

Chapter 13

Huguenots in the Army of Savoy-Piedmont Protestant Soldiers and Civilians in the Savoyard State in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century¹

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From the seventeenth to the eighteenth century Catholic and Protestant states shared a common course of action by deciding to enrol professional soldiers and officers who were recruited from a wide international market. After the Thirty Years' War, bodies of itinerant mercenaries survived but became increasingly specialised. In part this reflects and emphasises the consolidation of migration routes used by soldiers across Europe.² Among those who played an important role in this typical form of military service in the early modern period, as illustrated by the studies referred to in this chapter, were Huguenots affected by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. This chapter explores the movements of some of them as they travelled to one of France's neighbours, Savoy-Piedmont, which, from the late seventeenth century onwards, had become increasingly independent of the earlier political influence exerted by its powerful neighbour.³ The study also explains how the presence of Huguenot soldiers, and Protestants in general, fits into a Savoyard social fabric that also welcomed other categories of Protestant groups employed in lay professions.

I

In order to understand this phenomenon, it is important to go back to the sixteenth century when the territories of Savoy-Piedmont became a target for migratory waves

1 Translated by Lucinda Byatt.

2 It is difficult to provide a concise bibliography on this subject which has produced a number of studies. For a synthesis that is historiographically up to date, see J. Black, *European Warfare, 1660–1815* (London: UCL Press, 1994) and *European Warfare, 1494–1660* (London: Routledge, 2002).

3 G. Symcox, *Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard state (1675–1730)* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983); C. Storrs, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy, 1690–1720* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).

of Protestants from France and Geneva. This led to the birth of the Waldensian enclave, which has survived to the present day, in a mountainous area that follows the curve of the Alps and comprises the Chisone, Pellice and Germanasca valleys.⁴

The Waldensians, namely the remnants of the medieval sect who had survived continuing condemnation and persecution, had already settled in Piedmontese territory by the time of the French occupation of Piedmont (1536–59). Therefore, when Emanuele Filiberto regained possession of Savoy-Piedmont in 1559, the Waldensian presence already represented a political problem. There are no specific studies on this aspect, but traces exist of the degree to which Lutheran and Calvinist doctrines had penetrated the Savoy aristocracy and even the court of Turin itself through the influence of its Duchess, the French Princess, Marguerite de Valois.⁵ As for south-western Piedmont, in the areas around Cuneo and Pinerolo, various branches of the Reformed movement had joined the Cathar-Waldensian settlements. Cuneo, a city close to France and the marquisate of Saluzzo (which had been affected by the spread of Protestant ideas before it was annexed to the Savoy-Piedmontese territories), offered fertile grounds for contact with Protestants.⁶ Trade with Provence and Switzerland, and the frequent transit of armies comprising considerable numbers of Lutheran and Calvinist French soldiers had fostered these exchanges, perhaps more so than in other areas of Piedmont. Maximilien-Henri, Marquis de Saint-Simon, was not inventing anything when, in his *Histoire de la guerre des Alpes* (History of the War of the Alps: a late eighteenth-century work that described the military campaigns of the War of the Austrian Succession, and focused in particular on the siege of Cuneo in 1744), he used the city's sixteenth-century history to underline the tenacity of a small, but hardened group of Huguenot settlers. According to Saint-Simon, when Emanuele Filiberto made his first ducal entrance into Cuneo in 1561 all the subjects came to pay homage to him, except for those from the Angrogna and Luserna valleys, whose disobedience was incited by Huguenots who had arrived from France. Between 1575 and 1576 the Duke was again welcomed to the city with his son, Carlo Emanuele, and again – as Saint-Simon observed – the Huguenots who had settled in the surrounding valleys caused trouble.⁷

4 On the history of the Waldensian community in Piedmont, see essays published in A. de Lange (ed.), *Dall'Europa alle valli valdesi. Atti del convegno 'Il Glorioso Rimpatrio 1689–1989'* (Turin: Società di studi valdesi, 1990); G. P. Romagnani (ed.), *La Bibbia, la coccarda e il tricolore. I valdesi fra due Emancipazioni 1798–1848* (Turin: Claudiana, 2001).

5 P. Merlin, *Emanuele Filiberto. Un principe tra il Piemonte e l'Europa* (Turin: SEI, 1995), pp. 238–67.

6 Having been occupied since 1588, the marquisate of Saluzzo was annexed to Piedmont in 1601: see M. Fratini (ed.), *L'annessione sabauda del Marchesato di Saluzzo. Tra dissidenza religiosa e ortodossia cattolica. Secoli XVI–XVIII* (Turin: Claudiana, 2004).

7 H. de Saint-Simon, *Histoire de la guerre des Alpes* (Amsterdam, 1770), pp. 214–15. The author was *aide-de-camp* to Louis-François de Bourbon, Prince de Conti (1717–76), the French commander who, together with the Spaniard Jayme Miguel de Gusman, Marquis de La Mina (1689–1767), led the French and Spanish army against the Savoy troops in the campaign of 1744. On the spread of the Reformation in Cuneo, see P. Bianchi and A. Merlotti,

In response to strong pressure exerted by the allies, first Spanish and then French, and in order to avoid upsetting the equilibrium created by the climate of the Counter-Reformation in the various Italian states, Emanuele Filiberto (1553–80) and his successor, Carlo Emanuele I (1580–1630), finally undertook proper military campaigns to repress the heterodox minorities residing inside the duchy and along the border with France.⁸ By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, these campaigns had alternated with phases of temporary compromise during which the Waldensians were granted the right to worship, to build schools and to convene synods on the condition that they abstained from proselytising to the Catholic population.

The real political turning point, at both a domestic and international level, was not reached before the reign of Vittorio Amadeo II as duke (1684–1713) and subsequently king (1713–30). France's growing interference in the affairs of Savoy-Piedmont had become a form of protection that was overly oppressive and, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Vittorio Amadeo felt that he could not simply obey. In 1685 Louis XIV had ordered the Piedmontese ruler to crush the Waldensian community, but although at first he was unable to oppose this request, Vittorio Amadeo II soon turned the presence of the Waldensian minority to his advantage by entering an alliance with the United Provinces and Britain.⁹

Between the summer and autumn of 1685, a considerable number of Huguenots chose to travel from France to Geneva, passing through Piedmont and staying in houses in those Piedmontese valleys that had for years welcomed the Waldensians. A community of Huguenots, whose livelihood depended not on arms but on trade, settled around Nice where, in spite of the ban of 1685, they succeeded in surviving underground, thanks above all to contacts with England. The then Governor of Nice, Don Antonio di Savoia (1620–88), one of Duke Carlo Emanuele I's illegitimate sons, was given the task of ordering a house-to-house search but was eventually forced to give his tacit consent to the undisturbed continuation of the valuable economic activities in the area around the port. In October 1685 Don Antonio wrote to Vittorio Amadeo that every day fugitives arrived from France who were heading for Piedmont, many of whom were determined to reach Germany (*alamagna*).¹⁰

Cuneo in età moderna. Città e Stato del Piemonte d'antico regime (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2002), pp. 79–103.

8 P. Bianchi, 'La riorganizzazione militare del Ducato di Savoia e i rapporti del Piemonte con la Francia e la Spagna. Da Emanuele Filiberto a Carlo Emanuele II', in *Guerra y Sociedad en la Monarquía Hispánica. Política, Estrategia y Cultura en la Europa Moderna (1500–1700)*. Congreso internacional de historia militar, Madrid 9–12 March 2005 (Madrid, 2006).

9 On these aspects, see the studies published in de Lange (ed.), *Dall'Europa alle valli valdesi*, in particular G. Symcox, 'The Waldensians in the Absolutist State of Victor Amadeus II' (pp. 237–50) and R. Oresko, 'The Diplomatic Background to the Glorioso Rimpatrio: The Rupture Between Victor Amadeus II and Louis XIV (1688–1690)' (pp. 251–78).

10 On Don Antonio and on the situation in Nice, see P. Bianchi, 'Principi, militari, cortigiani: gli illegittimi dei Savoia fra esercito, diplomazia e cariche curiali', in P. Bianchi and L. C. Gentile (eds), *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna* (Turin, 2006).

In January 1686, pandering to Louis XIV's continued demands, Vittorio Amadeo revoked the previous measures of tolerance granted to the Waldensians; but, from 1687 onwards, his policy started to assume tones that were more and more clearly anti-French.¹¹ At the end of August 1689, a band of nearly 1,000 Huguenots and Waldensians, who had left Piedmont under the guidance of the pastor Henri Arnaud, set out from Geneva in a march that became known in Protestant tradition as the *glorieuse rentrée*. The return of this group of Protestants to Piedmont was in fact encouraged by the Duke of Savoy himself, who used the event to rupture the alliance with France. The sovereign had not only started secret negotiations with the Waldensians but had already entered into a military alliance with the Swiss cantons, well aware that William III was closely watching the affairs of the Piedmontese community. All this helped to prompt the Duke of Savoy to intervene in the War of the League of Augsburg (1690–96), with the aim of freeing Piedmont from French hegemony, but also with a view to gaining favour with the Protestant powers. Therefore, in 1694 he granted limited freedom of worship to the Waldensians, marking a return to the situation prior to 1686. By doing so, he opened the way to a partial absorption of Waldensian soldiers in the Savoy-Piedmont army fighting against the French, and also for the settlement in Turin of a new group of Protestants.¹²

The operations against the French army under Marshal Catinat exploited the widespread popular dislike of the invaders. Alongside a regiment of volunteers recruited in Mondovì (a city that, until 1690, had opposed ducal rule and had witnessed open anti-Savoy uprisings), the Waldensians were initially organised into an irregular battalion and later enrolled into two standing regiments together with other Protestants and predominantly French refugees from Switzerland.¹³

The role of the *religionari* (an expression used to describe Protestants in general, but which often referred to French Calvinists alone), most of whom were paid directly by the States General of the United Provinces or by the English crown, was again exploited by Vittorio Amadeo II during the war of the Spanish Succession (1702–13). At the end of the war, Savoy policy again oscillated between the temptation to react and the adoption of greater caution, but any sign of renewed repression of the Protestant minorities was met with complaints and pressure from Britain. In this context, the actions of the English representative in Turin, John Molesworth, finally led to a decree being passed in 1730 in which it was established that Piedmontese Waldensians could worship freely (including giving sermons and holding meetings

11 I. Soffietti, 'La legislazione sabauda sui valdesi dal 1685 al 1730', in de Lange (ed.), *Dall'Europa alle valli valdesi*, pp. 279–92.

12 P. Bianchi, 'Militari, banchieri, studenti. Presenze protestanti nella Torino del Settecento', in P. Cozzo, F. De Pieri and A. Merlotti (eds), *Valdesi e protestanti a Torino. XVIII–XX secolo* (Turin, 2005), pp. 41–65.

13 On the various aspects of the late seventeenth-century revolts in Savoy territories and on the development of the political conditions that led to the anti-French choice made by Vittorio Amadeo II during the Nine Years' War, see the useful studies in G. Lombardi (ed.), *La guerra del sale (1680–1699). Rivolte e frontiere del Piemonte barocco* (3 vols, Milan: Angeli, 1986). Among the various studies, it is worth mentioning that by G. Symcox, 'Two Forms of Popular Resistance in the Savoyard State of the 1680s: The Rebels of Mondovì and the Vaudois' (vol. 1, pp. 275–90).

of pastors) solely in the Pellice and Chisone valleys; diplomatic pressure was also applied in the 1690s during the Nine Years' War by English and Dutch ambassadors. They were entitled to trade and attend fairs outside these boundaries provided that they did not move there and did not use the occasion to spread the Reformed faith; could work on Catholic feast days, but only in their own homes; were obliged to negotiate with foreigners through the sovereign; and were able to set up schools and publish books on religious subjects in their respective residential centres provided they avoided mixing with or involving Catholics.



Map 1 The Savoyard State in 1713, after the Peace of Utrecht

The outbreak of the war of the Polish Succession (1733–8) a few years later again saw the involvement of various groups of Waldensians from Piedmont, on this occasion not fighting to defend their own lands but rather as allies of the French troops occupying the Imperial possessions of Lombardy and Emilia. The Waldensians were also engaged, both as irregular companies and standing troops, in the last war that Piedmont fought during the first half of the century, the war of the Austrian Succession (1740–8), again as part of the alliance against the French.¹⁴

The decision to make ‘heretics’ and Catholics fight side-by-side caused a variety of confessional reactions. The Waldensians for their part continued to boast of their invincible tradition as militiamen; this was countered by the growing loyalty of the Piedmontese *La Regina* (Queen’s) infantry regiment established in 1734 and described as a compact regiment made up of Waldensians alone. In fact, the troops of the regiment did not include Waldensian soldiers solely, but also Catholic militia. The percentage of *religionari*, in this as in other regiments serving Savoy, changed considerably from year to year. In other words, these were military units whose religious physiognomy was far from homogeneous, being instead conditioned by contingent factors such as intermittent recruiting. The Rietman, Guibert, Ghidt, du Pasquier, Roquin, Thonatz, Rehbinder, Schulenburg and de Portes infantry regiments, named after the men who commanded them, welcomed both Lutherans and Huguenots.¹⁵ De Portes, in particular, raised and commanded a regiment officered and manned by French refugees in Savoy service.

14 On the difference between the commissioned army (made up of career soldiers), ancient bodies of militia (introduced into the Savoy troops in the late sixteenth century) and provincial regiments (units that were recruited only occasionally, and were introduced from 1713–14), see P. Bianchi, *Onore e mestiere. Le riforme militari nel Piemonte del Settecento* (Turin: Silvio Zamorani Editore, 2002).

15 Johan Rietman commanded the Swiss Kalbermatten infantry regiment from 21 December 1731 to 1744. The Swiss Guibert Regiment of Infantry (‘the fighting regiment’), was commanded by Alexander Guibert de Saissac from 10 November 1733 to 1746. Franz Frederick Ghidt commanded a Swiss infantry regiment from 24 November 1733 till it was disbanded in 1737. Jacques du Pasquier commanded a Swiss infantry regiment from 24 November 1733 to 1737, when it was disbanded. Albert Louis Roquin de Suerdon commanded a Swiss infantry regiment from 14 November 1733 to 1737; thereafter, its command passed to Jean Rodolfe von Diesbach (from 17 May 1737) thence to Augustine Roquin (from 10 April 1744). Conrad Thonatz commanded this Swiss infantry regiment from 15 March 1734 to 1737. Karl Frederick, Baron von Bourgsdorff commanded a German infantry regiment from 20 December 1723; thereafter, its command passed to Frederick Wilhelm, Baron von Leutrum (from 10 January 1749), then Karl Heinrich von Wangenheim (from 12 July 1755), and Ludwig Anton, Baron von Brempt (from 10 December 1763). Commanders of the German Schulenburg (Schoulembourg) or *royal allemand* infantry regiment, 1695–1798 include Christopher Daniel Birkoltz, Baron von der Schulenburg (from 3 June 1729), Heinrich Hasswich Falchemberg, Baron von der Schulenburg (from 23 March 1754), Hernst Frederick von Leuthen (from 7 July 1757) and Daniel Gotfried Zietten (from 17 December 1763). Existing from 1703, the de Portes regiment of foreign infantry was commanded by Louis de Portes from 4 November 1703 to 1739. Thereafter, its command passed to Pierre Audibert (from 10 March 1739), then Jean du Monfort de Varache (from 6 April 1746) and Eugene Alexandre de Sury (from 16 November 1769).

Some of the oldest Savoyard regiments were associated with Huguenots. The Savoy Regiment was first raised in 1624 as the *régiment de Fleury* with a strength of 1,500 men in 15 companies, all French with some Protestants among them. In 1640 it became the *régiment française du S.A.R.* (French regiment of His Royal Highness) only changing its name in 1664 to become the *régiment du Savoye du S.A.R.* It ranked second in order of seniority and by century's end the officer *corps* was resolutely Savoyard and Piedmontese with its commanders drawn from the high aristocracy.¹⁶ The Savoyard *régiment du marine* was commanded by a possible Huguenot from 1728 to 1734 – Colonel Jacob d'Alerthon (commissioned 25 April 1728). Other units commanded by men with French-sounding names were actually loyal, and ultra-Catholic, Savoyards: for example, between 1739 and 1742, Paul Seyssel, Baron de La Serre (commissioned 14 April 1739), commanded the *régiment d'Aoste*. Some other colonels may well have had refugee origins, including Jean Augustin Gouett, who commanded the *régiment de Nice* from 16 April 1739. Similarly, Jean Jacques du Paquier (or Paquier), was colonel of a Savoy regiment bearing his name in 1733, having previously served Spain. He and three brothers reached the rank of lieutenant-general, major and captain in Savoyard service, but his regiment was dissolved by Carlo Emanuele III in 1739 and it remains unclear whether the family's origins lay in the French Protestant diaspora.¹⁷

Three commanders of Savoyard regiments were undoubtedly of Huguenot origin. The most prominent of them was Louis de Portes, who became a general of Infantry and Governor of Alessandria. His family, originally from Dauphiné, migrated to Lausanne, Switzerland, due to their Protestant faith and Louis de Portes entered Savoyard service as a cadet in the *corps* of *gentilshommes*, then commanded a regiment in 1690. In 1699 he became a naturalised Swiss citizen in the canton of Bern, and in 1703 raised a regiment composed of French *rifugiati* or refugees in the service of Savoy. He was successively a major-general (1709), lieutenant-general (1717), and general (1720), before being raised to the title of Count of Verriè in Savoy. He did not convert to Catholicism and retired to Geneva where he later died.¹⁸ Two Huguenots of slightly lesser standing include Jean Pierre Audibert, a lieutenant-general in Savoy and *bourgeois de Vevai* in France by origin. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes he was naturalised in the canton of Béarn, having come from Languedoc and been a refugee by cause of his religion.¹⁹ Alexandre Guibert de Seissac was born in Guienne where he was eventually proscribed due to his religion at the time of the revocation. He abandoned his homeland in favour of Switzerland. Afterwards he joined the Savoyard army and commanded the ostensibly

16 The names of Seyssel, Chabod de Saint-Maurice, Clermont, Della Chiesa and du Verger all belong to Savoyard or Piedmontese families, from the high aristocracy. They were not French, but faithful subjects of the Savoyard dynasty.

17 F. Girard, *Histoire abrégée des officiers suisses qui se sont distingués aux services étrangers dans des grades supérieurs* (3 vols, Fribourg: Louis Piller, 1781–2), vol. 2, pp. 189, 289.

18 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 227–9.

19 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 47–8.

Swiss infantry regiment, called ‘the fighting regiment’, that bore his name from 10 November 1733 to 1746.²⁰

II

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the recruitment of foreign officers was used by the rulers of Savoy-Piedmont not only as a means of guaranteeing professional leadership for the troops but also to reduce the claims made by the old local military aristocracy. The role played by a number of figures from German-speaking areas – who were generically known as *alemanni* or Germans – was particularly important in this sense. The preferential treatment received by Swiss troops over the past two hundred years or so had been gradually eroded by soldiers recruited from German and northern European states. Some names have become linked not only to the military history of the Savoy-Piedmont domains but also to that of other European countries. Their international scope and itinerant professionalism marks them as representative figures akin to Huguenot soldiers who were often of lesser standing in Savoy.

A case in point, for example, is that of the Schulenburg family, descendants of one of the many branches of a dynasty originating in Brandenburg who, from the late fifteenth century onwards, sent officers to the German, Italian and English courts.²¹ The Schulenburg distinguished themselves in Piedmont during the first half of the eighteenth century. Johann Matthias was a brigadier in the Savoy army from 1698 to 1711; during the same period he was also appointed lieutenant-general (in 1702) of Augustus II of Poland’s troops, and then moved to the Republic of Venice in 1715. His brother, Daniel Bodo, and nephew, Ludwig Ferdinand, then followed him to Italy: the former joined the Venetian troops and was eventually recruited into the Polish army; the latter was engaged by the Emperor to fight in Lombardy in 1735 and in the 1747 expedition against Genoa.²² In 1723 another Schulenburg, Karl, moved to Piedmont. These were third and fourth cousins of Levin Friedrich, who died in Turin in 1729 at the age of 58, having been appointed marshal, general of artillery and Governor of Alba, as well as being sent on delicate missions to Hanover and Genoa on behalf of Vittorio Amadeo II. His brother, Friedrich August, nephew, Christoph Daniel, and the latter’s son, Heinrich Hartung, also joined the Savoy army.

Bernhard Otto, Baron von Rehbinder had a much more influential role, and he succeeded in maintaining his position until the start of Carlo Emanuele III’s reign.²³ Born in 1662 in Revel, now the city of Tallinn, which was under Swedish rule at the time, Rehbinder came from a Lutheran family of noble stock, originally from the

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 320–22.

²¹ On the genealogy of the Schulenburg family, see J. H. Zedler, *Grosses Vollständiges universal Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (64 vols, Leipzig, Halle: Zedler, 1732–54; reprinted Graz: Adakemische Druck, 1961–4), vol. 35, col. 1501–35. On their presence in Piedmont, see Bianchi, *Onore e mestiere*, p. 102.

²² F. Venturi, *Settecento riformatore. I Da Muratori a Beccaria. 1730–1764* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969), pp. 246–7.

²³ Bianchi, *Onore e mestiere, passim*.

Grand Duchy of Livonia. His father, Otto, was a privy councillor: an excellent visiting card for the young officer who, having enrolled in the *royal allemand* regiment in the pay of the Elector Palatine, then came to Piedmont with the allied troops of the Emperor, the Prussians and a number of German principalities. In 1707 Rehbinder was already on the payroll of the Duke of Savoy as Governor of Biella, in charge of recruiting a regiment of German infantry. Between 1713 and 1730 the Baltic officer rose rapidly through the military ranks, from infantry commander to brigadier, and from Governor of Pinerolo to field marshal. Having abjured his Lutheran faith and converted to Roman Catholicism, probably under pressure from his wife, Maria O'More, a noblewoman of Irish origin whose ancestors included several generations of turbulent Catholic rebels, in 1713 Rehbinder was made a member of the *ordine dell'Annunziata* (Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation), a Savoy order of knighthood, and in 1718 became a naturalised subject of Savoy.

Once the Rehbinder family had come to court and had forged links with a number of families belonging to the Piedmontese landed nobility, they lived in a palace in the heart of Turin. It had been used in 1695 by Karl Philipp von Hohenzollern, brother of Friedrich III, Elector of Brandenburg, the commander of the *alemanni* battalions who fought alongside the Piedmontese during the War of the League of Augsburg. By 1739 Rehbinder had been widowed and, although getting on in years, he married the noblewoman, Cristina Margherita Piosasco, who was then 16 years old. However, suspicion and jealousy of the foreign officer increased during the reign of Carlo Emanuele III (1730–73). At the outbreak of the War of the Polish Succession, Rehbinder was again placed at the head of the Piedmontese infantry, but the French allies, through Cardinal Fleury in Paris, turned down the suggestion that he should be appointed in charge of the joint French and Piedmontese armies. Rehbinder's isolation grew during the last years of his life and his presence was restricted mainly to court ceremonies. The general died in Turin in November 1742 and was buried in the church of Santo Spirito. He was outlived by the regiment that was named after him, the Rehbinder regiment, made up of soldiers of Roman Catholic and Lutheran faith, which initially passed to the command of his stepson, Karl Friedrich Burgsdorf, and then to another Protestant officer well known to Piedmontese military historians, Friedrich Wilhelm von Leutrum.²⁴

Born in Karlhausen, Baden, in 1692, son of Baron Friedrich, a member of the Württemberg court, Friedrich Wilhelm von Leutrum only partly followed in Rehbinder's wake. He came to Piedmont as a boy, in 1706, in the retinue of Prince Eugène, together with his elder brother, Karl Magnus, who soon left to serve the rulers of Sweden and Austria. Of Karl Magnus' sons, it is known with certainty that Karl Alexander also fought in Piedmont, where he was killed at the battle of Madonna dell'Olmo (1744), as did his brother Karl August Emanuel. Having fought for Austria against the Prussians in the Seven Years' War (1756–63), Karl August Emanuel enrolled in the service of the King of Sardinia in 1764; he was made a count by Vittorio Amadeo III in 1781 and married a German noblewoman in Württemberg, who later gave birth to a son, Karl Emanuel, in Alessandria.

²⁴ See P. Bianchi, *'Baron Litron' e gli altri. Militari stranieri nel Piemonte del Settecento*, preface by P. Del Negro (Turin: Gribaudo, 1998).

Unlike the Rehbinders, the Leutrums preserved strong links with their native land and did not intermarry with the Piedmontese nobility. In this their experience of Savoy service echoes that of the Huguenots a generation before. The contribution made by Friedrich Wilhelm, who spent his entire career in the service of Savoy, working his way up to the rank of infantry commander and Governor of Cuneo, has entered the collective imagination, together with the memory of his professionalism, his sense of duty and, also, his discretion. His role in freeing the city of Cuneo from the Franco-Spanish siege of 1744 inspired a series of novels and even well-known popular songs. As a Lutheran who refused to convert to Roman Catholicism, Friedrich Wilhelm von Leutrum asked to be buried in a small Protestant church in Val Luserna (one of the Waldensian valleys); he also renounced the possibility of being invested with the Order of the Annunciation, as Reh binder had been. He died in 1755, leaving his nephew, Karl August Emanuel, in Piedmont; the latter became the last great career army officer given to the court of Turin by this family, and he re-established contacts with Württemberg whence derived his roots.

The cases of the Schulenburg, Reh binder and Leutrum families, although not identical, stemmed from a common background of international exchanges and military service to highlight a few noteworthy examples, which, however, must be seen against the dense network of military relationships spread throughout Savoy-Piedmont. In order to illustrate more clearly the phenomenon of this mix of foreign and native soldiers, troops and civil population, Protestant and Catholic, it is useful to turn briefly to a more limited geographical area, but one that was at the heart of the Piedmontese strategic system: the urban area of Turin.

III

By signing a separate peace in 1696 with Louis XIV, Vittorio Amadeo II undertook to expel the Huguenots in order to prevent the spread of the Reformation. The pastors and most of the Protestants who had settled in Turin subsequently left Piedmont and moved to Switzerland or to German principalities that had embraced the Reformation. But, as was explained earlier, a Protestant minority remained. The risk of friction between the Duke and Rome was constantly looming.²⁵ In 1692, for example, a brief from Pope Innocent XII had expressed the Church's disapproval of Vittorio Amadeo II's decision to allow 40 Huguenot families to settle in Turin.²⁶ In 1721 a similar document, signed by Pope Clement XI, denounced the fact that Protestant soldiers based in Turin and Alessandria enjoyed the right to worship according to their own faith; the Pope exhorted the Duke's mother, Giovanna Battista di Savoia-Nemours, to intercede by convincing her son to ban such 'heretical' practices that were pernicious for Catholics. But Vittorio Amadeo II defended his position by stating that troops in the de Portes regiment (one of the two bodies of foreign Protestants, together with

25 G. P. Romagnani, 'Presenze protestanti a Torino tra Sei e Settecento', in G. Ricuperati (ed.), *Dalla città razionale alla crisi dello Stato d'Antico Regime (1730-1798)*, Storia di Torino 5 (Turin, 2002), pp. 423-51.

26 Archivio di Stato di Torino (hereafter AST), Corte, Materie ecclesiastiche, Eretici, m. 1 non inv, 11 November 1692.

the Schulenburg regiment, then employed by the Savoy rulers) had always been carefully monitored and ordered to celebrate Reformed religious rites ‘in secret’.²⁷ Tension on this subject continued, to a varying degree, throughout the century, but was regulated by an endless series of compromise situations.

The Protestant presence in Turin can only be quantified with reasonable certainty after 1724, the year when the sovereign decided to impose an annual census on the urban population who were divided into groups according to religious persuasion. Later censuses have only survived up to the middle of the eighteenth century, given that after 1752 a description was no longer included of the separate confessional groups. Therefore, it is impossible today to assess whether the community increased or shrank over the course of the entire century.²⁸ In 1725 a royal decree attempted to curb the number of *religionari* residing in the capital, many of whom had lived there for several years. The sovereign ordered the *vicario di polizia* to take steps to reduce the phenomenon of permanent residence. Protestants were given the chance to stay in inns and to exercise business activities with other traders, provided that they did not manage them in person. However, once again, these provisions were widely disregarded both by the authorities and by the Protestants themselves, who did not hesitate to rent business premises and turn them into houses if the occasion arose.²⁹

Interesting data can be extracted from the surveys, bearing in mind, however, that some categories, such as military officers and diplomats, were not included. In 1726, for example, out of a total population of 63,819 inhabitants, there were 144 Protestants and 1,056 Jews in Turin. At the time of the severe economic crisis of the 1730s, the number of Protestants fell, ranging between a minimum of 45 and a maximum of 86 persons up until 1751. The population started to rise again during the 1750s and this was accompanied, proportionally, by an increased number of Protestants, climbing to between 150 and 200 in all. The peak was reached in 1769–71, when a total of 216 of them were recorded. Numbers fell again during the closing decades of the century, when the number of Protestants shrank to 70 or 80 individuals every year. Although fragmentary and broken, these figures offer information regarding the composition and location of the groups covered by the census. Between the 1720s and 1730s, the Protestants came from Geneva, Lyons, Nîmes and Languedoc. In 1752, among the Protestants the *vicario* counted 17 households from Geneva, 3 from Switzerland, 2 from Nîmes and 4 from Lucerna, giving a total of 135 individuals. Most were merchants, shopkeepers and bankers, but there were also professional figures, including lawyers, as well as domestic servants, labourers, grooms, tailors, wigmakers and watchmakers. The considerable number of so-called *ginevrini* (namely those from Geneva) dealers may have concealed the

27 Ibid., 16 January 1721.

28 Documents in AST, Corte, Provincia di Torino, Città di Torino, m. 5, n. 1, m. 2 addendum, n. 6, m. 5 d’add., n. 5, and m. 22, n. 6; Corte, Materie ecclesiastiche, Eretici, m. 1, n. 11, and m. 1 d’add. For census of 1725, 1726, 1728, 1729, 1731, 1733, 1735, 1740, 1744, 1752: Romagnani, ‘Presenze protestanti a Torino’, p. 428.

29 D. Balani, *Il vicario tra città e Stato. L’ordine pubblico e l’annona nella Torino del Settecento* (Turin: Deputazione subalpina, 1987); P. Bianchi, “Politica e polizia” in una realtà d’antico regime: le sfide contro vecchi e nuovi disordini nello Stato sabaudo fra Sei e Settecento’, *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino*, 103 (2005): 473–504.

presence of various French Huguenot exiles, originally from the Languedoc and Cévennes regions.

Among the families registered in Turin were the brothers Pierre and Paul Tallian (or Talhan), who arrived there in 1695; the brothers Pierre and Paul Torras, who were involved in major financial operations during the mid-century wars of succession; and the brothers, Mathieu and Jacques Nadal, who later became associated with Jean-Abraham Haldimann and Pierre Long d'Yverdon as promoters of the firm 'Haldimann, Long & Nadal', which was active in Turin until the 1770s. Other likely Huguenots include the brothers Perraud, the banker Giovanni André, the silk merchant and banker Giovanni Long, in association with the refugee Pietro Barde, the bankers Jean Giraudet and David Gadagnon, who operated in partnership, Giovanni Lobié, a banker and dealer of cloth and silk, the merchants Luigi and Giovanni Chiametton, and the gentlemen Sancton and Leukeus. Twenty years later the situation had not changed much. The earlier occupations had survived, but new individuals had also arrived: for example, the Leclercs, the Bouers, Jacques-Louis and Guillaume Aubert, members of a family with numerous branches originally from the Dauphiné and recorded as 'bourgeois citizens' from Geneva who were very active in Turin up until the 1780s.³⁰

It is difficult to assess how old the Protestant presence in Turin was, even if it seems plausible to imagine that the city would have accepted groups of Protestants among the garrison troops in the capital or in diplomatic legations from the earliest settlements. Diplomatic relations between Savoy-Piedmont and the Protestant countries (Bern, Basel, Britain) dated back to the early sixteenth century. Relations were subsequently established during the course of the seventeenth century with Holland, Saxony and Prussia, and were strengthened during the eighteenth century. The question of contacts with Geneva and with the Swiss was more complex because ancient rivalries with the dukes prevented the signing of international agreements and the establishment of diplomatic representatives in Turin.³¹ The study of the role played by chapels for private worship within the foreign embassies in the Piedmontese

30 Romagnani, 'Presenze protestanti a Torino', pp. 437–40.

31 See D. Carutti, *Storia della diplomazia della corte di Savoia (1494–1773)* (4 vols, Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1875–80); A. Bazzoni, 'Relazioni diplomatiche tra la Casa di Savoia e la Prussia nel secolo XVIII', *Archivio storico italiano*, 15 (1872): 3–21, 193–209, 377–90; L. Bulferetti, *Le relazioni diplomatiche tra lo Stato sabaudo e la Prussia durante il regno di Vittorio Amadeo III* (Milan, 1941). For Anglo-Piedmontese relations, see F. Sclopis, 'Delle relazioni politiche tra la dinastia di Savoia e il governo britannico (1240–1815); Ricerche storiche', *Memorie della Regia Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* (1854): 261–2; C. Contessa, 'Aspirazioni commerciali intrecciate ad alleanze politiche della Casa di Savoia coll'Inghilterra nei secoli XVII e XVIII', *Memorie della Regia Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, 64 (1913–14): 1–50; F. Venturi, 'Il Piemonte dei primi decenni del Settecento nelle relazioni dei diplomatici inglesi', *Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino*, 54 (1956): 227–71; J. Black, 'The Development of Anglo-Sardinian Relations in the First Half of Eighteenth Century', *Studi piemontesi*, 12 (1983): 48–60; G. Pagano De Divitiis, 'Il Mediterraneo nel XVII secolo. L'espansione commerciale inglese e l'Italia', *Studi storici*, 27 (1986): 109–48. On the growth of diplomatic missions between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, see Storrs, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy*, pp. 122–70.

capital might offer interesting information, but no overall reconstruction of the development of foreign delegations in Turin has yet been made. It is only known that throughout the eighteenth century the various ambassadors chose their own residences individually, given that they could not yet rely on institutional premises used by the embassies.

Turning to the military presence, the first foreigners to settle in Turin were about 70 Swiss (but Catholic) soldiers who were recruited to form the body known as the *guardia*, which survived until the early 1830s.³² Duke Carlo Emanuele I (1580–1630) had used some Swiss troops on the battlefield, but also Germans, Frenchmen and soldiers from Lorraine, including a number of Huguenots.³³ Clear rifts between these early foreign units became evident during the years of civil war (1638–42) when the supporters of Duchess Christine (who had become regent after the death of Vittorio Amadeo I) fought against those who backed the Princes Tomaso and Maurizio (the brothers of the deceased Duke). During this period the Swiss who had settled in Piedmont, and formed a regiment of companies originating also from the Protestant cantons of Bern, Basel and Fribourg, were divided and some supported the Princes and others the regent: the soldiers from Bern and Basel supported Prince Tomaso's troops, while the company from Fribourg remained loyal to Christine of France.³⁴

After this period of seventeenth-century crisis and civil war had passed, in traditional relations between Piedmont and its resident foreigners, embassy staff and soldiers continued to receive preferential treatment compared to the normal state policy. For example, the application of the law of *ubena* was suspended in their favour. This law gave rulers the prerogative of allocating to the treasury of the host country the property of a foreigner who died, excluding the possibility that any inheritance belonging to persons who had become naturalised Piedmontese subjects should leave the country, destined for spouses or fellow countrymen.³⁵ The essential role of these groups of foreigners prompted the introduction of a policy of tacit tolerance, at the risk of having to cope with the ever-present danger of cultural and religious contamination.

At a more formal level, the regulations drew a distinction between regiments that were wholly Protestant and mixed regiments: the former were exempt from

32 On their establishment beside the ducal palace, see W. Barberis, *Le armi del principe. La tradizione militare sabauda* (Turin: Einaudi, 1988), pp. 124–9.

33 Unfortunately their names and number remain a mystery. The primary sources, which are not easy to search in this period, have not yet been studied seriously by anyone. Other information comes from secondary sources: see N. Brancaccio, *L'esercito del vecchio Piemonte. Gli ordinamenti. Parte I: Dal 1560 al 1814* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1923) and Girard, *Histoire abrégée des officiers suisses, passim*.

34 In the absence of more recent studies, see Brancaccio, *L'esercito del vecchio Piemonte*, pp. 42, 91–3, 147–50.

35 The law of *ubena* was suspended during the French occupation and while Piedmont was annexed to Napoleonic France, re-introduced after the Restoration and then lapsed at the end of the nineteenth century: see M. C. Scopi, 'Ricerche storico-giuridiche sul diritto d'*ubena* negli Stati sabaudi con particolare riguardo alla legislazione militare', PhD thesis (University of Turin, Faculty of Jurisprudence, 1997/8).

confessional obligations, such as kneeling when a procession went past or in front of a sacred image, whereas the mixed regiments had to show respect for the Roman Catholic religion while continuing to include minority groups from other faiths.³⁶ Faced with the inevitable mixing of different religions, complaints were not slow to emerge. In the early eighteenth century, for example, a Lutheran soldier from the Schulenburg regiment was condemned to death in Turin, and was assisted by a Protestant pastor; the case immediately provoked an angry reaction from the Archbishop who demanded that, in other similar cases, religious comfort should be denied in public because it might provide an occasion for preaching.³⁷ A number of Protestant officers continued to settle in Turin, sometimes accompanied by their families and households. In response to this widely accepted practice, the clergy tried to convince landlords not to accept Protestants or to report their conduct to the Inquisition.³⁸

However, one episode shows how such excessive zeal on the part of the Catholic clergy against the Protestants was counterproductive for the political authorities. In the spring of 1758 the Jesuit priest Carlo Melano di Portula, having spent many years abroad, including a long period in Prussia, returned to Savoy-Piedmont where he became rector of the College in Chambéry, in Savoy. Between 1757 and 1758 the Jesuit had – without the sovereign's permission – printed 1,000 copies of a work of Roman Catholic precepts entitled *Heures et instruction chrétiennes à l'usage des troupes de S.M. le Roy de Sardaigne* (Hours and Christian instruction for the use of the troops of His Royal Highness the King of Sardinia). The books were soon made available in Piedmont, where they were falsely attributed to a Turin-based publisher ('chez les frères Reycend, Guibert et Silvestre, avec approbation et permission': 'by the brothers Reycend, Guibert and Silvestre, with approbation and permission'). When the first copies began to circulate, state officials were quick to intervene and ordered their sequestration. The Jesuits's teachings could have fomented malcontent among the numerous Protestant soldiers, leading to defections or forms of insubordination that could not be risked among professional troops, even in peace time.³⁹

IV

Savoyard diplomacy ... offers an excellent example of the constant interaction between war and diplomacy – between campaigning and negotiating what John Lynn identifies as a key component in the type of 'war process' which characterised contemporary warfare.⁴⁰

These are the words of Christopher Storrs, writing with reference to the period 1690–1720. The same argument can in fact be applied to later decades when Savoy-

36 AST, Corte, Materie militari, Levata di truppe straniere, m. 1 non inventariato.

37 Ibid., m. 1, n. 7, undated report on this case.

38 Romagnani, 'Presenze protestanti a Torino', p. 445.

39 The episode is described in A. Merlotti, *Il silenzio e il servizio. Le Epoche principali delle vita di me di Vincenzo Sebastiano Beraudo di Pralormo* (Turin: Silvio Zamorani editore, 2003), pp. 62–3.

40 Storrs, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy*, p. 124.

Piedmont was involved in two wars (the war of the Polish Succession and that of the Austrian Succession), before experiencing a relatively long period of peace prior to the clash with revolutionary France (1748–92). During this period foreign soldiers were subject to a policy of demobilisation that resulted in their numbers virtually being halved, falling to about 6,000 men throughout Savoy-Piedmont; the overall number of so-called national troops shrank from 40–50,000 to about 30,000 soldiers.⁴¹

However, demobilisation did not mean demilitarisation, nor a breakdown in contacts with foreign troops. During the second-half of the eighteenth century the army was employed to maintain public order and to defend the frontiers in a state whose military image was now firmly in place. In the meantime, Piedmont's reputation grew as an example of a state that had successfully expanded its own domains through its skilful choice of international alliances. The recruitment of so many Protestant soldiers was another consequence of this relaxed attitude to dealings with foreign powers.

It was no coincidence, therefore, that in 1749, Philip Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, should write from London to his 18-year-old son who was then on a grand tour, advising him to visit Turin and to spend a few months in the city in order to study and learn the arts of court ceremony and diplomacy. Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, which was published posthumously in London in 1774 and soon circulated in translation, became a model for other handbooks of conduct and served to spread the reputation of the educational establishment attended by the English aristocrat's son in Turin: the *Accademia Reale*.

This was a cavalry school founded between 1677 and 1678 and housed in a building adjacent to the royal palace in Turin. The *Accademia Reale di Torino* (controlled directly by the court and not by a religious order, as was the case with numerous other *seminaria nobilium* in Piedmont and many other European countries) attracted a student population that was mainly Catholic but also included a number of young Protestants. The papacy had, as usual, attempted to curb this initiative, but with little success. The privileges enjoyed by the students and the jurisdictional policy of Savoy had helped to keep the Turin-based institution going. This is not the place to describe the various transformations which the *Accademia Reale* underwent during the eighteenth century. It is sufficient to say that throughout this period it attracted members of the top European aristocracy (Italians, but also Englishmen, Germans, Poles and Russians), intended for senior ecclesiastic, military and diplomatic careers. Through the *Accademia Reale* (where, among other things, the number of courses on military subjects was increased during the eighteenth century), the students came into contact with the main venues of Turinese social and cultural life: the court, salons, theatres, literary and scientific circles, and the noble *casini* (houses, or families). From this point of view, Turin was increasingly seen as a laboratory of modern political education.⁴² As has been seen, foreign soldiers

41 See P. Bianchi, 'Guerra e pace nel Settecento: alcune riflessioni sul caso sabauda', *Studi settecenteschi*, 22 (2002): 89–102.

42 See P. Bianchi, "'Quel fortunato e libero paese". L'Accademia Reale e i primi contatti del giovane Alfieri con il mondo inglese', in M. Cerruti, M. Corsi and B. Danna (eds), *Alfieri*

(among them Huguenots) played a very important role in this laboratory, alongside a wide variety of other social arenas.

This short study ends with a document that sums up, clearly, the highly pragmatic grounds on which the presence of *religionari* was for a long time tolerated in Savoy-Piedmont. In 1725, to mark the convocation of a council of state, which was also attended by the crown prince (the future Carlo Emanuele III), Vittorio Amadeo II set out a few clear rules of conduct for Protestants living in Turin. These rules were intended to guide the civil and military authorities responsible for keeping public order. The aim was to combat the ‘abuses’ committed by heretics in the city, but, at the same time, to ‘provide a remedy’. They were allowed partial, but controlled, autonomy of movement, which would not turn what was primarily a political choice (‘a rule for good governance’) into a question of faith (*un fatto di religione*, as the document states).⁴³ A series of rules of this type was introduced throughout the history of the Savoy domains, and not only in relation to the capital.

The co-existence, in mixed armies, of different religious faiths is, as is well known, characteristic of many European nations. The international aristocracy of officers accustomed to serve more than one sovereign continued to dominate the scene until the fall of the *ancien régime*. Similarly, some minor central European states (both Catholic and Protestant) specialised in offering collective mercenary troops (both officers and simple rank-and-file soldiers) to countries that could afford to pay temporarily for their use. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Savoy-Piedmont was a perfect example of this practice and it employed high-quality mercenaries without interrupting, on the other hand, the tradition of military service provided abroad by numerous members of aristocratic families who were subjects of Savoy.

Throughout the *ancien régime*, the military history of the Savoyard domains must essentially be studied in a wider context, stretching across most of Europe. Taking the contacts between different cultures and faiths inside the same country as a starting point helps us to see beyond the old national stereotypes that for years have influenced, both positively and negatively, the history of the territories ruled by Savoy’s dukes, the future kings of Italy.

e il suo tempo (Turin, Asti: *Archivum Romanicum*, 2001), pp. 89–112; P. Bianchi, ‘La fortuna dell’Accademia Reale di Torino nei percorsi europei del viaggio di formazione’, in R. Maggio Serra, F. Mazzocca, C. Sisi and C. Spantigati (eds), *Vittorio Alfieri. Aristocratico ribelle (1749–1803)* (Milan: Electa, 2003), pp. 150–53; P. Bianchi, ‘In cerca del moderno. Studenti e viaggiatori inglesi a Torino nel Settecento’, *Rivista storica italiana*, 115/3 (2003): 1021–51. On this subject, see also A. Merlotti, ‘Note sulla sociabilità aristocratica nell’Italia del Settecento: i “casini de’ nobili”’, in G. Barbarisi, C. Capra, F. Degrada and F. Mazzocca (eds), *L’amabil rito. Società e cultura nella Milano di Parini* (Milan: Cisalpino, 2000), pp. 45–69; A. Merlotti, ‘“Compagni de’ giovenili errori”. Gli amici di Alfieri fra Accademia Reale e Société des Sansgignon (1772–1778)’, in Maggio Serra *et al.* (eds), *Vittorio Alfieri. Aristocratico ribelle*, pp. 154–6; A. Merlotti, ‘Gentildonne e sociabilità aristocratica nella Torino del secondo Settecento’, in M. L. Betri and E. Brambilla (eds), *Salotti e ruolo femminile in Italia tra fine Seicento e primo Novecento* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), pp. 125–52.

43 AST, Corte, Materie giuridiche, Materie giuridiche per categorie, Ministri e segreterie, m. 1, n. 26, 30 January 1725.