of Vercelli

117 Cailloux, *Peindre*.

118 Grandjean, *L'architecture religieuse*.

119 This expression is from Paravy Pierrette, *De la chrétienté romaine*, p. 740. The neighbouring diocese of Grenoble shows similar dynamism and care for ecclesiastical reforms.

120 Similar reform activities have been observed for Brittany: Chauou, “Les évêques réformateurs”.

121 It is not easy to offer a reliable statistic about the frequency of synods and it is possible that many were held without leaving traces in the archives.

122 Binz, *Vie religieuse*, p. 146.

123 Vescoz, “Série des synodes”, p. 437–438. For the first half of the fifteenth century, see Colliard, *Atti sinodali*.

clearly stated in the preface of his synodal constitution printed in 1517.¹²⁴ The constitutions promulgated at the synods stated that each priest should possess a copy of them. With the spread of printing, bishops took the opportunity to disseminate the synodal legislation through this new medium, and twelve synodal constitutions were printed from 1480 to 1523 for the Sabaudian dioceses (see table 5).

Table 5. Printed synodal constitutions within the Duchy of Savoy

Diocese	Publication	Reference
Geneva	<i>Constitutiones synodales in sancta synodo in ecclesia gebennensi celebrata anno 1480</i> , Geneva: Louis Cruse, 1480.	GLN 15–16 6560
Geneva	<i>Constitutiones synodales episcopatus Gebennensis</i> , [Genève]: [Louis Cruse], [1493].	GLN 15–16 6593
Lausanne	<i>Statuta synodalia Lausannensia</i> , Lyon: [Gaspard Ortuin], 3 October 1494.	GW M43397
Mondovi	<i>Constitutiones synodales Episcopi et Cleri Montisregalensis</i> , Mondovi: Laurentius de Vivaldis, 5 October 1495.	IGI 9247 GW M43417
Turin	[<i>Constitutiones synodales et provinciales diocesis Taurinensis</i>], Turin: Giovannetto Martinaglia, 1502.	Edit16 CNCE 53973
Geneva	<i>Constitutiones synodales in hac sacra synodo in ecclesia gebennensi celebrata anno 1505</i> , [Geneva]: [Louis Cruse], 1505.	GLN 15–16 5699
Geneva	<i>Constitutiones synodales in sancta synodo in ecclesia gebennensi diebus octava, nona et decima novembris M. Vc. XIII. Celebrate</i> , [Geneva]: [Jacques Vivian], 1513.	GLN 15–16 5700
Turin	<i>Constitutiones synodales</i> , Turin: Nicolas Benedict, 1514. ¹²⁵	Edit16 CNCE 59591
Vercelli	<i>Constitutiones synodales ecclesiae Vercellensis</i> , Turin: Giovanni Angelo and Bernardino Silva, 1517.	Edit16 CNCE 31555
Aosta	<i>Constitutiones synodales augustensis dyocesis</i> , [Geneva]: [Jacques Vivian ?], [± 1520]. ¹²⁶	GLN 15–16 5704
Geneva	<i>Constitutiones synodales in sancta synodo in ecclesia Gebennensi</i> , Geneva: Wygand Koeln for Gabriel Pomard, 1523.	GLN 15–16 5703
Lausanne	<i>Constitutiones synodales ecclesie et episcopatus Lausannensis</i> , Geneva: Wygand Koeln for Gabriel Pomard, 1523. ¹²⁷	GLN 15–16 5698

¹²⁴ *Constitutiones synodales ecclesiae Vercellensis*, Turin: Giovanni Angelo and Bernardino Silva, 1517, fol. 1r.

¹²⁵ Also containing the constitutions of 1502.

¹²⁶ This constitution was approved in 1504.

¹²⁷ These constitutions were reprinted by Pomard in 1535 in Annecy (cf. Besson, *L'Église et imprimerie*, vol.2, p. 42).

As is the case for other early printing, it is not always clear whether the publication was an episcopal initiative. In some cases, printers specifically cited a request from the bishop. The Lausanne constitutions of 1494 were “per reverendissimum in Christo patrem et Dominum, dominum Aymonem de Montefalcone Dei gratia presulem, principem et comitem Lusannensis modernum confirmate et approbate ac de eius mandato impressae.” (fol. 1r). And we also know that the printing of synodal constitutions for Turin (1514), Vercelli (1517), Geneva (1523) and Lausanne (1523) was certainly promoted by the local bishops.¹²⁸ The 1502 edition of the provincial constitution for the diocese of Turin was an initiative taken within the episcopal court, for the text contains a dedicatory letter of Amedeo Berruti to the bishop. Berruti was at that time a doctor *utriusque* and, above all, the vicar general.¹²⁹ Once again, both the summoning of synods and the promulgation of their statutes through printing demonstrate that prelates and their administrations were far from dormant and neglectful of the religious life within their dioceses.

Synodal constitutions frequently made clear that the parish clergy should be instructed about the importance and the meaning of sacraments.¹³⁰ And bishops (or their vicars) during their visitations checked that the parish had the necessary liturgical books to administer the sacraments correctly. The need to repair or replace liturgical books is one of the leitmotifs of episcopal visitations of the late Middle Ages.¹³¹ It therefore should come as no surprise that liturgical books, along with the Bible, were among the texts most widely published from the beginning by the first printers. For the northern Alpine dioceses under Sabaudian control, we have identified thirty-four different editions of the three main books necessary for every parish priest: missals (containing the proper form of the Mass), the breviary (with the texts and prayers to be recited for the daily offices of hours) and manuals (the forms and words for liturgical functions associated with sacraments).¹³² The simple list of missals, breviaries and manuals clearly

128 The Turin printing of 1514 and the two editions of 1523 bear the coats of arms of the bishops.

129 This edition is extremely rare for we know of only four copies: Alba, Biblioteca diocesana AN.XXXVII.B.2/1; Cambridge, University Library, Td.52.120; Torino, Archivio di Stato, Corte, Biblioteca antica, I.IV.31; Torino, Biblioteca Reale, C.7.15. USTC wrongly assigns two different identification numbers to the same edition: 806590 and 859656. On Berruti, see Lino Marini, “Berruti, Amedeo”, in *DBI*, 9 (1967), online.

130 This is the case, for instance, for the Genevan constitutions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Binz, *Vie religieuse*, p. 347). See also, Backus, “Des réformes avant la Réforme”.

131 Cf. for Geneva Binz, *Les visites, passim* and for Lausanne Wildermann and Pasche, eds., *La visite, passim*. Quentin Savary is currently conducting a PhD on this topic under my supervision.

132 As has already been observed by Nowakowska, “From Strassburg”, p. 11: “the Italian peninsula proved barren territory for episcopal liturgies”. For the period under scrutiny, only one breviary

shows the importance of the printing of liturgical books and the existence of a market for them (table 12).

It is less simple to know whether these first publications were initiated by the local ecclesiastical authorities. The presence of coats of arms, or the explicit reference to a *mandatum* to print by the bishop (and/or the cathedral chapter), must be taken as a sign of an official demand.¹³³ The missals *ad usum Lausannensem* printed in 1505 and in 1522, along with the one for the diocese of Tarentaise (1529), were certainly commissioned by the bishops whose arms were depicted on the frontispiece. Similarly, the Genevan missal of 1487 was printed by Jean Belot “de mandato atque expressa licentia illustrissimi et reverendissimi in Christo Patris et Domini, domini Francisci de Sabaudia”. Similarly, the breviaries of Geneva (1479), Tarentaise (1486), and Maurienne (1512), and the 1508 manual for Tarentaise, were certainly printed at the request of the bishops.

Savoy was not an isolated case in Europe. Natalia Nowakowska has found evidence of 107 editions of liturgical books for fifty-two different dioceses commissioned by bishops during the period spanning from 1478 to 1501,¹³⁴ and the imperial area was the most active centre for liturgical publications. If we also consider that the first liturgical books were commissioned by bishops in Basel, Strasbourg and Speyer in 1478, the diocese of Geneva can be considered quite a forerunner; even a small Alpine diocese like Tarentaise was not backward, disconnected from the “modernity” of its times. Much certainly depended on the personality of the bishop and his level of culturedness,¹³⁵ but there is no doubt about the willingness of many bishops to reform and govern their dioceses and equip the secular clergy with good (and updated) instruments for pastoral care. And we must

appears to have been printed in Piedmont following a local initiative. The *Breviarium secundum ritum Curie Vercellensis*, Venice: Albertino da Lesson, 1504 (Editio CNCE 24242) was printed “cum gratia et privilegio concesso per dominos Joannem de Bromis et Nicolaum Lanem canonicos nomine capitula predicti Bartholomeo Cantono”. There is no simple explanation for these differences between Italy and the dioceses north of the Alps, and a detailed study of this topic has yet to be made. Researchers have observed that Italian breviaries undergone a certain uniformisation already by the thirteenth century due to the spread of the *Breviarium curiae* adopted by the Franciscan Order (see some general remarks in Righetti, *Manuale*). I am grateful to Laura Albiero, who shared her ongoing research with me.

¹³³ For similar problems concerning legislative texts in Savoy, see Caesar, “Statuts” and Caesar, “L'imprimerie”, p. 129–132.

¹³⁴ Nowakowska, “From Strassburg”.

¹³⁵ See, for example, the “literate prince” and bishop of Lausanne Aymon de Montfalcon (1491–1517): Andenmatten *et al.*, eds., *Aymon de Montfalcon*.

acknowledge that Sabaudian bishops “consciously employed printing as a tool of ecclesiastical reform”.¹³⁶

Book publishing, we must not forget, was also a commercial undertaking. The great number of editions of liturgical books is first of all a sign that a market for them existed and that the bishops never had a complete monopoly over the printing processes. A new edition could be created on the basis of an older one, and be a simple “reprint” with few textual variations, thus requiring no special collaboration, nor any special approval from the ecclesiastical authorities. Printers could then be good allies of episcopal reforms. The appeal of a new edition could be its new layout or simply because there was demand. Very often, printers published a breviary or a missal with more or less small changes to offer an updated instrument and make the old one look “outdated”, while making this clear to potential buyers. The missal printed in Geneva by Jean Belot (1508) had a front page with images of the four evangelists, Jesus and the apostles and a red title: *Missale secundum usum Gebennensem noviter revisum et emendatum tam correctione quam devotarum missarum et cantus munitione*.¹³⁷ Sometimes, the printer added a colophon stating that the breviary or the missal had been diligently corrected by clerical staff, but a certain caution is needed when this language is generic and vague. This was sometimes no more than a rhetorical way to state that the corrections had been made by a reliable person and that the new edition was a good one.¹³⁸

Around 1520, Gabriel Pomard printed a *Missale parvum* (i.e., portable) in Geneva (GLN 15–16 5681), for which there is no proof of episcopal intervention. It included a Mass for the Holy Shroud, written by the Genevan Dominican Antoine Pennet.¹³⁹ This Mass had already been printed in the form of booklets and six different Genevan editions, issued in quite a short period of time (1506–1520), are known.¹⁴⁰ The numerous editions are clearly a sign of the demand for this new liturgical office, and, interestingly, some of these small booklets were bound together with older Genevan missals, showing that users tried to update their “old” missals.¹⁴¹ The emergence of a market and the numerous editions are easy to explain,

136 Nowakowska, “From Strassburg”, p. 31. On early printing in Geneva and Lausanne, Besson, *L'Eglise et l'imprimerie*, is still a necessary starting point. For the Genevan case, see also Würgler, “Buchdruck und Reformation”.

137 See the copy BGE, Bd 1673rés.

138 Cf. Albiero, “Les livres liturgiques”.

139 Ripart, “Le Saint Suaire”, p. 72–73, and also *supra*, chapter 1, p. 41.

140 1506 ca. (GLN 15–16 5685), 1506 ca. (GLN 15–16 5689), 1510 ca. (GLN 15–16 5686), 1519 (GLN 15–16 6259), 1520 ca. (GLN 15–16 5687) and 1521 (GLN 15–16 5688).

141 For example, London, BL, C.36.c9 and Paris, BnF, Rés B-266.

since they followed Pope Julius II's decision, precisely in 1506, to recognise the Sabaudian Shroud of Lirey as the one and only true Holy Shroud and to establish a feast of the Holy Shroud (4 May). Pomard's missal of 1520 thus offered an updated (and marketable) version, and the new liturgical office was clearly intended as explicitly "promotional". The frontispiece reproduced a scene of crucifixion, accompanied by a text making clear the improvements of the new edition: *Missale parvum (quod veni mecum nuncupari potest) missas communes : et alias continens necessarias : una cum missa sancti Sudarii et aliis pluribus bene notandis cura diligenti correctum*.¹⁴²

In addition to great pastoral visitations and synods, bishops could take more local initiatives. It is not easy to evaluate these sporadic activities,¹⁴³ but substantial evidence points again to zeal and tangible efforts to improve the morality of clergy and the government of the dioceses, as attested, for instance, by the reform of the cathedral chapter promoted by the bishop of Maurienne, Etienne de Morel (1483–1499).¹⁴⁴ Bishops also promulgated new statutes, mainly to improve their administration and to reform justice in their courts, as did Louis de Gorrevod, bishop of Maurienne, in 1506, and Jean Louis de Savoie, bishop of Geneva, in 1515.¹⁴⁵ Hospitals were also among the institutions targeted by the reforms and they had received particular attention since the middle of the fifteenth century, as the cases of Geneva and Turin show.¹⁴⁶

Bishops and the secular clergy were not alone in their efforts to reform the church and society. It is now acknowledged that late medieval monasticism was a vibrant and active incubator of discussion and reforms.¹⁴⁷ In addition, Observant initiatives for renewed pastoral care were particularly intense during this period, as François Lambert's itinerant campaign of preaching reminded us at the beginning of this chapter.¹⁴⁸ By the 1450s, the dukes and duchesses of Savoy particularly encouraged the foundation of Observant

142 *Missale parvum*, [Geneva]: [Wygand Koeln pour] Gabriel Pomard, [± 1520] (copy consulted: BGE Rés. Bd 1511).

143 Once again, no comprehensive study has been done concerning the Duchy of Savoy and the bibliography is fragmented by nationalist approaches and series.

144 Lovie, *Histoire des diocèses*, p. 69.

145 Burnier, "Les constitutions". On Gorrevod, see also Gros, *Histoire du diocèse*, t. 2, p. 162–178. Jean de Savoie required them to be printed and marked with his arms: *Statuta noviter edicta per Johannem de Sabaudia episcopum et principem gebennensem*, [Geneva]: [Jacques Vivian], 1515 (GLN 15–16 5702).

146 Duparc-Hermann, *Vivre et mourir*, p. 114–117; Comba (ed.), *Storia di Torino*, p. 773.

147 Roest, "A Crisis".

148 Roest, "The Observance".

houses within the northern alpine parts of the duchy. During the decade 1470–1481, seven new houses, for both men and women, were founded in Savoy. On some occasions, bishops could be active in the founding of these as well. This was the case for Thomas de Sur, archbishop of Tarentaise, who supported the installation of the Observant Franciscans in Moûtiers in 1470.¹⁴⁹ And for Aymon de Montfalcon, who promoted an Observant priory of Franciscans in Morges (1497) and encouraged the foundation of a Carmelite house at Sainte-Catherine du Jorat (1497), not far from Lausanne.¹⁵⁰

What was the impact of these monastic institutions on the reforming movements and discussions within the Duchy of Savoy, and how were Observant friars linked with the first Evangelical preachers? We can look back to 1522 and François Lambert's journey through Savoy and his preachings. We know that his sermons were generally typical of the reform-oriented programme of the Franciscan Observance, asking people to leave their sinful lives behind and using theatrical techniques such as making the audience throw objects like cards and dice into a bonfire of the vanities as a sign of repentance.¹⁵¹ Although the local sources are silent about Lambert's preaching in Geneva, it is striking that precisely during these days of June, the city councils enforced measures promoting morality against prostitutes and blasphemers (on 10 and 13 June).¹⁵²

That said, we still have only a very vague idea of the way religious – and their preaching – shaped the general demand for reforms within the Duchy of Savoy. Similarly, the attraction of the new Evangelical ideas for the clergy and monastic orders is still mostly a blank page. How many priests, nuns and monks embraced the new faith in the Pays de Vaud or in Geneva during the first half of the 1530s? It is difficult to say. Archival destruction – which was massive for most of the religious houses sacked by the Bernese troops – and historiographical lacunae explain this silence. Most of the time, we are left with the most controversial and noisy cases, such as Blaisine Varember, the daughter of the Mammelu Dominique Varember and the only Genevan Poor Clare who decided to embrace the Reformation,¹⁵³ or François Lambert, whom we met at the beginning of this chapter. Minor figures and the overall

149 Pierregrosse, "Foyers et diffusion" and Pibiri, "Les Franciscains".

150 Vocanson-Manzi, "Aymon de Montfalcon". This project of the founding of a Carmelite priory began in 1494.

151 Delcorno, "Between Pulpit and Reformation", p. 116–117.

152 *RC* 9, p. 181–182.

153 See *supra*, chapter 4, p. 175 for references.

picture are hard to reconstruct, and we should be cautious about linear and simplistic explanations, as some examples will make clear.¹⁵⁴

In 1532, a Franciscan preacher from the Lausanne priory troubled the Catholics in Payerne during Lent: his sermons were judged to be too Evangelical, and many people believed that he was shifting towards the new ideas.¹⁵⁵ Since we do not have any hints about the contents of his sermons – we only know the friar was named François – the affair remains obscure. The way in which a message could be understood and the problems that could arise from the preaching during those years is revealing, however. As Lambert's case showed, even though people tended to judge preachers by their message, the clear and sharp divide between an Evangelical preacher and a reforming Catholic was certainly thinner than we tend to believe, especially around the decades 1520s–1530s.¹⁵⁶

The Lausanne Franciscans were certainly not a cradle of Evangelical preachers, nor were they particularly oriented towards reforms of the order, as the priory had remained with the Conventual branch. In 1536, when the city officially adopted the Reformation, all but one friar left the city. There were probably around 10–15 individuals in this community. Quite intriguingly, the only friar who remained – although we do not know anything about his motivations – was a certain François Chassot.¹⁵⁷ Was he the same François that preached in Payerne four years earlier?

Although Franciscan Observants spoke about the need for reform, it would be wrong to see them as proto-Evangelical (or more prone to become Reformed than Conventuals) solely on the basis of similar ideals or on cases such as Lambert's.¹⁵⁸ The priory of Morges, in the Pays de Vaud, was Observant but all the friars apparently left without converting in 1536.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ In Geneva, among the first local priests to convert we find Thomas Vandel (parish priest of Saint-Gervais), Louis Bernard, Jean Hugonier, Charles Dunant, and Pierre de Petra *alias* Berthod (cf., *RC* 12, p. 547 n.1). See also, Cahier-Buccelli, "Dans l'ombre". This article is incomplete, however, and some choices are questionable. Gabriella Cahier-Buccelli decided not to focus on people like Thomas Vandel and Jacques Bernard because they became ministers in the new church but "the change of faith did not mean [...] a change of state" and they did not endure precarity in their lives (p. 368). Their marriages and their supplications before the City Council suggest the opposite.

¹⁵⁵ Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Vaud", p. 122.

¹⁵⁶ Roest, "The Observance", p. 303–304.

¹⁵⁷ On Franciscans in Lausanne on the eve of the Reformation: *HS* V/1, p. 392 and Manzi, *Une économie*, p. 18–22, 39–40 and 253–263.

¹⁵⁸ Meyer and Viallet, "Les champs", p. 28–29: a salutary warning about the difficulty of accounting for the silent majority of friars who stayed Catholic, and the risks of overestimating the number who converted based on conspicuous individual paths.

¹⁵⁹ *HS* V/1, p. 405–406. Also, nothing is known about the fate of the six to nine Franciscans that lived in the Nyon priory (*ibidem*, p. 401–402).

From that point of view, it is telling that the house that adhered the most to the Reformation was the Genevan one, which had remained Conventual, suggesting that the local situation was more important than the affiliation of the house (Conventual or Observant).

In Geneva, following the problems of the preaching in Advent 1533 and the troubled situation at the beginning of 1534, some of the friars left, and the only ones who stayed were those already inclined to the new Evangelical ideas.¹⁶⁰ At least four friars remained and converted: Jacques Bernard (sacristan around 1534–1536), Claude Boulard, Etienne de Domonova and Thivent Solliet. By the end of the summer 1535, Boulard, de Domonova and Bernard were married,¹⁶¹ but their conversions and new lives appear punctuated by difficulties as they asked the city councils to grant them financial aid on many occasions.¹⁶² The choice of these friars – and the departure of their fellow brothers – opened the doors of the priory at Rive to the Evangelical preachers, and in fact, Farel began to preach daily at the Franciscan house in March 1534.¹⁶³

Some of these Franciscans began to preach with the Evangelicals, and Jacques Bernard appears to have been one of the most active of the group, as many local people witnessed.¹⁶⁴ During the spring of 1535 he was one of the leading figures of the so-called Rive Disputation, which led to the abrogation of the Mass in August.¹⁶⁵ Later Bernard became a Reformed pastor and held various parishes: Archamps (1536–1538), Geneva (1538) and Satigny (1542–1559). He died 4 February 1559.¹⁶⁶

This situation certainly led to some confusion and mixed reactions from people attending the sermons. Henri Goulaz, interrogated by the Peneysans in 1535, admitted that he went to the Genevan parish church of Saint Germain to listen to a Lenten sermon by a Franciscan, but that he had left after the preacher criticised the power to remit sin after death, an affirmation that made clear that the preacher was a “Lutheran”.¹⁶⁷ Obviously Goulaz, facing death, may have fabricated his history in order to prove his innocence. His justification had, however, to be consistent with the reality of his times and we must thus admit that mixed audiences were a reality

160 *HSV*/1, p. 370.

161 *RC* 13, p. 305 and 463; *HSV*/1, p. 379–380.

162 *RC* 13, p. 235, 310, 501, 505, and 544.

163 *RC* 12, p. 493–494 and n. 2.

164 *AEG*, P.C. 1/293, p. 11–12 and Mercier, “Le procès”, p. 338.

165 Cf. Flückiger, *Dire le vrai*, p. 194.

166 *HSV*/1, p. 380. On these Reformed parishes see, Murdock, “Religious Life”.

167 *AEG*, P.C. 1/293, p. 11–12.

during these years. In fact, Jeanne de Jussie also tells of part of the audience being scandalised by Jacques Bernard's sermon during Lent 1535 at the Franciscan church. Many had probably come to hear a Franciscan preaching, but discovered Bernard's position during the sermon. Jeanne states that many people attended the sermon, "Christians and Lutherans".¹⁶⁸ Jeanne wrote much of this text at a moment that is difficult to date – she began in 1535, shortly after she left Geneva, and completed her work by 1547.¹⁶⁹ One might wonder how much this sharp division into two groups – Catholics (Christians) and Lutherans – was a reality present in those years or whether it was a later interpretation. The many tumults that were affecting the city by 1533 speak in favour of clear divisions.¹⁷⁰ The *Registres du Conseil* also relate tumults following sermons, and the people taking part in the riots were clearly identified by their "confession". On February 14, a riot erupted because one of the Genevan Franciscans – possibly Bernard – preached in Saint Germain. The Ordinary Council summoned three women involved in the tumult. Jana, who identified herself as a poor prostitute, admitted that she, as well as many other women who were at Saint Germain for the Mass, had said that "Lutherans were dogs who wanted to bring one preacher into [the church]". Jeanne noted that the Franciscan – whom she called an apostate – still had the habit of his order, but preached "in heretical fashion" ("à la mode heretique").¹⁷¹

How people reacted to sermons shows that some of them had precise ideas about what was "Catholic" and what was "Lutheran" and that clearly defined groups – at least identified as such by people who witnessed and attended these events – existed. Uncertainty was the order of the day, since some of these preachers had previously been priests or friars who were still wearing their habits. Often attendees discovered the "true identities" of the preachers during the Mass and the sermon, leading to furious and violent reactions, motivated in part by the conviction that they had been deceived.

Some readers may find this overview of the activities of late medieval bishops, of the reform policies of the Estates, of the engagement of clergy and friars with the ideals of the reforms, and of the way people received and appreciated the religious message delivered to them to be impressionistic. The discussion here is inevitably incomplete because of certain

¹⁶⁸ Jeanne de Jussie, *Short Chronicle*, p. 110.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 24. It is possible that Jeanne also incorporated some notes taken during the early 1530s.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *supra*, chapter 4 p. 157.

¹⁷¹ RC 13, p. 149 and n. 1.

historiographical silences. Nevertheless, some clear patterns have emerged: most of the bishops during the period from the 1450s to the 1530s were not simple courtiers. Certainly, their presence at court and their acting as ducal counsellors were part of their duty. However, prelates and their ecclesiastical officers were actively involved in pastoral care and attempted to reform their churches in the best way possible. The Estates were involved in ecclesiastical and moral reforms as well. Thus, when the first Evangelical preachers, such as Froment and Farel, started their campaigns within the Duchy of Savoy around 1528, they were not entering an unploughed field. They came onto a territory where – for many decades already – the political elites had been used to discussing the need for reforms, where bishops had been acting as pastors, and where people were accustomed to hearing from zealous and fiery advocates of reform.¹⁷² It is fair to say that the problem of religious reform, matters that touched on the ways in which people could gain salvation, was no longer, as it still was in other parts of the empire,¹⁷³ merely a discussion among theologians; addressing this problem had become the duty of the entire political society.

The first Evangelical preachers were largely new and competing voices within a larger political and religious society. They were forced to challenge factions and individuals who were willing to side with tradition, both religious and political. In the end, as this chapter has shown, the duke of Savoy and the bishops were active rulers who were working on the reform of both the church and the principality. Uncertainty and factionalism – with the violence that sometimes accompanied it – were the consequences of these plural voices. Who possessed the truth about the best way to reform society?

172 On reform-oriented preaching during the fifteenth century, see Morenzoni, “Vincent Ferrier”, Morenzoni, *Le prédicateur* and Hodel and Morenzoni, eds., *Mirificus praedicator*.

173 Cf. Maissen, “Pourquoi”, p. 103–107.

Epilogue

At the time Calvin gave his farewell speech to the Company of Pastors, on 28 April 1564, Savoy had a new duke: Emmanuel Philibert (1553–1580), Charles II's only child. Also, by that time, many of the companions we met at the beginning of each chapter, who guided us through the uncertain and changing world they lived in, had died.

Claude de Seyssel, the faithful ducal councillor, died decades before Calvin and well before the 1536 invasion of the duchy; he passed away in 1520, while serving as archbishop of Turin. François Lambert, after leaving the Swiss cantons, most probably travelled to Freiburg im Breisgau, then to Cologne or Mainz, ultimately reaching Wittenberg in 1523. Facing financial troubles – and dissatisfied with his spiritual-pastoral journey – he decided to leave soon thereafter and went back to Metz (1524), then moved again to Strasbourg and to Speyer, and ended up in Marburg (1526). It is from that city that he wrote to Bucer in 1530, telling him of his desire to go back among the Swiss, in Lausanne or Geneva. After all these tumultuous years, he died from plague in 1530 in Frankenberg an der Eder (Hesse).¹

We already know the tragic fate of Pierre Gaudet and Jacques de Malbuisson, both condemned and sentenced to death in 1535. Jacques's brother, Pierre de Malbuisson, had also been condemned as a Peneysan (in absentia) in 1535, and fled to somewhere in the surrounding countryside. The fate of the exiled part of the family remains obscure – as for most of the exiles of those years – but we know that some members converted and stayed within the city. Etienne, an uncle of Jacques and Pierre, sat on the Council of Two Hundred in 1544 and another Jacques, a descendant of Jean (brother of the Peneysans Jacques and Pierre) also became a member of this council in 1573.²

Similar paths were the lot of the Varembergs. After a prosperous economic and political rise in Geneva that had begun in the mid-1440s, they experienced a troubled decade during the years 1526–1536. Dominique was

¹ Cf. *supra*, chapter 5, p. 185–188 and Delcorno, “Between Pulpit and Reformation”, p. 124–132.

² Cf. table 9 (sentence of 13 July 1535) and Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, t. 1, 1829, p. 382–384.

condemned as a Mammelu and banished in 1527.³ His family split, some exiled from the city and some converting to the new Evangelical ideas and remaining in Geneva. As far as we know, he had six daughters, three of whom remained in Geneva. Blaisine, well known as the only Genevan Poor Clare to choose the new faith, ended up marrying Thomas Genod, a former priest. Two other daughters stayed in Geneva and also embraced the Reformation: Ayma (or Aimée), who married four times – her last husband was Michel Cop, a minister and firm supporter of Calvin – and Octavienne, who married Jean Barral. The other three daughters most probably followed their father and husbands. In fact, we know that two of them married other condemned Mammelus: Mye's husband was the former treasurer of the city, Bernard Boulet (1521–1524), and Estienna married a Mammelu we have already met as well: the rich merchant François Milliet.⁴

Finally, among the exiled Genevans, we also find Etienne de La Mare, the turncoat we met in chapter 2. Like many other Genevans who fled the city because of factionalism, he tried (unsuccessfully) to return to the town, pleading with the city councils in 1536, 1537 and 1539.⁵ Etienne de La Mare died without heirs, probably around 1543. He was survived by his wife Yolande de Gingins, who was still alive in 1544.⁶

The destiny of these people and their short biographical portraits remind us that for many individuals and families, these were years of itineracy, division and exile. Numerous were those who broke with their past as well: various religious left their monasteries or convents and fled into exile, as did many people in Geneva during the factional struggles of the 1520s–1530s. Most of them never managed to come back to their city, with 1536 representing a breaking point. In that year, the strong rupture affected a considerable portion of the former Sabaudian francophone territories, which officially became Reformed: Geneva by a vote of the General Council and the Pays de Vaud by imposition from Bern. Both Lausanne and Geneva ceased to be episcopal cities (Geneva had already declared the see vacant in 1534) and took on a new political status: Geneva managed to stay independent, while

3 See *supra*, chapter 2, p. 108 and table 7.

4 Martin, “Jean Calvin”; Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, t. 4, p. 45, 83 and 229; Pettegree, “Cop [Cope], Michel (c. 1501–1566)”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Retrieved 16 July 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6255> (Varembert is spelled “Warembert”). For Milliet's and Varembert's activities as merchants, see chapter 1, p. 68–69. For Boulet as treasurer, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir en ville*, p. 184–185.

5 Cf. *supra*, chapter 2, p. 112. RCC 1, p. 109; RCC 2, p. 112, 172; RCC 4, p. 299; Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, t. 1, p. 135.

6 Mottier, “La rupture”, p. 227–228.

Lausanne and the Pays de Vaud had new, Bernese, lords. The different paths of these two similar cities, both having *combourgeoisies* with the Swiss, are a powerful reminder of the negligible importance that this treaty potentially had in the context of war, and more generally of the fragility of polities in an unstable frontier region.

Similarly, the whole Duchy of Savoy underwent radical changes. After 1536, the Estates slowly lost much of their political power and ceased to be one of the centres of political debate. During the French occupation (1536–1559), the Estates of Piedmont were still summoned but they only “represented the provincial autonomy of Piedmont”, having lost their capacity to influence the policies of a sovereign state.⁷ And from 1560, once reinstated, the duke of Savoy never summoned them again. Similar remarks could be made for the territories north of the Alps.⁸ During the same decades, the centre of gravity of the principality shifted from north of to south of the Alps. The process is best incarnated by the establishment of Turin as the official capital in 1572 and the transfer to this new capital of the Holy Shroud – at that time, one of the most precious relics of the Western world – in 1578.⁹ Renaissance Savoy had largely been francophone, but the early modern duchy was increasingly an Italian principality, and Turin and Piedmont had replaced Chambéry and Savoy as the main political and administrative centres.

However, some of these changes were not necessarily permanent, and uncertainty and instability did not cease in 1536. In some respects, that year only added a new layer of complexity. From a geopolitical point of view, avoiding a teleological perspective, we must recognise that a portion of the territories lost in 1536 (see map 6) – which would ultimately never return to Sabaudian rule – remained in an uncertain state throughout the sixteenth century. For many contemporaries, the future was far from settled and “it was commonly expected that the Emperor would be along any day to restore the authority of both Savoy and the Holy Mother Church in the Pays de Vaud”.¹⁰ In fact, the Duchy of Savoy was restored with the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559): France gave Savoy back to the new duke Emmanuel Philibert. Subsequently, part of the Chablais, the Genevois, the Pays de

7 Koenigsberger, “Estates”, p. 71 and Merlin, “Il Cinquecento”, 31–36. For the territories north of the Alps during the French occupation see Houlemare, “Le parlement de Savoie” (the *parlement* was a new court of justice replacing the old medieval courts) and Chevailler, “L’occupation française”.

8 Merlin, “Gli Stati”, p. 525 and Merlin, *La Croce*, p. 22–42.

9 Ripart, “Le Saint Suaire”, p. 58.

10 Bruening, *Calvinism’s First Battleground*, p. 44.

Gex, and the Bailiwicks of Ternier and Gaillard were restored to Sabaudian authority under the Treaties of Lausanne (1564) and Thonon (1569).¹¹ Even though the duke had renounced Lausanne and the Pays de Vaud, which were forever lost, dynastic changes remained a source of uncertainty. During the 1580s, after Charles Emmanuel I succeeded Emmanuel Philibert as duke of Savoy, new Sabaudian loyalties resurfaced in the Pays de Vaud, and in 1588 a plot was uncovered in Lausanne.¹²

Similarly, Geneva's fate was still an open question, and instability characterised political life there until the Peace of Saint-Julien in 1603.¹³ The territorial uncertainty remained particularly high in the vicinity of Geneva. In the wake of the conquest, Bern's intentions to annex the city were clear and the threat remained real until the Treaty of Lausanne in 1564. The Bernese also claimed sovereignty over the numerous rights and lands held by the Genevan Cluniac priory of Saint-Victor and the cathedral chapter in the surrounding – now Bernese – countryside. The Genevan authorities contested this situation, claiming that these rights pertained to the city.¹⁴ The new *combourgeoisie* and a separate treaty, both signed on 7 August 1536, were unable to resolve the issue, and the conflict lasted until 1544.¹⁵ At that time, after countless efforts at negotiation, a solution was found thanks to the Arbitration of Basel. The so-called “Departure of Basel”¹⁶ was certainly more favourable to Bern than to Geneva, but it had the advantage of bringing some relief to a conflictual situation that Basel had called a “labyrinth”. Bern's appetite for complete conquest of the city, as it had done with Lausanne, was not completely satisfied, and Genevans certainly understood, once more, how imbalanced the *combourgeoisie* was, how far it was from an alliance between equals. For this reason, in 1549–1550, six embassies were sent to Bern to obtain support for an alliance with the whole Swiss Confederation (according to the treaty sealed in 1536,

11 Abetel-Béguelin, “Lausanne, traité de” (17 March 2009 version), in *e-DHS*; Tripet, “Thonon, Traité de” (19 February 2014 version), in *e-DHS* and Cramer, *La Seigneurie*.

12 Bruening, “Francophone Territories”, p. 287.

13 Caesar, “Government”. With respect to this point, I do not agree with Scott's view that after 1536, “Bern's aggression yielded to accommodation” (*Swiss*, p. 171).

14 An overview of the jurisdictional conflicts between Bern and Geneva, particularly over Saint-Victor and the cathedral chapter properties, is Santschi, “Les mandements”, p. 394–415. See also, Guilleré and Santschi, eds., *Terres et pouvoirs*; Hochuli Dubuis, “La lutte”.

15 Santschi, ed., *Crises*, p. 21–25.

16 Mediation by a third institution was provided for in a clause of the *combourgeoisie*. After an arbitration or a meeting of the Diet, ambassadors and mediators received a text with the official decisions, called *Abschied* in German, which literally means *départ*. In Geneva, the decision of 1544 has thus been called *Départ* (“Departure”).

Geneva could not conclude a new alliance without Bern's consent).¹⁷ Geneva becoming a full member of the confederation would have put an end to Bern's attempts to conquer the city. Needless to say, the Genevans' efforts were in vain. All this was not new; as we have seen, from the end of the fifteenth century, the *combourgeoisies* by their very nature, and due to the intricacies of many overlapping networks of alliances, were a source of great instability for the entire region, leading to numerous embassies and an almost permanent state of negotiation. The invasion of 1536 did little to change this climate.

We shall now look more deeply into the labyrinth of territorial and jurisdictional conflicts that existed between Bern and Geneva. It must be realised that the quarrel was not simply played out on an institutional level, as litigation between two cities, fought through embassies and legal arbitrations. In fact, Bernese lordship over the newly conquered territories in the Lake Geneva region did not eliminate the need to ground power in the personal ties of their subjects. During the late Middle Ages, personal *bourgeoisies* were instrumental in providing Bern with a reason to interfere with its neighbours' internal affairs, as the Dufour Affair and the first moves of the Eidguenots have shown (see chapters 1 and 2). After 1536, Bern was able to benefit from the former status of many of its new subjects as Genevan burghers, who were still engaged in ongoing litigation with the city. Individuals could look to Bernese support for their personal problems, and in return, Bern could strengthen its position by using the conflicts besetting its subjects. This was one of the ways that the city on the Aare gained firmer control over territory and enabled it to effectively interfere with internal Genevan politics. In the process of defending its subjects' claims, Bern could also fight for its own jurisdictional view of the Genevan countryside.

Following the uncertain fate of individuals is therefore especially revelatory of the changing situation and the nature of political life at this time, which took unexpected directions: confessional divisions and old forms of partisanship may have had little importance in the presence of a common political interest. The numerous individual claims that received Bernese support after 1536 are, from that point of view, quite revealing of these dynamics,¹⁸ and we now return to two well-known characters: Étienne de La Mare and Perceval de Pesmes. I have already recalled de La Mare's various unsuccessful attempts to obtain pardon and come back to the city. Like others, de La Mare became a Bernese subject in 1536, and as such, he was

¹⁷ Körner, "Genève et la Suisse", p. 7.

¹⁸ Cf. also *supra*, chapter 4, p. 173.

able to secure support in his legal disputes with Geneva over past debts.¹⁹ In 1542, the Genevan authorities sent an ambassador, Louis Chabod, to Bern to officially protest the fact that the Bernese were helping a former enemy of theirs and of their city. The Genevan authorities gave Chabod precise instructions: he should firmly remind Bern that de La Mare's death sentence (as a Mammelu in 1528) had been confirmed by the Arbitration of Payerne and the subsequent *Abschied* in 1530²⁰ and that he had no right to receive the support of Bern. Perceval de Pesmes's case is also telling.²¹ De Pesmes, like Jacques de Malbuisson, was a leader of the Sabaudian-Catholic party, imprisoned and put on trial, but the difference with Malbuisson's destiny is striking. As we have seen, he was able to gain his freedom from prison thanks to his good relationship with Bern (and the burghership he had acquired). In the end, the new Genevan-Bernese relationships after 1536 turned Bern – the long-standing enemy – into an unexpected ally for many exiled Mammelus and Penneysans, with political life being shaped more by pragmatism than by ideological and religious divisions.

These policies afford the opportunity for some reflections on the state-building process and on the way in which control over territories was exercised. During the last two decades, historians' interest in these subjects has resulted in a more circumstantiated interpretation, and it is now acknowledged that state-building was more than a simple top-down process. Its construction from below and from relationships with a large number of individuals (not only institutions) was equally important.²² The cases of de Pesmes and de La Mare and the other exiled Penneysans reveal how Bern's policies were able to build on personal conflicts to strengthen their position. In other words, the goals of individuals could work as important tools for state-building and territorial construction. Similar remarks could be made with respect to some of the *combourgeoisies* between cities and "small" local lords in search of protection and of means to increase their political weight.²³

More generally, political life during the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance is no longer interpreted as a period of violence and chaos, but "as a time of growing government and lively politics, a combination which thickened

19 Cf. on that *RCC* 4, p. 38, n. 134.

20 The instructions given to the ambassador are published in *RCC* 4, p. 623–624.

21 Galiffe, *Notices généalogiques*, t. 3, p. 397.

22 See especially Blockmans, Schläppi and Holenstein, eds., *Empowering Interactions* and Dørum, Hallenberg and Katajala, eds., *Bringing the People*.

23 See table 6 for details. This kind of alliance has not yet been widely studied and warrants more attention.

the constitutional texture in every European polity".²⁴ Historians have come to integrate into their analysis of the state-building process all the actors involved in claims of legitimacy, be they formal or informal polities or more volatile groups.²⁵ Among these groups were factions. We have seen in chapters 2, 3 and 4 how they could function as accepted interlocutors and how the duke of Savoy used them despite their condemnation by most of the theologians and jurists of the time. It is, however, also evident that especially the Genevan factions could not be considered to be stable parties – as sometimes they were in northern Italy.²⁶ In Geneva, factions erupted because of uncertainty and geopolitical instability, and the same is partially true for Sabaudian Piedmont, where factionalism reached unprecedented peaks due to the politically unstable regional situation. Whatever their nature, it is undeniable that factions managed to become political actors; we have seen how they gained a hearing within the city councils, often overlapping with official embassies from the municipal authorities of the same city, to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to separate them from these authorities. Certainly, factional actors endeavoured to present themselves as legitimate and to downplay their nature as conflictual groups. Factionalism, with all its consequences, had to be avoided, for it was a source of trouble and the duke of Savoy was forced to contain it (see chapter 3), but factions were not for this reason completely excluded from the political dialogue. As for the *combourgeoisie* (cf. chapters 1 and 2), such groups were at the same time a *consequence* of uncertainty (i.e., a means for parties to create stability) and a *source* of greater instability and complexity, but we should consider them to be legitimate actors and not simply deviations from the established order in opposition to institutional efforts to strengthen the state. Factions were not simply a sign of disorder and conflict, examples of pre-modern backwardness, but also a way in which society could choose to structure political life.²⁷

The previous chapters help us to make another point clear: actors were sometimes unable to find a solution, not due to their lack of ability or political intelligence, but because they were acting in difficult and ever-changing situations, as is best illustrated by the bishops of Lausanne and Geneva. Moreover, political complexity was not a "natural event" that people had to fight against – it was the result of intentional policies. Endless negotiations

24 Watts, "Power", p. 41.

25 Gamberini, *The Clash*.

26 Cf. Gentile, *Fazioni* and Gentile, "Factions and Parties".

27 See also Lantschner, *The Logic*, p. 66–77.

were also the fruit of each actor's efforts to counterbalance the moves of its adversaries. The numerous clauses added to treaties and *combourgeoisies* are another example of actors' ability to evolve their tools and adapt to their adversaries' manoeuvres. Surely these evolutions meant new juridical "labyrinths", as the mediators from Basel would have said, but we also see these complex patterns as a sign of a highly developed political society.

Combourgeoisie, treaties and negotiations (mainly through the *journées*, or *Tage* as they were called in German sources) were the hallmark of the late medieval empire – to which both Savoy and the Swiss cities belonged. They were at the core of the associative character of political society, and they deeply shaped the individuals and institutions that participated in politics.²⁸ From a Sabaudian standpoint, complexity and uncertainty arose out of the construction and strengthening of this associative character of politics. In such a context, competing voices continuously emerged, expressing opinions about the best option to deal with these processes, whether political (the *combourgeoisie* with the Swiss or traditional Sabaudian obedience?) or religious (Catholicism or a reformed new Evangelical faith?). These were different sides of the same coin and part of the complexity.

For all these reasons, criminal trials cannot simply be understood as instruments to restore order by eradicating factions. This was definitely the narrative produced by the various polities involved, which needed to present themselves as sources of justice. In fact, trials against factions fulfilled many other goals. Trials could be a way to shape enemies or even to create them.²⁹ As we have seen in chapter 2 especially, collective trials often involved individuals not sitting on the city councils – and which we could assume were in the background of political life. The involvement of these people in factionalism often remains opaque precisely until the moment they appear as part of criminal proceedings. Somehow, trials gave them political weight by identifying them as part of the faction being prosecuted, thereby creating "visibility". Trials were also a powerful instrument for gaining information about the enemy's strategies, about who was implicated: in reading the records of the many Genevan proceedings, one cannot fail to notice the enormous number of witnesses interrogated and the endless lists of suspects. We should not underestimate the problem of a lack of reliable information about all the actors involved in political life. Our recent era, so preoccupied with "fake news", is probably more sensitive to this form of uncertainty. The difficulty of knowing who was a legitimate interlocutor was

28 Cf. Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*.

29 Similar remarks about political trials in Jouanna, "Conclusion", p. 665–666.

real, as tangible as the difficulty of knowing how events really happened and who was responsible for them, as recalled by the hesitations of Solothurn before entering into the *combourgeoisie* with Lausanne and Geneva. Such difficulties created the “obscure times” decried by Amy Girard.³⁰ Ultimately, factional trials fulfilled many purposes and certainly also contributed to the exacerbation and duration of conflicts, as the extensive proceedings of the years 1534–1536 have shown (cf. chapter 4).

In Geneva, from 1517 until 1555, the long series of factional struggles and the numerous criminal trials put the city in an almost permanent state of internal conflict; for this period, the archives in Geneva and in Turin contain around 120 criminal trials involving some 400 persons.³¹ Once again, as observed from the standpoint of politics, the year 1536, the Reformation and Calvin's arrival did not substantially change the already chaotic internal political situation. Strong continuity prevailed in Genevan political life, and factionalism shaped Calvin's Geneva for two decades, as it had for twenty years before his arrival.

Similarly, we can observe that uncertainty, conflict and itineracy continued to affect many Genevans. Some of the first preachers active in Geneva and the surrounding countryside provide some good examples. We have seen, in chapter 5, how the Franciscans who converted to the Reformed faith and stayed in Geneva experienced financial uncertainty and that some of them became pastors. The life of one of them, Jacques Bernard, was marked by itineracy and conflict with Calvin. The same was true for other preachers during the new phase of factional conflicts that affected Calvin's Geneva until 1555.³² Most of these early preachers were minor figures compared to the “triumvirate” of Calvin-Farel-Viret.³³ Christophe Fabri, Antoine Froment, Garin Muète, Antoine Saunier, Jean Martel, Claude Bigottier, and Henri de La Mare³⁴ were among the first Evangelical preachers

30 Cf. *supra*, chapter 3, p. 147.

31 On factionalism in Geneva after 1536, see Naphy, *Calvin*. The data are based on my research of the period 1517–1536, and on Naphy's work and the inventories preserved at the AEG (Archives, A 55) for the period 1537–1555.

32 On these pastors, see also Naphy, *Calvin*, p. 53–83.

33 A collective portrait of these individuals and a deeper analysis of their networks would certainly be beneficial to gaining a better understanding of the early Reformation after 1536. The RC and RCC, along with Herminjard's *Correspondance des réformateurs* and Vuilleumier's index in his *Histoire de l'Église réformée* (t. 4, p. 479–765), which offers short biographies, could provide a good starting point. The old *Dictionnaire historique et biographique de la Suisse* (8 vols.), Neuchâtel, 1921–1934 is also still useful since many individual biographies were not included in the new *e-DHS*.

34 Most probably not a relative of Etienne de La Mare, cf. Lambert and Watt, eds., *Registres du Consistoire*, p. 2, n. 6.

who stayed in Geneva – and delivered sermons there – for a period in the 1530s.³⁵ For many of them, what is striking is how they relentlessly travelled or wandered from place to place. Their itineracy cannot be explained solely by their pastoral zeal or duties; it was often the fruit of conflicts with the local authorities or with other theologians and preachers. In some cases, conflicts with Calvin were the reasons for an “exile” to rural parishes, as was the case for Philippe de Ecclesia (removed from his office in 1553) and Henri de La Mare.³⁶ Most of the time, they were forced to adapt to ever-evolving situations and to frequently change their occupations.³⁷ Somehow, the term “itinerant preachers” is only partially fitting, as Froment’s life best shows: he was a preacher and a pastor, but also a historian and notary.³⁸ The uncertainty affecting their lives was not simply the *result* of tensions and conflicts with Calvin, but also a *cause* of the worsening of those tensions.

We can now address the difficult question of the reasons for the spread of the Reformation and why people wanted the Reformation.³⁹ In this book, I have examined patterns of religious change during the 1530s (and reactions to it) since they affected political life and are thus key to our understanding of factionalism (see especially chapters 4 and 5). The opposite is also true: political life, factional struggles and the wider situation of uncertainty and geopolitical instability affected the way in which the Reformation occurred and whether it was accepted (or not) in Geneva and in formerly Sabaudian lands.

In Geneva, we have observed (chapter 4) that members of the elite in the early “Lutheran” community during the second half of the 1520s started to reject traditional practices such as Lenten fasting and confession, contesting the validity of the Mass and believing that monastic life was useless. If we can believe René de Challant, one of the most acute observers of these years, in Lausanne around 1528, when Reformed ideas also made their way among the elite, people were not interested in the abolition of the Mass or of the cult of images, but instead were attentive to messages about the vices of ecclesiastical people.⁴⁰ One wonders whether René underestimated the appeal of more theological content, but in Lausanne anticlericalism appears

35 On these people, much information in Gross, “Au service”; Naef, *Les origines*, vol. 2, p. 355–360; Van Berchem, “Une predication”; Naphy, *Calvin*, p. 59–68 and Cahier-Buccelli, “Dans l’ombre”.

36 Murdock, “Religious Life”, p. 239.

37 See also *supra*, chapter 5 p. 220–221, about the itineracy of Jacques Bernard, one of the Genevan Franciscans who converted and became a pastor.

38 On Froment, *supra*, chapter 4, p. 151.

39 One good synthesis of the debates is in Cameron, *The European Reformation*, p. 297–319.

40 Letter quoted in Gilliard, “Les débuts ... Lausanne”, p. 257.

to have been the main reason for the initial spread of the Reformation: citizen expectations echo the Three Estates protests during these years about the “vilification of the priestly state”.⁴¹ Thus, despite the similarity of the cities, there were different dynamics operating in Lausanne and Geneva at the beginning of the spread of the Reformation. It would be wrong to generalise from a few examples, and certainly people’s motivations were very diverse, even within a given city. Also it is worth remembering that these were the defining characteristics of the early stages and that motivations for adopting the Reformation evolved over time. It can be said, however, that as events unfolded and as observed from the ancient Sabaudian territories north of the Alps, politics played an increasingly important role.

We can begin with some observations about the failure of the Reformation within the Pays de Vaud prior to 1536.⁴² Sabaudian power was certainly stronger in these territories. It is not by chance that only cities that had a great deal of autonomy from the House of Savoy (Lausanne, Payerne and Avenches), and which were therefore more exposed to the region’s political instability as described in the initial chapters, developed factional struggles and ties with neighbouring Swiss cantons, and finally emerged as communities inclined to accept the new Evangelical ideas.

If we accept that geopolitical frameworks and local situations played crucial roles, as in the Pays de Vaud,⁴³ Sabaudian resistance to (or the lack of penetration of) the Evangelical preachers could also be interpreted – at least in part – as a political choice, and not simply as the refusal of a religious message.⁴⁴ We saw that the duke, the Three Estates and the bishops were effective governors, and thus the need for a political change (and the Reformation was also inevitably a political stance) may not have been felt by most of the people. I am not arguing that Savoy was a well-functioning principality and that this served as an antidote to the spread of religious ideas, nor that the religious messages coming from the preachers had no appeal at all. But it is clear that by 1528 in these western territories of the empire, religious change also involved a political rapprochement with

41 *PS* 9, p. 558, cf. *supra*, chapter 5 p. 207.

42 The importance of institutional situations and geopolitical frameworks in explaining unsuccessful Reformations has also been stressed by Scribner, “Why Was There”; more focused on the Swiss Confederation and a portion of the Duchy of Savoy, see Henny, “Failed Reformations”.

43 Christopher Close also observed that in southern Germany, the success or lack of success of the Reformation “resulted in many cases from negotiation shaped by regional politics” (*The Negotiated Reformation*, 2009, p. 19).

44 For the Pays de Vaud, Bruening, *Calvinism’s First Battleground*, offers a good analysis of the political situation.

Bernese expansionism. And a significant portion of these territories had no political reason to change their traditional lords, who were far from absent and were concerned with reform, as I demonstrated in chapter 5.

It is not by chance then that the area most actively pushing for the Reformation within the Pays de Vaud was Lausanne, a city where the political authority of the duke and the bishop was contested and *combourgeoisies* with the Swiss became an option. We can also wonder how much regions under the pressure of regional political instability, such as Bresse, Savoy and Piedmont – because their neighbours did not offer a religious (and then also political) alternative – actually did not experience a significant penetration of the new Evangelical ideals before 1536.⁴⁵

With these observations in mind, we can now turn to Geneva. As previous chapters have shown, neither political nor religious turmoil proceeded in a linear way.

Contrary to the patriotic narrative that has longtime been authoritative,⁴⁶ there was no “Geneva” (nor was there a “Lausanne”) against the bishop and the duke of Savoy: the city and its urban elites were largely split into factions, as chapter 2 and 4 have shown, with the political and religious factions never fully coinciding. In Geneva, independence from episcopal power was mostly an unforeseen consequence of the choices of Pierre de La Baume, and less the fruit of successful politics begun in the late 1510s. In 1526, the *combourgeoisie* explicitly reserved the bishops’ rights, and discussions during 1526–1536 showed that independence was not the primary goal sought by the *Eidguenots*.⁴⁷ As for Payerne and Avenches, the Reformation in Geneva was successful because of the city’s particular circumstances: shared jurisdictions, significant juridical autonomy from Sabaudian power, and intense factional struggles. Ultimately, uncertainty and instability created a situation in which change was possible, and religion became instrumental to politics.

These dynamics also shaped much of the spread of the Reformation on a regional scale in present-day Romandy. It has become commonplace to stress the fact that the spread of Evangelical ideals was instrumental to Bern’s political agenda.⁴⁸ This was also the analysis that the main political actors had adopted concerning the spread of the Reformation. Towards the

45 Cf. also the remarks about Piedmont and the Waldenses, *supra*, chapter 5 p. 188–189.

46 On this point, cf. *supra*, prologue, p. 24–26 and chapter 2, p. 76.

47 Cf. *SDGE*, vol. 2 p. 245 for the *combourgeoisie* and *supra*, chapter 3, p. 139–142 for the actions of Pierre De La Baume and the negotiations during the period 1526–1536.

48 See *supra*, chapter 4, n. 1 and 2 for references.

end of the year 1528, René de Challant was convinced that Farel's preaching was being used by the Swiss faction in Lausanne to advance the cause of the *combourgeoisie*:

It is to be believed and thought that the said Lords of Berne did this [i.e., encouraged Farel's preaching] at the request of those of Lausanne, promoters of the *combourgeoisie* of Lausanne, in order to have and find a way of taking temporal rights away from Monseigneur de Lausanne and making the city a canton allied with the others; something which the said promoters, in my opinion, would better achieve with the doctrine of the said Farel, who easily through this doctrine would mislead the people and induce them to do this. This is precisely what the said promoters would not be able to do because of the different opinions and wishes of the community.⁴⁹

The city on the Aare undoubtedly played a crucial role and actively promoted the actions of many preachers, and it is not by chance that the Reformation was firmly introduced in many towns and territories only after the conquest of 1536 and the unsettling of the previous balance of power. Seen from the point of view of the complex factional-confessional struggles taking place in Geneva, and to some extent in the Pays de Vaud, it is tempting to reverse this assessment: for a great number of actors – members of the factions and early preachers – politics became essential to their religious agendas.

Instability and the endless negotiations that were unable to create a solution to what in early 1530 had become the vexed question of the legitimacy of the *combourgeoisies* explain the liberty that some of the early preachers enjoyed. As for the *combourgeoisies*, political intricacies offered room for manoeuvre and, in the end, protected people like Farel and Froment. Bern's political support was effective because of the blockade preventing many actors from intervening out of fear that general war would erupt. Thanks to their political strength, the Bernese authorities were, on several occasions, able to free – and probably even save from death – many of the

49 Gilliard, "Les débuts ... Lausanne", p. 256: "[il] est à croire et penser que lesdits seigneurs de Berne ont ce fait à la poursuite de ceux de Lausanne, promoteurs de la bourgeoisie de Lausanne, pour avoir et trouver moyen de tollir la temporalité à Monsieur de Lausanne et la faire canton allié des autres, à quoi lesdits promoteurs, à mon semblant, ne sauront mieux parvenir sinon par la doctrine dudit Farel, qui facilement par icelle décevra le peuple et l'induirà à ce faire. Ce que bonnement ne sauraient faire lesdits promoteurs, attendu les diverses opinions et vouloir de la communauté". Cf. also *supra*, chapter 5 p. 193–194 for a more detailed analysis.

early Evangelical preachers. This was the case not only for Farel and Viret,⁵⁰ but also for some of the lesser-known Evangelical figures, such as Antoine Saunier.⁵¹

It is not a surprise that this unstable equilibrium received a serious shock from a political event: Fribourg's departure from the *combourgeoisie* with Geneva in 1534. As we saw, not every Eidguenot was a committed Lutheran, but after 1534 and even more after Bern's territorial conquests in 1536 and the final shift to the Reformed faith, Catholic Eidguenots in Geneva enjoyed little political support. To make a confessional choice in Geneva after 1536 involved making a political choice: siding with the bishop and the duke of Savoy against the city; and after 1536 choosing the former was to take a highly dangerous risk, as the very recent trials against the Penneysans and Malbuisson's beheading reminded everyone in town.

By using the political reconfigurations of the 1520s and 1530s, preachers were able to address their sermons to the common people. Factionalism could be heard in municipal councils in arguments over political prosecutions of those who were also confessional enemies. Certainly, the multi-confessional context of the Swiss Confederation after the Second War of Kappel, which deeply affected Swiss-Sabaudian political relationships, turned religion into the subject of a delicate argument that was to be avoided. It is unsurprising therefore that Savoy burnt fewer heretics than other francophone territories.⁵² It was necessary for the prosecution of early Lutherans to become political if it were to be accepted, as was the case for the Sabaudian-Catholic party.⁵³ Political prosecutions became a legitimate and legal way to engage in religious persecution. In the end, the long series of political trials that took place from 1527 to 1536 largely paved the way for the religious shift of 1535–1536 through the elimination of political adversaries, whom the run of events had in the meantime also transformed into religious enemies.

Lastly, I wrote this book as an attempt to take a closer look at categories such as uncertainty and instability, and at the way they affected political life in the Duchy of Savoy. I conceived each of the five chapters as the scenes of a bas-relief aimed at highlighting a broader story, enabling us to look differently and in a less cut-and-dried way at well-known narratives.⁵⁴ I believe that we are not able to fully grasp the intricacies of these times

50 Benedict, "The Spread", p. 49.

51 Vuilleumier, *Histoire*, t. 4, p. 706.

52 Cf. Benedict, "The Spread", p. 28.

53 See *supra*, chapter 4, p. 162–184.

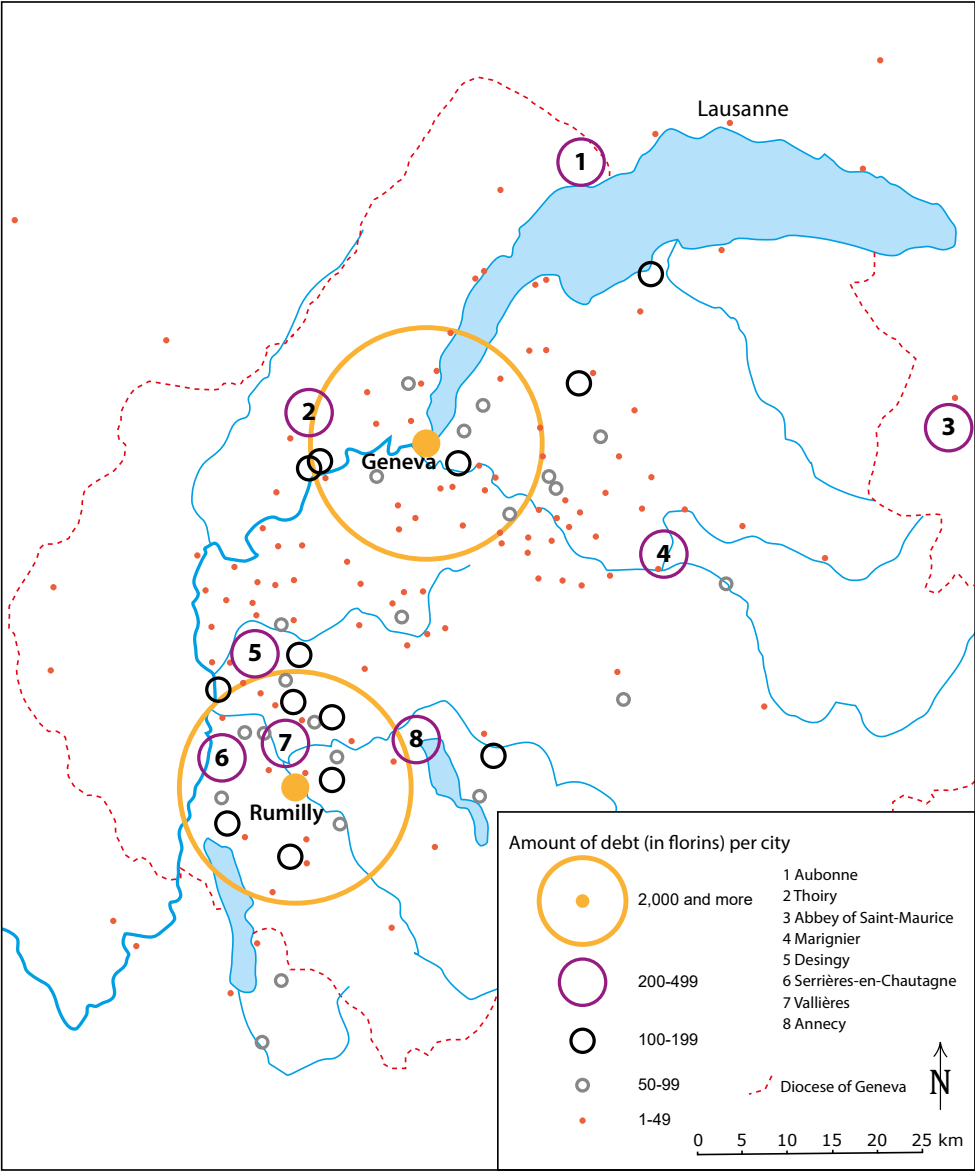
54 Cf. *supra*, Prologue, p. 24–25.

without writing about the many polities and individuals that lived through them, underlining how their choices and strategies were made in the face of instability and constant change. If at the close of this book, this period in the history of Renaissance Geneva and Savoy is somewhat less part of a “silent century”, and readers will have gained a better understanding of how political life worked and perhaps feel closer to the people who lived in that uncertain world, then I have achieved what I set out to do. “Car le véritable historien est celui qui se fait le contemporain des événements qu’il raconte, qui retrouve l’incertitude fondamentale, si vivement ressentie par l’homme d’action, qui était la leur quand ils étaient encore un futur en train de devenir”.⁵⁵

55 Marrou, “Tristesse de l’historien”, p. 43: “For the true historian is the one who becomes a contemporary of the events being retold, and who rediscovers the basic uncertainty, so vividly felt by the man of action, that was theirs when those events were still a future beginning to take shape”.

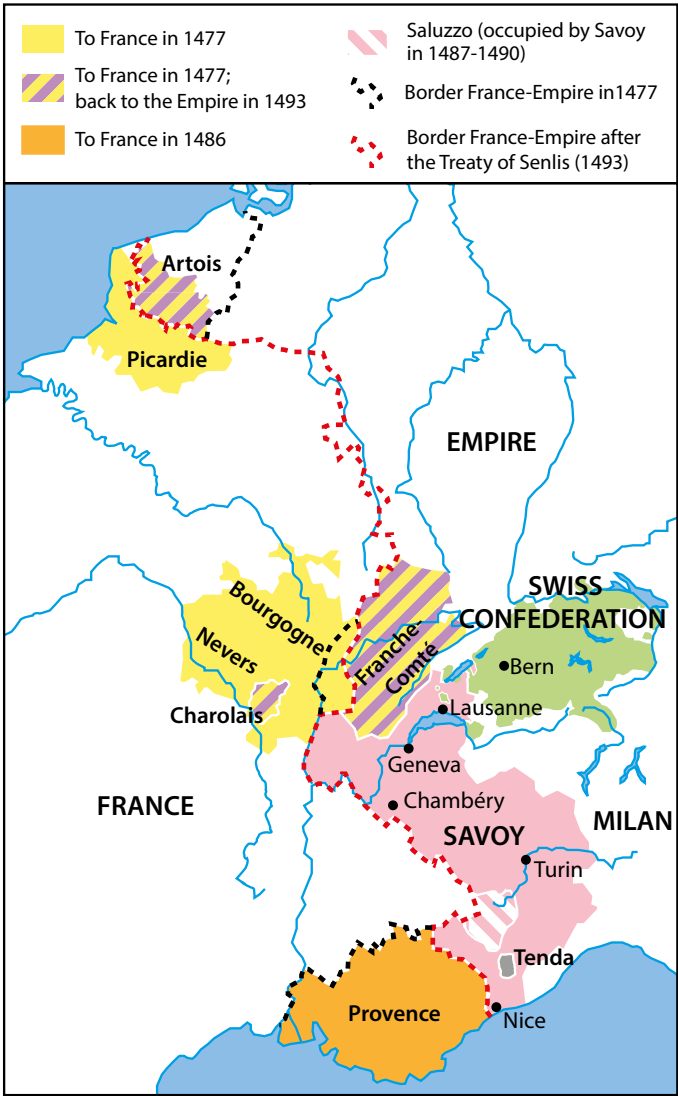
Maps

Map 1. Milliet and Donzel’s debtors in 1515



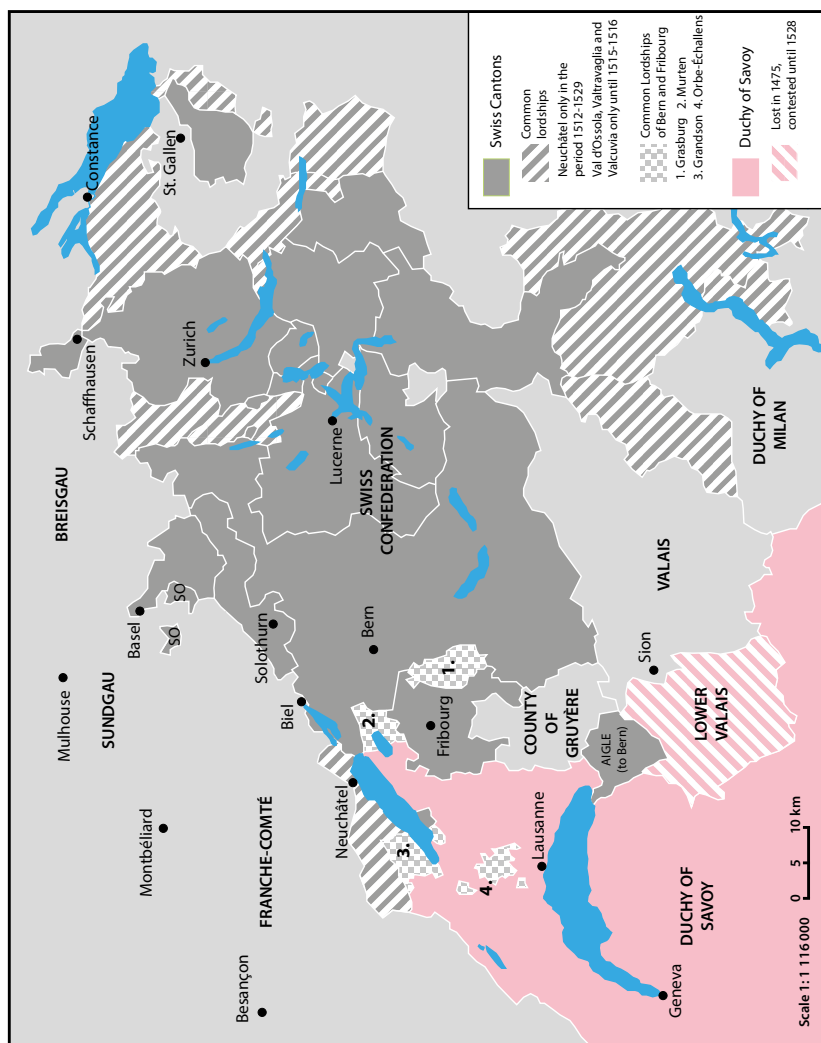
Mathieu Caesar (2024), data: AEG, Commerce F11.

Map 2. Border France–Empire (1477–1493)



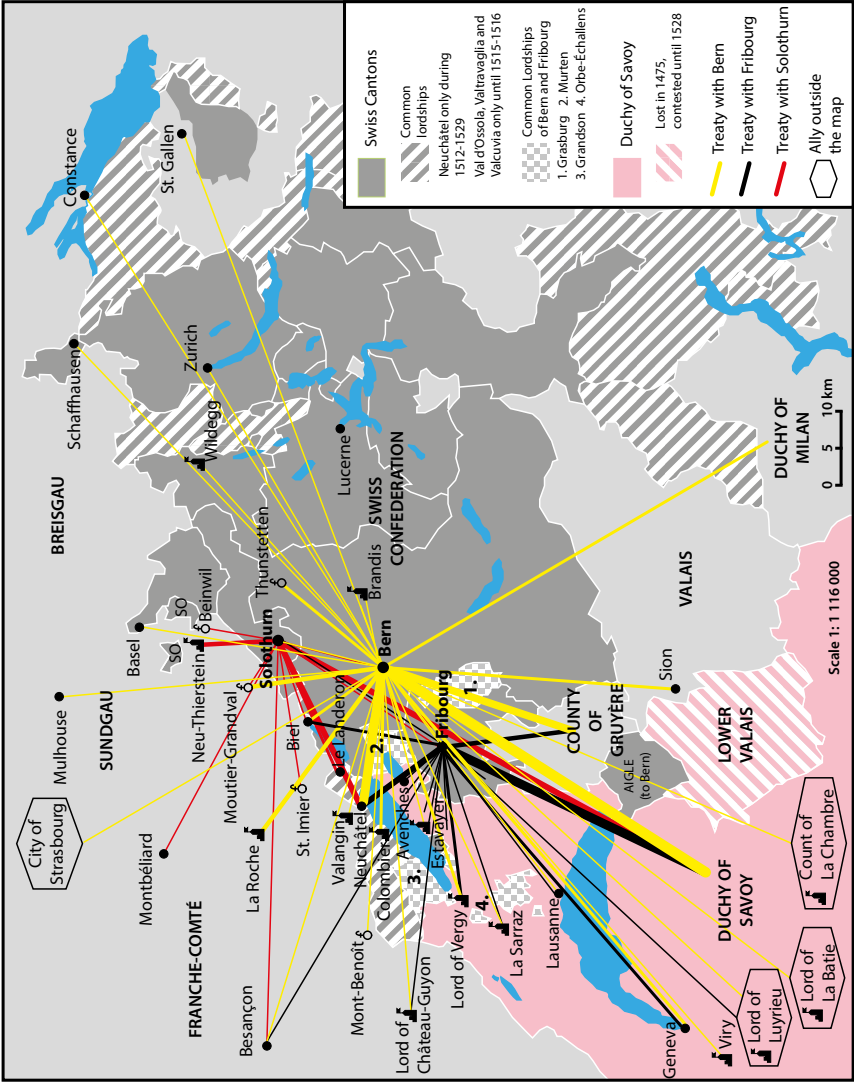
Mathieu Caesar (2024), adapted from Kreis, ed., *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*, p. 173. First published in Caesar, “Government and Political Life”, p. 31.

Map 3. Savoy and the Swiss around 1516



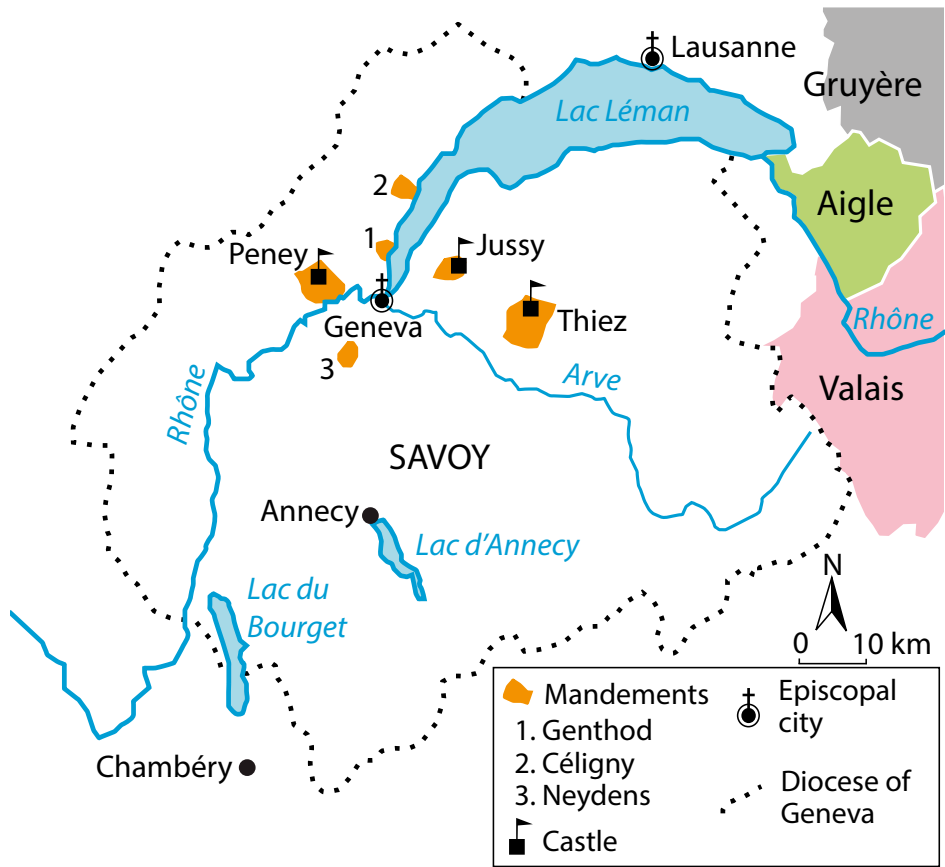
Mathieu Caesar (2024), adapted from Ammann and Schib, eds. *Atlas historique de la Suisse*, Aarau: Sauerländer, 1958, p. 30.

Map 4. Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn and their network of alliances



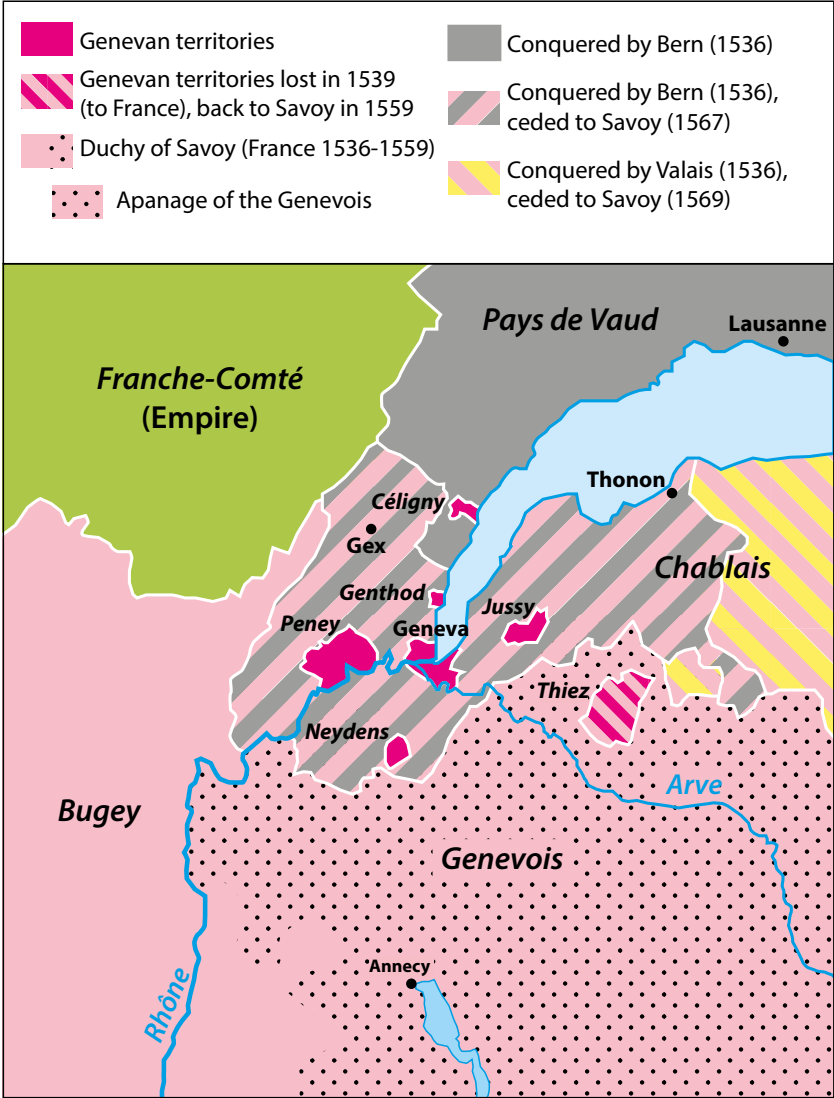
Mathieu Caesar (2024), adapted from Ammann and Schib, eds. *Atlas historique de la Suisse*, Aarau: Sauerländer, 1958, p. 30.

Map 5. Geneva and its medieval diocese



Mathieu Caesar (2024), adapted from *Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse*, vol. 5, Hauterive: G. Attinger, 2006, p. 481.

Map 6. Geneva and her neighbours (1536–1569)



Mathieu Caesar (2024), adapted from Barbier and Schwarz, eds., *Atlas historique du Pays de Genève*, Saint-Julien-en-Genevois: La Salévienne, 2014, map 8. First published in Caesar, "Government and Political Life", p. 34.

Tables

Table 6. Bern's, Fribourg's and Solothurn's alliance treaties (1482-1536)¹

Year	Cities	Alliance with	References
1482	Bern	Pierre de Pesmes, for the lordship of Brandis	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 325
1483	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 554 and ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 3, no. 8
1483	Bern	Kaspar von Effinger, for the lordship of Wildegg	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 568
1486	Bern	Moutier-Grandval	Barras, "Des combourgeoisies", p. 157
1486	Bern	Counts of Neuchâtel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 467
1486	Solothurn	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 158
1486	Bern	Hugues de Chalon, lord of Château-Guyon	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 603
1486	Fribourg	Hugues de Chalon, lord of Château-Guyon	<i>Mémoires et documents de la Suisse Romande</i> , 14 (1857), p. 293
1487	Solothurn	Counts of Thierstein	Christ, <i>Zwischen Kooperation</i> , p. 322-323
1487	Bern	Count Louis de La Chambre	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 555
1489	Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn	Biel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 147
1490	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 3, no 10
1491	Bern	Abbey of Mont-Benoît	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 610
1492	Bern	Guillaume de Vergy	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 611
1492	Bern	Jacques de Clermont, Lord of La Batie en Albanais	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p.655
1492	Bern	Counts of Gruyère	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 654
1492	Fribourg	Solothurn	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 22
1493	Bern	Counts of Gruyère	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 654
1494	Bern	Hospitaller commandery of Thunstetten	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 514
1494	Fribourg	Payerne	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 260
1495	Fribourg	Counts of Gruyère	Cuendet, <i>Les traités</i> , p. 162

¹ For details about these alliances, see *supra* chapter 1, p. 48-61 and chapter 2, p. 76-92. The Table does not include the alliances concluded by Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn as members of the Swiss Confederation.

Year	Cities	Alliance with	References
1495	Fribourg	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , 175
1496	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	RQBE I.4.1., p. 655
1496	Bern	Moutier-Grandval	Barras, "Des combourgeoisies", p. 157
1496	Bern	Milan	RQBE I.4.1., p. 682
1496	Bern	Amedée de Viry	RQBE I.4.1., p. 657
1496	Fribourg	Biel	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 165
1497	Bern	Bishop of Sion	Feller, <i>Geschichte Berns</i> , Bd. 2, p. 469
1497	Fribourg	Saint-Aubin (FR)	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 155
1498	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	RQBE I.4.1., p. 657
1498	Bern	Milan	RQBE I.4.1., p. 682
1499	Bern	Claude de la Palud, count of La Roche	RQBE I.4.1., p. 614
1500	Bern	Bishop of Sion	RQBE I.4.1., p. 311
1500	Solothurn	Counts of Thierstein	Christ, <i>Zwischen Kooperation</i> , p. 344
1501	Bern	Moutier-Grandval	Barras, "Des combourgeoisies", p. 157
1501	Solothurn	Le Landeron	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 195
1501	Fribourg	Counts of Gruyère	Cuendet, <i>Les traités</i> , p. 162
1502	Solothurn	Counts of Thierstein	Christ, <i>Zwischen Kooperation</i> , p. 344
1502	Solothurn	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 3, no 15
1503	Bern	Counts of Gruyère	RQBE I.4.1., p. 662
1503	Fribourg	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 220
1503	Solothurn	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 208
1504	Bern	Hospitaller commandery of Thunstetten	RQBE I.4.1., p. 514
1504	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 3, no. 16
1504	Solothurn	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 3, no. 17
1504	Fribourg	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 223
1504	Solothurn	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 225
1504	Solothurn	Abbey of Beinwil	Rüedy, "Bauernkrieg", p. 64
1505	Bern	Counts of Neuchâtel	RQBE I.4.1., p. 469
1505	Fribourg	Guillaume de Vergy	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 298
1506	Bern	Baron of La Sarraz	RQBE I.4.1., p. 664
1506	Bern	Lord of Estavayer	RQBE I.4.1., p. 664
1506	Fribourg	Lord of Estavayer	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 191
1506	Fribourg	Georges de Glanna, for the lordship of Cugy	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 199
1508	Bern	Claude, Lord of Luyrieu	RQBE I.4.1., p. 677
1508	Fribourg	Claude, Lord of Luyrieu	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 232

Year	Cities	Alliance with	References
1509	Bern and Fribourg	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 4, no. 2 and <i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 680
1509	Solothurn	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 4, no. 3 and <i>EA</i> , III 2, 1325
1509	Bern	Commune of Neuchâtel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 470
1511	Fribourg	Avenches	Cuendet, <i>Les traités</i> , p. 162
1512	Solothurn	Le Landeron	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 234
1512	Fribourg	Benoît de Glanna, for the lordship of Cugy	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 200
1513	Bern	Lord of Colombier	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 241
1514	Fribourg	Counts of Gruyère	Cuendet, <i>Les traités</i> , p. 162
1514	Bern	Counts of Gruyère	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 681
1517	Bern	Commune of Neuchâtel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 473
1517	Solothurn	Cities of the county of Montbéliard	Gutzwiller, "Die Beziehungen", p. 71
1517	Bern	Fribourg and Solothurn	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 716
1517	Bern (and Solothurn in 1521) ²	House of Savoy	ASTo, Corte, Materie politiche per rapporto all'estero, Trattati, Trattati cogli Svizzeri, paq. 4, no. 10
1518	Bern	Philibert de la Palud, count of La Roche	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 617
1518	Bern, Fribourg and Solothurn	Besançon	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 617
1522	Bern	René de Challant, for the Lordship of Valangin	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 174
1523	Bern	Claude de Vergy	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 614
1523	Fribourg	Claude de Vergy	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 299
1525	Bern and Fribourg	Commune of Lausanne	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 719
1526	Bern and Fribourg	Commune of Genève	SDGE, 2, p. 237
1526	Bern	Lord of Colombier	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 261
1526	Fribourg	François de Gingins, for the lordship of Le Châtelard	AEF, <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 182
1527	Bern	Chapter of Neuchâtel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 474
1528	Bern	Constance	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1528	Bern	Zurich	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1528	Bern (and Zurich)	St. Gallen	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern	Counts of Gruyère	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 682

2 Solothurn only sealed the treaty in 1521 after many negotiations; see chapter 2, p. 82 for more details.

Year	Cities	Alliance with	References
1529	Bern (and Zurich)	Biel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern (and Zurich)	Mulhouse	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern (and Zurich)	Basel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern (with Zurich and Basel)	Schaffhausen	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern (with Zurich and Basel)	Strasbourg	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.2., p. 725
1529	Bern	Counts of Neuchâtel	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 476
1529	Solothurn	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 270
1529	Fribourg	Counts of Neuchâtel	Jeanjaquet, <i>Traités d'alliance</i> , p. 274
1530	Bern	Fribourg	<i>EA</i> , IV/1b p. 698
1530	Fribourg	Savoy	Scott, <i>The Swiss</i> , p. 117
1531	Bern	Jean de la Palud, count of La Roche	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 617
1531	Solothurn	Moutier-Grandval	Barras, "Des combourgeoisies", p. 157
1531	Bern and Fribourg	Commune of Geneva	<i>RQBE</i> I.4.1., p. 723
1533	Fribourg	Baron of la Sarraz	<i>AEF</i> , <i>Traités et contrats</i> , no 271
1534	Solothurn	Chapter of Saint-Imier	Barras, "Des combourgeoisies", p. 157
1536	Bern	Commune of Geneva	<i>SDGE</i> , 2, p. 322

Table 7. The Mammelus³

Name	Profession	Main municipal offices ⁴
Sentenced 21 February 1528⁵		
1. Acquinez, Claude	---	---
2. <i>Arpa</i> , Jean de	Craftsman	---
3. Bernard, Humbert	---	---
4. <i>Biollesij</i> , Étienne	Notary	S 1514; CO 1509-1511, 1515-1516; SE 1519-1526
5. <i>Bona</i> , Bernardin de	---	---
6. <i>Bosco</i> , Claude de	---	---
7. Boulet, Bernard	Notary	TR 1521-1524
8. Bovier, Jean	---	S 1525; CO 1519 ^a -1525

3 Information about each person's profession and municipal offices comes from AEG, P.C., Annexes, n° 1bis; RC 8-10; CAESAR, *Le pouvoir*; and BAECHLER, *Le Petit Conseil*, vol. 2. On the trials against the Mammelus, see *supra* chapter 2, p. 104-109.

4 We have only considered the main municipal offices which involved regular presence during the Ordinary Council: S = syndic, CO = member of the Ordinary Council, TR = Treasurer; SE = Secretary (office is followed by the dates of first service in the office; 1519^a = elected in August 1519, after the "Sabaudian restoration" – see chapter 2, p. 90 for details). Presence at other less important councils, like for instance the Council of Fifty, is not listed.

5 List in AEG, P.C., 1^e série, n° 228bis, p. 1. Condemned to death in absentia 21 February 1528.

Name	Profession	Main municipal offices ⁴
9. Boysson, Jean	Merchant	CO 1524-1525
10. Danel, Guillaume	Merchant	S 1519 ^a -1520; CO 1521-1525
11. Fabri, Claude	---	---
12. Fabri, Hugonin	Cloth Merchant	S 1522; CO 1523-1525
13. Fernex, Pierre de, junior	Apothecary	S 1519 ^a -1520; CO 1521-1522
14. <i>Fonte</i> , Antoine de	Notary	S 1512, 1523-1524; CO 1519 ^a , 1521-1522, 1525
15. Forneract, François	Cloth Merchant	S 1520, 1524; CO 1519 ^a , 1521-1522, 1525
16. Furjon, Jacques	Apothecary	S 1522; CO 1519 ^a -1520, 1523-1524
17. <i>Fuserii</i> , Jean	---	---
18. Gervais, Pierre	Saddler	---
19. Gignet, Nicolas	Sabaudian officer	---
20. Girard, André	Saddler	---
21. Guact, André	---	---
22. Joly, Pierre	Merchant	CO 1519 ^a
23. La Mare, Étienne de	Apothecary	S 1519
24. Lestelley, Ludovic de	---	S 1521; CO 1520, 1522-1525; TR 1505-1520
25. Lucian, Mathieu	Apothecary	---
26. Megex, Guillaume	Notary	S 1522; CO 1519 ^a -1521, 1523-1524
27. Milliet, François	Merchant	---
28. <i>Monte</i> , Bernard de	Notary	S 1524; CO 1522, 1525
29. Monthion, Ludovic	Notary	S 1521, 1525; CO 1519 ^a -1520 1522, 1524; SE 1501-1518
30. Nergaz, Michel	Merchant	S 1507, 1511, 1513, 1515, 1517; CO 1519 ^a -1525
31. <i>Pane</i> , Michel de	Apothecary	---
32. Peyrollier, Perrin	Cloth Merchant	---
33. Pont, Raymond du	---	---
34. <i>Porta</i> , Claude de	---	---
35. Ramus, Étienne	---	---
36. <i>Regis</i> , Philippe	Merchant	---
37. Rosset, Antoine	Merchant	CO 1519 ^a ;
38. Saint Michel, François de	---	CO 1519 ^a
39. <i>Silventis</i> (or <i>Serventis</i>), Claude, alias Mauloz		Sabaudian officer, castellan of Gaillard
40. Turbilliod, Blaise	Craftsman	---
41. Testut François	Cloth Merchant	---
42. Vallet, Jean	---	---
43. Varember, Dominique	Merchant	---
44. Versonnex, Amédée de (son of Antonin)	---	---
45. Versonnex, Antonin de	---	CO 1519 ^a -1523
46. Versonnex, Robert de (son of Antonin)	---	---
47. Vieux, Pierre	Craftsman	CO 1519 ^a

Name	Profession	Main municipal offices ⁴
Other prosecuted Mammelus		
Cartellier, François ⁶	Cloth Merchant	S 1516, 1521; CO 1517-1518, 1519 ^a -1520, 1522-1525
Durand, Pierre ⁷	Pastry cook	---
Grangier, Sébastien (or Bastien) ⁸	Barber-surgeon	---
Griveti, Pierre ⁹	---	---
Montfalcon, Jean de ¹⁰	Canon of Geneva and Lausanne cathedral chapter	---
Servel, Jacques ¹¹	---	---

Table 8. The Penneysans¹²

Name	Profession
Sentenced 16 June 1535	
Blanc, Jean	---
Crest, François du	Cloth Merchant
Levrat, Jean (junior)	Shoemaker
Moine, Thomas	Cloth Merchant
Sentenced 7 July 1535	
Espaula, François	Guard

6 AEG, P.C., 2^e série, n° 138. Arrested 13 December 1526. Released 28 April 1527, left the city and established in Bourg-en-Bresse.

7 AEG, P.C., 1^e série n° 231. His trial started 17 October 1526. He received the grace from the bishop and was finally acquitted by the Ordinary Council 13 August 1527 (cf. *RC* 10, p. 365, n.1).

8 AEG, P.C., 2^e série n° 130. First interrogated 17 October 1526. Deprived of his burghership 12 March 1527 (*RC* 10, p. 323), but he nevertheless stayed in town. Grangier died, poisoned in 1530 in a affair related to his profession as barber-surgeon at the plague hospital (cf. *RC* 11, p. 430 and L. GAUTIER, *La médecine à Genève jusqu'à la fin du dix-huitième siècle*, p. 139-140).

9 AEG, P.C., Annexes, n° 1bis, fol. 31v and P.C., 2^e série, n° 252. Interrogated, condemned as traitor to the city and hanged 10 October 1530.

10 AEG, P.C., Annexes, n° 1bis, fol. 17r. Jean de Montfalcon, a relative of Lausanne's bishops Aymon and Sébastien. He left Geneva in 1526 and took refuge in Annecy where he died in 1553 (cf. Piguët, "Montfalcon, Jean de", *e-DHS*). His properties in town were seized and inventoried with those of the other Mammelus.

11 AEG, P.C., 2^e série, n° 137. Arrested 9 January 1527. Released between 20 and 27 July 1527.

12 Information about each person's profession comes from the trials (See Table 9 for details), completed by AEG, P.H. 1145, *RC* 13 and BAECHLER, *Le Petit Conseil*, vol. 2.

Name	Profession
Sentenced 13 July 1535	
Baud, Claude	Merchant
Brammet, Pierre	Notary
Champs, Sermet de	---
Crest, Barthélemy du	---
Crest, Jean du	---
Crest, Oddet du	---
<i>Fabrica</i> , Johan de	Doctor of law
<i>Ferrati</i> , Thomas	Shoemaker
<i>Furno</i> , Claude de	Doctor of law
Goil, Jacques	Haberdasher
Grandchamps, Jacques	Cobbler
Griffon, Nicolas	Cloth Merchant
Guillet, Michel	Cloth Merchant and Nobleman
Jornal, Besançon	Fisherman
La Pallu, Bernardin de	Notary
Lacra, Pierre de	Notary
Leschaulx, François de, <i>alias</i> Choudellet	Cobbler
Malbuisson, Pierre de	Cloth Merchant
Mermet, Pierre, <i>alias</i> Blanchet	Doctor of law
Mersier, Claude, <i>alias</i> Guilliard	---
Mestral, Gonin	Cobbler
Mont, Jean du, <i>alias</i> Perreal	Shoemaker
Mulatier, Jacques, <i>alias</i> Foissiaz	---
<i>Muro</i> , Besançon de	---
Nant, Nicolas du	---
Pennet, François	Notary
Pennet, Nicolas	Notary
Poujal, Ludovic	Notary
<i>Prato</i> , Nycod de ¹³	Notary
Regis, François, <i>junior</i>	Merchant
Regis, François, <i>senior</i>	Merchant
Regis, Jean, <i>alias</i> de Fonte	Notary
Suchet, Dominique	Doctor of law
Tacon, Roland	---
Tête d'Or, Pierre	Notary
Verdollet, Pierre	Cobbler
Vulliard, Claude	Cloth Merchant

¹³ Captured on 18 November 1536, he was beheaded after a new trial on 8 December 1536 (Cf. Table 9).

Name	Profession
Sentenced 17 July 1535	
Malbuisson, Jacques de	Merchant
Sentenced 28 August 1535	
Fornet, André	---
Jacquier, Amédée	---
Sentenced 19 February 1536	
Boccard, Jean	Cheesemaker
Sentenced 19 February 1536	
Regis, Jean	Priest
Sentenced 5 March 1536	
Evrard, Jean	Priest
Mulet, Antoine	Hat Maker
Sentenced 15 April 1536	
Pesmes, Perceval de	Nobleman
Baud, Pierre	Merchant
Sentenced 10 November 1536¹⁴	
Achard, Jean	---
Aniso, Antoine, <i>alias</i> Collombet*	Pin maker
Arche, Jean de l'	---
Ballexert, Pierre	Butcher
Balme, Claude*	Haberdasher
Baud, Mermet*	---
Baud, Pierre, <i>alias</i> Guempa	Merchant
Beffa, François	Patissier
Bel, Jacques	Patissier
Berthet, Gabriel	Notary
Bertier, Hugoz	Notary
Besson, Jean	Tailor
Bessonnet, Jean	Carpenter and Wood Merchant
<i>Biollesii</i> , Claude*	Notary
Blanch, Pey	Craftsman
Blanchod, André*	Patissier
Boccard, Collet	Cheesemaker
Bonivard, François	Patissier

14 The sixteen people condemned to death are in bold. People who were found guilty of conspiracy and having fought in arms with the Penneysans are marked with an * (their accusations are in AEG, P.C. 1/308, n° IX (*“Les articles contre les cites”*)).

Name	Profession
Brochut, Claude*	---
Byolley, Cristenet	Shearer
<i>Cabulo, Pierre de</i>	Notary
Calabri, Pierre	Mason
Carrier, Jean	Cobbler
Chaliot, Jean	Workman
Chamot, Nicolas	Cloth merchant
Champs, Claude des	---
Champs, Georges des	Guard
Chappuis, Jean, <i>senior</i>	Tailor
Charfoy, Bernard	Patissier
Chatron, Jean	Barber
Chavanel, Hemoz	---
Chavannes, Pierre de *	---
Chenu, Antoine, <i>alias</i> Gurdillon	---
Cherdon, Pierre	Patissier
Cherpina, Claude de	Merchant
Chetaz, François	Cobbler
Cheyne, Claude	---
Chivallier, Humbert*	---
Choudens, Louis de	Notary
Claude, Quartier	Blacksmith
Claude, Quartier, <i>junior</i>	Blacksmith
Colliard, Pierre	Potter
Collomb, Jean	Butcher
Collomb, Pierre*	---
Collomb, Robert	---
Conte, Jean	Butcher
Conte, Jean Loys	Butcher
Cordannier, Noel	---
Cortagier, Hemoz	---
Couchet, Michel	---
Court, Jean	Barber
Croso, Pierre de	---
Curtet, Martin	Cloth merchant
Daussi, François	Butcher
Dorier, Oddet	Servant
Duyot, Amyé	Potter
Escoffier, Noël	---
Excoffier, Pierre	---
Exerton, Humbert	Notary
Faulson, Barthélemy	Apothecary
Favre, Claude, <i>alias</i> Le Neveu de Roland*	Haberdasher
Faysant, Loys	Tailor

Name	Profession
Ferrier, Nycod	Farmer
Folz, Hemoz	Haberdasher
Folz, Jean	Haberdasher
Fu, George du	Pâtissier
Gallantin, Louis	---
Gallantin, Pierre*	---
Gasans, Tivent	Workman
Gaybovier, Pierre*	Notary
Genod, Guillaume*	Pâtissier
Gerbel, Truffin	---
Girard, Claude	Saddler
Griffon, Claude*	Merchant
Grossi, Claude	Doctor of Law
Guex, Louis	Tailor
Guex, Pernet	Shearer
Guilliot, Rolin	Boatman
Hugues, Conrad*	Priest
Jacon, Claude*	Notary
Jacquet, Jacques	---
Jacquier, Pierre	Tailor
Jegetz, Jean	Notary
Joes, Pierre de	Cloth merchant
Lagasse, Martin	Workman
Lancier, Claude de	---
Lestelley, Augustin de *	Notary
Levrat, Michel	---
Lionet, François	----
Lyffort, Jean	Cloth Merchant
Macheret, Etienne*	Notary
Magnin, Humbert*	Pâtissier
Malvanu, André	Vagabond
Marengé, Jean	Mason
Marterey, Amyé du	Pâtissier
Martin, Mauri	Tailor
Mermoz, Pierre	Pâtissier
Merval, Jean	Tailor
Mestral, Jean, <i>alias</i> Geneva	Pâtissier
Mont, Jean du, son of Jacques*	Notary
Mont, Pierre du, <i>alias</i> Perreal*	---
Mosse, Pierre	Workman
Mota, François de	Notary
Nant du, Aymé	Mason
Nepploz, Tivent*	Saddler
Neyrod, Gaspard*	Shearer

Name	Profession
Nycod, Franquet	Boatman
Pacard, Antoine	Innkeeper
Peaulz, Jean	Granary keeper
Pellin, Claude*	Tailor
Perret, François	---
Perrin, Henri	Haberdasher
Piaquey	Miller
Pierre ¹⁵	Workman
Pierre, Binvenu	---
Pierre, Chapoteau	Priest
Pierre, Collomb <i>alias</i> Romand	Boatman
Pomard, Gabriel	Printer
Poutex, Pierre	---
Profenat, Jacques	Notary
Purpon, Thiodelloz*	Haberdasher
Quartier, Guillaume	---
Quartier, Pierre	Blacksmith
Quey, Pierre	Guard
Quybi, Claude	Carpenter
Ramel, Legier*	---
Ramu, Monet	Granary keeper
Ravoyre, Nycod de La	Tailor
Raymond, Roland*	Haberdasher
Romaniaz, Pierre	Carpenter
Rosset, Claude, <i>alias</i> Rolet	Notary
Rua, Claude de La	Granary keeper
Simeon, Jean*	Cloth merchant
Tabasan, François, <i>alias</i> Borroquet	Butcher
Tapporier, Calude	Ironmonger
Tarapel, Claude	Tailor
Testuz, Jean	---
Thomas, Pierre	Tailor
Tissoct, François, <i>alias</i> Margot*	Haberdasher
Tissot, Jacques	Workman
Trossier, Thomas	Patissier
Tyollier, Jean	Butcher
Venire, Nycod de	Farmer
Verneto, Jean de	Notary
Versonnex, Marin de	---
Villard, François* de	---
Villaret, Jacques*	Innkeeper
Viollat, Jacques*	Haberdasher

¹⁵ No family name recorded.

Name	Profession
Vuarenaz, Jacques*	Butcher
Vulliod, Pierre	Shoemaker
Sentenced 31 January 1537	
Bronges, Jacques	Locksmith

Table 9. Trials against the Penneysans (1534-1536)¹⁶

Date of sentence	Defendants	Sentence	Trial source
16 June 1535	François du Crest, Thomas Moine, Jean Levrat junior and Jean Blanc Trial began 16 October 1534	Sentenced in absentia – Fined 100'000 golden <i>écus</i> to be satisfied by the sale of their properties and goods seized within the city – Condemned to death if they are captured or return to Geneva. – Their descendants are forbidden from serving in public offices for four generations	AEG, P.C. 1/289
7 July 1535	François Espaula Imprisoned 30 June 1535	Condemned to death and beheaded the same day	AEG, P.C. 2/348
13 July 1535	Michel Guillet, Nycod de Prato and 35 other Penneysans Trial began 27 April 1535	Sentenced in absentia – Fined of 300'000 golden <i>écus</i> to be satisfied by the sale of their properties and goods seized within the city – Condemned to death if they are captured or return to Geneva	AEG, P.C. 1/296
17 July 1535	Jacques de Malbuisson Imprisoned 14 August 1534	Condemned to death and beheaded the same day	AEG, P.C. 1/288
28 August 1535	André Fornet and Amédée Jacquier	Perpetual banishment from Geneva under penalty of death	AEG, P.C. 1/304

16 For details on these trials, see *supra* chapter 4, p. 162-175.

Date of sentence	Defendants	Sentence	Trial source
19 February 1536	Jean Boccard Imprisoned 3 August 1534	Condemned to death and beheaded the same day	AEG, P.C. 1/286
19 February 1536	Jean Regis Imprisoned 14 August 1535	Condemned to death	AEG, P.C. 1/302
5 March 1536	Jean Evrard and Antoine Mulet	Perpetual banishment from Geneva under penalty of death	AEG, P.C. 1/285 and 1/294
15 April 1536	Perceval de Pesmes and Pierre Baud	Grace conceded thanks to Bernese pressure, but deprived of any honours in town and of the right to bear arms	AEG, P.C. 1/300, 1/303 and 2/363
6 September 1536	Louis Matheri	Sentenced to perpetual banishment, privation of his burgership and a fine of 100 <i>écus</i>	AEG, P.C. 1/306
10 November 1536	Marin de Versonnex and other 146 Peneysans Procedure started 21 June 1536	Sentenced in absentia – Fined 600'000 golden <i>écus</i> to be satisfied by the sale of their properties and goods seized within the city – Marin de Versonnex and 15 people condemned to death	AEG, P.C. 1/308
8 December 1536	Nycod de Prato Captured and imprisoned 18 November 1536	Confirmation of the previous death sentence (13 July 1535) and beheaded the same day	AEG, P.C. 1/311
31 January 1537	Jacques Bronges Trial began 23 November 1536	Condemned to death and beheaded	AEG, P.C. 1/310

Table 10. Guillaume Farel and the early evangelical community in Geneva (1532)

Name ¹⁷	Political offices held (1526-1532) ¹⁸
1. Arlod, Dominique d'	C50 (1526-1527) C200 (1528-1530) C60 (1530) Officer at the court of the General Lieutenant ¹⁹ (1532)
2. Béguin, François	C200 (1529-1530)
3. Bernard, Claude	C200 (1528-1530) C60 (1532) Lieutenant of the troops the city sent to help Zwingli (1529)
4. Chapeaurouge, Etienne	C200 (1527-1528) General Treasurer (1528-1530) CO (1532)
5. Chautemps, Jean	C200 (1530)
6. Compte, François	C200 (1527, 1529-1530) C60 (1528)
7. Dadaz, Besançon	---
8. Dolen, Henry	---
9. Goulaz, Jean	C50 (1526); troublemaker, many times in prison around 1527-1529; Master of the Halles (1530)
10. Joseph ²⁰	
11. Lambert, Jean	C200 (1527-1530) C50 (1527, 1529) C60 (1528)
12. Montaigne, [Jean de la] ²¹	---
13. Paste, Claude [= Claude Salomon]	C50 (1526) C60 (1528 and 1530) C200 (1527-1530)
14. Perrin, Amy	C50 (1526) C200 (1527-1529)
15. Porral, Amédée	S (1532) Secretary (1526-1527)

17 The names are contained in a letter from Farel to Garin Muète (18 November 1532), edited in HERMINJARD, *La correspondance*, t. 2, p. 462. See above p. 160.

18 S = syndic; CO = Ordinary Council; C50 = Council of Fifty; C60 = Council of Sixty; C200 = Council of the Two Hundred. On these councils, see Caesar, *Le pouvoir*, p. 84-91. Based on RC 10-13 (see indexes for the corresponding page numbers); Naef, *Les origines*, t. 2, 360-367; Baechler, *Le Petit Conseil*, t. 2; and Caesar, *Le pouvoir*. For the C50, 60 and 200 it is not always possible to create complete lists because the *Registres du Conseil* sometimes only provide partial lists. Therefore, a gap is not necessarily a proof of absence during a particular year.

19 By 1529, the court of the General Lieutenant had replaced the Court of the Vidomne.

20 This person remains unidentified.

21 From Gand; in 1532 he was probably a newcomer since he became a Genevan burgher in 1533 (RC 12, p. 203).

Name ¹⁷	Political offices held (1526-1532) ¹⁸
16. Le Grec [= Roset, Claude]	Secretary in Vandel's absence resulting from embassies (1531)
17. Vandelli	Farel does not say which of the brothers he refers to. Possibly he refers to Robert and/or Pierre. ²² Robert S (1529), CO (1530), Secretary (1530-1533) Pierre C200 (1527-1530), C60 (1530)

Table 11. People imprisoned, interrogated and tried by the Peneyans²³

Name	Arrested	Relevant Facts	Trial
1. Antoine Richerme*	14 August 1534	Accused of being a Lutheran, sedition and conspiracy against the bishop. 3 August 1535 sentenced to death (beheaded and body split into four parts).	AEG, P.C. 2/350
2. Benoît Dadaz*	22 August 1534	Accused of conspiracy against the bishop; witness in the trial against Nycod de Prato (1536). Escaped from prison sometime after 2 September 1535.	AEG, P.C. 2/318
3. Girard Chabod*	22 August 1534	Accused of conspiracy against the bishop; witness in the trial against Nycod de Prato (1536). Escaped from prison in 1535-1536.	AEG, P.C. 2/347
4. Henri Noël*	1 September 1534	Still in prison as of 20 September 1535.	AEG, P.C. 2/319
5. Gaspard Neyrod*	11 September 1534	Still in prison as of 13 July 1535.	AEG, P.C. 2/321
6. Henri Goulaz*	5 April 1535	Still in prison as of 13 July 1535.	AEG, P.C. 1/293

²² Froment in *Acts* (p. 3) provides a similar list and among the first Lutherans he identifies the two brothers Pierre and Robert.

²³ People marked with * were among those on the list of 28 March 1534 and prosecuted on 10 August 1534. Cf. *supra*, chapter 4, p. 176.

Name	Arrested	Relevant Facts	Trial
7. Mermet de <i>Calcibus</i> , alias Jacquard*	Around the end of August 1534 (RC 13, 55 n.1)	Still in prison as of 13 July 1535 (RC, 13, p. 261).	Trial not preserved (information about him in AEG, P.C. 1/311)
8. Le Ridan		Still in prison as of 13 July 1535 (RC, 13, p. 261).	Trial not preserved (information about him in AEG, P.C. 1/311)
9. Claude Begoz		Still in prison as of 13 July 1535 (RC, 13, p. 261).	Trial not preserved (information about him in AEG, P.C. 1/311)
10. Noël Excoffez		Still in prison as of 13 July 1535 (RC, 13, p. 261).	Trial not preserved (information about him in AEG, P.C. 1/311)
11. Nicolas de la Croix	Arrested with Jean Picard	From Paris, suspected to be Lutheran and in possession of counterfeit money.	AEG, P.C. 2/323
12. Jean Picard	Arrested with Nicolas de la Croix	From Paris, suspected to be Lutheran and in possession of counterfeit money.	AEG, P.C. 2/323
13. Michel de Garines		Interrogated 11 February 1535.	AEG, P.C. 2/335
14. Jean <i>Calamerii</i>	6 April 1535	Lutheran and accused of attempting to poison Peney's water. Sentenced to death, 8 May 1535.	AEG, P.C. 2/337

Table 12. Missals, breviaries and manuals printed for the Sabaudian dioceses north of the Alps

Diocese	Year and place of print	Type of book	Reference
Geneva	1479 (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 6552
Lausanne	1479–1480 ca. (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 6535
Tarentaise	1486 (Paris)	Breviary	GW 05472
Geneva	1487 (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 6606
Geneva	1491 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 6607
Lausanne	1493 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 6609
Tarentaise	1495 (Moûtiers)	Breviary	GW 05364
Lausanne	1495 ca. (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 6612
Lausanne	1495–1497 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 6615
Geneva	1498 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 6618
Geneva	1499 ca. (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 6621
Lausanne	1500 (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 6626
Geneva	1500 ca. (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 6622

Diocese	Year and place of print	Type of book	Reference
Geneva	1503 ca. (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5671
Lausanne	1503 (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5672
Belley	1503 (Lyon)	Missal	USTC 123529
Lausanne	1505 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 5678
Tarentaise	1508 (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 5697
Geneva	1508 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 5680
Geneva	1508 (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 5695
Lausanne	1508-1510 ca (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 5694
Lausanne	1509 (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5673
Maurienne	1512 (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5677
Geneva	1513 (Lyon)	Breviary	USTC 121650
Belley	1518 (Lyon)	Breviary	USTC 121646
Geneva	1520 ca. (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 5681
Geneva	1520 ca. (Geneva)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5675
Geneva	1521 (Lyon)	Missal	USTC 121675
Lausanne	1522 (Geneva/Lyon)	Missal	GLN 15–16 5679
Geneva	1523 (Geneva)	Manual	GLN 15–16 5696
Geneva	1525 (Lyon)	Breviary	GLN 15–16 5676 ²⁴
Belley	1527 (Lyon)	Missal	USTC 130438
Tarentaise	1529 (Geneva)	Missal	GLN 15–16 6763

24 This breviary was printed in Lyon by Denis de Harsy for the Genevan printer Gabriel Pomard.

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Uncertainty and instability affected Geneva and the Duchy of Savoy since the mid-fifteenth century. French and Swiss expansionism had turned Savoy into part of a long geopolitical fault line, running from the North Sea to the Mediterranean along the border between France and the Holy Roman Empire. In Geneva, and partially in other towns in Piedmont and the Pays de Vaud, this instability fuelled urban factionalism and confessional conflicts, but also wider discussions about the ways in which society could be reformed. These conflicts were ultimately the consequence of a struggle about what political and religious option was best suited to reduce uncertainty. *The Uncertain World of Renaissance Geneva and Savoy* looks at how political life worked in a time of great instability, seeking to answer a straightforward—but not easy—question: how did people face and react to political and religious uncertainty?

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