

**LES PRINCES ÉTRANGERS: TRULY PRINCES? TRULY FOREIGN?
TYPOLOGIES OF PRINCELY STATUS, TRANS-NATIONALISM AND IDENTITY
IN EARLY MODERN FRANCE.**

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I

From the late sixteenth century, more prevalently in the seventeenth, and with certainty in the eighteenth, an informal title of address evolved in its usage at the French court: the *prince étranger*, or »foreign prince«. At first merely a general description of the dual status of a person who was a foreigner and of princely rank, the phrase evolved into a recognised title delineating specific rank and status for a group of senior courtiers who resided in France and had acquired specific privileges, accorded personally by French sovereigns, but never formally given official standing in French law. It was not, in contrast to the title *duc-et-pair* or other letters patent granting titles of nobility, registered in the Parlement of Paris or other courts of law. But that was the point – the name *prince étranger* deliberately carried with it the notion of extra-territoriality, of a status existing outside the jurisdiction of French sovereignty. These princes, or so they maintained, lived under the protection of the French king, and worked with him as allies and clients, but were free to leave his service at any time. They based their claims to this status on their position as junior members of sovereign princely families in the Holy Roman Empire or in Italy, or as sovereigns themselves of independent territories, however small, or as potential heirs to foreign kingdoms, real or imagined.

Few historians have dedicated attention specifically to the *princes étrangers*, and their views are sometimes conflicting. The now standard definition by Robert Oresko, points out the inherent contradiction of courtiers of French monarchs who presented themselves as independent members of foreign sovereign houses and at the same time as subjects of the Crown, due to extensive properties held within French jurisdiction¹. In contrast, Guy Antonetti de-stressed the foreign quality of the foreign princes, and instead posed a thesis whereby the adoption of such a title was based mostly on the factor of blood relations of the *princes étrangers* with the royal house of France². With the emergence of trans-nationalism

¹ Robert ORESKO, *Princes étrangers*, in: Lucien BÉLY (ed.), *Dictionnaire de l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1996, p. 1019–1020.

² Guy ANTONETTI, *Les princes étrangers*, in: J.-P. BARDET et al. (dir.), *Etat et société en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, Paris, 2000, p. 33–62. See further analysis of both Oresko's and Antonetti's views in my own work on this subject, *The Society of Princes: The Lorraine-Guise and the Conservation of Power and Wealth in Seventeenth-Century France*, Farnham 2009, chapter 1.

as an important focus for the study of European elites and court societies, it is perhaps easier for us to conceptualise this dichotomy of mixed loyalties and the associated contradictions between sovereign and subject.

The questions posed in the title of this chapter, therefore, ask whether the moniker »foreign prince« was completely appropriate. After living in France for several generations, can these elites still be reckoned as foreign, particularly in an era before the true onset of nationalism? And is this qualification uniform across the set of families who were accorded this title? Moreover, in what sense were they princely? What does that term mean, either symbolically or realistically? On the surface, we can observe that this subset of elite courtiers appear to have been French aristocrats who made use of merely honorific and exalted titles to assert and defend their position at the very top of the court hierarchy, a position they saw as under attack in the sixteenth century from powerful royal favourites, or from rising new nobles from the worlds of the judiciary and finance³. In some cases, this is an entirely correct assessment, and there is no more truth to their titular claims than the usage of Queen Elizabeth II as »Duke of Normandy« in her capacity as sovereign of the Channel Islands. In many instances, their titles were empty claims only, vague memories of past glories (real or imagined), maintained to distinguish themselves from the rising number of French nobles employing titles of *comte* or *marquis* at court⁴. At the same time, the titles were sometimes useful to the French crown, and therefore tolerated. For example, the claimed descent from semi-legendary kings of ancient Bretagne propped up the honour of the princes of Rohan, but it was acceptable to the French monarchy as it was a potentially useful claim in a completely different area: the restitution of lost territory of the kingdom of Navarre south of the Pyrenees⁵. Other princes in France genuinely were perceived by the monarchy as individuals who needed to be treated with the respect a sovereign due to this key word: potential. Since much of the European state system continued to function through the mechanisms of hereditary dynasticism, it was essential to remain attentive to potentiality. The most obvious example from the point of view of the French state is the Gonzague de Nevers family who left the French court in 1629 to become dukes of the strategic North Italian duchy of Mantua

³ On royal favourites, see Nicolas LE ROUX, *La faveur du roi. Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois*, Seyssel 2001. On new nobles of the state bureaucracy, see Charles T. LIPP, *Noble Strategies in an Early Modern Small State. The Mahuet of Lorraine*, Rochester, N.Y. 2011.

⁴ Contemporary scepticism of the elevation of titles can be easily detected in one of the chief chronicles of families and honours of the French court, Père ANSELME DE SAINTE-MARIE, *Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, des Pairs, des Grands Officiers de la Couronne & de la Maison du Roy, des anciens Barons du Royaume, avec les qualitez, l'origine, le progrès et les armes de toutes leurs familles [...]*, 9 vols., Paris, 1726–1733. The author is careful to differentiate genuine elevated titles (with letters patent registered in Parlement) from those that were simply assumed, by adding the word »dit« before the title.

⁵ In the reign of Henri IV, the Rohans retained a position as heirs to Navarre if the Bourbon line should fail. Indeed, when Louis XIII moved to restore Catholicism to Béarn in 1617, the Huguenot estates there looked to the Protestant duc de Rohan as a potential saviour. Alain BOULAIRE, *Les Rohan*, Paris 2001, p. 58–59, 79–80.

due to the extinction of the senior branch of the family⁶. Cadets of the houses of Lorraine and Savoy came quite close to a similar scenario in the middle of the seventeenth century, as the numbers of heirs in both sovereign ducal families dwindled⁷. And of course, larger prizes were occasionally on offer for semi-sovereign princes or their cadets: the last duke of Lorraine, François III, became Holy Roman Emperor Francis I in 1745; the elector of Hanover, Georg Ludwig, became king of Great Britain in 1714; a cadet of the House of Savoy, Charles-Albert, Prince of Carignano, became king of Sardinia in 1831⁸.

This evolution of the value of the term *prince étranger* is not, however, merely a question of a »game of thrones«: by the eighteenth century, there is in fact more to this story which should be explored in the context of »nations« and »nobility«. This has something to do with the emergence (or perhaps re-assertion?) of a new type of European aristocrat: the trans-national prince⁹. These trans-national elites were, I propose, a reaction to growing sense of national identity in the nation-states of western Europe, perhaps even a yearning to return to a pre-Reformation world of Christian universality as a marker of identity; an identity that would continue well into the modern era¹⁰. Of course these princes were not the only members of this emerging trans-national aristocratic elite: we must certainly include diplomats, wealthy merchants and the artists and artisans who moved in and out of their service. But I would argue that those who moved the most smoothly in a »trans-aulic« manner did so due to an unassailable privilege of secured access to any royal court, be it Versailles, Vienna or Saint Petersburg, because they of their rank of prince. This chapter will therefore examine this issue from two angles: firstly, the nature of princeliness and the development of the rank of the *princes étrangers* in France; and secondly, the solidification of the rank of prince in the hierarchy of European courts as an trans-national rank by the eighteenth century.

II

⁶ David PARROTT, A prince souverain and the French crown: Charles de Nevers, 1580-1637, in: Robert ORESKO et al. (ed.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1997, p. 149–187.

⁷ In Lorraine, circa 1650, Duke Charles IV had two legitimate heirs (his brother and his nephew), then two aging bachelor cousins (the marquis de Mouy and the bishop of Verdun), between himself and the duke of Guise. In Savoy, Duke Charles Emmanuel II, thus far childless, had only an uncle, a cardinal, before the succession would fall to another uncle, the comte de Soissons, at that time in French service.

⁸ See recent biographical work highlighting the transformation of François III of Lorraine to Emperor Francis I in Renate ZEDINGER, Wolfgang SCHMALE (ed.), *Franz Stephan von Lothringen und sein Kreis. – L’empereur François I et le réseau lorrain*, Bochum 2009.

⁹ I use this term with reservations, given the difficulties in establishing the existence of nationalism in the pre-modern era. Other terms to consider carefully include »trans-regional«, or perhaps more aptly »pan-regional«, since the point is that such aristocrats not only moved across frontiers, but could feel at home anywhere; or »pan-aulic«, more specifically relevant to the discussion here, with a focus on the court.

¹⁰ Jonathan SPANGLER, *Those In Between: Princely Families on the Margins of the Great Powers. The Franco-German Frontier, 1477–1830*, in: C. JOHNSON et al. (ed.), *Trans-regional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences Since the Middle Ages*, Oxford 2011, p. 131-154.

In a study of nobilities and nations, it is perhaps relevant to begin with a quote from Saint-Simon, who offers his opinion that the *princes étrangers ne sont pas de la noblesse de France*, while at the same time admitting that they were a firm part of the political and cultural fabric of France and the French court¹¹. Their position was ambiguous, and could be seen in one sense as a conservative element clinging to an elite feudal past where loyalties were determined personally between subject and sovereign, rather than to a nation. Alternately, it is possible to view the trans-national princes as looking towards a more enlightened future of pan-European integration, though it is doubtful this thought was intentional in either dynastic or individual strategy. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the rank of the foreign prince was a useful feature for the French monarchy and to the families themselves: it allowed the former to make use of unofficial diplomacy, easing tensions through personal or even kin-based trans-national links between courts otherwise prohibited by protocol; and it allowed the latter to consolidate their hold on the topmost positions in court society, from the highest court offices to the most elevated positions in military and ecclesiastical hierarchies, until the collapse of the ancien régime itself.

European elites have often yearned for a sense of universality of identity. After the collapse of the unity of the Roman Empire, identity was held together by the conceptualisation of being part of the Christian World. Charlemagne re-forged this concept, and the »Imperial Idea«, the idea of universal monarchy, was preserved in his heirs in Germany, adopted of course by the Habsburgs, and repeatedly challenged by Charlemagne's other heirs, the kings of France¹². Focusing on the border nobles, for example, those who lived in the valleys of the Meuse and the Moselle, we can see they had little sense that they needed to fight exclusively for one king or another, or adhere to one polity solely based on ties of language or culture. They had their formal feudal allegiances of course, but examination of detailed feudal maps of this region quickly demonstrates that for every fief held of the king of France, these nobles held another from the king of Germany¹³. Over time, some of these territories managed to slip outside the jurisdiction of either monarchy, and these formed one of the categories of the princely rank examined here. Mountainous regions far from centres of royal power were of course natural formation zones of these micro-principalities: the Ardennes, the Vosges, the Alps, the Pyrenees.

¹¹ Louis de Rouvroy, duc de SAINT-SIMON, Additions inédites du duc de Saint-Simon, in: Philippe de Courcillon, marquis de DANGEAU, Journal, ed. E. SOULIÉ, L. DUSSIEUX et al., 19 vol., Paris 1854–1860, vol. XIV, p. 448.

¹² A useful examination of this idea from a literary and visual perspective can be found in: Andrew WHEATCROFT, *The Habsburgs. Embodying Empire*, New York 1995, chapter 3.

¹³ See for example, Michel PARISSE, *Noblesse et chevalerie en Lorraine médiévale: les familles nobles du XI^e au XIII^e siècle*, Nancy 1982; or more recently, Léonard DAUPHANT, *Le Royaume des quatre rivières. L'espace politique français (1380–1515)*, Seyssel 2012, notably sections that highlight the frontier mentality of noble families like the Lenoncourts (p. 325–328, 354–356).

Some of these elites maintained a sense of universality through the common language of chivalry and crusade; others connected through learning – the Republic of Letters – or perhaps through finance, as in the multiple branches of the banking houses of Medici or Fugger. Latin remained the language of the Church and of higher learning; Italian of commerce and diplomacy. As is well known, the political developments of the fifteenth century, particularly in France, England and Spain disrupted this universality and led to what we identify as the modern nation-state. The Hundred Years' War and the Reconquista forged national identities and loyalties to king and country that had only weakly existed before. But another great change which facilitated this transition happened simultaneously, partly by accident and partly by design. This was the elimination of a grouping of the most powerful elites who surrounded and supported – or sometimes threatened – medieval monarchs: the close kin of princely blood who had formed a layer of separation between the monarch and his nobles and subjects. The French monarchy at the beginning of the fifteenth century was dominated by the rivalries between the monarch and his kinsmen of the houses of Anjou, Orléans, Berry, Alençon, Bourbon, and of course Burgundy, not to mention the close kinsmen from across the Channel, the Plantagenets¹⁴. But through spectacular fortune, one by one these dynasties died out until by 1525, in the reign of François I, there were none left but the Bourbons¹⁵. Other historians have pointed to this development as the impetus for the creation of the new, non-princely order of *ducs-et-pairs*, necessary for the filling of ceremonial and real political posts that once were filled by these collateral princes of the blood¹⁶. Among the first new peers were favourites of the monarch, drawn from the old provincial nobility, such as Rouannais (1519) and Montmorency (1551), but it is important to stress that these were anomalies, and were resisted by Parlement¹⁷. Instead, the more ›normal‹ of these new duchy-peerages were created for younger sons of foreign sovereigns who had been sent to the French court to solidify diplomatic and dynastic ties: Claude of Lorraine, first duc de Guise (1528); Philippe of Savoy, first duc de Nemours (1528); Jean of Cleves, first duc de Nevers (1538). There had been previous duchies granted to other foreigners to forge alliances, starting as far back as 1423, with the grant of the duchy of Touraine to Lord

¹⁴ For an overview, see Graeme SMALL, *Late Medieval France*, Basingstoke 2009. Similarly, political strife in England and the Iberian peninsula at the same time can be attributed to an over-abundance of magnates of princely rank, all with strong claims to participate in the governing of the realm: York versus Lancaster, »la Católica« versus »La Beltraneja« and so on.

¹⁵ Terminations of apanage branches, either through extinction of the line, or through succeeding to the Crown itself: Berry, 1416; Burgundy, 1477; Anjou, 1481; Orléans, 1498; Angoulême, 1515, Alençon, 1525.

¹⁶ This was discussed as long ago as Jean-Pierre LABATUT, *Les Ducs et Pairs de France au XVII^e Siècle*, Paris 1972; and Richard JACKSON, *Peers of France and Princes of the Blood*, in: *French Historical Studies* 7 (1971), p. 27–47, esp. 37; and more recently (though less explicitly) by Christophe LEVANTAL, *Ducs et Pairs et Duchés-Pairies Laïques à l'Epoque Moderne (1519–1790)*, Paris 1996, p. 173.

¹⁷ Artus Gouffier, Grand Maître de France under François I (and previously his governor) was created *duc-et-pair* in 1519, but died before the innovation could be registered (or not) in the Parlement. His son was re-created duke, but not peer in 1566. When subsequent generations attempted to revive the former peerage, in 1612 and 1620, it was rejected by the Parlement. P. ANSELME, *Histoire Généalogique* (see n. 4), vol. V, p. 604.

Archibald Douglas. This practice later included Villefranche (a county-peerage) for Federigo of Aragon, prince of Taranto; Valentinois for Cesare Borgia; Nemours for Giuliano de' Medici; and Chartres for the duke and duchess of Ferrara¹⁸. One of the key personages in the development of the rank of *prince étranger* is in fact the daughter of the latter couple: Anne d'Este, who should be viewed as a *princesse étrangère* as wife of the duc de Guise, but also as a daughter of a sovereign herself, and indeed the grand-daughter of a French king, Louis XII¹⁹.

In addition to forging foreign alliances, French kings also sought to consolidate their own borders. They began to manipulate the recognition of the rank of foreign prince as part of a process of integration of semi-sovereign border families within their domains. In 1458 the county of Foix was tied in more closely to the French crown via a formal re-granting of the previously semi-independent fief as a *comté-pairie* to Gaston de Foix²⁰. A similar tactic was used two-hundred years later in 1651: in exchange for the cession of the sovereign principality of Sedan to the French crown, the King of France recognised the La Tour d'Auvergne formally as *princes étrangers*, and granted them the duchy-peerages of Albret and Château-Thierry and the counties of Auvergne and Évreux, all sizeable portions of the royal domain²¹. The La Tour d'Auvergne remained as sovereigns of the Duchy of Bouillon, however, justifying their continued use of a princely title. Shortly after, in 1659, by the Treaty of the Pyrenees, the province of Artois became part of France, and as part of the tactics of integration, several of the leading families of the province – notably two magnates, the prince d'Epinoy and the prince de Bournonville, previously pillars of Spanish regime in the region – were wooed by the French Crown. Bournonville, governor of the province at the time of the treaty, soon returned to Spanish service (though his brother moved swiftly into French service, and was named governor of Paris in 1660, and *chevalier d'honneur* of Queen

¹⁸ Details on all of these can all be found in P. ANSELME, *Histoire Généalogique* (see n. 4). The topic of the luring of foreign princes to the French court as an aspect of diplomacy and trans-regional court culture is explored in more detail in a forthcoming article by this author, tentatively entitled, »Sons and Daughters Sent Abroad: Foreign Princes at the French Court in the early sixteenth century«.

¹⁹ Jessica MUNNS, Penny RICHARDS, Exploiting and destabilizing Gender Roles. Anne d'Este, in: *French History* 6 (1992), p. 206–215; Christiane COESTER, *Schön wie Venus, mutig wie Mars. Anna d'Este, Herzogin von Guise und von Nemours (1531–1607)*, Munich 2007.

²⁰ P. ANSELME, *Histoire Généalogique* (see n. 4), vol. III, p. 342. It is significant to note that only three years before, Gaston de Foix had been named (conjointly with his wife) as heir to the throne of Navarre, so it is not surprising the king of France was anxious to keep him closely allied. My thanks to Dr. Elena Woodacre for pointing this out to me. See also Christian BOURRET, *Un royaume »transpyrénéen«? La tentative de la maison de Foix-Béarn-Albret à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Aspet 1998.

²¹ Details of the negotiations and outcomes of the exchange can be found in Simon HODSON, *Sovereigns as Subjects: The Princes of Sedan and Dukes of Bouillon in Early Modern France, c. 1450–1652*, unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford University 1999. On the Bouillon struggle for recognition later on see Martin WREDE, *Ohne Furcht und Tadel. Für König und Vaterland. Frühneuzeitlicher Hochadel zwischen familienehre, Ritterideal und Fürstendienst*, Ostfildern 2012, p. 82–116.

Marie-Thérèse)²². Epinoy was awarded the Order of the Holy Spirit in 1661, and given formal support of his on-going quarrel with the house of Ligne in the law courts of the Spanish Netherlands²³. The Epinoy had received a princely title from the king of Spain in 1545, and the Bournonville in 1658, but neither title carried any real sense of sovereignty, and neither family was listed amongst the *princes étrangers* at the French court. They did however, marry into senior French courtly families: Bournonville made alliances with two of the ducal families most in favour with Louis XIV (Noailles and Albert de Luynes); while Epinoy aimed higher and married into the princely families of Rohan and Lorraine²⁴.

This brings us to the meaning of the title »prince«, and to the distinctions emerging in the seventeenth century between the old *prince étranger* families, the new ones that began to challenge them, and the other families who used a princely title but without any formal recognition by the French king. If the term *prince étranger* became prevalent in the late sixteenth century to distinguish high ranking courtiers from newer grandees with the title of *duc-et-pair*, by the seventeenth century, this struggle continued, and required further delineation between »old« and »new« – at least in their eyes, and in those of commentators obsessed with hierarchy such as the duc de Saint-Simon²⁵.

So what exactly is a prince? The Latin word *princeps* is formed from *primus* (first) plus *capere* (to take possession)²⁶. Originally given to the leader of the Roman Senate, the title was then taken by the Roman emperor to legitimise his authority as »first citizen«²⁷. This differed from terms used for sovereignty (*dominus* in Latin, *basileus* in Greek), and was more akin to *dux* (leader) from which emerged the title »duke«. In Germany and the Low Countries, the titles of prince and duke remained intertwined in the early modern period: a dukedom always implied princely rule with a degree of sovereignty (as it did in the parts of the Italian peninsula that remained under the influence of imperial governance). The distinction can be seen most clearly in the Southern Netherlands in the early modern period. A number of princely titles were created by the king of Spain: Chimay, Ligne, Arenberg,

²² P. ANSELME, *Histoire Généalogique* (see n. 4), vol. V, p. 839-840. In a clear indication of French frontier policy, Gaston d'Orléans, as commander-in-chief of forces in Flanders left the duc de Bournonville in command of Courtrai after it surrendered to the French in June 1646, »pour faire voire à ces peuples qu'on les veut traiter doucement en les faisant gouverner par ceux de leur pays meme«. Letter to Abel Servien, quoted in: Georges DETHAN, *La vie de Gaston d'Orléans*, Paris 1992, p. 224.

²³ The details of this dispute over possession of lands in Artois and the châtelanie of Lille can be found in Bibliothèque nationale de France [BNF], factums 5661 to 5677, wherein the King of France and the Parlement of Paris repeatedly uphold the terms of the Treaty of the Pyrenees which granted the lands to Epinoy. See also the »Memoir for the Princesse d'Epinoy on the lands of the Maison de Melun being returned from the Maison de Ligne« (circa 1713), pleading directly to the Emperor for the restoration of the same lands seized by the allies, Archives départementales [AD], Meurthe-et-Moselle, 3F 317, no. 60.

²⁴ See genealogical and career details for Bournonville and Melun-Epinoy in P. ANSELME, *Histoire généalogique*, vol. V, p. 806ff, and 221ff, respectively. The Bournonville did not become completely a French courtly family, but remained mixed in their loyalties between France and Spain.

²⁵ See below.

²⁶ Charlton LEWIS & Charles SHORT, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford 1879.

²⁷ Michael GRANT, *The Twelve Caesars*, London 1975, p. 62.

Berghes – to honour the leading provincial dynasties who remained loyal during the Dutch revolt. But it was actually the title of duke, a rare title, that carried with it elements of alienated sovereignty: Aarschot in Brabant being the clearest example, with specifically delineated regalian rights over justice and coinage²⁸. Yet, even in the more carefully controlled environment (as regards titles and sovereignty) of seventeenth-century England, we do see dukes referred to, at least honorifically, as prince. See for example the full title of Margaret Cavendish's most famous work: *The Description of a New World, called the Blazing-World, Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princesse, the Duchess of Newcastle* (London, 1668). As with France, the expansion in England of the title of duke outside the ranks of the royal family itself was at first limited to magnates with princely pretensions, those with royal blood (Holland, Beaufort, Stafford, Neville, Mowbray, La Pole, Howard), or those allied to the royal house by marriage (Brandon, Seymour). The same is true for Scotland (Lennox, Hamilton).

In the Holy Roman Empire, the term prince – *Fürst* (ruler), which in German (unlike French or English) can be distinguished from *Prinz*, more generically a rank rather than a title – came to refer to any territorial ruler who had no superior but the Emperor, no matter what their title (duke, margrave, count), hence the emergence of the distinction between *Grafen* and *gefürstete Grafen*²⁹. From the 1620s, the Habsburg emperors began to create »new princes« as a means of constructing a specifically Catholic high aristocracy to counter-balance the old territorial princes, many of whom were now Lutheran or Calvinist. To solidify the claims of these new princes, rules were set up by which these men or their heirs were required to acquire feudal land – no matter how small – that they could hold directly from the emperor, after which they were qualified as genuine princes, or having *Reichstand* status, with a full vote in the Diet. This is clear in the well-known example of the Liechtenstein family who first obtained princely rank in 1608, but had to wait until they had purchased the out-of-the way county of Vaduz in 1712 before they were recognised by the older princely members of the Diet³⁰.

This is not the place to engage in analysis of the quite dissimilar use of the title of prince by the Spanish monarchy or the Papacy in Italy in the early modern period, where the title was used purely as an honour with no connotation of sovereignty. The dozens of families in the central and southern parts of the Peninsula who bore princely titles did so out of recognition of special proximity to royal or papal authority and kinship (various Neapolitan

²⁸ Piet DE FRAINE, *Gouvernés et gouvernants au Pays et Duché d'Aerschot*, in: *Assemblées d'Etats*, Leuven, 1965, p. 181–194. A later example can be seen in the duchy of Hoogstraten (also located in northern Brabant, near the frontier with the Dutch Republic), created for to the princes of Salm-Salm by the Emperor in 1740. The exact nature of the sovereignty of these duchies remains elusive, however, as most formal documentation has been lost. I thank Mirella Marini for this information.

²⁹ The evolution of the princely title is examined in a comparative manner in Eric HAMOIR, *Qualité princière et dignités nobiliaires*, Brussels 1974. I thank Professor Luc Duerloo for alerting me to this work.

³⁰ In addition to his earlier works focusing on the Liechtenstein princes, see the more general recent study of the Habsburgs and power structures in the Empire by Thomas WINKELBAUER, *Ständefreiheit und Fürstenmacht. Länder und Untertanen des Hauses Habsburg im konfessionellen Zeitalter*, Vienna 2003.

families who added »d'Aragona« to their surname to mark kinship with the royal house; various papal families in Rome), or ancientness of lineage and extent of landed wealth. By the 1670s there were over one-hundred princely titles in the kingdom of Naples alone, and another hundred across the straits in Sicily³¹. In sharp contrast, there was a sense that the title should be more restricted in a place where the sovereign was actually resident: in Spain itself. Here there were no titles of princely rank at all outside the royal family, except for those from foreign states. Those exceptions could be considered in the same light as the *princes étrangers* in France. Edward Corp highlights two individuals, for example, who both had periods of service at the Spanish court, and who later brought social and political clout to the court of Stuart exiles in Rome because of their princely status and their incumbent ability to smooth diplomatic and social relationships: the Princesse des Ursins was a La Trémoille by birth, and an Orsini by marriage; Ippolita Ludovisi was sovereign princess of Piombino³². Similarly, in the kingdoms of England and Scotland, there were no families who might be considered to have a similar rank and status as the foreign princes; again, only single exceptions, such as Prince Rupert of the Rhine (Charles I's nephew) or Charlotte de la Trémoille, countess of Derby³³.

III

This brings us back to France, where a similar ideological conflict existed: a princely title can add lustre to a royal court, but must not conflict with notions of royal sovereignty. Therefore, in general, princely titles were not created or granted, but were simply recognised as pre-existing for members of foreign dynasties resident in France: Cleves, Lorraine, Savoy. Nevertheless, we do find the exception of the barony of Joinville which was indeed raised to the level of a principality for the Lorraine-Guise in 1552 by Henri II, with regalian rights over

³¹ See Claudio DONATI, *The Italian Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: H.M. SCOTT (ed.), *The European Nobilities*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. London 2007, vol. I, p. 286–321, esp. 249; Rosario VILLARI, *The Revolt of Naples*, Cambridge 1993, p. 118–121. Lists of princely titles and dates of creations are available on a variety of websites, for example, <http://www.nobili-napoletani.it/index.htm> [accessed 24/09/2013].

³² Edward CORP, *The Stuarts in Italy, 1719–1766. A Royal Court in Permanent Exile*, Cambridge 2011. Both women are discussed in chapter 3.

³³ For a study of Charlotte de la Trémoille in context of dynastic rank and trans-national identity, see Sonja KMEC, *Across the Channel: Noblewomen in Seventeenth-Century France and England*, Trier, 2010. In fact, the family into which she married, the Stanleys, could potentially have pressed their own claims to princely rank as sovereigns of the Isle of Man. One can speculate that there might have been a family of Anglo-Danish 'foreign princes' established at the British court if Queen Anne had not ascended the throne herself, and if any of her children by Prince George of Denmark had survived. The Duke of Marlborough was able to call himself a prince of the Empire (and was addressed as such in diplomatic correspondence) through the gift of the immediate lordship of Mindelheim (Swabia) by a grateful Joseph I in 1705. This was lost at Utrecht in 1713, but the Duke was compensated with the principality of Mellenburg (Upper Austria) instead. Richard HOLMES, *Marlborough*, London 2008, p. 303, 466. On the La Trémoille and princely rank see WREDE, *Ohne Furcht und Tadel* (see n. 21), p. 39–81.

nearly seventy villages, such as exemptions from taxation and billeting of royal troops, monopolies on fishing, hunting, milling, and appointments to local justice, hospices and clergy³⁴. In the letters patent the principality is formally removed from the jurisdiction of the local law-courts of Champagne, but it nevertheless remained subject to the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris and the Conseil du Roi; so it is a mistake for us to consider this a »sovereignty« any more than an ordinary duchy-peerage, which enjoyed much of the same legal privileges. This is even less applicable for the principality of Guémené created a few years later by Charles IX for the Rohan in 1570. Letters patent recognise that the family has a long history of valour and service to the French crown, but is also one of the oldest and most illustrious in Europe, having kinship with all the crowned heads in Christendom. Nevertheless, unlike for Joinville, the new prince de Guémené is specifically forbidden to make any 'innovations' regarding the ordinary course of justice or appeals; he will also not alter any of the succession conventions that are customary in Bretagne. Aside from this, the letters are vague, specifying only such privileges and rights as have customarily been given to others who received principalities by creation (which was very few indeed).³⁵ Similar erections of principalities are mentioned for the Gonzagas on their estates in Berry, and for the Croÿ in Champagne, though concrete evidence for these is thin³⁶. But as before, the distinction between these principalities and duchy-peerages is that they did not elevate aristocrats to the rank of princes, but were given to families who already held (or claimed) this rank.

Historians have traditionally had difficulty in recognising this link between the sixteenth-century *princes étrangers* and the sovereignty of their ancestors and cousins. The problem stems from over-rigorous periodization, artificially creating a conceptual gap between the reigns of Louis XII and François I, between the late medieval and the renaissance eras. It is important to think of the Guise, for example, not as a dynasty that suddenly emerged onto the political stage from nowhere – as many histories of sixteenth-

³⁴ There are several copies of the letters patent: Archives nationales [AN], K 617, no. 25; X^{1A} 8617, fol. 396; BNF, Ms. Fr. 8182, fol. 21; AD, Haute-Marne, 19 J, VII, fol. 302. Regalian rights are detailed in Emile HUMBLLOT, Roger LUZU, *Les Seigneurs de Joinville, Saint-Dizier* 1964, p. 181, 265.

³⁵ AN, MM 759, p. 942-946. These are printed in Dom Pierre-Hyacinthe MORICE, *Mémoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne*, 3 vols. Paris 1742-46, vol. III, cols. 1366-68.

³⁶ David Parrott discusses the possible creation of a »principauté de Mantoue« erected by Charles IX on Gonzaga estates in Perche, though evidence for this is patchy: PARROTT, *A prince souverain* (see n. 6), p. 156. Several historical sources repeat that Antoine de Croÿ, nephew of the prince de Chimay, was created prince de Porcien in 1561 in recognition of his marriage to a Cleves princess who was also niece of the prince de Condé (which seems to be a singularly Protestant creation), Dom Nicolas LE LONG, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile du diocèse de Laon, et de tout le pays contenu entre l'Oise et la Meuse, l'Aisne et la Sambre*, Châlons 1783, p. 435. LEVANTAL, *Ducs et pairs* (see n. 16), p. 885, cites letters patent (AN, X^{1A} 8617, fols 372-374) for an additional Rohan principality of Soubise (in Saintonge), created in 1667 by Louis XIV (quite out of the ordinary for him), but there is little information available on what precise honorific, legal or fiscal privileges were derived from this, or from the other, more ancient Rohan principality of Léon (also in Bretagne, detailed in BOULAIRE, *Les Rohan*, see n. 5, p. 55, but without any citation). Clearly, closer scrutiny is required.

century France do³⁷ – but rather as merely the younger branch of a family that had been deeply intertwined with French politics for centuries. Indeed, the very reason young Claude of Lorraine, second son of Duke René II (himself the grandson and heir of René I d’Anjou, King of Sicily), was sent to the French court in 1506 was to keep alive Lorraine interests within the French kingdom, making good use of his close blood ties to both the King (Louis XII), and the heir to the throne, François d’Angoulême, a link that was further cemented by his marriage to François’ cousin, Antoinette de Bourbon in 1513³⁸. From this perspective it is more correct to argue that François I was not extending the rank of *duc-et-pair* to non-princes of the blood, but instead was extending the pool of princes of the blood itself, to whom he was willing to grant peerages. An equal case can be said for the peerage of Nemours, since Philippe of Savoy was the King’s uncle. In default of other Valois princes, such agnatic kin were useful, even necessary, being of sufficient rank and blood kinship with the king to fill ceremonial roles such as representing the six lay peers at the coronation, acting as provincial governors, and leading the royal armies.

By the late sixteenth century the relationship between princes and peers was clarified, as part of the reaction of the old elites (notably the *princes du sang*) to the promotion of new peers, as discussed several years ago by Giesey and Jackson³⁹. As for the princes of the blood, it was the *potential* to succeed to a sovereignty that was emphasized to create a new princely rank, a *rang intermédiaire*, similar to that which the *princes légitimés* would fight for in the seventeenth century⁴⁰. Henri III recognised four princely families residing in France: Lorraine, Savoy, Luxembourg, and Gonzaga (who had succeeded the Clèves in their duchy of Nevers). The Duchy of Luxembourg had of course been part of the Burgundian then Habsburg dominions since the mid-fifteenth century, so the likelihood of succession for the various cadet branches residing in France were minimal, yet they were specifically honoured in the terms of the letters patent erecting their duchy-peerage of Penthièvre in 1569, as descending from an ancient house that had provided several emperors and married numerous

³⁷ For example, Frederic BAUMGARTNER’s *France in the Sixteenth Century*, New York 1995, p. 52, describes the Guise as one of »two nobles families previously with little clout« (alongside the Montmorency) who emerged as leaders of the nobility in the mid-sixteenth century. More recently, William BEIK’s *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France*, Cambridge 2009, p. 88–90, understates the princely origins of Claude, first duc de Guise by noting the »stunning alliance« of his marriage to a Bourbon, and the family’s »establishment« of international links through his daughters’ marriages into the houses of Stuart and Orange, as if there had been none of this type before. Pamela Ritchie, in her biography of Marie de Guise, similarly stresses the marriage to James V of Scotland as propelling the family into the ranks of princes, despite her family having intermarried with the French and Imperial houses for centuries. See Pamela E. RITCHIE, *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548–1560. A Political Career*, East Linton 2002, p. 11.

³⁸ The secure position of the Guise in France derived from the will of Duke René II of Lorraine in 1506, solidified by a pact made by his sons in 1530, dividing the inheritance cleanly into French and non-French possessions. AD, Meurthe-et-Moselle, 3F 432, fol. 181; 3F 348.

³⁹ Ralph GIESEY, *The Juristic Basis of Dynastic Right to the French Throne*, in: *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 51, part 5 (1961); JACKSON, *Peers of France and Princes of the Blood*.

⁴⁰ See the »Affaire des princes«, in Harold ELLIS, *Boulainvilliers and the French Monarchy: Aristocratic Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century France*, Cornell, 1988, chapter six.

times within the royal house of France; or further, as in letters patent for duchy-peerage of Piney in 1576, that they *should be* the more appropriate heirs to Luxembourg due to the Salic Law⁴¹. Here we see an excellent example of the usage of the recognition of princely rank for diplomatic purposes by the French monarchy, though one which in this case was never deployed.

In the next reign, Henry IV regulated the rank further in 1610, when he granted his bastards a position above the foreign princes, but below the princes of the blood – but this was overturned by Marie de Médicis and her Guise allies immediately after his murder⁴². Concurrent debates asked what exactly defined a prince of the blood, in connection with the rise of the notion of the »divine right of kings«: what was so special about blood? The jurist Louis Charondas Le Caron wrote: princes of the blood *sont nez tels, et ne peut le Roy, quelque souveraineté qu'il ait, faire aucuns Princes de son sang*⁴³. Jean du Tillet complained that there were »too many kings« in France – the great magnates – despite the fact that the only true princes were ones who were born into it⁴⁴. Chancellor Séguier chastised the young Louis XIV in a similar manner, stating that the kings of France *ne pouvaient faire de princes du sang qu'avec les reines, leurs épouses*⁴⁵. Such was the force by the mid-seventeenth century of the mysterious and ill-defined fundamental laws of the kingdom⁴⁶.

By the reign of Louis XIV, well-known contemporaries recorded specific privileges which were granted to the *princes étrangers*, always unofficially (though outlined in published *Etats de la France*). The ambassador from Brandenburg, Baron Spanheim, details the privileges as including the right to remain covered before the king at ambassadorial audiences and to be seated in the presence of the queen, the dauphine or Madame⁴⁷. Saint-Simon gives a similar account of these privileges⁴⁸. One of the key differences here is that the privileges were given not just to the head of the family (as with *ducs-et-pairs*) but to all

⁴¹ ANSELME, *Histoire généalogique*, vol. III, 715 (Penthièvre); and 869 (Piney); more specifically p. 873-874.

⁴² This is described in detail in Jean-Paul DESPRAT, *Les bâtards d'Henri IV. L'épopée des Vendômes, 1594–1727*, Paris, 1994, p. 130-150.

⁴³ Loys CHARONDAS, *Pandectes, ou Digestes du droict François*, Lyon 1597, p. 283.

⁴⁴ Jean DU TILLET, *Recueil des rois de France, leur couronne et maison: ensemble, le reings des grands de France*, Paris 1580.

⁴⁵ This quote is often cited, for example, Ernest LAVISSE, *Louis XIV. Histoire d'un grand règne, 1643–1715*, Paris 1908 (reprint 1989), p. 607. For the context, see Jonathan SPANGLER, *A Lesson in Diplomacy for Louis XIV. The Treaty of Montmartre, 1662, and the Princes of the House of Lorraine*, in: *French History* 17/3 (2003), p. 225–250.

⁴⁶ And it remains misconstrued today. See the recent article by Sarah Hanley in which she discusses uncritically assumptions made by Louis XIV and the French judiciary about the sovereignty of a principality (Neuchâtel) well outside the sphere of French jurisdiction: Sarah HANLEY, *The Family, the State, and the Law in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France. The Political Ideology of Male Right versus an Early Theory of Natural Rights*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 78/2 (2006), p. 289–332.

⁴⁷ Ezéchiél, Baron SPANHEIM, *Relation de la Cour de France en 1690*, ed. E. Bourgeois, Paris 1973, p. 116, 119–120.

⁴⁸ Louis de Rouvroy, duc de SAINT-SIMON, *Mémoires*, ed. A. de Boislisle, 41 vols., Paris, 1879–1928, vol. V, p. 14–15; vol. VI, p. 423–424.

members, male and female; so each of the prince's daughters, not just his wife, could be seated on a *tabouret* in the presence of the queen⁴⁹. This translated in the eighteenth century into the right of all daughters to be presented at court *before* they were married, again, as a means of distancing themselves from ›mere‹ duke's daughters. Publications stress that privileges were accorded to cadets as well as eldest sons, for example, the honour of having marriage contracts signed in the Cabinet du Roi, like the *princes du sang*⁵⁰. Two court insiders, Dangeau and Sourches, indicate through numerous examples that these princes had a solid hold on one of the most sought after privileges of the court: regular access to the sovereign. They had admittance to the *lever* and the *coucher*, and consistently featured in key public ceremonies of Louis XIV's monarchy, such as the reception of the Doge of Genoa in 1685, or the reception of the ambassadors from Siam in 1686⁵¹.

Their ascent was limited, however, by the growth in number of the extended royal family, as can be seen most clearly in the return of the *princes du sang* in representing the six lay peers at royal coronations of the eighteenth century⁵². Further limitations were placed on the recognition (or lack) by other courtiers, diplomats and officials. Spanheim considers only the princes of Lorraine and Savoy as proper *princes étrangers*, and only somewhat grudgingly the Bouillon, Rohan and Grimaldi; he notes that this distinction was highlighted in the promotion of the knights of the Saint-Esprit in 1688, where the princes of Lorraine marched in the procession ahead of the *ducs-et-pairs*, but behind the duc de Vendôme, a legitimated prince, which the comte de Soissons, a prince of Savoy, refused to do; meanwhile, the prince de Soubise (a Rohan) refused to march in his position as a *duc-et-pair*, the comte d'Auvergne (a La Tour d'Auvergne) refused the order outright, and the prince de Monaco (a Grimaldi) stayed conveniently away from court⁵³. Saint-Simon also disputes the genuine *princerie* of some of the newly minted princely families, such as the La Tour d'Auvergne⁵⁴. But so too did the princes of the older houses themselves. For example, in 1657, Charles de Lorraine, Duc d'Elbeuf, refused to sign his son's marriage contract with Mademoiselle de Bouillon, of the House of La Tour d'Auvergne⁵⁵. Officials were concerned

⁴⁹ The resulting strength of numbers forms the core of my argument in my book on the Lorraine-Guise. See SPANGLER, *The Society of Princes* (see n. 2), p. 46–51.

⁵⁰ See for example, Jean DU MONT and Jean ROUSSET DE MISSY, *Le cérémonial diplomatique des cours de l'Europe*, Amsterdam 1739, vol. I, p. 435–436.

⁵¹ See SPANGLER, *Society of Princes* (see n. 2), chapter 3.

⁵² At the coronation of Louis XI in 1461, all six peers were princes of the blood. From the 1560s, the six peers were represented increasingly by non-royal dukes, culminating in the coronation of Henri III (1575) with only two princes of the blood. The trend would be reversed entirely by the eighteenth century, however, and all six peers at the coronations of Louis XV and Louis XVI were once again princes of the blood. See the lists of coronation peers in the appendices of LEVANTAL, *Ducs et Pairs* (see n. 16).

⁵³ SPANHEIM, *Relation de la cour de France* (see n. 46), p. 106–108, 119–120.

⁵⁴ SAINT-SIMON, *Mémoires* (see n. 47), vol. XVI, p. 26.

⁵⁵ Parfait MAILLÉ, *Recherches sur Elbeuf. Esquisses ou silhouettes de ses seigneurs de la maison de Lorraine*, 3 vols., Elbeuf 1859–1863, vol. I, p. 126. Maillé does not give a source for this story, but the Duke's signature is not on the copy of the marriage contract in AN, T 199¹⁹.

about the pretensions of the old and new princes alike: a memoir from 1688, written for the King's minister Seignelay, remonstrates against both the comte d'Armagnac (a Lorraine) and the prince de Monaco adopting the style *tres haut & tres puissant prince monseigneur*, normally reserved for the Dauphin⁵⁶. Nevertheless, the gradual breakdown of the barriers between old and new by the end of the reign of Louis XIV eventually transformed the three families of Lorraine, La Tour and Rohan into a super-clan that would dominate the French court until the end of the monarchy⁵⁷.

Who were these new *princes étrangers*? Without going into full detail, we can provide a simple overview here. The Grimaldis are the most straightforward. The sovereignty of their rock at Monaco was formally recognised by the kings of Spain and France in the mid-seventeenth century, partly as a trade-off of a changing of alliances from one power to another⁵⁸. The others are more complicated. The La Tour d'Auvergne were an ancient French noble family from the Midi who exercised fragments of ancient feudal sovereignty in their viscounty of Turenne in the Limousin, then acquired the sovereign principality of Sedan and the duchy of Bouillon in the Ardennes by marriage⁵⁹. They published claims to princely status that were also founded on the sovereignty of the ancient house of Auvergne, and also by association from the house of La Marck-Cleves⁶⁰. Even more shaky were the claims of the house of Rohan, whose princely identity was traditionally derived as representatives of the last independent kings of Brittany, whose origins and descent lines are hazy; but recognition by the French crown was more likely to have hinged on the fact that the Rohans had a strong claim to the kingdom of Navarre should the house of Bourbon die out⁶¹. Finally, the La Trémoille, another ancient French noble lineage, with a solid power base in Poitou and Saintonge, defended their princely status as heirs to the Aragonese claim to the kingdom of Naples (in opposition to the Angevin claim, which was maintained by the House of Lorraine, or indeed by the House of France itself). Their status was sometimes recognised by the king of France, and sometimes not. They used the title prince de Tarente to indicate this status, as used by kings of Naples for their heirs in the fifteenth century⁶². Similarly complicated was the position of the dukes of Longueville. They possessed the sovereign principality of

⁵⁶ BNF, Clairambault 534, fol. 727.

⁵⁷ See below.

⁵⁸ For an overview for this and the following, see Simon HODSON, *Princes Etrangers at the French Court in the Seventeenth Century: the Grimaldi, the La Tour d'Auvergne, and the La Trémoille*, in: *The Court Historian*, vol. III, no. 1 (1998).

⁵⁹ Françoise de NOIRFONTAINE, *Les privilèges de la Vicomté de Turenne*, in: BARDET et al. (dir.), *Etat et société*, p. 420-435. Simon HODSON, *Politics of the Frontier. Henri IV, the Maréchal-Duc de Bouillon and the Sovereignty of Sedan*, in: *French History* 19 (2005), p. 413-439.

⁶⁰ Christofle JUSTEL, *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne*, Paris 1645, dedicated to »Tres-haut et tres-puissant prince, monseigneur«, the duc de Bouillon. Cf. WREDE, *Ohne Furcht und Tadel* (see n. 21), p. 98–105.

⁶¹ See above, note 7.

⁶² KMEC, *Across the Channel* (see n. 33), p. 210–216. See also Guy MASSIN LE GOFF, *Les droits des La Trémoille au royaume de Naples*, in: *L'Europe des Anjou*, Paris, 2001.

Neuchâtel in Switzerland, but were not usually regarded as *princes étrangers* in France; instead they strove for recognition as *princes du sang*, or at least as *princes légitimés*, as descendants of Louis d'Orléans, Bâtard de Dunois⁶³.

Some of the tiny sovereign territories that permitted a more solid hold on the title of prince were acquired by the old princely families in this period, just as they had for the new families. Some were located in the Ardennes and along the frontier between France and Lorraine: Château-Regnault and Commercy for the Lorraine-Guise, or nearby Charleville-Arches for the Gonzagas⁶⁴. In contrast, some princely dynasties considered more genuinely foreign held lands enclaved in France, notably the Nassaus as princes of Orange or counts of Saarwerden (in the Vosges). Individual Nassaus did spend time in France, notably as Calvinist military commanders in the sixteenth century, as did members of the Palatine House of Zweibrücken (or Deux-Ponts), but they were not considered *princes étrangers* in court parlance, as they did not possess significant estates within France or establish permanent cadet branches. As the regions of Lorraine and Alsace were incorporated into the French Kingdom, other princes came to reside at the French court in the eighteenth century whose princely titles derived from their position in the Holy Roman Empire⁶⁵. Several were indeed holders of Imperial immediate fiefs that were by this point enclaved within France: Salm, Saarwerden, Leiningen, Criechingen, Fénétrange (though of these only Salm was formally called a principality). Sovereignty here was often divided and sub-divided (as imperial fiefs following Germanic custom), which challenges our very notion of sovereignty itself⁶⁶. In the end any notion of sovereignty exercised by such princes came to an abrupt end during the revolutionary era when annexation of the estates of these so-called *princes possessionnés* provided the *casus belli* for the Emperor to declare war on France in 1792⁶⁷.

⁶³ P. ANSELME, *Histoire généalogique* (see n. 4), vol. I, p. 219-220, 222, specifies that the Longueville received letters patent from Charles IX as *princes du sang* in 1570 and 1571, but these were never registered formally; they were confirmed by Louis XIV in 1653, but again, not registered.

⁶⁴ We might also include here Yvois-Carignan, a duchy created by Louis XIV for the for the Savoie-Soissons after it was ceded to France in 1659, a remnant of the former semi-sovereign county of Chiny. The tiny lordship of Commercy, between Lorraine and Barrois, was held by the semi-sovereign imperial counts of Saarbrücken throughout the middle ages, repeatedly contesting claims of overlordship from the bishops of Metz, the dukes of Bar or the kings of France, then passed by succession and purchase through several non-sovereign families until it was sold (in propriety and in sovereignty) to a cadet of the Lorraine-Guise in 1665. Sovereignty issues are discussed for both of these (at length for Commercy) by Dom August CALMET, *Notice de la Lorraine*, qui comprend les duchés de Bar et de Luxembourg, l'électorat de Trèves, les trois évêchés Metz, Toul et Verdun, 2nd edn, Lunéville 1840, vol. I, p. 214-228, 454-456.

⁶⁵ Examples include Prince Guillaume-Henri de Nassau-Saarbrück, field marshal from 1744; Prince Frédéric-Jean de Salm-Kyrbourg, brigadier-general, 1771; and Prince Maximilien-Joseph de Deux-Ponts-Birkenfeld (the future king of Bavaria), major-general from 1780.

⁶⁶ The incredible complexity of shared sovereignty, as well as the true extent of regalian rights, can be seen in a fascinating micro-study by Jean GALLET, *Le bon plaisir du baron de Fénétrange*, Nancy 1990.

⁶⁷ François GENDRON, *Princes possessionnés*, in: F. GENDRON et al. (dir.), *Dictionnaire historique de la Révolution française*, Paris 1989, p. 863–864.

Other families who were permanently resident in France used princely titles attached to fiefs whose sovereignty was vague at best, and whose pretensions were never formally recognised by the monarch. These need to be studied far more carefully and systematically⁶⁸. As before, these were located along frontier zones: in the Pyrenees, Bidache for Gramont, Bédaille for Albret, and Luxe for Montmorency; in Artois and Picardie, Carency for La Vauguyon, Poix for Créqui, and Tingry for Luxembourg. In the formerly border regions of the Rhône Valley there was the aforementioned principality of Orange, but also the Dombes held by La Grande Mademoiselle (the duchesse de Montpensier) and later by the duc du Maine, with its own miniature parliament, its mint and its important printing press⁶⁹. This region was home to families using several less well-defined princely titles, such as Soyons for the ducs d'Uzès, Sault for the ducs de Lesdiguières, and Martigues for the Lorraine-Mercoeur, among others⁷⁰. There were also some princely titles that were attached to bishoprics and archbishoprics in frontier regions. Some, such as Metz, Cambrai, Besançon, or Strasbourg retained genuine semi-sovereign authority within their episcopal jurisdictions, akin to that exercised by prince-bishops of the Empire (as technically, some of them remained⁷¹); indeed some monasteries in border regions retained their former imperial princely status (Lure and Murbach for men, Remiremont and Andlau for women). Others were merely retained as memories of frontiers that no longer existed: the bishops of Viviers used the title prince de Donzère in Dauphiné; the Alpine bishops of Apt, Embrun and Grenoble all used a princely title⁷². As with the duchy-peerages, it is conceivable that these ephemeral titles were used to distinguish some of the archbishoprics from the ancient, yet in some cases quite small and insignificant ecclesiastical peerages, notably Noyon, a relic of a faded Frankish heartland, or the even older and less-defined title of primate employed by Bourges, Lyon and Sens when trying to outrank the other archbishops of France⁷³.

IV.

Further afield, in the eighteenth century, some French families were given honours and privileges as princes of the Empire. The Mancini ducs de Nevers were princes by inheritance

⁶⁸ A good, though brief, overview is provided by ANTONETTI, *Les princes étrangers* (see n. 2).

⁶⁹ Both Montpensier and Maine had short works dedicated to them on this subject: Samuel GUICHENON, *Histoire de la Souveraineté de Dombes*, Lyon 1662; and Claude Cachet de GARNERANS, *Abrégé de l'histoire de la souveraineté de Dombe*, Thoissey 1696. For the *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, see Alfred DESAUTELS, *Les Mémoires de Trévoux et le mouvement des idées au XVIIIe siècle (1701–1734)*, Rome 1956.

⁷⁰ These are listed on numerous websites dedicated to genealogy and heraldry of the early modern world, notably by the reliable scholar François VELDE (who cites well-known sources such as P. Anselme, Du Cange, and Moréri). But further research is required to verify the usages and privileges (if any) of these shadowy titles.

⁷¹ As examined by Franklin FORD, *Strasbourg in Transition, 1649-1789*, Cambridge, Mass. 1958.

⁷² See for example the *Lettres du cardinal Le Camus, évêque et prince de Grenoble (1632-1707)*, ed. P. INGOLD, Paris 1892.

⁷³ Joseph BERGIN, *Crown, Church and Episcopate under Louis XIV*, New Haven, Conn. 2004, p. 48–49.

from a Spinola heiress. Others were given princely rank by the emperor directly, for example the Maréchal-Duc de Belle-Isle in 1742. These had no sense of territoriality or real sovereignty, but were honorific, rewards for solidifying alliances or winning battles. Some of these families owned lands that were annexed to France (as with Epinoy and Bournonville, above): the Gorrevod, for example, were given an imperial princely title (1623) in the Franche-Comté which became part of France in 1678; their title soon after passed to the Bauffremont, from the marches of Lorraine and Burgundy, whose princely claims were then boosted through marriage in 1712 to the heiress of the ›royal‹ house of Courtenay, a distant offshoot of the French royal dynasty itself⁷⁴. Other imperial princely titles were given to individuals with close personal ties to the dukes of Lorraine as allies (and later kin) of the Habsburgs in Vienna: Phalsbourg and Lixin (fiefs in the Vosges), Vaudémont (a purely personal title), and in particular, Beauvau-Craon, obtained in 1722 for the favourite of Duke Léopold – the first three were all granted to members of the ducal house itself, and thus already of princely rank, while the Beauvau-Craon had been careful to stress their descent from the French royal house publicly for at least a century⁷⁵. Later instances of imperial princely rank given to French families with a trans-liminal nature include Broglie (1759, originally from the Piedmont), Montbarrey (1774, from Franche-Comté), and Béthune-Hesdigneul (1781, from Artois). These French imperial princes – even those with close personal ties to the French court in the reign of Louis XV, such as Beauvau-Craon – were not normally included in the lists of *princes étrangers*⁷⁶. Nor were princes of the Empire or of the Austrian Netherlands whose titles were much older, but who increasingly moved in French courtly circles by the eighteenth century: Croÿ, Issenghien, Berghes, Mérode. None of these bore any real sense of sovereignty; nevertheless, it can be argued that these personal princely links helped lubricate the wheels diplomatic policy in the mid-eighteenth century. What their ranks translated into for these families in practical terms – finance, careers, status – remains to be explored.

There were families who used the princely title at the French court that were entirely devoid of sovereignty, and on first consideration, noticeably distant from any frontier zone. Classified by Charles Loyseau as the ›princes simples‹⁷⁷, these individuals used ancient feudal titles held in their families for centuries with no feudal overlords aside from the king.

⁷⁴ P. ANSELME, *Histoire généalogique* (see n. 4), vol. V, p. 662 (Gorrevod); vol. IX-b (4th edn, 1868), (Bauffremont). For the Courtenay's mostly unsuccessful claims for royal recognition, see also Alice SAUNIER-SÉITÉ, *Les Courtenay*, Paris 1998.

⁷⁵ Scevole and Louys DE SAINTE-MARTHE, *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison de Beauvau, Justifiée par titres, histoires & autres bonnes preuves*, Paris 1626. See Jonathan SPANGLER, *Transferring Affections: Princes, Favourites and the Peripatetic Houses of Lorraine and Beauvau as Trans-Regional Families*, in: B. HAIDER-WILSON, W. MUELLE and W. D. GODSEY (ed.), *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie und Praxis: Traditionen und Perspektiven*, Vienna (forthcoming).

⁷⁶ ANTONETTI, *Les princes étrangers* (see n. 2), however, does include in his discussion the French branch of the princes of Jablonowski, cousins of Queen Marie Leszczyńska. He also includes the Beauvau-Craon, and even the family of the duc de Saint-Simon, as scions of the ancient Capetian house of Vermandois.

⁷⁷ Charles LOYSEAU, *Traité des seigneuries*, Châteaudun 1610.

In 1700, the intendant in Poitou and Saintonge was questioned by Louis XIV on the principalities in his jurisdiction. He replied that the lords of these estates did not enjoy any particular rights, any more than those of counts or marquises⁷⁸. It is worth noting, however, that these principalities were in fact mostly located in the relatively remote and undeveloped regions of Limousin, Périgord and Angoulême-Saintonge, and it is no mere coincidence that this region was indeed for centuries a border zone between the rival powers of England and France. As with the frontier between France and Germany, and France and the Low Countries, competition for sovereign favours in this region generated a disproportionate number of the grandest noble families of France, many of whom used a princely title, usually for the heir: Marcillac for La Rochefoucauld, Chalais for Talleyrand, Mortagne for Richelieu, Tonnay-Charente for Rochechouart, Talmond for La Trémoille, all in the frontier between Poitou and Aquitaine. Recognition of some of these as genuine was given by the Regent Anne of Austria, but only in time of crisis during the Fronde (the *affaire du Tabouret*), and was in most cases swiftly revoked⁷⁹. And while we should not take these claims to princely status too seriously, neither should we dismiss them entirely. They served as remnants or memories of formerly liminal spaces of the French kingdom. Moreover, an element of the original meaning of prince remained: while the eighteenth-century jurist La Roque defined principalities in France as a feudal title between duchies and counties – in fact he argued that some of the principalities should be considered as lower in rank than counties, as, for example, Marcillac was a fief of the county of Angoulême – yet in his opinion, what made these feudal dignities rise above their neighbours was that their holders were recognised as principal persons within the region, *qui a droit de commander*⁸⁰. This is an important aspect of the nature of princely status at its widest definition.

Some families who were not given full recognition claimed princely status as heirs of other, older princely families, and tried to assert, as the La Tour d’Auvergne had done, that such status was transmittable through a female. Some were successful, notably the Goyon de Matignon (originally from Normandy) who were recognised as sovereign princes of Monaco in 1715 following marriage to the Grimaldi heiress. Others were unsuccessful. The Chabot dukes of Rohan, holding this title by virtue of marriage to the heiress, tried to boost their princely credentials by using the traditional Breton title prince de Léon for their heir, but were not accorded the same rights at court as the genuine (that is, patrilineally descended) Rohans of the Soubise and Guémené branches⁸¹. The Montmorency-Luxembourg did the same with Tingry (in Artois), and were similarly disappointed in their pursuits of the privileges of a *prince étranger*⁸². Yet sometimes simple persistence wins out. The

⁷⁸ Lettres de Michel Bégon, cited by E.R. LABANDE (dir.), *Histoire du Poitou, du Limousin, et des Pays Charentais*, Toulouse 1976, p. 275.

⁷⁹ Discussed in the context of the La Trémoille in KMEC, *Across the Channel* (see n. 33, p. 206–210).

⁸⁰ Gilles André de LA ROQUE, sieur de la Lontière, *Traité de la noblesse et de toutes ses différentes especes*, nouvelle édition, Rouen 1735, p. 237.

⁸¹ SAINT-SIMON, *Mémoires*, vol. XIV, p. 134–166.

⁸² Guy ROWLANDS, *The Dynastic State and the Army under Louis XIV*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 327–329.

Montmorency were supported by claims to a unique title, *premier baron chrétien*⁸³, and by the more concrete fact that they had cousins across the frontier in the Spanish Netherlands who had borne princely titles since 1630⁸⁴. They boasted a long history of great wealth, high court office, and numerous intermarriages with princely families. Thus, regardless of a lack of formal recognition of a princely title by the French crown, by the late eighteenth century the Montmorency were indistinguishable in court nomenclature from the recognised princely houses: in addition to Tingry, they were known variously as the princes of Aigremont, Robecq, Logny, or Tancarville. Often, these names of (fairly ordinary) estates were hyphenated with the name Montmorency itself, which underlines firmly that the princely title was by this point connected to a dynasty rather than a place.

Was genuine princely status therefore concerned with family or with territory? Official texts refer specifically to a »quality« borne by such families, transmissible therefore to all its members.⁸⁵ We can continue to unravel this question by examining the unique exceptions and oddities. Boisbelle, in the very centre of France (Berry), was given to the duc de Sully and his heirs by Henri IV (and renamed Henrichemont in the King's honour), complete with rights of taxation, justice and coinage⁸⁶. But the estate had previously belonged to the Gonzague-Nevers (and before them the Cleves), so the princely rank was already attached, and the Béthune-Sully were never treated as princes at court. Even odder is the »kingdom of Yvetot« in Upper Normandy, held by several families of varying rank, including that of the poet Du Bellay in the sixteenth century, and descendants of the once semi-sovereign delphinal family d'Albon in the eighteenth; its »kings« exercised rights of justice and tax exemptions, but for no concrete reason beyond tradition⁸⁷.

V.

⁸³ According to La Chesnaye-Desbois, an early Montmorency baron was qualified as one of the »princes of the Kingdom« in a charter by King Philippe I (c.1076). François-Alexandre Aubert de LA CHESNAYE-DESBOIS and Jacques BADIÉ (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, 19 vols, Paris 1863–77, vol. XIV, cols. 374–376

⁸⁴ At the same time, this connection serves as a concrete example of the threat seen by sovereigns from families with trans-regional links: in the trial and execution in 1570 of Floris de Montmorency, baron de Montigny (younger brother of the Count van Hoorn), Philip II's wrath was fanned primarily by Montigny's correspondence and mutual aid agreements (for troops and money) with his uncle, Anne de Montmorency, the Constable of France. Geoffrey PARKER, *Philip II*, rev. edn. London 1988, p. 98.

⁸⁵ MORICE, *Mémoire pour servir de preuves* (see n. 35), col. 1366.

⁸⁶ Marie-Hélène MARTIN, *Henrichemont, ville du grand Sully et l'extraordinaire destin de la principauté de Boisbelle*, Montsûrs 1977.

⁸⁷ Nineteenth-century historians located specific documents that demonstrated the use of this title, starting in the late fourteenth century; but any actual practice of sovereign jurisdiction over the *franc-alleu* ended in the fifteenth century and was formally suppressed by the Parlement de Normandie and Henri II in 1555. See Augustin LABUTTE, *Histoire des rois d'Yvetot*, Paris 1871; re-examined recently by Yves-Marie BERCÉ, *Les dernières chances des alleux souverains*, in: F. LASSUS et al. (ed.), *Mélanges offerts au professeur Maurice Gresset. Des institutions et des hommes*, Besançon 2008, p. 29–42.

But what jurisdictional rights were held by the recognised *princes étrangers*? As stated above, the status of the foreign princes was complex because they were personally members of sovereign dynasties but at the same time held most of their properties as fiefs of the king of France. Crown jurisdiction extended to their lands, not to them as individuals. This can be illustrated by a legal case drawn from my study of the Lorraine-Guise, in which the prince d'Harcourt, the younger son of a *duc-et-pair* (Elbeuf) but not himself a peer, was pursued in the Paris city law-courts in 1685 for adultery. His identity was kept secret, however, since his status as a prince would have necessitated that his case be presented before the fully assembled Parlement of Paris, or in the King's Council itself⁸⁸. The lawsuit did not deal with any property he held in France, but with his person. But did the Parlement of Paris have jurisdiction over non-subjects? It was a contested space, deliberately cultivated by these families. Another example, on a larger scale, involved the archiepiscopal court in Malines and the Papal Rota in Rome, whose authority to judge the marital status of the fifth duke of Guise in the 1660s was vehemently challenged by the Parisian court⁸⁹. So, it benefitted the *princes étrangers* to accept the jurisdiction of the French judiciary system when it suited their interests.

Returning to the prince d'Harcourt, his title can also help us further clarify the issue of territorial versus personal princely status. As with other princely titles held by the Lorraine cadets in the eighteenth century – prince de Pons, prince de Marsan, prince de Lambesc – his title of prince made no claim to any sovereign nature of his estate (the county of Harcourt in Normandy), simply to the princely nature of the person who owned it. He was a prince because he was in the line of succession (however remote) to the sovereign duchies of Lorraine and Bar. The same is true for the prince de Soubise or the prince de Rochefort for the Rohans, or the prince de Turenne or the prince d'Auvergne for the La Tour d'Auvergne. Moreover, the same practice can be seen for the princes of the blood: neither of the estates of Condé or Conti were territorial principalities, nor was Lamballe, held by the legitimated branch of Bourbon-Penthièvre. Instead, these titles pointed to the *qualité* of the dynasty overall, and to the potential of the individual to succeed to a position of sovereignty, even if extremely unlikely. This is further underlined when we look again at those few titles of prince that were created by letters patent of various French monarchs: Joinville and Mercoeur for the Lorraine, Porcean for the Croÿ, and Guémené for the Rohan. In every instance, the family was of princely rank already. The title should be considered therefore as attaching princely status not to the estate specifically, but reflecting the status of the person who owned it. This is the real definition of princely status in *ancien régime* France, though it remains imperfect, as it does not adequately take into consideration the phantom princely titles mentioned above for grandee families like Talleyrand or La Rochefoucauld, except in the consideration that the individuals of these families were suitable by their birth to command.

⁸⁸ Detailed in BNF, Thoisy 95, *Requête* to the Lieutenant-Criminel de Paris by Nicolas de Chanterais, Sieur Dormoy, versus his wife, Catherine le Breton (c.1685).

⁸⁹ BNF, Ms. Fr. 16573, fol. 89, Memoir for Président de Harlay on the case of Guise versus Berghes.

VI.

It is clear, therefore, that the use of the title prince was variable in early modern France, from members of the ruling dynasty, to those exercising genuine sovereignty, however small, to members of sovereign families whose jurisdiction lay outside the kingdom, and to those with no real sovereignty, but whose ancestry allowed them to claim a share in the leadership of the kingdom. Privileges extended to French ›principalities‹ in terms of real estate meant little more than limited tax exemptions and local jurisdiction, but the more important princely privileges instead were attached to individuals and families, recognised not by law, but by the variable goodwill of the monarch. This then needed to be maintained, in large part through public display, notably printed media. Recent studies have scrutinised public manifestos issued by Bourbon princes in their quest to remain relevant in an increasingly centralised monarchy⁹⁰. More detailed work remains to be done, however, on the public identities of the other princes in France, through printed pamphlets, memoirs, or family genealogies. We can certainly perceive a sense of the princely order and its shifting loyalties and insecurities in the proclamations of rebel princes such as the comte de Soissons, the duc de Bouillon and the duc de Guise in 1641 – their primary goal was to remove Richelieu in order to restore access to the monarch, their natural right as princes⁹¹. A decade later, Guise's manifesto published in 1652 to justify his attempt to take the throne of Naples from the Spanish in 1647, stressed the independence of his actions based on his status as a member of the pan-European princely order⁹². Memoirs were published by Bouillon later in his career as a means of publicly justifying his activities and cultivating public favour; they even have a distinct scent of royalty in the subtitle, clear reference to the memoirs Louis XIV published for his own son⁹³. At the wider, dynastic, level, numerous genealogical histories were printed in the seventeenth century, displaying the princely claims of France's grandest magnate families: for example, *Histoire généalogique de la maison d'Auvergne* (1645); *Rangs et alliances de la maison de Rohan depuis six cents ans* (1647); *Histoire généalogique de la Maison Royale de Courtenay*

⁹⁰ Caroline BITSCH, *Vie et carrière d'Henri II de Bourbon, prince de Condé. Exemple de comportement et d'idées politiques au début du XVII^e siècle*, Paris 2008; Pierre GATULLE, *Gaston d'Orléans: Entre mécénat et impatience du pouvoir*, Seyssel 2012.

⁹¹ Manifeste des princes de la paix assemblez à Sedan, 2 July 1641, printed in: *Memoires de Monsieur de Montrésor. Diverses pieces durant le ministere du cardinal de Richelieu. [...] Affaires de Messieurs le comte de Soissons, ducs de Guise & de Boüillon*, Brussels 1665, p. 373–394.

⁹² Manifeste de Monseigneur le Duc de Guise. Touchant les particularités de son emprisonnement. & les raisons de sa jonction avec M. le Prince, s.l. 1652 [among other copies, BNF, L37 b 3029]. Reiterated in *Les memoires de feu Monsieur le duc de Guise*, Cologne, 1668. These, and other publications of Henri II de Lorraine, fifth duc de Guise, are the subject of a chapter by Michèle BENAITEAU to be published in J. SPANGLER et al. (ed.), *Aspiration, Representation and Memory: The Guise in Europe, 1506–1688* (forthcoming).

⁹³ *Les memoires de Henry de La Tour d'Auvergne, souverain duc de Boüillon: Adressez a son fils le prince de Sedan*, Paris, 1666. The memoirs of Louis XIV for the Dauphin, however, were not published.

(1661); *Histoire généalogique de la maison de La Trémoille* (1668); and so on, each with a variant on the sub-title *justifiée par chartes, titres et histoires anciennes et autres preuves authentiques*⁹⁴.

A second indicator of the defence of princely identity can be seen in marriage patterns, meticulously observed in memoirs and journals by noble courtiers and urban bourgeois alike. Published genealogical histories from the period reveal that endogamy within the princely families increased in the reign of Louis XIV, and that during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI, intermarriage between the houses of Lorraine, Rohan and La Tour d'Auvergne rose to the point of exclusivity⁹⁵. This super-clan's multiple arches supported itself, protecting its unsurpassable rank and its extensive properties from any outside incursion. This not only included lands and pensions cited in marriage contracts and wills, but also official posts, military regiments, and major court offices, such as the post of Gouvernante des Enfants de France, which passed from one female relation to another within the super-clan for nearly a century. Occasional exogamous marriages were brokered with other princes from outside the normal French courtly sphere, for example soldiers and diplomats who came to reside in Paris such as the prince de Salm-Kyrbourg or the duc de Deux-Ponts, but these were anomalies, and these Rhenish imperial princes usually married within their own endogamous super-clans. Another super-cluster that frequently interacted with the French court in the eighteenth century was that of Ligne-Arenberg-Croÿ based in the Austrian Netherlands⁹⁶.

Increasingly, such families found themselves at home at the court of Versailles, but equally in Vienna or Brussels. There is a frequently quoted remark attributed to Cardinal Mazarin that *au galant homme, tout pays est patrie*⁹⁷, which succinctly conveys the feeling of these trans-national elites in Europe in this period. It also reflects the persistence of an internationality of the community of Christian warrior elites discussed above, especially as the quote sounds so close to a phrase from Ovid: »Any country is homeland for the strong, as the sea is for fish«⁹⁸. With connections and the right sort of fins, one can swim anywhere. The prince with interests and knowledge of humanists, painters, and musicians, and kinship

⁹⁴ A cursory search on Google Books reveals numerous publications of a similar nature: Luxembourg (1619), Montmorency (1624), Beauvau-Craon (1626), Béthune (1639), Harcourt (1662), La Rochefoucauld (1675), etc.

⁹⁵ Percentages of endogamy rise from the earlier period to the later period: 13 to 25% for the Lorraine, 20 to 31% for the La Tour d'Auvergne, and, most dramatically, 13 to 44% for the Rohan. For marriage strategies of the French court nobles in general, see Leonhard HOROWSKI, *Die Belagerung des Thrones. Machtstrukturen und Karrieremechanismen am Hof von Frankreich 1661–1789*, Ostfildern 2012, p. 315–350, 438–450.

⁹⁶ See SPANGLER, *Those in Between* (see n. 10), p. 144–147.

⁹⁷ Quoted in works by Geoffrey Parker, Geoffrey Treasure, and Georges Livet, among others. An early version appears in Italian (»ogni stanza ad Galant huomo è Patria«) in Gregorio LETI, *La Vie de Don Pedro Giron, Duc d'Ossone, Viceroy de Sicile et de Naples*, Amsterdam 1707, part I, book I, p. 17.

⁹⁸ »Omne solum forti patria est, ut piscibus aequor«, OVID, *Fasti*, I. 493. Naturally, humanists attuned to the classics strengthened this idea of universality, as seen for example in the title of the eminently famous book by Erasmus, *Institutio Principis Christiani* (1516), dedicated to the most trans-national of all princes, the future Emperor Charles V.

connections across Europe could feel at home anywhere, especially once the accepted language of court culture became French continent-wide. The career of the prince de Ligne in the late eighteenth century makes this abundantly clear⁹⁹.

But this was certainly not novel for the eighteenth century: one of the most significant contributions to the flow of international politics and diplomacy in the early modern period had been that of the northern European Calvinist princely network of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, an aid to the Dutch Republic in its struggles against Spain, and a threat to the centralisation efforts of Cardinal Richelieu in France. The tightly inter-connected Protestant clans of Orange-Nassau, Hessen-Kassel, La Tour d'Auvergne, Rohan and La Trémoille transcended political boundaries, and ascended to even greater heights with the integration into their kinship cluster of the electoral house of the Palatinate and the royal house of Stuart¹⁰⁰. The Thirty Years War brought an end to this network's strength, and by the end of the seventeenth century all of the *princes étrangers* in France had converted to Catholicism without exception¹⁰¹. The Catholic Church provided a basis for trans-national movement in Europe as well, Mazarin himself providing the archetype, but the Rohans took up the challenge in the eighteenth century and used their *prince étranger* status to help bridge the gap between France and the Empire in their dual role as French prelates and princes of the Empire (as successive prince-bishops of Strasbourg)¹⁰². The military of course continued to provide a clear channel for trans-national migration, as seen clearly in the career paths of Charles of Lorraine, prince de Commercy, and his close friend, Prince Eugene of Savoy¹⁰³. Snubbed by Louis XIV who increasingly guarded the supremacy of the French crown over all people residing at his court, foreign or not, these two princes gravitated to the Imperial court in Vienna, where, as with the Church in Rome, an entrenched tradition of de-centralised national identity and incumbent cosmopolitanism continued to support a more independent sphere of activity for princely families into the eighteenth century, and indeed beyond: princely titles continued to be granted in both Vienna and Rome well into the nineteenth century¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁹ Philip MANSEL, *Prince of Europe: The Life of Charles Joseph de Ligne (1735-1814)*, London, 2003.

¹⁰⁰ For a recent study of this network, see Simon HODSON, *The Power of Female Dynastic Networks. A brief study of Louise de Coligny, princess of Orange, and her stepdaughters*, in: *Women's History Review* 16/3 (2007), p. 335-351; and KMEC, *Across the Channel* (see n. 33).

¹⁰¹ Of the three Protestant *prince étranger* families, the Rohans went into exile rather than convert (BOULAIRE, *Les Rohan*, see. n. 5, p. 85-102); Bouillon converted in 1633 to marry a Catholic in Brussels, but his brother Turenne famously held out until his shocking change of heart in 1668 (Susan ROSA, »Il était possible aussi que cette conversion fût sincère.« Turenne's Conversion in Context, in: *French Historical Studies* 18/3 [1994], p. 632-666); and the La Trémoille moved back and forth before definitively »abjuring heresy« in 1670 (KMEC, *Across the Channel*, see n. 33, p. 23, 139; WREDE, *Ohne Furcht und Tadel*, see n. 21, p. 64-68).

¹⁰² Four Rohans succeeded one another in Strasbourg from 1704 to 1801.

¹⁰³ For Commercy, see SPANGLER, *Society of Princes* (see n. 10), p. 245-248. Derek MCKAY, *Prince Eugene of Savoy*, London 1977.

¹⁰⁴ Some of the Pontifical titles were given to prominent French families: Polignac (1820), Clermont-Tonnerre (1823), La Tour d'Auvergne-Lauraguais (1859), and others. See Louis DE MAGNY, *Armorial des princes, ducs*,

Markers of identity – the sense of a princely order in memoirs and manifestos, the endogamous marriage patterns of princes within France, and with princely families in the Empire and elsewhere – meant that families such as these were ideally situated to move around as necessary to survive political or social change. This was not of course guaranteed. The journal of the duc de Croÿ, a prince of the Empire, enables us to see this clearly¹⁰⁵. Despite his ancient and exalted pedigree in the Austrian Netherlands, his family had rarely appeared at the French court before his arrival in the 1730s, and he thus had to establish *crédit*, as any other courtier. As a prince, *il revendiquait comme un droit naturel de partager l'intimité du roi*, but the favour of Louis XV was elusive, and Croÿ had to make several attempts before he was admitted to the *honneurs de la cour* or given top positions in the military and household hierarchies¹⁰⁶. Nevertheless, he did get them, eventually, which would not have been the case for the average foreigner without his dynastic credentials. Others from this society of princes displayed trans-aulic flexibility in order to survive annexation and revolution. Just as the ducal house of Lorraine moved to Vienna and transformed itself into the House of Habsburg-Lorraine to survive French aggression in the 1740s, so too did their junior Lorraine cousins during the emigration of the 1790s: both the prince de Lambesc and his brother the prince de Vaudémont moved to Vienna and were rewarded with military posts, pensions, and significantly, recognition of status, as princes of the blood imperial¹⁰⁷. Thomas Kaiser has highlighted how the foreignness of the *princes étrangers* once again came into question (for the first time since the 1580s) during the French Revolution, when the house of Lorraine's kinship connections with Marie-Antoinette now discredited them in the eyes of the French nation¹⁰⁸. Lambesc himself was said to have made himself as Austrian as possible in Vienna, pretending to forget the French language¹⁰⁹. Indeed, legal documents from the Restoration period paint Lambesc as a foreigner unworthy of restitution of his French estates¹¹⁰. A Rohan, the prince de Guémené, also went to Vienna during the emigration, and was also given positions within the Austrian military and court hierarchy; he was created a prince of the Empire, one of the last, in an effort to secure his status¹¹¹. Neither

marquis, barons et comtes romains en France, créés de 1815 à 1890, et des titres pontificaux conférés en France par les papes, souverains du Comtat-Venaissin, Paris 1890.

¹⁰⁵ Emmanuel de CROÿ-SOLRE, *Journal inédit du duc de Croÿ (1718–1784)*, ed. E.H. de Grouchy, P. Cottin, 4 vols., Paris 1906. On the house of Croÿ and especially the duke Emmanuel, see WREDE, *Ohne Furcht und Tadel* (see n. 21), p. 135–143.

¹⁰⁶ Bernard HOURS, *Louis XV et sa cour. Le roi, l'étiquette et le courtisan*, Paris 2002, p. 154–159 (cit. p. 156).

¹⁰⁷ Alexandrine Prévost de la Boutetière, Baronne DU MONTET, *Souvenirs de la Baronne du Montet, 1785–1866*, Paris 1904, p. 168. According to a note written to foreign minister Choiseul, Lambesc had already been treated as a prince of the blood when he visited Vienna in 1770: Thomas KAISER, *Ambiguous Identities: Marie-Antoinette and the House of Lorraine from the Affair of the Minuet to Lambesc's Charge*, in: D. GOODMAN (ed.), *Marie-Antoinette. Writings on the Body of a Queen*, New York 2003, p. 171–198, esp. 178.

¹⁰⁸ KAISER, *Ambiguous Identities* (see n. 107), p. 188–189.

¹⁰⁹ DU MONTET, *Souvenirs* (see n. 107), p. 36–37.

¹¹⁰ BNF, Factum 17253, *Mémoire contre très haut et très puissant prince Charles Eugène, Prince de Lorraine et de Lambesc, Feld-Maréchal en Autriche* (1822).

¹¹¹ BOULAIRE, *Les Rohan* (see n. 5), p. 285.

Lambesc nor Rohan returned to France after the Revolution, and although Lambesc left no descendants, Rohan did; they simply became Austrians.

In sum, the trans-aulic identity of the foreign princes indicates someone who is able to move from court to court easily. And while some princes required careful treatment by monarchs due to the potential that they might someday take on a sovereign throne, others were not ever realistically going to rise to such heights. The status of the *princes étrangers* was never written in to French law; instead it relied on the situation of the moment, the reception of the court and courtiers, and the personal favour of individual monarchs. This leaves one final question: why would French monarchs condone or even cultivate powerful magnates whose claims to sovereign status clashed with the increasingly unitary nature of absolute monarchy? In the end we can conclude that French monarchs recognised that being attended by and intimate with senior courtiers who considered themselves both »princely« and »foreign« projected an image of the highest majesty for the Bourbon monarchy. This was in clear emulation of royal stylings of power from the ancient world, the king of kings, an emperor above princes, not unlike the courts of the holy roman emperor or the pope, whose vassals included kings and princes. To outshine its rivals, the Bourbon monarchy encouraged and defended the pretensions of its grandest courtiers, employed them as leaders in the household, government, military and the church, and supported their kinship and patronage networks thereby extending its own influence across political and cultural boundaries.