

Hunting for Ambition

Princely Hunts, Sovereignty and the House of Savoy

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Princely Hunts, Sovereignty and the House of Savoy

PhD thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor in History at the University of Antwerp to be defended by Bruno Farinelli

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Introduction

The (state of the) art of hunting

«Akin to leopards in gardens, kings were no stranger in forests».¹ With this sentence, Julie E. Hughes has described in a stark and sharp way the bonds that tied the animal kingdom to the princely world and the aristocratic privilege to the environment in the British Raj India at the turn of the nineteenth century. Just as the animals carried their symbolic strength into princely palaces, embodying a tamed and dominated wilderness, so princes and kings brought their authority and prestige into the thick of the forests. The interconnection between these three spheres - the animal kingdom, the aristocratic élite, and the environment - gave rise to what Hughes has called *princely ecology*, which found its highest manifestation in princely hunting.

Rather than being a peculiarity of Indian history, princely hunting was, as Thomas Allsen has shown, a common factor among the aristocratic elite throughout the entire Eurasian continent. According to Allsen, it should not be considered as a separate field of aristocratic power but as «an effective *reaffirmation* of a ruler's capacity to manage large-scale enterprise, that is, to govern», which the ruler demonstrated in other spheres of command.² In this sense, it can be considered one of the most meaningful *marks of sovereignty*, a way to strengthen the legitimacy of the sovereign.³

In the European context, that led to a progressive codification of the art of hunting (and falconry) since the Middle Ages. The many *livre de chasse* drawn up constituted a corpus where practical and moral norms intertwined, and the noble huntsman was expected to

¹ J. E. HUGHES, *Animal Kingdoms. Hunting, Environment and Power in the Indian Princely States*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2013, 5.

² T. T. ALLSEN, *The royal hunt in Eurasian history*, University of Pennsylvania press, Philadelphia 2006, 8. For a more global approach, which also integrates ancient hunts, but less focused on princely hunting see *La chasse. Pratiques sociales et symboliques*, I. SIDÉRA, E. VILA, P. ERIKSON (eds.), De Boccard, Paris 2006 ; for a long-term anthropological approach see C. STÉPANOFF, *L'animal et la mort. Chasses, modernité et crise du sauvage*, La Découverte, Paris 2021.

³ This is a political category dating back to the philosophy of Jean Bodin, later revised by Carl Schmitt See C. SCHMITT, *Political Theology. Four chapters on the concept of sovereignty*, G. SCHWAB (tr.), University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2005, 5-7.

comply.⁴ Away from any form of utility or nourishment, princely hunting aimed at the pure satisfaction of celebrating the supremacy over the animal kingdom stemming from the aristocratic privilege. The resulting elitist practice was shaped by nobility imagery and values. A «regulated confrontation with the wild», according to the expression used by Philippe Salvadori, fuelled by warlike metaphors.⁵ From an aristocratic perspective, hunting was a *simulation of war*, a form of struggle that saw in the animal a projection of an enemy (or the embodiment of moral attributes) which had to be defeated by the rules of chivalric ethics.⁶

Hunting was therefore an essential part of the princely education, elevating it to a crucial position in the court society, as redefined from the work of Norbert Elias.⁷ Marked by calendars and rituals that articulated its inner life, princely hunting emerged as one of the most crucial *court ceremonies* and princely *loisir*. A ceremony that needed large hunting crews made up of huntsmen and dog keepers, falconers and bird catchers, and consequently kennels for dogs, aviaries for birds of prey and stables for horses.⁸ An

⁴ Among main hunting treatises may be considered the *Trésor de Venerie* by Hardouin de Fontaines-Guerin (1384); *Le livre de chasse* by Gaston Phoebus (1387-1389); *The Art of Hunting* by William Twiti (fifteenth c.); *Le livre du Roy Modus et de la Royne Racio*, by Henry de la Ferrière (1486). For an overview of treatises strictly of French origin, see A. SMETS, B. VAN DEN ABEELE, *Manuscrits et traités de chasse français du Moyen Âge. Recensement et perspectives de recherche*, «Romania», 116 (1998), 316-367. On falconry, see: B. VAN DE ABEELE, *Il De arte venandi cum avibus e i trattati latini di falconeria in Federico II e le scienze*, P. TOUBERT, A. PARAVICINI BAGLIANI (eds.), Sellerio, Palermo 1994; D. BOCCASSINI, *Il volo della mente. Falconeria e sofia nel mondo mediterraneo: Islam, Federico II, Dante*, Longo Editori, Ravenna 2003.

⁵ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Régime*, Gallimard, Paris 1996, 11.

⁶ Ivi, 76-79; S. SCHAMA, *Landscape and memory*, Knopf, New York 1995, 144-145; W. RÖSENER, *Adel un Jagd. Die Bedeutung der Jagd im Kontext der adeligen Mentalität in La chasse au Moyen Age. Société, traités, symboles*, A. PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, B. VAN DEN ABEELE (eds.), Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2000, 129-150; M. PASTOREAU, *La chasse au sanglier: histoire d'une dévalorisation, IVe-XIVe siècle* in Ivi, 7-23 ; A. PLUSKOWSKI, *Holy and exalted prey. Hunters and deer in high medieval seigneurial culture in La chasse. Pratiques sociales et symboliques*, 245-255.

⁷ N. ELIAS, *The court society*, Basic Blackwell Publisher, Oxford 1983; See also ID., *An Essay on sport and violence in Quest for excitement. Sport and leisure in the civilizing process*, N. ELIAS, E. DUNNING (eds.), Blackwell, Oxford 1986, 150-175.

⁸ M. GIESE, *Kaiser Friedrich II. als Jäger in Jagd, Wald, Herrscherrepräsentation*, in J. FAJT, M. HÖRSCH, V. RAZİM (eds.), Jan Thorbecke Verlag, Ostfildern 2014, 289-303; E. J. GOLDBERG, *Louis the Pious and the hunt*, «Speculum», 88 (2013), 613-643; C. BECK, *Chasse et équipages de chasse en Bourgogne ducale (vers 1360 – 1420) in La chasse au Moyen Age. Société, traités, symboles*, 151-175; J. KRUSE, *Hunting, magnificence and the court Leo X in «Renaissance studies»*, 7 (1993), 243-257; L. DUERLOO, *The hunt in the performance of Archducal rule in «Renaissance Quarterly»*, 69 (2016), 116-154.

impressive apparatus that played a prominent part in displaying the magnificence of the court.

If the other court ceremonies had a spatial dimension, princely hunting needed a territorial projection. Woods and forests began to be subjected to legislation that guaranteed their sole use to the prince, establishing parks and reserved areas that delimited large portions of territory within which exclusive hunting rights were exercised.⁹ In these areas, precluded to hunting by anyone else, hunting came a new hierarchy of men and animals, which affected the economy of those places within.

The territorial projection required the presence of infrastructures to host the sovereign and the hunting crew. These were constituted by *a system of princely residences* (also known in the Italian context as the *corona di delizie*) that, from the early modern age onwards, experienced a flourishing development around many European capitals.¹⁰ Their infrastructural role was also associated with the opulence of the courts, making these hunting palaces landmarks of architectural and artistic expression.

As highlighted in the literature, the princely hunt was each and all of these things at the same time: a way to implement princely ecology and asserting sovereignty; a rich symbolic world and cornerstone of aristocratic education; a central rite in the court life; an apparatus to control the territory, to provide it with the necessary infrastructure it and to

⁹ S.A. MILESON, *Parks in Medieval England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009; D. BARSANTI, *Tre secoli di caccia in Toscana attraverso la legislazione: da privative signorile sotto I Medici a oggetto di pubblica economia sotto i Lorena*, «Rivista di storia dell'agricoltura», 26 (1986), 105-150; H. FRADKINE, *Chasse à courre, relations interclasses et domination spatialisée*, «Genèses», 99 (2015), 28-47; M. AZZI VISENTINI, *La chasse dans le duché de Milan à l'époque des Visconti et des Sforza : les parcs de Pavie et de Milan* in *Chasse princière dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, C. D'ANTHENAISE – M. CHATENET (eds.), Actes Sud, Paris 2007, 179-219; J.-M. DEREK, *Les parcs de Vincennes et de Boulogne au XVI^e siècle* in *VI*, 251-269. Joseph Morsel traced to the hunting-space connection only the reason for the spread of hunting as an aristocratic and princely practice, see J. MORSEL, *Jagd und Raum. Überlegungen über den sozialen Sinn der Jagdpraxis am Beispiel des spätmittelalterlichen Franken* in W. Rösener (ed.), *Jagd und höfische Kultur im Mittelalter*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1997, 255- 287.

¹⁰ M. FOLIN, *Le residenze di corte e il sistema delle delizie fra Medioevo ed età moderna* in *Delizie estensi. Architetture di villa nel Rinascimento italiano ed europeo*, ID., F. CECCARELLI (eds.), Olschki, Firenze 2009, 79-135; K. DE JONGE, *Le parc de Mariemont. Chasse et architecture à la cour de Marie de Hongrie (1531-1555)* in *Chasse princière dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, 269-289 ; *Beyond Scylla and Charybdis. European courts and court residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon territories 1500-1700*, B.B. JOHANNSEN, K. OTTENHEY (ed.), «Studies in Archaeology & History», 24 (2015).

enshrine it in a legislative framework. Was it just that, or did it represent something deeper and more radical?

The pervasiveness with which hunting permeated the spaces of power in early modern Europe, however, suggests that it may have been something more. As emerged from Jacques Derrida's theoretical approach, the *world of the beast* and the *world of the sovereign* were not only structurally interconnected but shared the same nature that was rooted in the very essence of power: «the beast and the sovereign resemble each other [...] in that *they seem to be* outside, above or alongside the law». ¹¹ Princely hunt, the point at which these two worlds came into most profound and most violent contact, represents the very *language of sovereignty*. However, the approaches presented so far do not reveal the inherently political nature of princely hunting and its potential to enact sovereignty.

A new perspective is needed to look at this phenomenon from a different point of view: was princely hunting a mere mark or an *effective instrument* in the hands of the prince not just to affirm but to *enact* sovereignty? What was its *political function* in early modern Europe? Was princely hunting a phenomenon exclusively dependent on the courtly dimension, and thus on its evolution, or was it affected by the *fluidity* imposed by the broader political dynamics?

This thesis will attempt to answer these questions by placing at the core of its analysis the historical dynamics of which a European dynasty was a protagonist in the early modern period: the House of Savoy. As will be seen in the pages that follow, the political evolution of the House of Savoy between the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth century allows us to retrace the various phases of a dynasty forced to rebuild the territorial, political and symbolic ties of its sovereignty, which once regained were called into question by a civil and dynastic conflict that, when the internal fracture created was overcome, managed to rise to the status of a royal house. Throughout these different political phases, princely hunting remained a central element and a common thread in the history of the House of Savoy, more than in the rest of the Italian context, bringing it closer to other European experiences.

The following pages have both an introductory value, to make the key phases and protagonists of this process known, and an indicative purpose, as they will be referred to in the course of the text to enhance the reader's understanding of the political context.

¹¹ J. DERRIDA, *The beast and the sovereign*, vol. II, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2011, 45.

The House of Savoy: a bird's eye view

The House of Savoy was a European dynasty whose history was inscribed, until the end of the eighteenth century, within the political space of the Holy Roman Empire.¹² Its dominions straddled the Western Alps, including the regions of Savoie, the cradle of the House, Maurienne, Tarantaise, Chablais, on the French side, Aosta Valley and part of Piedmont on the Italian side. Feudal lords of the Empire since the eleventh century, of which they were to all respects recognised princes and perpetual vicars in Italy, the House of Savoy's territories were first elevated into a county in 1321 and then into a duchy in 1416.

The creation of the Duchy of Savoy led to the choice of Chambery as the capital city, thus confirming Savoy as the political gravitational centre. At this time, the duchy annexed new territories on the borders of Lyon and Geneva and acquired the county of Nice. However, during the fifteenth century the city of Turin, which lay on the other side of the Alps, experienced a progressive growth in importance and duchy expanded until the river Sesia, on the border with the Duchy of Milan.¹³

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Duchy of Savoy had long since gradually entered the French sphere of influence when the duke Charles II ascended the throne (1504). He was in time to annex the county of Asti to his domains (1531), brought as a dowry by his wife Beatrice of Portugal in 1536, when the French King Francis I's armies invaded the Duchy of Savoy. Crushed in the clash between the Habsburgs and France, Charles II had been forced to flee and leave most of his domains for over twenty years.

¹² A. MERLOTTI, *I Savoia: una dinastia europea in Italia* in *I Savoia. I secoli d'oro d'una dinastia europea*, W. BARBERIS (ed.), Einaudi, Torino 2007, 87-96; M. BELLABARBA, A. MERLOTTI, *Stato sabauda e Sacro Romano Impero*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2014.

¹³ On the economic and political rise of Turin as of the 15th century see BARBERO, *Il mutamento dei rapporti fra Torino e le altre comunità del Piemonte nel nuovo assetto del ducato sabauda* in R. COMBA (ed.), *Storia di Torino*, vol. II, Einaudi, Torino 1997, 373-423; ID., *Una città in ascesa* in V. CASTRONOVO (ed.), *Storia illustrata di Torino*, vol. II, Sellino, Torino 1992, 301-320. On territorial development see A. BARBERO, *Il ducato di Savoia. Amministrazione di uno stato franco-italiano*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 2018, 6-11; BIANCHI, MERLOTTI, *Storia degli Stati sabaudi*, 29-31.

Savoy, with the capital Chambery, and Piedmont, with Turin as the primary urban centre on the Italian side, were merged into the Kingdom of France.¹⁴

The Duke of Savoy maintained his sovereignty just over a third of his domains (Aosta Valley, the lordship of Vercelli, the cities of Ivrea, Cuneo and Biella, and the county of Nice). The invasion of a large part of the duchy, and the rescinding of the sovereignty of the House of Savoy over the territories occupied and annexed by France, opened a breach for which it would take decades, if not centuries, for it to be remedied.

The rebirth of the Savoy states was due to Charles II's successor, Duke Emmanuel Philibert. His designation as governor of the Netherlands by Charles V (1556), the subsequent victory at the command of the imperial armies over the French forces in St. Quintin (1557) and the extreme efforts to prevent the loss of the last remaining domains guaranteed Emmanuel Philibert the return of his lost ancient states in 1559, after the ratification of Cateau-Cambrésis treaty.

The victory had, however, handed back a politically fragile territory. The treaty's clauses stipulated that many critical urban centres, such as Turin and Pinerolo, would remain in French hands for a few more years, a key stronghold for controlling Alpine crossings. That led to the permanence of Spanish garrisons in other cities, like Asti and Santhià. Moreover, as the most recent historiography has underlined, the states that the House of Savoy had recovered could not be considered a *unicum*. They constituted «a composite monarchy, an aggregate of territories that found its unity exclusively in the person of the sovereign», who, however, had to reestablish these ties of power.¹⁵

The reconquest of the states led to a radical change in their configuration due to the will to shift the political gravity centre to the Italian side of the duchy, electing Turin as new capital of the Duchy in February 1563. Having regained possession of the city, the duke

¹⁴ The French occupation, long interpreted as a period of oppression at the hands of a foreign power, have in recent years been subject to a historiographical revision that has brought out the active role and participation in the new political course, especially of urban elites P. P. MERLIN, *Il Piemonte e la Francia nel primo Cinquecento: alcune considerazioni storiografiche* in «Studi Piemontesi», 45-1 (2016), 7-16; ID., *Torino durante l'occupazione francese* in *Storia di Torino*, vol. III, Einaudi, Torino 1998, 7-50; G. MOMBELLO, *Lingua e cultura francese durante l'occupazione* in G. RICUPERATI (ed.), *Storia di Torino*, vol. III, 59-111; E. STUMPO, *Spazi urbani e gruppi sociali (1536-1630)*, in VI, 187-190.

¹⁵ P. BIANCHI, A. MERLOTTI, *Storia degli Stati sabaudi (1416-1848)*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2017, 7; J.H. ELLIOTT, *A Europe of Composite Monarchies*, «Past&Present», 137 (1992), 48-71.

could resolve the following issues: securing the city through new defensive works, rebuilding a ducal estate, and finding a place suitable for his court.

In 1580, the Duchy of Savoy then passed into the hands of the successor Charles Emmanuel I. On the strength of the consolidation achieved, the new Duke of Savoy initiated a new phase that Stephane Gal has defined as a «*politique du précipice*».¹⁶ Through this definition, he has tried to summarise the spirit which led the new Duke of Savoy to pursue a risky form of expansionist politics based on a challenge to the overall political balance in Europe and rapid changes in alliances.

One of the first aims of this politics was conquering and assimilating those minor states within the Savoy state, as in the case of the Marquisate of Saluzzo or on its borders, like the Duchy of Monferrato.¹⁷ The first was an enclave bordering the territories around the city of Saluzzo, annexed by France in 1549, which had ruled its fortunes until then. The invasion by the House of Savoy's army in 1588 caught France off guard and unprepared for an adequate reaction, as it was at the time engaged again in a clash with Spain. In 1600, however, Henry IV could concentrate again on the southern border. A new invasion by French armies forced Charles Emmanuel to make peace with a heavy price: to keep control of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, with the Treaty of Lyon in 1601 he ceded Bresse and Bugey, precious territories on the border with Lyon, to the Kingdom of France.¹⁸

In the case of the Duchy of Monferrato, events were more complex and of greater international dimensions than with France. In 1612, the Duke of Mantua and Monferrato Francesco IV Gonzaga died heirless, thus giving way to the claims of Charles Emmanuel I by marriage contracted with the House of Savoy. The crisis that ensued led to the outbreak of the War of the Monferrato Succession (1613-1617), this time with France and the

¹⁶ S. GAL, *Charles-Emmanuel de Savoie. La politique du précipice*, Payot, Paris 2012.

¹⁷ C. ROSSO, *L'ordine disordinato: Carlo Emanuele I e le ambiguità dello Stato barocco*, in M. MASOERO ET AL. (eds.), *Politica e cultura nell'età di Carlo Emanuele I*, Olschki Firenze 1999, pp. 37-79.

¹⁸ On the complex developments that led to the progressive assimilation of the marquisate within the Duchy of Savoy see P.P MERLIN, *Saluzzo, il Piemonte, l'Europa. La politica sabauda dalla conquista del marchesato alla pace di Lione* in M. FRATINI (ed.), *L'annessione sabauda del marchesato di Saluzzo. Tra dissidenza religiosa e ortodossia cattolica XVI-XVII*, Claudiana, Torino 2004, 15-63.

Duchy of Savoy on the same side, while the House of Gonzaga had the support of Spain.¹⁹ Charles Emmanuel I lost the war, and his claims were not honoured. The Peace of Asti left the situation unchanged but ready to erupt again, an event that did indeed occur a few years later, when with the death of Vincenzo II Gonzaga, the Duchy of Mantua was again left without an heir, resulting in the War of the Mantuan Succession (1628-1631).²⁰ Due to the fluctuating foreign policy of Charles Emmanuel I, this time, the Duchy of Savoy found itself once again opposed to France: but even in this case, wartime events were not favourable, and the Treaty of Cherasco put an end to the claims of the House of Savoy, which only obtained territorial enlargement as far as, but had to surrender the strategic stronghold of Pinerolo to France.

The end of the War of the Mantuan Succession coincided with the rise to power of Victor Amadeus I, second son of Charles Emmanuel I, in 1630. Victor Amadeus I inherited a duchy weakened by his father's aggressive policy. In 1632, a year after peace had been restored, the new Duke of Savoy did not seem to want to abandon the will to power completely: on 23 December 1632, Victor Amadeus I claimed for himself and his successors the title of King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, which allowed him to boast the royal crown and its prestige.²¹ The pretension had no concrete effects and was always a title claimed by the House of Savoy, which thus showed its firm intention to pursue, after restoring its sovereignty over the ancient reconquered states, that of gaining access to the most prestigious sovereign title. Victor Amadeus married Christine of France in 1619, the sister of King Louis XIII, in line with the pro-French policy of the duchy at that time. When France

¹⁹ On Gonzaga's Monferrato, see A. B. RAVIOLA, *Il Monferrato gonzaghesco: istituzioni ed élites di un micro-Stato, 1536-1708*, Olschki, Firenze 2003. An interpretation in a European perspective has recently been given, see F. J. ALVAREZ GARCIA, *Guerra en el Parnaso. Gestión política y retórica mediática de la crisis del Monferrato (1612-1618)*, Doce Calles, Aranjuez 2021. About the end of the Duchy of Mantua and Monferrato, see *Fine di una dinastia, fine di uno Stato: la scomparsa dei Ducati di Mantova e di Monferrato dallo scacchiere europeo*, Atti del convegno Torino-Mantova 2008, R. MAESTRI, A. B. RAVIOLA (eds.), Alessandria 2010.

²⁰ These events had a much greater incidence than the first Monferrato crisis and were part of the dynamics of the Thirty Years' War, see D. PARROTT, *The Mantuan Succession, 1627-31: A Sovereignty Dispute in Early Modern Europe*, «The English Historical Review», 112-445 (1997), 20-65; R. A. STRADLING, *Prelude to Disaster: the Precipitation of the War of the Mantuan Succession*, «The Historical Journal», 33-4 (1990), 769-785.

²¹ This claim was based on the rights that would descend from Anne of Lusignan, Queen of Cyprus and wife of Louis of Savoy, see R. ORESKO, *The House of Savoy in search for a royal crown in the seventeenth century* in ID., G.C. GIBBS, H. M. SCOTT (eds.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern France*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997, 272-350; G. POUMARÈDE, *Deux têtes pour une couronne: la rivalité entre la Savoie et Venise pour le titre royal de Chypre au temps de Christine de France*, «Dix-septième siècle», 262-1 (2014), 53-54.

actively entered the Thirty Years' War in 1635, the Duchy of Savoy took part in the conflict on its side.²² Victor Amadeus I's political plans were destined to be stopped by his early death in 1637. His demise left the Duchy in great internal challenges, split into a pro-Spanish and a pro-French faction, resulting in the outbreak of a civil war that bloodied the Duchy of Savoy from 1638 to 1642.

The conflict opposed the faction of *madamisti*, loyal to the Duchess Christine of France and regent with the title of *Madama Reale* in place of the heir Francis Hyacinth, supported by France, against the *principisti*, loyal to the prince of Savoy-Carignano Francis Thomas and the cardinal Maurice, brothers of Victor Amadeus I and backed by Spanish arms.²³ More than anything, the vicissitudes of war had opened up profound wounds within the House of Savoy. The leaders, Christine, Maurice and Thomas, had tried hard to prevent the opposing party from gaining the upper hand, but, at the same time, they had been constrained to ensure that foreign powers did not take over and make their efforts to gain control in vain. This led to many attempts at compromise, mainly on the part of Christine of France's brothers-in-law, and the resolution of the conflict through a series of agreements. In 1642, the brothers-in-law recognised the legitimacy of Christine's regency over the duchy until Charles Emmanuel II, succeeded his brother Francis Hyacinth who died in 1638, came of age.

The figure of Christine of France has been recently reevaluated by historiography, freeing her from the infamy that had always surrounded her as a despotic duchess who had ceded the fate of the duchy into the hands of the France from which she came. Although her regency was characterised by almost total domination of the Duchy of Savoy politics, even

²² Of these events, a broader interpretation in the European context has been, see G. HANLON, *Italy 1636: Cemetery of armies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016.

²³ On the opposite factions at the court of Savoy see P. MERLIN, “*Seguir la fazione di sua Maestà Cattolica*”. *Il partito spagnolo nella corte di Savoia tra Cinque e Seicento* in *Centros de poder italianos en la Monarquía Hispánica (siglos XV-XVIII)*, Actas del Congreso, Madrid 2008, J. M. MILLÁN, M. RIVERO RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), Polifemo, Madrid 2010, 247-265; F. MEYER, *La duchesse et le robins. Christine de France et le sénat de Savoie de part et d'autre de la guerre civile en Piémont*, «Dix-septième siècle», 262-1 (2014), 65-79. On Francis Thomas of Savoy Carignano see L. PICCO, *Il patrimonio privato dei Savoia : Tommaso di Savoia Carignano (1596-1656)*, Centro studi piemontesi, Torino 2004. On Cardinal Maurice, see the very recent volume *Il Cardinale. Maurizio di Savoia, mecenate, diplomatico e politico (1593-1657)*, Atti del convegno internazionale Torino 2021, J. MORALES, C. SANTARELLI, F. VARALLO (eds.), Carocci, Roma 2023.

once Charles Emmanuel II had legitimate access to the power, she endeavoured to keep the Duchy independent though firmly embedded within the French sphere of influence.²⁴

Although he had legitimate access to the throne in 1648, Charles Emmanuel II was kept away from any actual political decisions. When Christine of France died at Christmas 1663, she still maintained her hegemony over the duchy. Charles Emmanuel II had married Françoise Magdalena of Orleans a few months earlier, thus achieving two political objectives in a short time: a marriage alliance and, with the death of the regent, the total exercise of power. However, these goals immediately faced many obstacles; first and foremost, the rapid departure of the duchess, who died in 1664. This forced the Duke of Savoy to find a new wife immediately; his choice this time was Joanne Baptist of Savoy-Nemours. After a long time away from the core of power, Charles Emmanuel II used the years up to his death in 1675 to attempt to direct the Duchy's politics.

Charles Emmanuel II's foreign policy turned in two directions: the reconquest of Geneva, a former possession of the House of Savoy, organised between 1666 and 1668 and the attempt to annex the Republic of Genoa in 1672. Both attempts were stopped by French intervention, but also because of the inability of the Duchy of Savoy to deeply destabilise the European political order. The clash with Geneva had had an internal precedent with the repression of the protestant Waldensian community, who settled in the Alpine valleys and converted to Calvinism in 1532. In 1655, after decades of progressive restriction of the religious liberties granted to this community, Charles Emmanuel II ordered a ferocious repression that ended in a brutal massacre that caused controversy throughout Europe.²⁵

Charles Emmanuel II's reign ended in 1675, and his succession returned power to another *Madama Reale*, the duchess consort Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours.²⁶ This time, however, unlike Christine of France, she failed to centralise the power in her hands, and she held power only until 1680 when a new Duke of Savoy could finally take over the regency: Victor Amadeus II. In contrast to his father, he succeeded from the outset in

²⁴ See the monographic issue *Christine de France et son siècle*, «Dix-septième siècle», 262-1 (2014), and *De Paris à Turin. Christine de France, duchesse de Savoie*, G. FERRETTI (ed.), L'Harmattan, Paris 2014. Also edited by G. Ferretti see *L'Etat, la cour et la ville*, Garnier, Paris 2017.

²⁵ D. TRON, *Le 'Pasque piemontesi' e l'internazionale protestante*, Claudiana, Torino 2005.

²⁶ For a recent comparative study between the two duchesses see *Madame Reali. Cultura e potere da Parigi a Torino. Cristina di Francia e Giovanna Battista di Savoia Nemours (1619-1724)*, C. ARNALDI DI BALME, M.P. RUFFINO (eds.), Sageo, Torino 2019; *Maria Giovanna Battista di Savoia-Nemours. Stato, capitale, architettura*, C. DEVOTI (ed.), Olschki, Firenze 2021.

stopping his mother's attempt to gain control over the duchy. Supported by the anti-French party within the court, Victor Amadeus II ousted his mother in 1684 from any leadership role and assumed full powers.

Victor Amadeus II immediately demonstrated the shrewdness that characterised his domestic and foreign politics. A political talent that allowed him to finally achieve the goal always coveted by his predecessors: being the last duke and the first king. In 1713, Victor Amadeus, having emerged victorious from the War of the Spanish Succession in which the Duchy of Savoy had taken part, was able to claim the title of King of Sicily, exchanged seven years later for that of Sardinia, adding the Mediterranean island to the domains of the House of Savoy, which could finally bear an actual royal title. Victor Amadeus II was the first king of the House of Savoy and the architect of the kingdom's transformation into an absolute state.²⁷

However, Victor Amadeus II's bright trajectory ended with his abdication in 1730 because of mental instability in favour of Charles Emmanuel III and his confinement in the castle of Moncalieri, until his death in 1731, due to his attempt to regain power. The several reforms that faced the Kingdom of Sardinia during the first half of the eighteenth century were the foundation for constructing a modern state.²⁸ The first twenty years of Charles Emmanuel III's reign were marked by the Kingdom of Sardinia's deep involvement in the phase of European conflicts that opened in 1733 with the outbreak of the War of the Polish Succession and ended in 1748 with the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. First, the Peace of Vienna in 1738 and then the Peace of Aachen in 1748 gave the House of Savoy its first real territorial conquests (the so-called *paesi di nuovo acquisto*) after the mid-sixteenth century restoration, integrating within the kingdom many provinces that had previously belonged to Spanish Lombardy.²⁹

²⁷ C. STORRS, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy 1690-1720*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004. See also the benchmark study G. SYMCOX, *Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard state (1675-1730)*, Thames and Hudson, London 1983.

²⁸ On the general organisation of the state see G. RICUPERATI, *Lo Stato sabauda nel Settecento*, Torino, UTET, 2001. On relations with between state and aristocracy see A. MERLOTTI, *L'enigma della nobiltà. Stato e ceti dirigenti nel Piemonte del Settecento*, Olschki, Firenze 2000. On central administration see G. STOLFI, *Dall'amministrare all'amministrazione. Le aziende nell'organizzazione statale del Regno di Sardegna*, Firenze University Press, Firenze 2014.

²⁹ G. RICUPERATI, *Lo Stato sabauda nel Settecento: dal trionfo delle burocrazia alla crisi d'antico regime*, UTET, Torino 2001.

The last quarter of the century (1773-1796) was marked by the reign of Victor Amadeus III where, while the splendours of the *Ancien Regime* were still being celebrated, the first revolutionary ideas and the consequent political and social upheavals began to spread. In 1792, the armies of revolutionary France invaded Savoy and Nice following the entry of the Kingdom of Sardinia into the first anti-French coalition, which would be annexed by the Peace of Cherasco in 1796. The brief eighteenth century of the Kingdom of Sardinia, began in 1720, ended in 1798 when a new invasion by French armies conquered the House of Savoy's domains once again.

On the trail of House of Savoy's hunts

The rich and fascinating history of the House of Savoy during the early modern age saw sovereigns very different from each other in temperament, fortune, and political skill. Still, the princely hunt was a constant background for their political fortunes, like a thread running through the centuries. Hunting has become a topic of great interest for the historiography of the House of Savoy since the 1990s, or to be more precise, since 1989 with the exhibition *Diana trionfatrice. Arte di corte nel Piemonte del Seicento* which gave rise to a rich catalogue where, alongside the traditional analysis of Piedmontese Baroque, an in-depth interpretation of the urban and architectural system of residences surrounding the capital began. Coordinated by Vera Comoli Mandracci, the historical-urban interpretation of the *crown of delights (corona di delizie)*, which counted many hunting palaces or residences also used for hunting purposes (Viboccone in the Park of Turin, Mirafiori, Valentino, Venaria Reale, Stupinigi), was placed at the centre of an analysis through which the different insights into individual architectural structures could be brought together in a single framework.³⁰ An approach that would take on an autonomous profile the following year with *Ville Sabaude*, where the historical-urban analysis was preceded by an accurate study of Costanza Roggero Bardelli on the territorial impact of princely hunting around Turin.³¹

The analysis of the residence network then gave way to specific contributions on what were the two most crucial hunting infrastructures: the hunting lodge of Stupinigi and the palace of Venaria Reale. The historical, artistic and architectural focus on the Stupinigi palace is due to the research of Gianfranco Gritella and Andreina Griseri, which led to the

³⁰ V. COMOLI MANDRACCI, *La città-capitale e la "corona di delizie"* in *Diana trionfatrice. Arte di corte nel Piemonte del Seicento*, M. MACCO, G. ROMANO (eds.), Allemandi, Torino 1989, 304-312; 328-348.

³¹ C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Il sovrano, la dinastia, l'architettura del territorio* in C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, M. G. VINARDI, V. DEFABIANI (eds.), *Ville sabaude*, Rusconi, Milano 1990, 12-54.

publication of the work *Stupinigi, luogo d'Europa* in 1996.³² For the palace of Venaria Reale, however, it was necessary to wait until the 2000s, after the overall restoration work that began in 1998. *Venaria Reale. Arte, magnificenza e storia di una corte europea* was edited by Enrico Castelnuovo in 2007, focusing on the artistic, symbolic and political, relationship between the dynasty and the palace built by Charles Emmanuel II and the entire history of the House of Savoy.³³ The art historical analysis has found its most recent elaboration in the volume *Il mito di Diana nella cultura delle corti*, which traces the emergence of hunting themes and symbolism to the broader court culture.³⁴

Until the early 2000s, therefore, historiography was mainly interested in the House of Savoy's princely hunting essentially from the architectural and artistic data on hunting infrastructure. An actual paradigm shift occurred between 2010 and 2011 with the publication of the two seminal volumes *La caccia nello stato sabauda*. Edited by Paola Bianchi and Pietro Passerin d'Entreves, the two volumes right from the title show how the focus has finally shifted to princely hunting *per se*, interpreting it through its ties to courtly culture and the practices and spaces in which it took place.³⁵

The contributions collected in the two volumes basically follow four core topics: hunting in the art and courtly culture;³⁶ tracking territories associated with the palace of Venaria

³² A. GRISERI, *La palazzina di Stupinigi*, De Agostini, Novara 1982; GRITELLA, *Stupinigi: dal progetto di Juvarra alle premesse neoclassiche*, Panini, Modena 1987; R. GABETTI, A. GRISERI, *Stupinigi, luogo d'Europa*, Allemandi, Torino 1996.

³³ *Venaria Reale arte, magnificenza e storia di una corte europea*, E. CASTELNUOVO (ed.), 2 voll., Allemandi, Torino 2007.

³⁴ *Il mito di Diana nella cultura delle corti. Arte, letteratura, musica*, G. B. SQUAROTTI, A. COLTURATO, C. GORIA (eds.), Olschki, Firenze 2018.

³⁵ *La caccia nello Stato sabauda*, P. BIANCHI, P. PASSERIN D'ENTREVES (eds.), 2 voll., I. *Caccia e cultura (secc. XVI-XVIII)*, II. *Pratiche e spazi (secc. XVI-XIX)*, Zamorani, Torino 2010-2011.

³⁶ P. BIANCHI, *La caccia nell'educazione del gentiluomo. Il caso sabauda (sec. XVI-XVIII)* in Ivi, vol. I, 19-38; G. BARBERI SQUAROTTI, *La caccia nella letteratura della corte sabauda* in Ivi, 39-63; F. VARALLO, *Il tema della caccia nelle feste sabaude nei secoli XVI e XVII* in Ivi, 131-148; F. BLANCHETTI, *Scene di caccia nel teatro in musica alla corte sabauda tra Sei e Settecento* in Ivi, 149-176; C. ARNALDI DI BALME, *Jan Miel e la serie di cacce per la reggia di Venaria* in Ivi, 193-203; D. COMINO, *I ritratti equestri della Sala di Diana alla Reggia di Venaria Reale* in Ivi, 203-222; F. CERINI, *La caccia rappresentata. Armi di lusso per la corte sabauda* in Ivi, vol. II, 71-81.

Reale, and the conformation assumed by the reserved district in the eighteenth century;³⁷ equestrian culture between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;³⁸ and more marginally, themes related to right and court offices in the eighteenth century.³⁹

The two volumes also contain, obviously, Pietro Passerin d'Entrèves' essays, but for the outstanding contribution made by his historiographic production, it will be discussed separately here. His research on House of Savoy's princely hunts, which began in the mid-1990s, initially focused on the hunting practices used at the Stupinigi hunting lodge in the 18th century, with a critical examination of game management. Then he moved on to nineteenth-century royal mountain hunting linked to the history of the House of Savoy when having passed the throne to the cadet branch of Savoy-Carignano, it had tied its destinies to the Italian Risorgimento and the process of national unification.⁴⁰ The focus then turns back to the eighteenth century and the House of Savoy court ceremonial, in which deer hunting is fully integrated.⁴¹ In a study he also tried to highlight some features

³⁷ G. MARINELLO, *Territorio di caccia: tra rituali di chasse à courre e vénerie royale* in *Ivi*, vol. I, 177-192; A. M. POLETTI, *Spazi e luoghi delle cacce reali* in *Ivi*, vol. II, 37-52; D. DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altesano Superiore: partecipazione della comunità e mutamenti negli assetti economici e social del territorio* in *Ivi*, 53-70; V. DEFABIANI, *La "Misura Reale": territori e caccia* in *Ivi*, 117-120; A. SISTRI, *I distretti riservati di caccia nei dintorni di Torino nel corso del Settecento* in *Ivi*, 121-137.

³⁸ P. CORNAGLIA, *Architetture equestri: la Cavallerizza di Palazzo Reale e le scuderie di Venaria* in *Ivi*, vol. I, 97-112; M. GENNERO, *La rimonta nella scuderia sabauda del Sei-Settecento* in *Ivi*, 113-120; B. A. RAVIOLA, "A caval donato...". *Regali e scambi di destrieri fra le corti di Torino, Mantova e Vienna* in *Ivi*, 121-130; M. GENNERO, *Il cavallo da caccia: razze e tipologie* in *Ivi*, 81-90.

³⁹ A. MERLOTTI, *Il Gran Cacciatore di Savoia nel XVIII secolo* in *Ivi*, vol. I, 79-96; F. A. GORIA, "Venatio est cui libet permissa de iure gentium". *La regolamentazione della caccia nella dottrina del tardo diritto comune*, 109-116.

⁴⁰ P. PASSERIN D'ENTREVES, *Le cacce reali in Stupinigi luogo d'Europa*, R. GABETTI, A. GRISERI (eds.), Allemandi, Torino 1996, 155-164; ID., *Introduzione alla Venaria: fanfare di Venerie e Messa di Sant'Uberto* in *Memoria e futuro, «I giornali di restauro»*, 5 (1996), 81-85; ID., *La gestion démographique du gibier et des animaux nuisibles dans les domaines royaux de chasse en Piémont au XVIII^{ème} siècle*, «Anthropozoologica», 31 (2000), 137-145; ID., *Le Chasses Royales in Valle d'Aosta (1850-1919)*, Allemandi, Torino 2000.

⁴¹ ID., *Il cerimoniale della caccia al cervo in Le strategie dell'apparenza. Cerimoniali, politica e società alla corte dei Savoia in età moderna*, P. BIANCHI, A. MERLOTTI (eds.), Zamorani, Torino 2010, 201-222.

of the sixteenth-seventeenth century hunting.⁴² Pietro Passerin d'Entrèves' more recent essays have taken up themes already addressed with additional insight.⁴³

The paradigm shift was effective and allowed to outline the House of Savoy's princely hunting in comparison with other Italian and European experiences, as demonstrated by the publication in 2017 of the volume *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*.⁴⁴ As can be seen, however, the eighteenth century, in many ways, constitutes the time frame on which most of the existing literature converges. Although this approach uncovered crucial data for understanding the House of Savoy's princely hunting at its height, at the same time, it elevated eighteenth-century hunting to an interpretive model for earlier periods and not as the endpoint of longer-term dynamics. Moreover, princely hunting is still analysed not as performance *per se* but in relation to other aspects of court life.

My aim in this thesis, it is to overturn this view by reconstructing the long-term dynamics that from the re-establishment of the Duchy of Savoy in 1559 with Emmanuel Philibert developed throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, underwent profound changes through the entire seventeenth century and found stability in the eighteenth century. Moreover, while maintaining the court as the necessary framework within which princely hunting was embedded, it will not be the pivot around which the analysis will revolve, which instead will be centered on the direct relationship between sovereign and hunt investigated through a multidimensional approach.

A multidimensional approach: methodologies and sources

The princely hunt at the House of Savoy was addressed with a multidimensional approach, built on a series of concepts which can be grouped in two main categories: structure and

⁴² ID., *La caccia reale tra Piemonte e Savoia nei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII* in *La ronde. Giostre, esercizi cavallereschi e loisir in Francia e Piemonte fra Medioevo e Ottocento*, F. VARALLO (ed.), Olschki, Firenze 2011, 199-213.

⁴³ ID., *Le cacce reali nello stato sabauda fra Sette e Ottocento*, in *La caccia nell'Europa dei principi*, 225-240; ID., *Le cacce reali a Stupinigi : la « Saint Obert »* in *Il sentimento religioso e le cacce reali. Il restauro della cappella di sant'Uberto a Stupinigi*, A. GRISERI (ed.), L'Artistica, Savigliano 2014, 9-32; ID., *Dalla vénerie royale alle riserve di montagna. Tecniche e uso dello spazio* in *La caccia nello stato sabauda*, II. *Pratiche e spazi*, ID., P. BIANCHI (eds.), Zamorani 2011, 19-36.

⁴⁴ E. GUERRA, *La caccia nel territorio estense tra pratica e legislazione nel XV secolo* in *Ivi*, vol. II, 137-152; S. CALONACI, *Nello specchio di Diana. La corte e la riforma della caccia in Toscanadi Cosimo III* in *Ivi*, 153-170; D. CECERE, *Cacce reali e cacce baronali nel Mezzogiorno borbonico* in *Ivi*, 171-86. *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*, A. MERLOTTI (ed.), Olschki, Firenze 2017.

performance. The category of structure is not new to hunting studies, although it has been understood to mean the structurally ambivalent nature of hunting concerning medieval society.⁴⁵ Here, reference is made instead to three different elements whose function made them strictly necessary for the very existence of princely hunting: the *hunting space*, the *animal court* and the *hunting officers*.

With *hunting space*, I intend to refer to something much broader than just the hunting ground reserved for the sovereign, which most often refers simply to woods or forests that are generally delimited. Foremost, a *hunting space* is a territory made homogeneous by laws that establish boundaries and restrictions, discipline behaviours, and redefines the animal and human hierarchy, where the sole authority on the environment comes from the sovereign power. A space that was not only limited to the woodlands proper but was also the result of interconnection with the other components: the waterscape, which played a fundamental role in ensuring, or not, the abundant presence of game and waterfowl; and hunting infrastructures such as residences, palaces, lodges and other facilities like kennels, aviaries and stables.⁴⁶ Finally, a space that did not impact only the animal world: within the hunting space, the *sovereign* exercised power over *subjects* through the *game*.

Alongside the hunting space, an *animal court* existed. Firstly, it consisted of the assistant animals, the *hunting trinity* made up of horses, hounds and hawks, which were, in many cases, also the weapons used to cull game. Besides, there was the menagerie of exotic or unusual animals (tigers, lions, fallow deer, lynxes and others) used as status symbols and exhibitions of power.⁴⁷ Lastly, the game, that is the hunt strictly reserved for the sovereign's pleasure, was composed of among others deer, wild board, pheasant heron. Although these animals were subjects of hunting violence, they were placed under the sovereign high protection for conservation purposes and their symbolic value.

The animal court was closely intertwined with a human hierarchy composed of *hunting officers*. Huntsmen, dog keepers and falconers managed the packs of hounds and the birds of prey, the stable staff looked after the horses, qualified personnel governed exotic

⁴⁵ A. GUERREAU, *Le structures de base de la chasse medievale* in *La chasse au Moyen Age*, 25-32.

⁴⁶ J. R. CHRISTIANSON, *The infrastructure of the Royal Hunt. King Frederik II of Denmark, 1559-1588* in *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*, 3-20.

⁴⁷ On these first two categories of animals see M. ROSCHER, *Animals at court: interspecies relations in a Longue durée perspective* in M. HENGERER, N. WEBER (eds.), *Animals and Courts. Europe, c. 1200–1800*, De Gruyter, Oldenbourg 2020, 399-416.

animals, and officers in charge of territorial control ensured that reserved animals were not hunted by anyone other than the duke. Hunting officers, argued Salvadori, formed «*une petite société ou se mêlent aristocrates et roturiers*», although nobility granted access to the highest offices.⁴⁸ Huntsmen, falconers and other hunting officers were among the inner circle of people who had access to the person of the sovereign.

The interconnection of these three elements formed the structure, the *hunting system*, within which the *performance* took shape. By this term, I am referring to the very act of hunting by the sovereign, which could take on very different features. The performance of a sovereign engaged in a heron hunt with falcons presupposed an entirely different choice of site, accompanying officers and assistant animals than a wild boar hunt. Moreover, this term is meant to indicate the cultural influences that intervened in hunting and affected how it occurred. Toile hunting, which implied enclosing a portion of the forest with nets and toils where prey was pushed and slaughtered, presupposed a completely different relationship with the territory than the *chasse à courre*. That was a French-origin hunt involving the use of large packs of dogs with which to pursue the prey, in most cases, a deer, which was hunted *parforce*, i.e. until its exhaustion, and then shot down with a rifle or stabbed with a hunting dagger by the sovereign. Personal taste and material-related elements also influenced the sovereign's hunting performance. The vast costs imposed by falconry and the evolution of firearms between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to a shift from falconry to rifle hunting, which brought about radical changes in the hunting system, especially concerning hunting officers and the animal court, which saw the gradual disappearance of falconers and birds of prey. These different levels influenced in many respects the sovereign's hunting performance and thus also the type of «dominion», as defined by Luc Duerloo, related to princely hunting.⁴⁹

Structures and performance thus influenced each other in an ambivalent relation. The attempt to delineate them and bring out this relationship with its political implications required a hybrid methodology. The analysis of the structures focused on two main areas: the legislation issued on princely hunting and reserved hunting grounds and the

⁴⁸ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Régime*, 245. The author speaks of two interests converging: that of the '*service par nature*', which belonged to the lowest positions held by most of the non-aristocrats, and that of the '*service par intérêt*', which belonged to the highest positions held by the aristocrats, see Ivi, 222.

⁴⁹ L. DUERLOO, *The hunt in the performance of Archducal rule*, «Renaissance Quarterly», 69-1 (2016), 116-154.

expenditure required to pay hunting officers and maintain assisting animals.⁵⁰ These two areas represented the two prominent voices through which the sovereign could shape the hunting system.

Legislation, indeed, entailed more than just the establishment of the boundaries of the reserved areas; it also concerned internal regulations on the exploitation of forest resources, the species enlisted among the royal animals, relations with other actors such as the feudal aristocracy or the communities within the hunting district, the duties of some hunting officers, policy on firearms. It was also accompanied by a set of rules concerning the discipline of behaviours that had to be kept within the reserved grounds.

The primary source relied on is the 38-volume integral edition of the laws and edicts issued by the sovereigns of the House of Savoy between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, edited by Felice Duboin.⁵¹ The fifth and twenty-sixth volumes contain the legislation on princely hunting from 1430 to 1796.⁵² In addition to this central axis, further research has been carried out in the collections *Protocolli dei notai della corona* and *Materie giuridiche* in the State Archive in Turin - Corte, which resulted in the emergence of unedited edicts and orders relating to hunting that, integrated with the previous ones, have ensured a comprehensive analysis.⁵³

On the other hand, hunting-related expenditures provide a rich set of information related to the numbers of hunting officers and their internal hierarchy, the quantity, type and different value of assistant animals, and they also serve as a means of collecting biographical data related to individual officers.

⁵⁰ This approach takes its roots from an initial survey conducted by Luc Duerloo on hunting accounting in the Archducal Netherlands over the first decades of the seventeenth century, see L. DUERLOO, *The price of the prey. Accounting for the princely hunt in the Archducal Netherlands 1598 – 1621* in *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*, 59-72.

⁵¹ F. A. DUBOIN, *Raccolta per ordine di materie delle leggi, editti, manifesti, ecc., pubblicati dal principio dell'anno 1681 sino agli 8 dicembre 1798 sotto il felicissimo dominio della Real Casa di Savoia per servire di continuazione a quella del senatore Borelli*, 38 voll., Stamperia Davico&Picco, Torino 1818-1860.

⁵² DUBOIN XXVI, lib. 12, tit. V, *Della caccia e della pesca*, 1093-1308 (henceforth: DUBOIN).

⁵³ ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI TORINO SEZIONE CORTE (henceforth: ASTO CORTE), *Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno*, *Protocolli dei notai della Corona*, *Protocolli dei notai ducali - serie rossa* (henceforth: *Protocolli dei notai della Corona*); ASTO CORTE, *Materie giuridiche*, *Editti originali*; *Editti a stampa*; *Editti originali riguardanti provvisori particolari e temporanee* (henceforth: *Editti originali*; *Editti a stampa*; *Editti particolari*).

Unlike legislative sources, the finding of hunting expenses in the central accounts of the House of Savoy presented more than one challenge. The reconstitution of the duchy in 1559 and the transfer of the capital meant that the administration and central accounting of the state also had to be rebuilt from scratch. This formally occurred with the establishment of a new Chamber of Accounts in Turin in 1577, which replaced the Chambery Chamber as the central authority.⁵⁴ Therefore, the first years after Emmanuel Philibert's return presented very fragmentary payments and were often issued with considerable delays. From 1565 the situation gradually stabilised, allowing payments for hunting officers to be identified in two specific treasuries: the House and the General Treasury of Piedmont in the State Archive of Turin - Riunite.⁵⁵

The significant fragmentation in payments was curbed by cross-analysis of treasury records with the *Patenti camerali* and *Patenti controllo finanze*, both inventoried and entered into an online database.⁵⁶ The former are provisions issued by the sovereign to individuals, places, and offices, hence also to all the hunting officers; the latter is the outcome of the *Camera dei Conti* control over the single payments emitted. Cross-referencing the three sources has made it possible to identify 139 profiles of hunting officers, entered in database covering the period 1559-1637.

Following a period of stable accounting system, the central administration of the House of Savoy endured a new upheaval during the civil war, yet the situation came back to normal as early as the 1640s with a definitive and exclusive transfer of hunting expenditures to the Piedmont General Treasury exclusively. From the 1660s, all payments were addressed to one internal treasurer instead of to specific officers as was the case before the creation of the *Venaria Reale*. Whereas that enabled hunting expenses to continue to be quantified, it simultaneously made it impossible to identify the individual internal crew members with their respective payments. The gap caused by this decision,

⁵⁴ On this phase see E. STUMPO, *Finanze e ragion di Stato nella prima età moderna. Due modelli diversi: Piemonte e Toscana, Savoia e Medici in Dall'Europa all'Italia. Studi sul Piemonte del Seicento*, P. BIANCHI (ed.), Zamorani, Torino 2015, 77-128.

⁵⁵ ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI TORINO SEZIONE RIUNITE (henceforth: ASTO RIUNITE), Camera dei conti, Camera dei Conti di Piemonte, Real Casa, art. 217 – Conti approvati, par. 1 – Tesoreria generale (henceforth: art. 217); Conti generali approvati, art. 86 – Ricevidoria, poi Tesoreria Generale del Piemonte, par. 3 – Piemonte, Tesoreria Generale (henceforth: art. 86).

⁵⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti, Camera dei Conti di Piemonte, Patenti regie, art. 687 – Patenti Camerale Piemonte, par. 1 – Patenti e concessioni sovrane e camerali di ogni genere (henceforth: art. 687); Camera dei conti, Camera dei Conti di Piemonte, art. 689 – Controllo di finanze, cioè registri di provvidenze e concessioni sovrane (henceforth: art. 689).

which was absolutely logical from the point of view of administrative evolution, has been amended through the integration of the data contained in the household budgets of Christine of France, Charles Emmanuel II and Jeanne-Baptiste of Savoy Nemours conserved in the Royal Library in Turin and in a collection of orders related to hunts issued between 1648 and 1719 stored in the fund *Camera dei conti* at the State Archive - Riunite.⁵⁷

The eighteenth century presents the most stable and consolidated situation. Following the administrative reforms sought by Victor Amadeus II and the founding of the *Azienda della Casa di Sua Maestà*, hunting expenditures were classified under the category called *Stati della Venaria Reale* included in the *Libri mastri categorici*, accounts that fully reported all expense orders for the King of Sardinia's household.⁵⁸

While the outline of the hunting system could be reconstructed from legislations and accounts, performance involving the action of hunting proved itself more complex to trace. Details reports on the princely hunts were analysed, yet they were insufficient to provide an overview. Indeed, they often were the product of actors at the court, whose purpose was to extol the deed of the Savoy sovereigns. The reports were found across a very heterogeneous body of sources ranging from the personal correspondence of some sovereigns to the *Storia della Real Casa* at archive Corte, to the fund *Simeom* in the City of Turin Archives.⁵⁹

The only way to get an overall perspective is to rely on the assessments of an actor outside the court of Savoy, thus not affected by internal power dynamics, who '*observes the sovereign hunting in our place*'. Venetian ambassadors to the court of Turin are the best choice to achieve this goal. After the re-establishment of the duchy, Venice was among the first foreign powers to send its ambassadors to the court of Savoy, with which it maintained diplomatic relations until 1632 when, because of Victor Amadeus I's claims to the royal crown of Cyprus and Jerusalem, a territory over which Venice formally claimed

⁵⁷ BIBLIOTECA REALE DI TORINO (henceforth: BRT), Mss. Savoia, I-1; ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti, Camera dei Conti di Piemonte, art. 690 - Miscellanee di patenti, ordini e provvidenze, par. 10-1 non inv., Miscellanea di patenti, ordini e provvidenze riguardanti le cacce 1648-1683 [1719] (henceforth: art. 690).

⁵⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, Casa di Sua Maestà, Azienda della Casa di Sua Maestà, Contabilità, Libri mastri categorici (henceforth: Libri mastri categorici).

⁵⁹ ASTO CORTE, Materie politiche per il rapporto all'interno, Lettere diverse Real Casa, Lettere Duchi e Sovrani; Lettere Principi diversi di Savoia; Storia della Real Casa (henceforth: Lettere Duchi; Lettere Principi; Storia della real Casa).

sovereignty, there was a first diplomatic break. Diplomatic relations were resumed in 1662 and lasted into 1671, when a second diplomatic break occurred due to Charles Emmanuel II's failed attempt to annex the republic of Genoa. Relations resumed in 1740 and continued until 1797, when the *Serenissima* fell under the occupation of the French troops.

Despite diplomatic breaks, the gaze of the Venetian ambassadors on the court of Savoy was insightful and detailed, and their reports bring a quantity of hunting-related information that can be used to retrace the hunting attitude of the House of Savoy during three centuries. As for the reports that ambassadors delivered before the Venetian Senate at the end of their term, the complete edition edited by Luigi Firpo was used.⁶⁰ Based on these reports, the ambassadors who were most interested in the hunting activity of the House of Savoy were identified, and dispatches sent by them during their diplomatic activity and conserved in the State Archive of Venice have been analysed.⁶¹

Finally, an implication of the multidimensional approach needs to be pointed out. Setting the primary research focus on the direct relationship between sovereign and hunting means observing the historical dynamics from the '*throne's standpoint*', which presupposes a top-bottom view whose limits must be considered. The bottom-up reactions to princely hunting that have emerged from the sources outlined so far have all been integrated into the analysis. To mitigate the rigidity imposed by this methodological choice, I integrated data from the trials of poaching offences committed between 1680 and 1730 in Savoy and Piedmont, which offer insight into the profile of those who challenged the sovereign authority in the hunting domain.⁶²

In addition, I also wanted to associate with this some of the iconographic production related to hunting: the cycle of hunts by Jan Miel (1659-1661) at the palace of Venaria Reale and that of Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli at the hunting lodge of Stupinigi (1771-1773). The two cycles are not new in the literature on the hunts of the House of Savoy, having been extensively analysed from an artistic-historical perspective. Instead, the two primary

⁶⁰ *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, L. FIRPO (ed.), vol. XI – Savoia (1496-1797), Bottega d'Erasmus, Torino 1983.

⁶¹ ARCHIVIO DI STATO DI VENEZIA (henceforth: ASVE), *Antichi regimi, Dispacci, Dispacci degli ambasciatori e resident 1484-1797, Savoia 1567, 1569-1670; Torino 1741-1797* (henceforth: *Dispacci Savoia, Dispacci Torino*).

⁶² ARCHIVES DEPARTEMENTALES DE LA SAVOIE (henceforth: ADS), B0 – *Processus criminelles*; 2B – *Edicts, patentes, lettres* (henceforth: B0; 2B); ASTO RIUNITE, *Senato di Piemonte, Sentenze* (henceforth: *Sentenze*).

pictorial cycles related to the hunts of the House of Savoy will be used as iconographic feedback to the findings of the previous analysis.

The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three main parts covering a chronological space from 1599 to 1796. The tripartition partly respects a classical subdivision of the House of Savoy's history. The first part goes from 1559, when Emmanuel Philibert returned, to the outbreak of civil war in 1637. The second goes from the conflict's conclusion in 1642 to the 1730s. The classic term would tend towards 1714 or 1720 when the House of Savoy achieved the royal title first with the crown of Sicily and then with that of Sardinia. As will be seen, however, the history of princely hunting is not perfectly overlapping. The third part focuses on the decades between 1740 and 1796 and traces the dynamics underlying the transition to a royal title.

The first part will focus on the processes that saw the construction of the three elements of the hunting system – hunting space, animal court, and hunting officers – between 1559 and 1637, relating them to the processes of sovereignty restoration undertaken by the dukes of Savoy between the fifteen and sixteen hundred. The second part will focus on the developments undergone by the hunting system in the aftermath of the civil war but, above all, on the evolution of hunting performance and its connections with sovereignty. The third part will finally deal with the final phase and evolution of the House of Savoy's royal hunts and which characteristics they assumed after achieving the long-awaited royal title.

Each of the three parts will be opened with an introduction proposing an interpretation of the relationship between the different sovereign and princely hunting based on the diplomatic sources of the Venetian ambassadors. Short conclusions will be offered at the end of the first two parts, comparing findings with those that have emerged in other European contexts, while in the case of the third part, the last chapter will provide general conclusions and a long-term interpretation of the connection between House of Savoy's princely hunting and sovereignty.

Following are the equivalences of the main measurements used in the thesis based on *Tavole di ragguglio degli antichi pesi e misure*.⁶³

Measure	Name	Equivalence
Weight	<i>Rubbo</i>	9,221.113 g
Capacity	<i>Emina</i>	23.00556 l
Surface	<i>Giornata</i>	0.38009599 ha

⁶³ *Tavole di ragguglio degli antichi pesi e misure degli Stati di S.M. in terraferma coi pesi e misure del sistema metrico decimale e pubblicate dal Ministero di Agricoltura e Commercio secondo il prescritto dell'art. 11 del R. Editto 11 settembre 1845*, Stamperia Reale, Torino 1849.

Summary

Influenced by anthropology, philosophy and the 'performative turn' in social sciences, historians and political scholars have begun to reconsider notions of 'authority'. Sovereignty is now understood to be a continuous activity of claim making. As a result, the on-going performance of power can be studied through seemingly trivial activities. If any of these deserves to be studied from the perspective of (claiming) sovereignty, it is most certainly the princely hunt. It would even be difficult to conceive of something more apt to reach a deeper understanding of the performance of sovereignty.

By studying the evolution of princely hunt over a long period of time, this thesis ambitions to deliver a new interpretation of the performance of sovereignty. To do so, it develops a novel approach to quantify the way the hunt served to enact power. The means allotted to the hunt offer an instrument to measure the levels of investment in – and therefore the long-term evolution of – that performance. They not only show how princely magnificence was constructed time and again, but they also reveal how the symbolic violence exercised by the princely hunt was as tool for building power.

The House of Savoy is at the core of this analysis, for it combines two central element enabling to disentangle the bonds between sovereignty and hunting: the unusual quantity of the (socio-economic) primary sources and the dynasty's ambitions and recurrent changes in the status of House of Savoy' sovereignty. The political evolution of the House of Savoy between the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth century allows us to retrace the various phases of a dynasty forced to rebuild the territorial, political and symbolic ties of its sovereignty, which once regained were called into question by civil and dynastic conflicts that. Only when the internal fracture created by these conflicts was overcome, the House of Savoy managed to rise to the status of a royal house. Princely hunt was at the centre of these cycles of claimed sovereignty as a pivotal tool to construct, exercise, and express power.

Dutch Summary

Onder invloed van de antropologie, de filosofie en de performative turn in de sociale wetenschappen zijn historici en politicologen begonnen met het heroverwegen van het begrip 'gezag'. Soevereiniteit wordt nu gezien als een voortdurende activiteit van het maken van claims. Het gevolg is dat de voortschrijdende machtsuitoefening bestudeerd kan worden aan de hand van ogenschijnlijk triviale activiteiten. Als er één van die activiteiten het verdient om bestudeerd te worden vanuit het perspectief van (het claimen van) soevereiniteit, dan is het wel de vorstelijke jacht.

Het zou zelfs moeilijk zijn om iets te bedenken dat geschikter is om tot een dieper begrip van de uitoefening van soevereiniteit te komen. Door de evolutie van de vorstelijke jacht over een lange periode te bestuderen, wil dit proefschrift bijdragen tot een nieuwe interpretatie van de uitoefening van soevereiniteit. Daartoe is een nieuwe benadering ontwikkeld om de manier waarop de jacht diende om het uitoefenen van macht te kwantificeren. De middelen die aan de jacht zijn toegekend bieden een instrument om de investeringen in - en dus de evolutie op lange termijn van - die representatie van de macht te meten. Ze laten niet alleen zien hoe vorstelijke grootsheid keer op keer werd geconstrueerd, maar ze onthullen ook hoe het symbolische geweld dat door de vorstelijke jacht werd uitgeoefend een middel was om macht op te bouwen.

Het Huis van Savoye staat centraal in deze analyse, omdat het twee centrale elementen combineert die het mogelijk maken om de banden tussen soevereiniteit en jacht te ontwarren: de ongewone hoeveelheid (sociaal-economische) primaire bronnen en de ambities van de dynastie en de terugkerende veranderingen in de status van de soevereiniteit van het vorstenhuis. De politieke evolutie van het Huis van Savoye tussen de zestiende en het einde van de achttiende eeuw stelt ons in staat om de verschillende fasen te volgen van een dynastie die gedwongen werd om de territoriale, politieke en symbolische banden van haar soevereiniteit opnieuw op te bouwen. Pas toen de interne breuk die door deze conflicten was ontstaan was overwonnen, slaagde het Huis van Savoye erin om de status van koninklijk huis te bereiken. De prinselijke jacht stond centraal in deze cycli van geclaimde soevereiniteit als een instrument om macht op te bouwen, uit te oefenen en tot uitdrukking te brengen.

Part 1 **A restored sovereignty**

On December 15, 1569, the Duke of Savoy Emmanuel Philibert invited the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Francesco Morosini «to attend a beautiful hunt that [he] held at San Gillio», a small town not far from Turin.⁶⁴ That day, however, the Duke of Savoy seemed more interested in pursuing rumours that were rapidly spreading around the courts of the Italian peninsula than a wild boar or deer. It was said that Pope Pius V Ghislieri wanted to confer the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany on Cosimo I Medici, thus elevating him above the ducal title. If this fact proved well-founded, the Medici dynasty would obtain a privileged status at the other Italian and European courts, overshadowing the House of Savoy.⁶⁵ Questioned on the issue, Morosini hints at an elusive attitude:

*I replied that this was the first time I heard that, and His Excellence told me that was written to him from Rome [...] I told him that I did not know what [Venice] was about to do, but that I believed that it didn't matter whether the Duke of Florence was more Duke than Archduke, because, regarding precedence, [the Duke of Savoy] counted as a King.*⁶⁶

This answer seemed to be intended to appease the Duke about his concerns and not reveal Venice's position on this sensitive issue. Apparently, Morosini's words must have struck a positive impression on the Duke. Indeed, he was again invited to take part in the hunts that Emmanuel Philibert arranged, like the large deer hunt held in June 1570 near Rumilly, where the Duke was due to hold talks with Bernese ambassadors.⁶⁷ The ambassador was so involved in the Duke of Savoy's hunts that when presenting his final report before the Venetian Senate, as every ambassador was required to do at the end of his stay at a foreign court, Morosini devoted much of it to describing the Duke's hunting practices. The analysis of Morosini's report, as well as that of his predecessors, will provide

⁶⁴ ASVE, Savoia, 1: 4, f.1, 17 December 1569. Or. It.: «L'altr'hieri che mi fece invitare ad andar seco a vedere una bella caccia che ha fatto a S. Gillio».

⁶⁵ The title of Grand Duke was conferred on Cosimo I in February 1570. The fact opened a direct clash with the House of Savoy as well as between Rome and Emperor Maximilian II, see T. OSBORNE, *The Surrogate War between the Savoy and the Medici*, 2; F. ANGIOLINI, *Medici e Savoia. Contese per la precedenza e rivaltà di rango in età moderna* in *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna*, P. BIANCHI, L. C. GENTILE (eds.), Zamorani, Torino 2006, 435-479.

⁶⁶ ASVE, Savoia, 1: 4, f.1v. Or. It.: «A che io rispondo questa esser la prima parola ch'io havessi sentito, mi disse S.E. che così gl'era scritto da Roma [...] Io gli dissi che non sapevo quello che [Venezia] fosse per fare ma che quanto a me credevo che importasse poco che il Duca di Fiorenza fosse più Duca che Arciduca, perché quanto a precedenza egli era in conto di Re».

⁶⁷ Ivi, 1:27, 13 June 1570.

a clear picture of the different *hunting performances* adopted by the Dukes of Savoy at this stage.

Firstly, he reported on a deer hunt that took place near Bourg-en-Bresse, whose dynamics showed the physical endurance and valour of the Duke of Savoy. The hunt lasted for more than nine hours, causing the duke to lose most of his entourage with more than 150 mounted men and was left alone with the ambassador and a few others. Eventually, the exhausted animal surrendered to the last pursuer: Emmanuel Philibert, «fearing that it might escape because there was only one dog and our horses did not want to go any further [...] dismounted from his horse, and with a pistol in his hand ran towards the stag», but some dogs anticipated the Duke and attacked the animal.⁶⁸ In another one, Emmanuel Philibert proved to be a merciful sovereign and an experienced falconer at the same time:

I was one day with His Excellency hunting in the countryside, where, having flown a terzuolo which the duke requested out of his ability, while we were going to make the partridge spotted by the terzuolo rise in flight, a servant killed the terzuolo with an arquebus, supposing it to be a field bird. The huntsmen shouted, and wanting to crucify him, but His Excellency, who had felt great displeasure at the death of the terzuolo, did not blame him but endeavoured to keep himself from anger.⁶⁹

Morosini was also especially impressed by the hunting officers Emmanuel Philibert had surrounded himself with, likewise by the great assortment of assisting animals:

⁶⁸ The Italian term '*terzuolo*' refers in falconry to male falcons as they are, due to the typical dimorphism of birds of prey, a third smaller than the females. RAV, 205. Or. It.: «Dubitando il signor duca che non si rilevasse poichè non vi era dietro altro che un cane, né volendo per la stanchezza andar più i nostri cavalli se non di passo per essere ormai finita dal tanto correre, saltò sua eccellenza dal cavallo, e con un pistoletto in mano si misé a correre verso il cervo ch'era anco assai lontano, con tanta leggerezza ch'era cosa mirabile da vedere. Ma sopraggiungendo gli altri cani prima che lui vi arrivasse, restò il cervo atterrato e quasi morto».

⁶⁹ Ibidem. Or. It. : «Mi ritrovai io un giorno con sua eccellenza in campagna alla caccia; dove avendosi fatto volar un terzuolo, che per la bontà sua si dimandava il duca, mentre che si andava a far levar la pernice, che aveva segnato il terzuolo, fu un discreto servitore, che con un archibuso ammazzò il terzuolo, credendo fosse un uccello di campagna. Di che gridando i cacciatori, e volendo cruciffiger colui, non lo comportò sua eccellenza che pur aveva sentito grandissimo dispaicere della morte del terzuolo, ma fece molta forza a sé stesso per ritenersi dalla collera».

*The Duke of Savoy keeps dogs for all kinds of hunting, and in addition to the men who take care of the dogs and govern them, he also keeps various huntsmen who are exceptionally skilled in this and that kind of hunting. He keeps falcons, goshawks and sparrow hawks, and all with people who take special care of them, as well as many other types of bird catchers, such as owls, thrushes, sparrows and ravens, which are widely used in Savoy.*⁷⁰

In the ambassador's words, princely hunting becomes an instrument to make the Venetian Senate understand the most intimate aspects of the Duke of Savoy's personality. The Duke of Savoy emerges as an experienced hunter, a sovereign who was careful to have high-level and experienced huntsmen, falconers and dog keepers at his court, so they could serve all types of hunting. All these elements seem to point to Emmanuel Philibert as deeply involved in hunting. When the ambassador went on to describe the direct relationship between the Duke and hunting, however, this assessment becomes more nuanced. According to Morosini, although he «is used to hunt often since the country is very suitable for this purpose [...] actually, His Excellency does not take so much pleasure in hunting as he does in the exercise he takes in it».⁷¹ The relationship with hunting thus seems to be actually directed towards to the *martial performance*.

The contrast between the hunt of 1570 and the portrait of the Duke by Morosini greatly echoes with the evaluations given by his predecessors, whose judgement becomes even sharper and goes into further detail. Andrea Boldù, the first Venetian ambassador who resided in Turin from 1560 to 1561, gives a detailed description of the main exercises of the Duke of Savoy:

He walks for the most part, and is fit and practised in all those bodily exercises that are appropriate for a prince, in which he proves to be

⁷⁰ RAV, 218. Or. It.: «Tiene il signor duca di Savoia cani per ogni sorte di caccia, ed oltre agli uomini che hanno la cura di essi cani e li governano, tiene anco cacciatori diversi, che s'intendono particolarmente chi di questa e chi di quell'altra sorte di caccia. Tiene falconi, astori e sparpieri, e tutti con persone che ne hanno specialmente cura, oltre molte altre sorte di diversi uccellatori, come da civetta, da tordi, da passere e da corvi, le quali caccie si usano assai in Savoia».

⁷¹ Ivi, *Relazione di Giovanni Francesco Morosini del 1570*, p. 205. Or. It. : «anco spesso andar fuori a caccia, avendo il Paese bellissimo a quest'effetto [...] in verità non piglia Sua Eccellenza tanto piacere della caccia, quanto si compiace dell'esercizio che fa in essa».

*almost tireless; therefore, he plays four or six hours with the ball or at pallamaglio in the sun [...] and above all he likes swimming.*⁷²

Hunting is not even mentioned, although most probably considered among the princely exercises in which Emmanuel Philibert was versed, while the Duke's main *sports* were ball games and swimming. Another significant fact is the Duke's habit of walking instead of riding. Boldù pointed out that although the Duke owned good horses, mostly acquired abroad, he did not seem to consider them highly: «His Excellency keeps a stable of beautiful horses from Spain and elsewhere, but he takes very little pleasure in them, being more pleased to ride a *cortaldo* or nags».⁷³ This fact was confirmed by the successor of Boldù, Sigismondo Cavalli, who a few years later reiterated the duke's lack of attraction to horse riding, which had also led to a depletion of the ducal stables, at that time adequate only for the most pressing needs:

*It remains still to speak of the stable of His Excellency's horses and mules, which, however, is not at present ample, since the prince does not take much pleasure in horses; and in France, when he married, he dispensed as a gift almost all the fine [horses] he had to the lords of that court, and of those he keeps he has barely enough for the essential needs [. ...] In hunting also he takes little delight, nor goes there except for exercise, killing at most a deer or a bird; so that he comes to be very thrifty for the expenses of his pleasures.*⁷⁴

Firearms, as already evidenced by the use of the gun in the deer hunt and by Cavalli's comments, had a central role in Emmanuel Philibert's hunting performance, further

⁷² RAV, 33. Or. It. : «Va a piedi per la maggior parte, ed è atto ed esercitato a tutti quelli esercizi del corpo che a principe si convengono, in che si dimostra quasi indefesso; perciocché giocherà quattro o sei ore alla palla o a pallamaglio, nel sole, e tuttavia rare volte e quasi mai suderà per gran fatiche che faccia [...] e sopra tutto si diletta di nuotare».

⁷³ The *cortaldo* was a horse whose tail and ears have been cut off and which was generally used to transport the knight's equipment and weapons; Ivi, 41. Or. It. : «Tiene sua eccellenza una stalla di bellissimi cavalli di Spagna e d'altrove, de' quali però si diletta molto poco, piuttosto compiacendosi di cavalcare alcun cortaldo o ronzino».

⁷⁴ RAV 94-95. Or. It. : «Vi resta ancora la stalla de' cavalli e dei muli di sua eccellenza, la quale però non è al presente copiosa, perciocché il principe [...] non si piglia molto piacere di cavalli; e in Francia quando si maritò dispensò in dono quasi tutti i belli che aveva ai signori di quella corte, e di questi che tiene ne ha appena per il necessario bisogno [...] Di caccia anco poco si diletta, né vi va salvo che per far esercizio, non si curando di ammazzar con l'archibugio più di un cervo, che un uccello; in modo che viene ad essere franchissimo di spesa per conto de' suoi piaceri».

confirmed by Giovanni Correr in 1566, according to whom «after dinner, when he is in his ordinary room in Turin [...] he shoulders his arquebus and shoots here and there in the garden».⁷⁵ Venetian diplomatic sources prove to be very accurate in portraying Emmanuel Philibert as essentially a *hunter-soldier*. Hunting was essentially a means of displaying physical strength and conveying the image of a sumptuous princely court, where he converged huntsmen and falconers.

If this was the profile of Emmanuel Philibert's hunting performance, with Charles Emmanuel I the diplomatic sources give a different portrait. In 1583, only three years after he ascended to the throne, the Venetian ambassador Costantino Molino could describe a completely different connection between ruler and horsemanship:

*His recreations can be said with all truth to be all exercises, [...] and to preserve his health, he often exercises himself in acts of chivalry on foot and on horseback [...] Thanks to his strength and dexterity he can sometimes run up to 60 or 70 lances in three or four hours, and fight all day at the tournament, finding himself in the end as quick as if he had not made any effort. And he keeps so many excellent horses on this occasion that he could hardly be matched. He hunts, by retrieving a lot, in which no one does not confess to being weary in following him, showing himself always tireless.*⁷⁶

Charles Emmanuel I had thus re-established the quality of the ducal stables, partly due of a personal interest in tournaments.⁷⁷ The insight into the duke's personality concerning hunting is not found so markedly with Charles Emmanuel I, apart from the remark left by ambassador Antonio Donato in 1618, arguing that during the «hunts and feasts he always

⁷⁵ Ivi, *Relazione di Giovanni Correr del 1566*, 122. Or. It. : «dopo il desinare, quando è in Torino, sua stanza ordinaria, data che ha la solita udienza, piglia l'archibuso in spalla e nel giardino tira a questa e quell'altra cosa».

⁷⁶ RAV, 376. Or. It. : «Le sue ricreazioni [di CE I] si può dire con ogni verità che siano tutte esercizi [...] e per conservarsi la sanità s'esercita spesso in atti cavallereschi a piedi ed a cavallo [...] Riesce nella forza e nella destrezza mirabilmente con correre alle volte fino a 60 e 70 lance in tre o quattro ore, e combattere tutto il giorno al torneo, trovandosi in fine così lesto come se non avesse fatto fatica alcuna. E mantiene in questa occasione così gran numero di cavalli eletti, che difficilmente se gli potrebbe trovar pari. Frequenta la caccia, e con molta sua ricreazione, nella quale non è alcuno che non confessi di stancarsi nel seguirlo, mostrandosi egli sempre indefesso».

⁷⁷ P. MERLIN, *Tra guerre e tornei. La corte sabauda nell'età di Carlo Emanuele I*, SEI, Torino 1991.

deals negotiates and listens», which confirms the use of hunting as a diplomatic space already highlighted above with Emmanuel Philibert.⁷⁸

The ambassador's gaze seemed to be struck, more than by hunting skills, by a particular inclination of the Duke of Savoy towards the animal world, as conveyed by the words of the ambassador Simone Contarini in 1601:

*When he eats, he does not care what time it is, and when he sleeps he does not distinguish between night and day, for he is accustomed to saying that it is good to eat, drink and sleep like animals, and like men to live for the rest; for this reason, neither trade nor rest is separated from each other.*⁷⁹

This assessment was also confirmed by Pietro Contarini seven years later:

*He eats with good discipline, yet in a different style from the ordinary, which benefits his health admirably, since he never observes the time or hour in taking food, but does so according to what he knows nature may require.*⁸⁰

This sort of *animality* that Charles Emmanuel I claimed to embody, reported by the witty eye of the Venetian ambassadors, must be traced back to a distinctive trait of his personality that led him to take an interest in natural studies since an early age. The Duke of Savoy had devoted his youth in studying and deepening his knowledge of natural history maintaining a great interest in a wide variety of animal species. His *Studi di storia naturale*, a compilation of notes taken while studying classics of natural history, are full of lists of exotic animals such as lions, panthers, tigers, and camels mixed with

⁷⁸ RAV, 878. Or. It. : «nelle cacce e nelle feste sempre tratta, negozia ed ascolta».

⁷⁹ RAV, 600. Or. It. : «Nel mangiare non serva più questa che quell'ora e nel dormire non distingue la notte dal giorno, essendo usata in tal proposito dire che è bene mangiare, bere e dormire come gli animali e come gli uomini vivere nel resto poi; non avendo in lei per ciò né il negozio né il riposo separato termine alcuno».

⁸⁰ RAV, 710. Or. It.: «Vive poi nel nutrirsi sebbene con buona regola, tuttavia con stile differente dal comune, il che giova mirabilmente alla sua complessione, poichè egli non osserva mai ora, né tempo nel prendere cibo, ma lo fa secondo conosce che la natura ne può avere bisogno »

autochthonous animals.⁸¹ The duke did the same with exotic birds, many specimens of which he ordered from Dutch markets for his aviary.⁸²

From diplomatic sources alone it is not possible to establish a precise profile of Charles Emmanuel I hunting performance, but his interest in *exotic menagerie* and close relationship with the *animal world* is unquestionable. As certain is the close relationship that hunting created between the Duke and his heir, Victor Amadeus I.

The correspondence between Victor Amadeus I and his father is already full of references to hunting from the last years of the 16th century, showing how this was a common thread. In 1597, when he was only ten years old, Victor Amadeus wrote to his father, away from Turin because of the conflict for the Marquisate of Saluzzo, that he was used to « have dinner at the castle bastion where he could admire the countryside», waiting for his return for «have the pleasure of going hunting sometimes together».⁸³

For Victor Amadeus, princely hunting was a means to weave political ties even before his rise to power. In 1603, the future duke was in fact sent to the court of Spain, together with his brother Philip Emmanuel (who died in 1606), with the prospect of being able to claim the Spanish crown for the House of Savoy, as they were both sons of Catherine of Habsburg and Philip III of Spain had no sons. While Philip Emmanuel was introduced to the Spanish court through the official ceremonial, Victor Amadeus consolidated political ties deep in the forests around Valladolid. During his stay, between 1603 and 1605, Victor Amadeus devoted his time to hunting a few times. The young prince joined the King of Spain's hunts several times.⁸⁴ During a 14 days stay in Tordesillas the future duke of Savoy

⁸¹ ASTO CORTE, *Storia della Real Casa, Studi di storia naturale fatti dal duca Carlo Emanuele I*, 15, 5, 1, *Elenchi di quadrupedi e rettili*; 2, *Quadrupedi divisi per specie*; 5, *Elenco di animali suddivisi per colore del mantello*. Charles Emmanuel I's natural history notes cite Conrad Gessner's work mainly for the study of mammals, reptiles and fishes. Gessner (1516–1565), a Swiss naturalist, published the *Historia animalium* between 1551 and 1558, whose first two books were devoted to viviparous and oviparous, and the last to fish and aquatic animals: C. GESSNER, *Historia animalium libri IV*, Tuguri 1551–1558. The Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522–1605) was the author of numerous ornithological studies at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae*, 3 vol., Bononiae 1599–1603.

⁸² Ivi, fasc. 5, 8, Tutti uccelli bianchi; 9, Elenco di uccelli; 11, Elenco di uccelli, per alcuni sono indicate le pagine del libro; 12, Elenco di uccelli con penne bianche; 5bis, 2, Lista di tutte le cose che si devono comperare in Amsterdam o altri luoghi d'Olanda.

⁸³ ASTO CORTE, *Lettere duchi e sovrani*, 46: 5-6. Or. It. : «avere il piacere di andare qualche volta alla caccia».

⁸⁴ Ivi, 46: 34, 45, 48, 54.

had «a lot of hunting and fishing pleasure».⁸⁵ A few months later, Victor Amadeus informed his father from the *Escorial* how he had been given a licence to hunt deer around Madrid after returning from Pardo with Philip III.⁸⁶ With the King of Spain, the two brothers also spent a lot of time practising the art of falconry, «slaughtering kites and magpies».⁸⁷

A few years after his return to Turin, the ambassador Gregorio Barbarigo provides an in-depth description of the relationship between Victor Amadeus I, became the heir to the throne, and hunting:

*The eldest prince, who is to succeed him in those States, is around twenty-five years old, he is also more robust in appearance rather than actual strength, and he has made a very evident improvement from a certain indisposition that he suffered from in his early years, like asthma [...] with constant continence, with the continuous use of all the knightly exercises of the body and other laborious entertainments and with the hard work and suffering of hunting.*⁸⁸

This is also corroborated by a source within the court of Savoy, Abbot Valeriano Castiglione, biographer of Victor Amadeus I.⁸⁹ In his biography, which has never been printed, there is confirmation of that:

As we are now on hunting, which was a frequent activity of his, to help himself from the infirmity of asthma by continuous running and to remain in conformity with his genius, let us say with what circumstances

⁸⁵ ASTO CORTE, Lettere duchi e sovrani, 10 July 1604, 46: 34.

⁸⁶ IVI, 9 October 1604, 46: 45.

⁸⁷ IVI, 27 November 1604, 46: 48.

⁸⁸ RAV, 779. Or. It.: «Il principe maggiore [Vittorio Amedeo], che ha da succedere in quei Stati, è d'intorno a' venticinque anni, ancor egli di più gagliarda natura in effetto che in apparenza non dimostra, ed ha fatto evidentissimo miglioramento da certa indisposizione che quasi specie di asma pativa nella sua più tenera età [...] con l'uso continuo di tutti gli esercizi del corpo cavallereschi ed altri laboriosi trattenimenti e con le fatiche e patimenti della caccia».

⁸⁹ Valeriano Castiglione (1593 - 1663) was born in Milan and entered the Benedictine order in 1610. Among his works the most important is *Lo statista regnante*, a political treatise inspired by the work of Giovanni Botero. Vittorio Amedeo's biography was not concluded and published most likely due to the lack of financing by Christine of France, as a letter sent to Madama Reale in 1654 suggests: C. CONTINISIO, *Frammenti per la biografia politica di Valeriano Castiglione, con l'inedito* Discorso sopra le maldicenze in «Il pensiero politico. Rivista di storia delle idee politiche e sociali», 51-1 (2018), 90.

he used to practice it. Leaving aside the hunting of sparrow hawks, vultures and falcons, and the striking of the bird in the air with the gun, in which he was most singular, let us write about the hunting of feral quadrupeds, bears, blackbirds, deer and wolves. Just as he kept a large number of hunters for hunting birds, he paid a much larger number for hunting wild game.⁹⁰

In Castiglione's description the image of the hunter overlaps that of the duke to the point of replacing it. Victor Amadeus I's hunting performance was limitless. His approach to falconry was total, being proficient in hunting with vultures, falconids and accipitrids. He was skilled in hunting with firearms and in hunting big game, included two traditional prey, deer and wild boar, as well as two large carnivores, wolf and bear.

The dukes who succeeded each other between 1559 and 1637, between the restoration of the Duchy of Savoy and the outbreak of the civil war, were very different hunters, just as profoundly different were their hunting performances. The next three chapters will explore how they created, developed and modified the hunting system of the Duchy of Savoy: the first chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the construction of the hunting space; the second chapter will deal with the formation of the animal court; the third chapter will focus on the evolution of hunting officers. The development of the hunting system will reveal how the different performances influenced the structures and vice versa, contributing to an understanding of how its construction was interconnected with the restored sovereignty of the House of Savoy over the regained states.

⁹⁰ ASTO CORTE, *Storia della Real Casa*, 16: 377-378. Or. It. : «Già che scorsi siamo nella caccia, che fu essercitio suo frequentato per beneficiarsi nell'infermita' dell'asma col corso continuo et per trattenersi conforme al suo genio, diciamo con quali circostanze usasse praticarlo. Tralasciando il cacciar con il sparvieri, avvoltoi et falconi, et colpir l'uccello in aria con lo scoppio, nel che fu singolarissimo, scriviamo delle caccie de' quadrupedi ferini, orso, cignale, cervo et lupo. Come dunque per la caccia de volatili tratteneva gran numero di cacciatori, molto maggiore ne stipendiava per la cacciagione belluina».

1.1 Boundaries of power

The creation of the hunting space

A few months after the signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in April 1559, the duke of Savoy Emmanuel Philibert received a detailed anonymous report about the territories that, after a little more than two decades, were returning to the possession of the House of Savoy.⁹¹ The author aimed to provide the Duke with an accurate overview of the economic, infrastructural and political situation of the lands that were about to come back into his possession, in order to give him valuable information to deal with the complex economic and political challenges he would have to face. Having listed the main revenues the Duke could count on, the condition of military and civil infrastructures and the ecclesiastical properties, the author moved to describe some of the most relevant waterways in Piedmont and their function related to the trade and economic revival of the House of Savoy's states.⁹²

Over previous decades, the rivers had not been properly maintained, causing serious damage to fields and to the so-called *navigli*, artificial waterways of paramount importance for trade and transport. Among these, the author paid close attention to the canal that connected Ivrea with Vercelli, two important cities of the eastern Piedmont.⁹³

⁹¹ The report has been attributed to several authors. The quoted version was published by E. RICOTTI, *Storia della monarchia piemontese*, vol. 1, Barbera Editore, Firenze 1861, 291-340. He attributed the text to Niccolò Balbo, member of the council of regency and president of the Senate. Considering Balbo's death in 1552, Federico Patetta later suggested Cassiano dal Pozzo, eminent politician and magistrate who remained loyal to the House of Savoy during the French period, in F. PATETTA, *Di N. Balbo prof. di diritto nell'università di Torino e del "Memoriale" al duca Emanuele Filiberto che gli è falsamente attribuito* in *Studi pubblicati dalla Regia Università di Torino nel IV centenario della nascita di Emanuele Filiberto*, Torino 1928, 458-476. He dated the document between August and September 1560. Later literature embraced Patetta's proposal, such as L. MARINI, *Savoardi e piemontesi nello Stato sabauda (1418-1601)*, Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, Roma 1962, 389, although other studies also indicated Tommaso Langosco di Stroppiana, ambassador and long-time diplomat: G. BUSINO, *Balbo, Niccolò*, in DBI, 5 (1963). Busino offered a broader but more accurate date, between 3 November 1559 and 16 September 1560.

⁹² E. RICOTTI, *Storia della monarchia piemontese*, vol. 1, p. 322-326.

⁹³ The canal was built in the second half of the 15th century and Emmanuel Philibert promoted some restoration works in the 1560s: N. VASSALLO, F. FRANZONI, *Il naviglio di Ivrea (sec. XV-XX): un profilo attraverso*

...

These cities were crossed by the rivers Dora Baltea and Sesia that each fed the canal. With respect to the lands that extended between these watercourses, the author enumerated the exceptional qualities that made this territory of such great interest for the Duke and his court: firstly, the river Dora Baltea, unlike other watercourses, flowed abundantly even in the warmest months; secondly, the presence of a castle in Moncrivello, that the report describes as a real princely residence; thirdly, a plentiful supply of wild animals, including big game, guaranteed by the fertility of the area. In front of the castle, the entire valley of the «river Dora shows a plenty of nearby lakes and fisheries, beautiful vineyards and nearby hunting areas» and «going down the hill of the castle you are on the plain near Santhià where you can hunt big game»: all these factors led the author to the conclusion that «there is no more suitable place for Your Highness and his court in the entire Dora Valley [...] where even in the worst weather riding and hunting are possible».⁹⁴

The Dukes of Savoy already knew the hunting potential of this territory: Charles II had issued orders to reserve certain hunting right on the Santhià plain between 1547 and 1550.⁹⁵ However, the emphasis on Moncrivello castle suggests that the author was recommending a suitable site for Emmanuel Philibert's court. The Duke was looking for a temporary seat for his court while waiting to regain possession of Turin. According to the author, the lands beyond the Dora Baltea appeared to be an excellent option, precisely due to the favourable environmental conditions that offered the opportunity to go hunting frequently.

Differently, the duke settled first in Vercelli, where his father used to reside, and in 1561 he chose as the temporary seat of his court the castle of Rivoli, a city far few kilometres

le fonti documentarie in «Annali dell'Accademia di Agricoltura di Torino», 148 (2005-2006), 18-37; E. Lusso, *Le cascine in età medievale e moderna. Uno sguardo sulla piana vercellese sud-orientale* in R. RAO (ed.), *I paesaggi fluviali della Sesia fra storia e archeologia. Territori, insediamenti, rappresentazioni*, All'Insegna del Giglio, Firenze 2016, 158; M. V. CATTANEO, *Storia di un'opera idraulica a servizio del territorio: il Naviglio di Ivrea da Leonardo al XIX secolo* in «Studi Piemontesi», 48-2 (2019), 461-464.

⁹⁴ RICOTTI, *Storia della monarchia piemontese*, 324. Or. It. : «Et fu allora fatto il Castello di Moncrivello, quale è proprio una vera habitatione da principe [...] et ha la vista della Valle del fiume di Dora, con comoditate di pescarie et laghi propinqui, vignarezo bellissimo, caccie propinque; et discesa la collina del castello si è in la total pianura et vicino di Santhià et alle caccie di bestie grosse [...] sì che gli conchiudo che in Vercellese et Valle del detto fiume di Dora non è luogo più propitio per V.A. et per tutta la Corte [...] in sito tale che con tutti li mal tempi si può cavalcar et andar a caccia».

⁹⁵ ASTO CORTE, *Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno*, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, Serie rossa, 175: 33, 182: 167.

from Turin that guaranteed to stay close to the future capital.⁹⁶ If the advice of the author of the report about the temporary seat of the court was not followed, this does not mean that the Duke of Savoy did not take it into account. In February 1560, the Duke of Savoy had taken some measures concerning «the reservation of hunting in our territory beyond the Dora [Baltea]», electing it as his first reserved hunting ground.⁹⁷ The reservation orders would be reaffirmed shortly afterwards, emphasising the ducal interest in big game, the so-called *bestie grosse*, roaming in the area.⁹⁸ In this the next pages, the process of construction of the lands beyond the Dora hunting space will be explored, underlining it as a model for future developments.

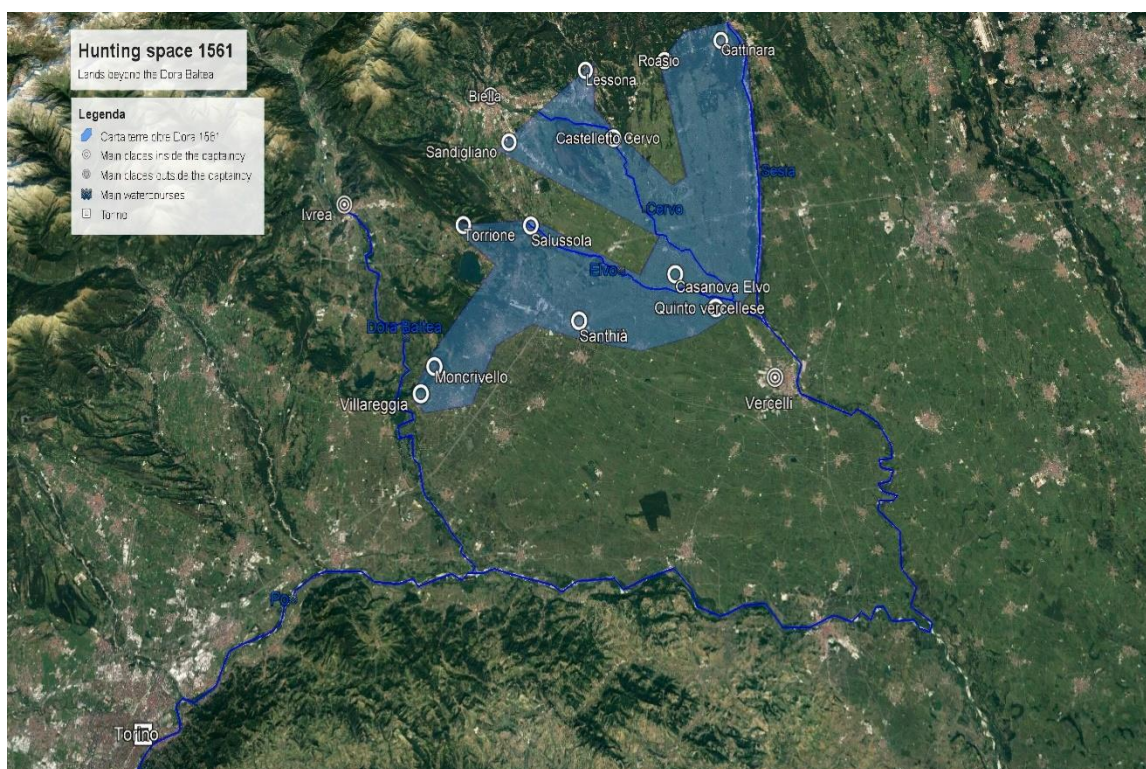


Image 1 - Hunting space projection 1561 based on ASTO CORTE, *Protocolli dei notai della corona*, 231:20.

⁹⁶ M. G. VINARDI, *Rivoli, Castello in Ville sabaude*, 263; L. E. PENNACCHINI, *Itinerario del duca Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia (1 gennaio 1558 - 30 agosto 1580)* in C. PATRUCCO, *Lo Stato sabaudo al tempo di Emanuele Filiberto*, Torino 1928, 22-24.

⁹⁷ ASTO CORTE, *Protocolli dei notai della corona*, 223bis: 71.

⁹⁸ *Ivi*, 223bis: 74.

Within a year, the ducal claims on the territories beyond the Dora became more explicit and the boundaries of the hunting ground more defined. In the orders issued on 14 January 1561, the area outlined is identified with a specific term, that of the *baraggia* i.e. a heathland made up of wet and clayey soils dotted with shrub-woods which represented its hearthland.⁹⁹ The reserved territories started from the area around the aforementioned Moncrivello castle and extended towards the Santhià plain. From there it stretched out in three directions following the course of three waterways: Elvo, Cervo and Sesia, which also represented the border between the Duchy of Savoy and that of Milan. Because of the great parks and hunting lodges built later, scholars have never given consideration to this first phase in the construction of the hunting space. In all respects, however, the establishment of this hunting territory was both a turning point and a model for future developments, whose main features will now be analysed. The orders issued by the duke did not only aim to better define the boundaries of his hunting territory but also, and most importantly, establishing different social and environmental rules that could guarantee the preservation and reproduction of the game. The legislation focused on three main aspects: the conservation of woodlands; the carrying and possession of weapons; and the social hierarchy of hunting. The interconnection of these aspects radically impacted the existing relations between the environment, the local actors, such as communities or local aristocracy, and the sovereign power.

The first part of the orders aimed «to make sure that no one would dare to set fire to the *baragge* nor to the woods», securing the woodlands against attempts to deforest them through fires. The fire-grazing interaction was one of the main ways of expanding livestock farming, which whilst reshaping the landscape by causing a loss of biodiversity that mainly affected local game, was also a fundamental land management system. In this area, moreover, the agrarian colonization that had taken hold from the thirteenth century onwards had resulted in a more careful exploitation of the commons used for grazing and

⁹⁹ IVI, 231: 20. This type of landscape was not new to Emmanuel Philibert. The castle of Turnhout, in Flanders, was surrounded by a landscape – the *heide* – comparable to the *baraggia* in the land beyond the Dora. The Dukes of Brabant built it in the thirteenth century for practicing falconry near Kempen and it was still used as hunting palace while Emmanuel Philibert was the governor of the Spanish Netherlands; see A.L. GALESLOOT, *Recherches historiques sur la maison de chasse des Ducs de Brabant et de l'ancienne cour de Bruxelles*, Kiessling- Schnée, Bruxelles-Leipzig 1854, 200; P. JANSSENS, S. ZEISCHKA (eds.), *La noblesse à table. Des ducs de Bourgogne aux rois des Belges*, VUB, Brussels 2008, 150-151. About the landscape history of the *baraggia* see I. ADAMI, *Terre di baraggia. Pascoli, acque, boschi e risaie: per una storia del paesaggio vercellese*, Edizioni dell'Orso, Alessandria, 2012.

in the transformation of large portions of forest into crops for animal feed.¹⁰⁰ The periodic use of fire was part of economic and environmental dynamics that were well rooted in the area, on which the economic implications for the neighbouring urban realities also depended. The ban on setting fire to the *baraggia* therefore had a significant impact on both pastoral activity and agriculture, which was also affected by the damage caused by the increased wildlife.

A second ban concerned keeping weapons on farmsteads in the countryside: carrying shooting weapons, such as arquebuses and crossbows, as well as hunting nets was henceforth prohibited. The keeping of dogs was also restricted. In the farmsteads in the countryside, their presence was banned, while those kept in villages had to have a fairly long stick hung by their necks to prevent them from chasing any possible prey or following flocks to pasture. Hunting legislation thus had an impact on a much wider range of animals than the game to be preserved.

The third aspect can be condensed by the phrase that sums up the subjects to which this law applied: «any person of any condition».¹⁰¹ Hence, this led to the establishment of a clear hierarchy within the reserved hunting territory: the sovereign was the exclusive hunter and aristocracy could only go hunting with his permission, while those who did not belong to the aristocratic class had to renounce any claim to it.

The establishment of this permanent hierarchy in a specific territory and on a permanent basis represented a novelty in the House of Savoy normative framework. Charles II's orders forbade his subjects to hunt certain species of animals – hares, partridges, pheasants, deer and roe deer – only when he was engaged in hunting: in any case, a norm more restrictive than that enacted by Amadeus VIII in the fifteenth century, which only provided for hunting restrictions around the ducal residences and a ban on catching deer from October to May.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ R. RAO, *Risorse collettive e tensioni giurisdizionali nella pianura vercellese e novarese (XII-XIII secolo)* in «Quaderni storici», 40-120 (2005), 755-758; ID., *Comunia. Le risorse collettive nel Piemonte comunale (secoli XII-XIII)*, Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere, Economia e Diritto, Milano 2008, 180-185.

¹⁰¹ ASTO CORTE, *Protocolli dei notai della corona*, 231: 20. Or. It. : «Qual si voglia persona di qual si voglia conditione».

¹⁰² *La loi du Prince: la raccolta normativa sabauda di Amedeo VIII (1430)*, F. MORENZONI – M. CAESAR (eds.), Palazzo Carignano, Torino 2019, 2. ; ASTO CORTE, *Protocolli dei notai della corona*, 175: 33; 182: 167.

Unlike before, the ban was no longer dependent on the actual presence of a ducal residence or the temporal contingency of the sovereign's hunting activity. Moreover, it applied to people of any kind of social condition and all the animals. It became a territory whose economy was placed at the service of the ducal hunts, affecting local communities for whom cattle grazing and crops was a primary source of survival. The extension of the legislation also imposed a broader social and environmental discipline. All these features were decisive and constant throughout the successive construction of the hunting space which, like every other political dynamic of the time, had a milestone in the reconquest of Turin.

Chasing lands, gaining the capital

Having regained possession of the city of Turin on 7 February 1563, eventually making it the new capital of the Duchy of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert had to deal with the reconstruction of a ducal estate through the acquisition of vast portions of land around the city. This was not a purely economic or land-based process but, as it will be outlined in the next few pages, essentially political since it aimed to remove or weaken actors competing with him.

The first to be targeted were those close to the French power that had hitherto ruled the city. A first case was that of the castle of Stupinigi and the surrounding woods along the Sangone stream, which dominated the southern entrance to the city. At that time, their owner was the Lord of Cremieux, inhabitant of Lyon and subject of the King of France: how crucial this territory was is shown by the fact that the purchase of it was made just a few days after the entry of the Duke into Turin, on 10 February 1563.¹⁰³

A second case was that of Renato Birago's properties, another man close to the French power. He owned broad portions of lands around Altessano, a small village on the north-west of the city, that with its woods made up a vast hunting ground, and the Valentino castle, which was located along the banks of the river Po to the south east of the city and was already used as a hunting lodge.¹⁰⁴ The condition of the building was precarious and in a state of near-abandonment, but its location in a strategic point made its acquisition

¹⁰³ C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Il sovrano, la dinastia, l'architettura del territorio*, 14-16; C. DEVOTI, V. DEFABIANI, *Palazzina, giardini, rotte di caccia: Stupinigi e il suo territorio* in C. DEVOTI, C. SCALON (eds.), *Disegnare il territorio di una Commenda Magistrale. Stupinigi*, Ferrero editore, Ivrea 2012, 68.

¹⁰⁴ EAD., *Castello del Valentino* in *Ville sabaude*, 201.

unavoidable. The Valentino castle and properties in Altessano were bought by Emmanuel Philibert in June 1564 for 3,000 *scudi oro*. These consisted of a large number of *giornate* that would be added to the ducal estate: about 400 *giornate* (152 ha) of meadow, 150 *giornate* (57 ha) of *alteno* and around 400 *giornate* (152 ha) of wood.¹⁰⁵

Within just over a year, therefore, Emmanuel Philibert had reconstituted the first core of the ducal estate around the new capital: the properties were, however, almost immediately ceded to other people. Even though it may seem illogical in the context of the construction of an estate, these transfers were part of a mechanism defined by Costanza Roggero Bardelli as a “temporary sale” with a “right of pre-emption” that was used many times. It consisted of the temporary transfer of a property to persons whom the duke trusted absolutely, in particular treasurers, who thereby guaranteed the payment to the former owner. As soon as the duke's finances permitted, the property was returned to him, and so he regained full possession. This allowed Emmanuel Philibert to proceed without expropriations that would have caused political and social tensions. For this reason, Stupinigi was ceded in December 1563 and then reacquired in 1573; the same happened with the Valentino, reacquired in 1577, and even with the castle of Rivoli ceded in 1575 and regained in 1581.¹⁰⁶

A more controversial development concerns the creation of what used to be the *Parco* of Turin, which gradually became the main site for the conservation and proliferation of game, as well as the principal space for urban hunts, although it was also intended for agrarian production. The lands chosen to form the district on which the *Parco* would be built were located in the north of the city, at the confluence of the Stura stream and the rivers Po and Dora Riparia. In August 1567, Emmanuel Philibert ordered that the properties existing in this district were measured and their value estimated.¹⁰⁷ The analysis of the *Parco's* properties shows that the establishment of this district compelled the Duke to interact with different type of actors.

¹⁰⁵ Lettera di Renato Birago, presidente del regio Parlamento di Torino, colla quale propone al duca Emanuele Filiberto l'acquisto de' suoi luoghi di Altessano Inferiore e del Valentino in G. VICO, *Il real castello del Valentino*, Stamperia reale, Torino 1858, 122-123. The *alteno* is a field cultivated with grapevines. What differs from a vineyard is that in the *alteno* the grapevine is combined with the cultivation of other stem plants whose function is to support the grape's branches.

¹⁰⁶ C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Il sovrano, la dinastia, l'architettura del territorio*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei Conti di Piemonte, art. 807, Titoli e scritture inerenti il Parco Regio in Torino, 1: 8, 6 August 1567.

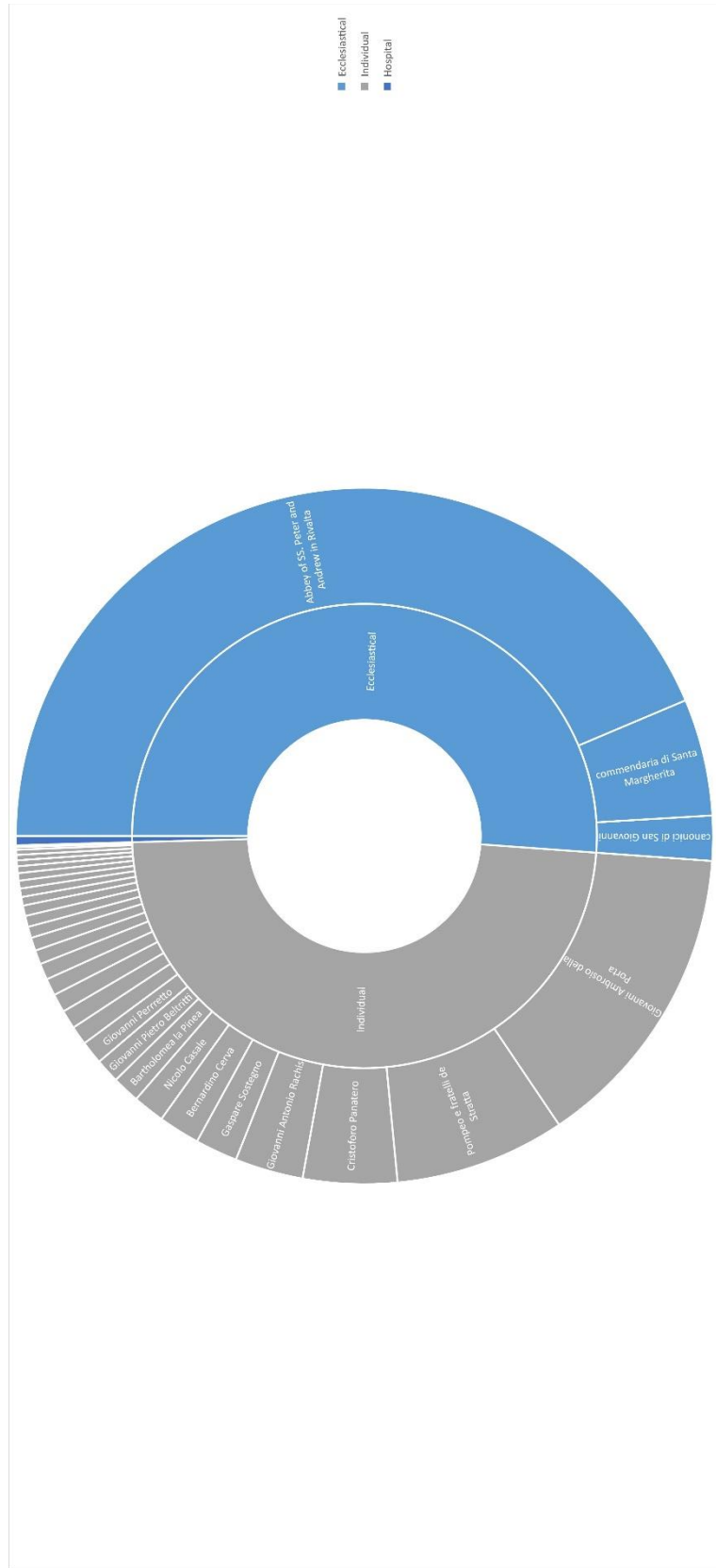


Chart 1 – Visualisation of the land repartition by categories in the survey ordered by Emmanuel Philibert on the 6th of August 1567 based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, Titoli e scritture inerenti il Parco Regio in Torino, 1: 8

The visualisation presented in the *chart 1* shows the repartition of land that emerged from the survey carried out by the ducal officers. Three main categories can be identified: the properties of ecclesiastical institutions, properties of lay institutions (represented by the city hospital only), and individual properties. The properties amounted to a total of 861 *giornate* (327 ha). Almost half of these fell under the control of an ecclesiastical institution, the Abbey of SS. Peter and Andrew in Rivalta: 126 *giornate* (48 ha) were located beyond the Stura stream, 202 *giornate* (77 ha) within the *Parco* district and 46 outside (17 ha), making a total of around 375 *giornate* (142 ha) with a value of 4,822 *scudi oro*. The remaining lands were distributed among two families, the De Stratta and Della Porta, 30 other small individual owners, and the city hospital, that held only a small unit of 3 *giornate* (1,14 ha) of meadow, for a value of 7,102 *scudi oro*. A first challenge emerges clearly from these data. Individual properties were very fragmented, and therefore easy to assimilate within the ducal project, whereas the Abbey of Rivalta had accumulated a large amount of land and, although only half of it fell within what was supposed to be the *Parco* district (46% of the *giornate* were located outside the area designated for the *Parco* district), these properties «could not be separated – as noted by the appointed officers - without damaging that Abbey».¹⁰⁸ The Duke could easily have obtained control of these lands for his own purposes, given the fragmentation of private properties, but the ecclesiastical power represented a political and territorial obstacle. Moreover, the analysis of the landscape configuration shows that the ecclesiastical lands were only relatively interesting for the Duke's purposes.

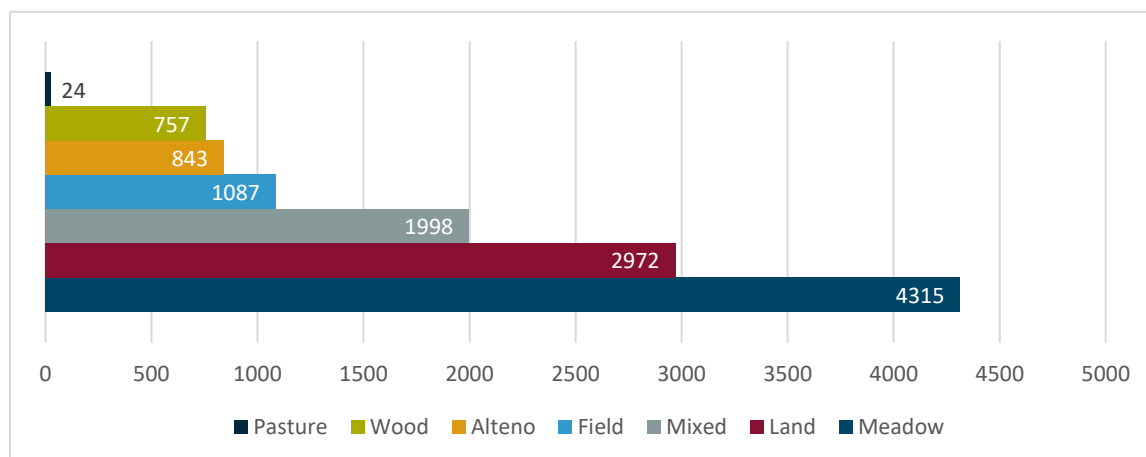


Chart 2 - Park's land value (scudi oro) according to the estimate based on in the survey ordered by Emmanuel Philibert the 6th of August 1567 based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, 1: 8

¹⁰⁸ IVI, f. 2.

Chart 2 shows the seven types of property classification by land type and their total value in *scudi oro*, the average estimated value of which varied according to the level of productivity: the highest position belonged to the *alteno* with 25 *scudi oro* per *giornata*; the meadow and mixed lands with a value of 16 *scudi oro* per *giornate*; uncultivated land and cultivated fields respectively 13 and 12 *scudi oro* per *giornata*; the last position was occupied by pasture, with only 3 *scudi oro* per *giornate*.

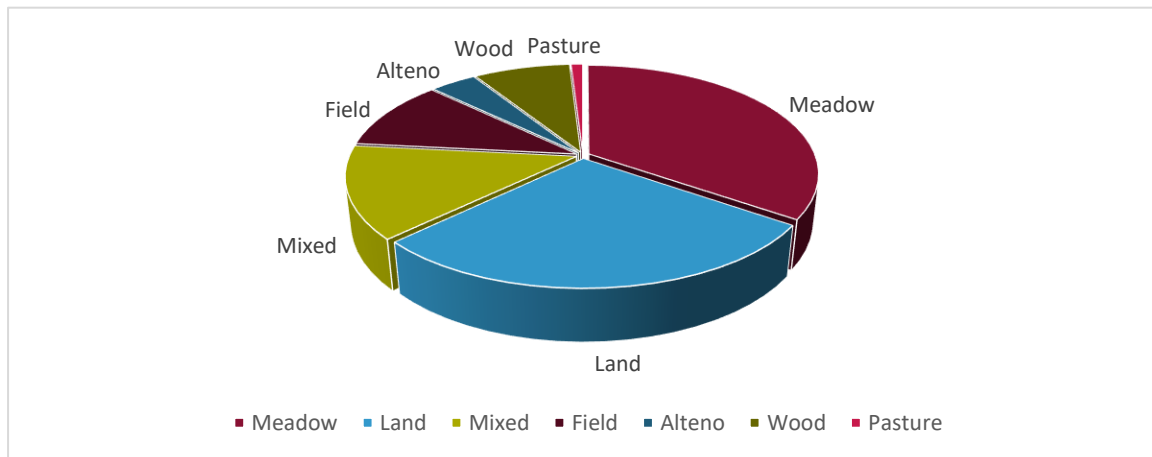


Chart 3 - Landscape configuration of the total properties based on the survey ordered by Emmanuel Philibert the 6th of August 1567 based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, 1: 8

As shown in *chart 3*, meadows and uncultivated lands accounted for the majority of the land, while *alteno* and woodland, respectively the most interesting types for agrarian production and hunting, occupied only 12%. Looking instead at *charts 4* and *5*, it can be seen how, although the preponderance of land and meadows remains even within church lands, the landscape configuration of the properties changes. Looking at the composition of ecclesiastical lands, it can be observed that they are largely composed of meadows with an extremely low presence of woodland cover and an absence of *alteno*. Although almost a quarter of the *giornate* consists of cultivated fields, many of them were actually outside the *Parco's* district. In contrast, the individuals' lands had a good forest cover, amounting to 14%, a large percentage of land for cultivation and the total presence of *alteni*. From the point of view of agrarian production and hunting, therefore, the Abbey's properties were largely irrelevant.

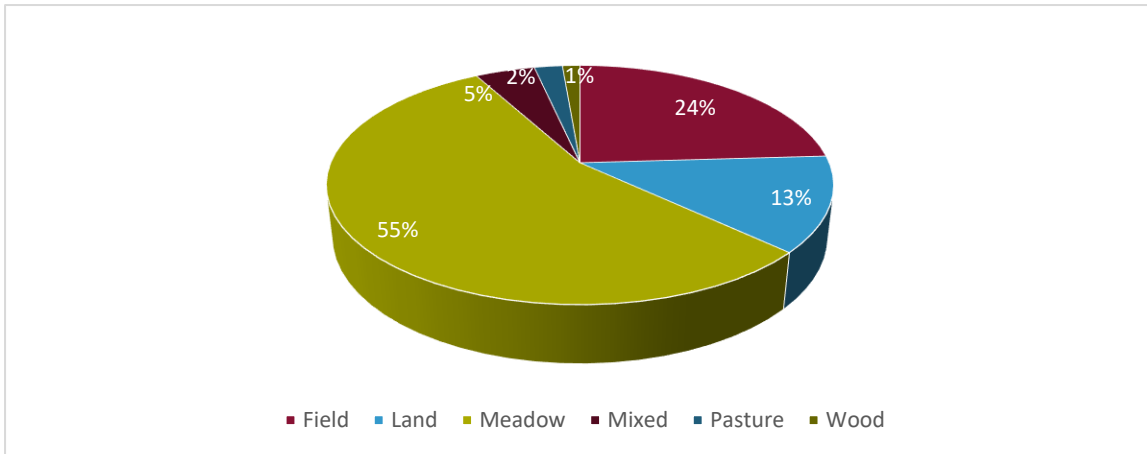


Chart 4 - Landscape configuration ecclesiastic properties based on the survey ordered by Emmanuel Philibert the 6th of August 1567 based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, 1: 8

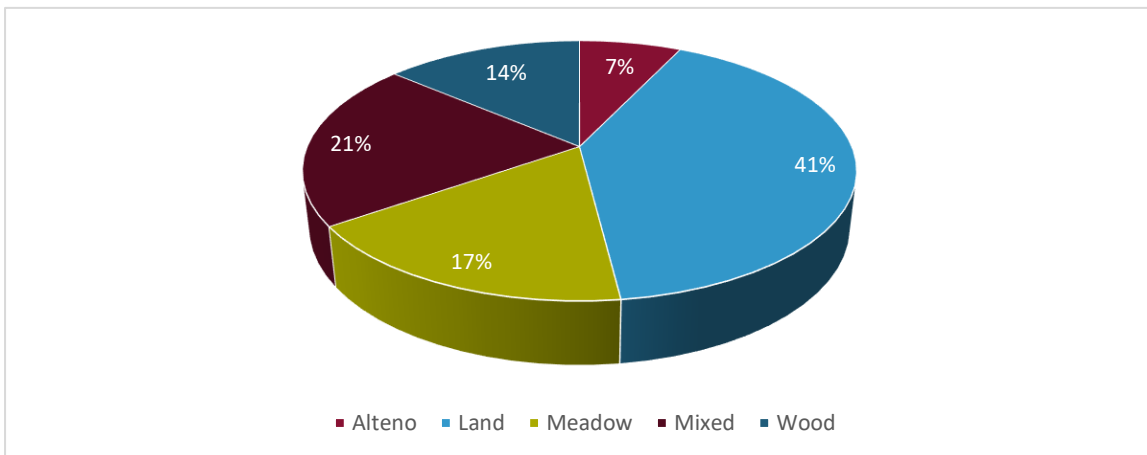


Chart 5 - Landscape configuration individual properties based on the survey ordered by Emmanuel Philibert the 6th of August 1567 based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, 1: 8

The price of gaining control over ecclesiastical properties was very high: the Duke ceded three-quarters of the revenues from the wheat tithe and any other income, rent, tithe and property he had in Rivoli. The agreement was also crucial in concluding the transaction with the most of the individual owners: it handed over to the duke the lands owned by the abbey outside the district, which were used as compensation for the main individual owners, avoiding a confiscation of properties that would have created tension

between the urban community and the duke just returned to possession of the capital.¹⁰⁹ This exchange was greatly to the disadvantage of the Duke, but the ducal agent emphasized that this act was part of the religious policy of the Duke, «[who] wants in this case to improve the condition of this [abbey] and *give more than he receives* through a free and irrevocable donation and almsgiving he willingly makes to the church as a demonstration of the pious goodwill he has in ecclesiastical matters».¹¹⁰

The acquisition process obviously did not end with the mere conclusion of a contract. It lasted until October 1573, when all the transactions were completed. Finally, the lands within the park amounted to 724 *giornate* (275 ha).¹¹¹ Through this exchange, Emmanuel Philibert achieved all his goals: he had obtained control of an area of great strategic interest, at the convergence of important waterways just outside the new capital; he had integrated lands within his estate that could provide him with income and agrarian production; and he had strengthened his ties with the ecclesiastical power. Above all, he had obtained a valuable hunting ground just outside the capital city. The acquisition of private lands did not seem to encounter many obstacles, and after two years only four owners had not received their payments.¹¹²

On the contrary, with regards to the transfer of ecclesiastical properties, the following years revealed some further problems and ultimately damage suffered by the ducal estate. The extent of this only became clear after the death of Emmanuel Philibert in 1580 and the return of the Rivoli castle to the ducal estate in 1581, which also revealed unfaithful behaviour on the part of the officers in charge of carrying out the agreement with the abbey. A confidential and anonymous report sent to Charles Emmanuel I after 1581 described how the agreement drawn up in 1568 was based on a string of false information, particularly regarding the revenues produced by the ecclesiastical lands in the district.

¹⁰⁹ Ivi, f. 7.

¹¹⁰ Ivi, f. 4v. Or. It. : «In tal caso esso signor procuratore a nome come suopra dechiara la mente di S.A. essere non sollo di ricompensare la detta abbatia ma voller in questo caso far migliore la conditione d'essa et *dare piu che non riceve* per libera et irrevocabile donatione et ellemosina la quale fa volentieri alla chiesa per dimostrazione del pio bon animo che tiene nelle cose ecclesiastiche».

¹¹¹ Ivi, 1: 6, *Ricavo de beni del Parco 1568-1573*.

¹¹² Ivi, 1: 10, *Suppliche sporte da particolari ad effetto d'ottener il pagamento del prezzo di caduno di loro beni stati incorporati nel Parco di S.A.*

The evaluation requested by the duke in November 1567 had established that these lands produced 250 *scudi oro* a year, a figure that turned out to be «completely false as these lands could never even produce 160 *scudi oro*».¹¹³ The ducal estate agent, according to the report, relied solely on the witnesses brought by Abbot Spinola instead of checking the previous contracts of sale and rent of those lands. Furthermore, Rivoli's revenues transferred turned out to be significantly higher than those stipulated in the agreement. The gap of value was even increased by the fact that the lands in the *Parco* district had turned out to be «stony, barren and thin» and subject to the «damage caused by their proximity to the Dora and Po» rivers.¹¹⁴ The conclusion of the author in the confidential report was sharp: «for a small, inconstant and uncertain revenue due to fog, water damage and storms, a large, safe and continuous revenue not subject to accidents was given to the abbot, which is worth three times as much».¹¹⁵

The lands acquired in the *Parco* district had therefore proved to be a poor investment both in terms of agrarian production, due to the proximity of the rivers, and in terms of the enhancement of the ducal domain, because of the losses incurred by the transfer of the Rivoli's revenues. According to the author, however, Charles Emmanuel I could easily have recovered his losses. More than ten years later, the abbot had not yet obtained the papal approval, and the ducal *Camera dei conti* could not legitimately conclude the exchange contract. The agreement could therefore be severed without prejudice to anyone: the abbey would regain possession of lands that had undergone agrarian improvements over the years, and Rivoli's extensive revenues would return to the ducal estate.

Here, however, hunting plays a key role in maintaining a homogeneous control over all those lands. The former abbey lands represented only a part of the *Parco* district, interspersed with those of individual owners, and as is pointed out in the report, «the duke could have enjoyed the hunt in any case».¹¹⁶ Charles Emmanuel I did not pursue the suggestion of the report, but the building of the hunting lodge known as the *Viboccone* in

¹¹³ IVI, 2: 15, f. 1.

¹¹⁴ IVI, f. 3. Or. It.: «quali per essere vicine alla Dora et al Po sono sempre offese dalla nebia et sono sottoposte a tempeste e falle, oltre che sono predose, sterili et magre».

¹¹⁵ IVI, f.5. Or. It.: «per un picciol reddito incerto et mal sicuro per conto della nebbia, falle et tempeste essersi dato a esso signor Abbatte un gran reddito, sicuro et continuo, non sottoposto a casi fortuitti, qual valle tre volte tanto e più».

¹¹⁶ IVI, f. 6.

the latter part of the 16th century suggests a shift in the use of the park largely in favour of hunting activity to the detriment of agrarian production.¹¹⁷

The events that characterised the establishment of the *Parco* or Park of Turin were reproduced on a smaller scale for an area located a short distance away, that of Lucento, a fiefdom pivoted on the eponymous castle owned by the Beccuti, one of the city's most important families.¹¹⁸ The last member of this family, Aleramo de Beccuti, bequeathed all his properties to the Society of Jesus, which took possession of Lucento in 1574. The city statutes forbade the transfer of property by inheritance from laymen to religious institutions: Emmanuel Philibert stepped into this dispute, personally acquiring the properties and, as with the Park, avoiding conflict with the religious institution. He compensated the jesuits by giving it a perpetual income in wheat. Likewise, the Duke proceeded to compensate other individual landowners by exchanging their properties with others outside Lucento.¹¹⁹ In the last year of his life, although no longer in perfect health, Emmanuel Philibert spent much time, often hunting, at Lucento.¹²⁰

This land grabbing process of the territories surrounding the capital did not end with the death of Emmanuel Philibert, but continued under Charles Emmanuel I. The branch of the Savoy-Nemours, which had actively collaborated with the French administration and had built strong ties with the court in Paris, held other properties within the city.¹²¹ Although they had not been loyal, in 1540 Charles II had appointed Jacques of Savoy-Nemours as heir to the throne in the event of Emmanuel Philibert's death without any successor.¹²² Their closeness to the court of Paris and their unchallenged domination of the Genevois region ensured that their property was not invaded: after the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, they tried to make the region independent. When the Duke tried to reach an agreement

¹¹⁷ C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Il regio parco*, 124.

¹¹⁸ M. BIASIN ET AL., *Dall'arrivo di Emanuele Filiberto a Torino alla peste di fine secolo in Soggetti e problemi della zona nord-ovest di Torino fino al 1796. Lucento e Madonna di Campagna*, Laboratorio di ricerca storica sulla periferia urbana della zona nord-ovest di Torino, Università degli studi di Torino, Torino 1997, 105-106; C. ROGGERO BARDELLI, *Lucento, castello in Ville sabaude*, 141.

¹¹⁹ A. MILAN, *Lucento dai Beccuti ai Savoia. Nascita e dispersione di un borgo agricolo tra Trecento e Cinquecento* in «Quaderni del CDS», 9\20-21 (2012), 11-22.

¹²⁰ PENNACCHINI, *Itinerario del duca Emanuele Filiberto*, 142-152.

¹²¹ A. MERLOTTI, *Dinastia e corte da Carlo II alla Guerra Civile*, in P. BIANCHI, L. C. GENTILE (eds.), *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna*, Torino 2006, 236-248.

¹²² M. VESTER, *Jacques de Savoie-Nemours. L'apanage du Genevois au cœur de la puissance dynastique savoyarde au XVIe siècle*, Droz, Genève 2008.

with the Swiss for the restitution of the territories taken from them, Jacques of Savoy-Nemours claimed a wider division of territories between the different branches of the dynasty. After the death of Emmanuel Philibert, he arrived in Turin, raising suspicions about his desire to succeed to the throne. This suspicion was confirmed by the construction of a palace along the banks of the stream Sangone. After Jacques of Savoy-Nemours' death in 1585, Charles Emmanuel was able to purchase the castle, named Mirafiori, and the surrounding territories. Limited information is available on the extent of the land annexed to the castle: the contract of sale brings the total to approximately 200 *giornate* (76 ha), paid to Jacques' son, Charles Emmanuel of Savoy-Nemours, by the Duke of Savoy in 1585.¹²³ The remaining 23,000 *scudi* was charged on the salt tax of Bresse and Faucigny.¹²⁴ It took eight years to finally close this transition, with a final payment of 8,000 *scudi* in April 1593.¹²⁵

The establishment of this large ducal estate around the capital, whose wooded areas were converted for the duke's hunting activities, required around 45,000 *scudi oro* to get the land and buildings. It was an investment, despite having confronted hurdles, that paid off: the Duke was guaranteed the best hunting sites around the capital, with optimal infrastructures, providing him with greater security and thus saving both time and money. The budget of the Duke's house in 1608 is evidence of that. The budgeted expenditure, which amounted to 75,631 *ducatoni*, recorded an outlay of 2,000 *ducatoni* per year «for short trips to the Parco, Mirafiori and Valentino for hunting».¹²⁶ This was therefore only 2.6% of the total expenditure. Politically, through the acquisition for hunting purposes of the park and river residences of Valentino and Mirafiori, Emmanuel Philibert and Charles Emmanuel I were able to consolidate their power over the regained capital by ousting those who could dispute it.

Drawing the hunting boundaries

After securing the capital, Charles Emmanuel I moved on to integrate the surrounding territories into the hunting system, with a first general edict on hunting in 1584.¹²⁷ The

¹²³ C. DEVOTI, *Une residence perdue pour les princes Victor-Amedee et Christine de Savoie: le Chateau de Millefleures* in G. FERRETTI, *De Paris a Turin. Christine de France duchesse de Savoie*, L'Harmattan, Paris 2014, p. 169.

¹²⁴ IVI, 21st November 1589.

¹²⁵ IVI, 23rd April 1593. V. DEFABIANI, *Castello di Mirafiori* in *Ville sabaude*, p. 158.

¹²⁶ BRT, MSS Savoia, I-1, *Bilancio 1608*.

¹²⁷ DUBOIN, 1095-1099,

edict added three new areas to the lands beyond Dora. The first extended around Turin for two miles and functioned as a connector between the urban parks - at that time only the Park and Valentino - and other important hunting locations such as Stupinigi, not far from the castle of Mirafiori. The boundaries of this area were therefore delimited by the so-called "*montagna di Torino*", a hilly zone overlooking the east side of the capital. The decision to leave this area outside the reserved territories depended on two factors: the first was the presence of vineyards, which needed greater protection from game; the second was that this concession was part of a more general agreement between the Duke and the city dating back to 1567.¹²⁸ With this agreement, Emmanuel Philibert had secured a number of grants in terms of taxation, including the entire cession to the ducal treasury of the city's taxes on wine and meat for 12 years, though it had demanded compensatory measures.¹²⁹ Among these was the concession for the citizens to have their own hunting ground in the area of the "mountain". In this way, wine production was guaranteed and at the same time the city was assured a meat supply. The second reserved ground was centred on Altessano Superiore. It extended along the course of the Ceronda and Casternone creeks. The third, which centred on Rivoli, extended along the course of the Sangone and Dora Riparia until the edge of the Susa Valley.

The first set-up of the ducal hunting space undoubtedly shows the validity of the lands beyond the Dora model. The influence of the waterways is evident from the structure given to the captaincies, and the role played by the urban residences echoes that previously emphasised by the castle of Moncrivello. Similarly, social discipline pursued the same directives with regard to weapons, hunting gears and dogs. The new reserved grounds came under the name of captaincies [*capitaneati*], as they were under the control of a captain conservator of the hunt [*capitani conservatori della caccia*]. These captains performed the same functions as the *gruyer* in Savoy, although their role was radically different as they were in charge of conserving the areas reserved for princely hunting. The captains of the hunts were in fact ordered to draw up a monthly record containing all the offences committed, with the exception of those beyond the Dora. Dispensation from this duty could be due to a progressive loss of centrality for the lands beyond the Dora or to a greater interest for the sovereign authority to ensure a greater control around the capital.

¹²⁸ ASCTO, *Carte sciolte*, 91, 30 April 1567.

¹²⁹ P. MERLIN, *Amministrazione e politica tra Cinque e Seicento: Torino da Emanuele Filiberto a Carlo Emanuele I* in RICUPERATI, *Storia di Torino*, III, 121.

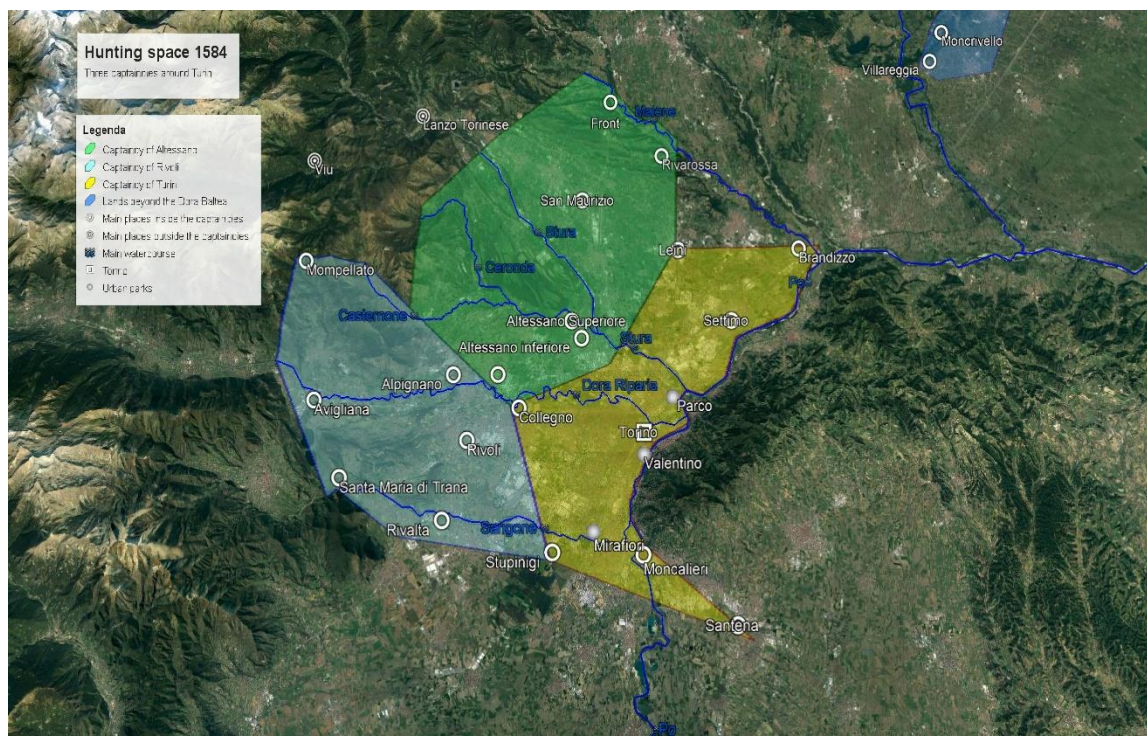


Image 2 - Hunting space projection 1584 based on DUBOIN, 1095-1099

What was done in the lands beyond the Dora twenty years earlier nonetheless remains the model that was to be applied. The edict in fact aimed from the outset to restrict the possession of weapons and to determine a new social hierarchy. The language that the edict introduces shows explicitly how this hierarchy was intrinsically linked to a hunting ethic. In any houses and farmsteads that dotted the established princely hunting ground it was, indeed, forbidden to keep any kind of instruments that could be used to kill or trap animals, designated with the terms of *treachery* [*tradimento*].¹³⁰ The expression refers semantically to the sphere of deception, to a battle against an enemy conducted in an unworthy manner. If hunting was connected to the war dimension then it had to be conducted in a chivalric manner, confronting the animal openly. The treacheries pointed out in this first edict were lights, snares, pits and traps.¹³¹ The hunting techniques most

¹³⁰ DUBOIN, 1096.

¹³¹ Snares, pits and traps were used to catch mid-sized and large mammals. The hunt with lights was often practised using a pole on which a conical net was placed at the top, with the light at the foot to attract small birds; this technique was also called *deluge* [*diluvio*]. See D. BARSANTI, *Tre secoli di caccia in Toscana attraverso la legislazione: da privata signorile sotto i Medici a oggetto di pubblica economia sotto i Lorena* in *Rivista di storia dell'agricoltura*, 26-2 (1986), 111.

widely used in the rural world were therefore categorised as ethically unacceptable and absolutely forbidden.

Not only the common people, but also the aristocratic world had to adapt to the new hunting space. The edict explicitly stated that «hunting is done for particular pleasure, nor should the nobility go to for anything else but pure leisure»: therefore, nobody could instruct servants to go hunting in its place, doing so personally and with a ducal license.¹³² Regarding weapons, there was an absolute prohibition on carrying arquebuses and crossbows in the public streets. The edict made no reference to the size of these weapons, nor to the ammunition that could be carried. The only reference to the carrying of arms in public ensured in any case the possibility to keep them inside private houses without incurring any controls. The limitations to which the dogs were subjected, on the contrary, perfectly replicated those issued for the lands beyond Dora. From the point of view of control, this first edict does not qualify as excessively repressive towards the local population. It also concluded with a promise from the ducal authority that any damage to fields and crops during the harvest season, *caused by huntsmen*, would be compensated.¹³³

However, how the establishment of this space was successful from a hunting point of view is shown, paradoxically, by the extremely negative impact it had on the crops and the economic and social stability of the areas involved, which once again forced the ducal power to make compromises.

The wall

The combination of intensive use of the park district for hunting, the consequent conservation and proliferation of game, and the establishment of a hunting space had a huge impact on local communities, crops and the general agricultural economy of the area. The resulting increase in wildlife took about thirty years to become unsustainable. By the beginning of the 17th century the pressing complaints had become alarming. The dukes had tried to exempt many of these communities from paying part of the taxation to which they were subjected, but these measures did not prevent people to leave the territory: at the end of 1603, Charles Emmanuel I was forced to reach an agreement with

¹³² DUBOIN, 1097. Or. It. : «la caccia è fatta per particular piacere, né deve la nobiltà andarli per altro, che per mera ricreatione».

¹³³ *IVI*, 1099.

forty-six communities and the city of Turin itself.¹³⁴ As in previous decades, Charles Emmanuel I preferred to adopt a compromising strategy that would allow him to avoid exacerbating social tensions while at the same time ensuring that he maintained a position of supremacy. The general terms of the agreement were based on an exchange: on the one hand, the communities were to finance the construction of a surrounding wall that would enclose the park district, thus preventing the game to escape; on the other hand, the duke was to allow these communities, until the work was completed, to freely hunt deer and wild boars, which were most impactful to crops, but also those most involved in the princely hunts. The other reserved animal species (roe deer, pheasants, partridges) which did not cause vast damage, remained prohibited. Similarly, hunting gears of any kind were not allowed: deer and wild boar when excessive in numbers could only be hunted with arquebuses, but small ammunition and hunting nets were prohibited.

The agreement was therefore mutually convenient for both parties, but especially for the duke: the communities would reduce the damage to their crops and have access to game, but only for a limited period. Charles Emmanuel I secured funding for a useful infrastructure to keep his park intact and he only temporarily suspended his privileges in favour of the communities. The possibilities such a deal promised were so broad, however, that it attracted other territories. In April 1604, contributors to the park wall were joined by others that were far removed from the capital and thus would have received less benefit from its construction, but which had been subject to hunting legislation long before: the lands beyond the Dora.¹³⁵ The inhabitants of the area that had been the first reserved hunting grounds interpreted this as an unmissable opportunity to regain their territories' former freedom and stop their land being harmed by overwhelming game.

Beyond this harmonious picture lies a more composite reality, which can be reconstructed from the communities included and the respected payments. Forty-seven communities signed the agreement in December 1603 and 35 of these were among those listed in the hunting space 20 years earlier: 5 belonged (62% of the total) to the captaincy of Turin, 16 to that of Ceronda and Casternone (72%), and 14 to that of Sangone (66%). The percentage of communities that joined thus far exceeded half of those that made up the captaincies: the non-participation of the remaining ones may be due more to financial constraints than to an unwillingness to accede to the terms of the agreement. The others

¹³⁴ Ivi, 1110-1112.

¹³⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 27: 301-302v.

12 communities, conversely, did not fall within the captaincies. The reason for this was due, on the one hand, to the fact that the environmental impact of the Turin park and hunting legislation had also reverberated on neighbouring communities, outside the boundaries of the hunting space. All these borders existed solely on paper and did not matter to the deer and wild boars, who instead moved around the territory following their own needs.

On the other hand, the presence of some of these communities shows how, through the agreement, the Duke attempted to extend the influence of the hunting district to territories not affected by the above-mentioned wildlife pressure. The most concrete example of this is the alpine community of Lanzo and its valleys, which in November 1604 sent a heartfelt plea to Charles Emmanuel I asking to be exempted from completing the payment for the construction of the wall:

Most Serene Lord, although the place of Lanzo and its valleys do not take any advantage from the order of His Highness whereby the hunting of pigs [boar] and deer is allowed, since in this place, as a mountainous area, there are neither deer nor wild boars and consequently it does not suffer any harm, and moreover the fact that these places are outside of the forbidden hunting area due to their distance from Turin, and that the people of these places should not contribute to the Park [...] however so commanded by order of His Highness they paid for the Park.¹³⁶

The first fact to emerge is that the Alpine communities were forced to take part in the agreement and did not do so of their own will. Furthermore, they were aware of the unfairness of the ducal requests, which were made all the more unjustified by the serious economic situation the valleys were in as a result of the epidemic that had struck Piedmont at the end of the 16th century and the storms that had damaged the harvests. Despite this, Lanzo had already paid out a large part of the money required: of the 1,000 *ducatoni* requested, 600 were to be paid by Lanzo and 400 by the rest of the valley

¹³⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 807, 1: 12. Or. It. : «Serenissimo signore, se ben il luoco di Lanzo e valli non si gioisca punto dell'ordine di VA Ser.ma per qual si permette la caccia de porci e cervi, per esser che in esso luoco come montuoso non si trovano cervi ne cingiali et per conseguenza non ne patiscono danno alcuno, oltre che essi luoghi sono fori delli compresi nella proibizione della caccia per la luoro lontananza da Torino, e che però non dovessero li homini d'esso luoco concorrer alla contribuzione del Parco [...] Tuttavia cosi comandati per ordine di VA hanno pagato per esso Parco».

communities. Lanzo had already paid 450 *ducatoni* and begged the duke to give up the remaining money.

However, the duke's reaction was only partially positive: the request was only half granted, obliging the community of Lanzo to pay another 75 *ducatoni*. Charles Emmanuel I therefore claimed to treat these mountain territories as something between a reserved and a free space. The reason is explained within the same plea, which ended with a formal greeting to the Duke «in the expectation of his arrival in this place for the bear hunting». The alpine valleys were in fact a privileged site for the hunt of bears, which had been regulated since medieval times, and was already frequented in the time of Emmanuel Philibert.

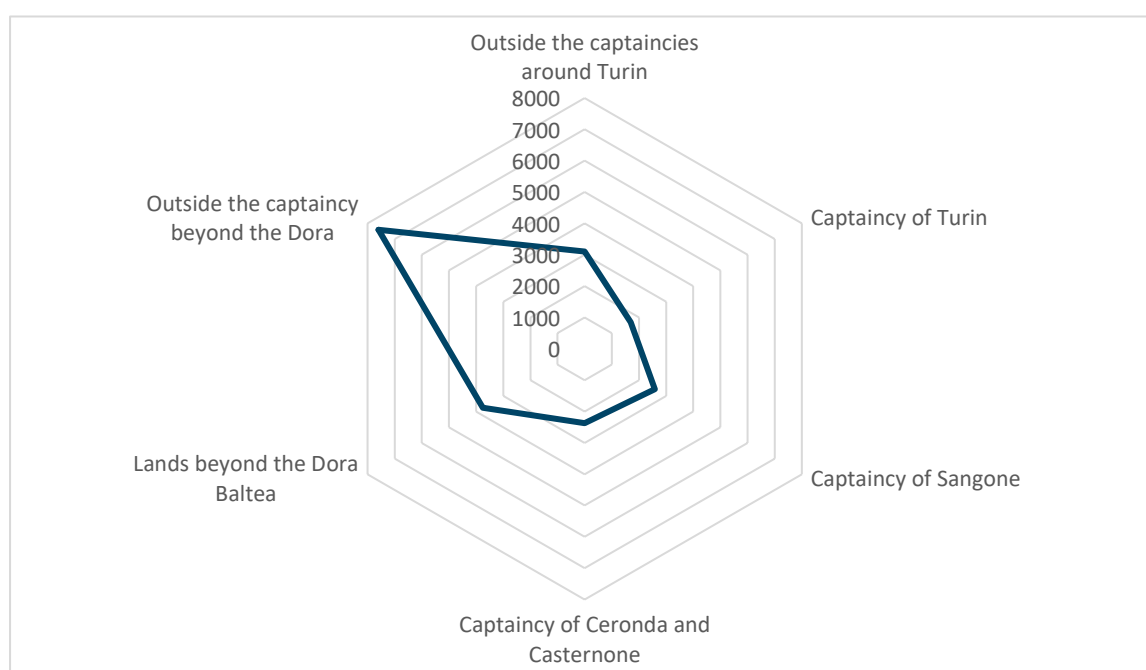


Chart 6 - Distribution of the payments for the Turin park wall (ducatoni) based on DUBOIN 1112 and ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 27: 301v

A total of 23 communities were added to the agreement in 1604, which presented a completely different configuration and in some ways a completely opposite one. Out of the 45 localities that made up the captaincy of the lands beyond Dora, only 12 (25%) subscribed to the agreement. As with other captaincies, economic reasons may have been the reason for low participation by communities as well as the distance from the park and its wall. However, the presence of the other 11 localities, adjacent to the lands beyond Dora but not within the captaincy, provides a further explanation. These included Vercelli and Biella, the two most important urban centres in eastern Piedmont. The two cities had every interest in freeing their countryside from the hunting legislation that, as mentioned

earlier, affected the agricultural and pastoral activities from which the two urban centres benefited. How motivated and wide-ranging the participation of these communities was, it is evident considering the total expenditure incurred by all 70 communities participating in the financing of the Turin park wall. The total amount came to 21,115 *ducatoni*. Almost half of this came from beyond the Dora, specifically from the localities outside the captaincy. Vercelli and Biella financed the construction to the tune of 3,000 *ducatoni* each, covering a quarter of the cost by themselves. Other 2,000 *ducatoni* came from Santhià, which together the other communities within the captaincy beyond the Dora reached 3,757 *ducatoni*.

It should therefore be pointed out how a ducal initiative aimed at containing a problem created by the game needed for princely hunting, soon turned into something different, as more than half of the expenses required to create the wall were borne by communities whose ultimate goal was largely different. Biella and Vercelli aimed to liberate their countryside, in particular the lands that fell among the three main watercourses (Cervo, Elvo and Sesia), in order to return to exploiting the land's potential for farming and grazing. The other communities within the captaincy beyond the Dora, for their part, aimed to reduce the pressure of hunting legislation and its restriction: indeed, the 1604 agreement mentioned the revocation of all appointed ducal hunting officers.¹³⁷

The construction of a simple wall enclosing the urban park thus shows how princely hunting incorporated different strategies by the stakeholders involved. The communities in the reserved areas around the capital secured through the 1603 agreement a temporary regaining of hunting rights and the construction of an infrastructure that would guarantee them less damage to their crops. The Duke of Savoy, in return for this temporary cession, would have prevented the depopulation of the areas around the park and would have provided the urban park with a wall that would also have prevented the illegal killing of game. Finally, the lands beyond the Dora took advantage of this opportunity to try to get out of the reserved hunting grounds. How far this was achieved can only be understood by looking at the evolution of the hunting space in the following decades.

¹³⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 27: 301v.

Winners and losers

In 1612, eight years after the construction of the park wall, Charles Emmanuel I issued a second general edict on hunting.¹³⁸ Looking at the new extension of the hunting space, an evolution resulting from the agreements made is evident. As the projection of the hunting space established in 1612 shows, displaying the new hunting space configuration overlaid on the previous structure, the reserved ground were extended as far as Cumiana, a few kilometres from the entrance to the Chisone valley, and to the abbey of Casanova, whose woodland region was connected with that of Santena. In addition, a second area comprising the woodlands from Garzigliana to Cavour and Staffarda was wedged beyond the course of the Pellice stream establishing a contact with the reserved territories around Turin. Furthermore, it was extended as far as Rivarolo, along the course of the Orco stream, and to Balangero, at the entrance of the Lanzo valleys. From Chivasso the reserved lands were brought up to the point where the Dora Baltea flowed into the river Po. As for the lands beyond the Dora, they underwent a redistribution southwards to include many localities around Vercelli. This led to the first concrete rapprochement of the two hunting areas.

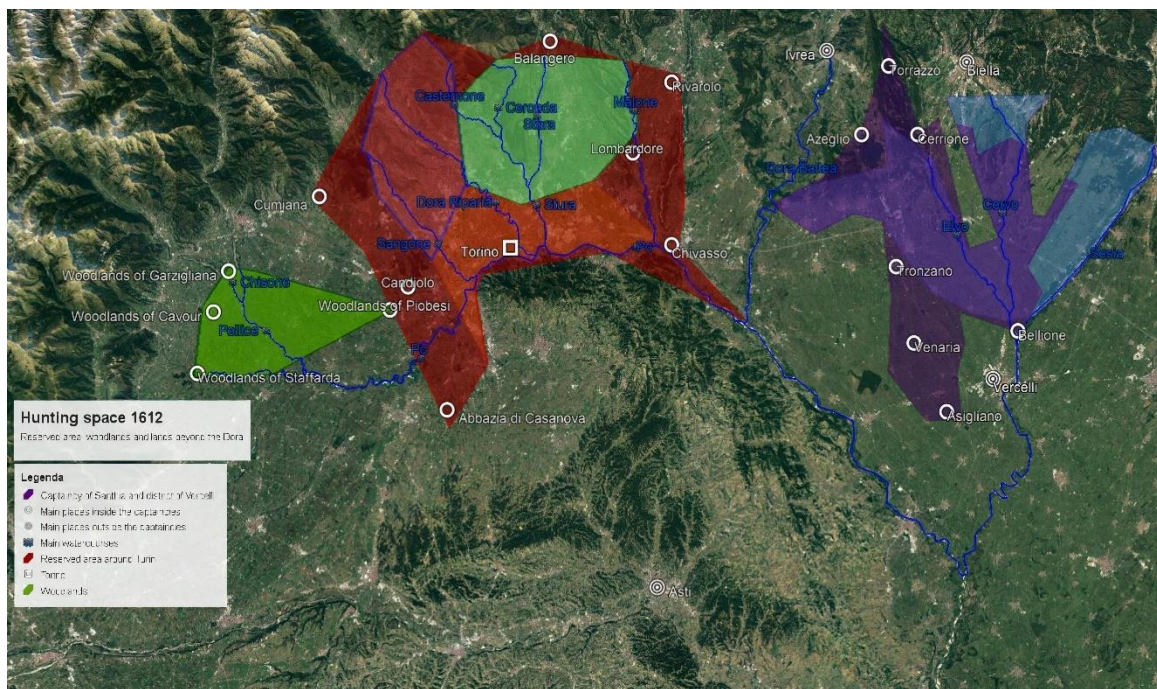


Image 3 - Projection of the evolution of the hunting space from 1584 to 1612 based on DUBOIN, 1113-1119

¹³⁸ DUBOIN, 1113-1119.

The first data to emerge from the new hunting space is certainly the confirmation of all the localities that were part of the 1584 captaincies around the capital, which indeed saw an extension to neighbouring areas. This means that the temporary concessions had been withdrawn as the park wall had been completed. A second point is the gradual approach of the hunting space to the entrance of the mountain valleys, whose willingness to integrate them had already been anticipated by the request for payments to the mountain communities of Lanzo valleys. A third and final point concerns the lands beyond the Dora. The shift southwards determined the exit from the reserved area of many of the localities between the Cervo and the Sesia, that in 1604 had participated in the financing of the wall, as well as others that were part of the Biella countryside. However, this was to the detriment of Vercelli, which instead suffered from this displacement.

The new hunting area established in 1612, decreed, at least temporarily, some losers and winners. Among the former were the alpine communities that saw the reserved area coming closer and closer to their territories; the communities beyond the Dora that had seen the hunting space reconfirmed, such as Santhià; and certainly the city of Vercelli which, instead of having less pressure from the princely hunting legislation in its countryside, had more. Among the winners were the other communities beyond the Dora and the city of Biella, but above all Charles Emmanuel I, who managed to obtain concrete advantages from a crisis produced by the unsustainability of the princely hunting. Evidence that this moment of crisis did not mark a setback in the construction of the hunting space can be found in the very configuration it takes in the text of the general edict. The places within the hunting space are no longer subdivided according to captaincies but they are listed as if they formed a homogeneous and connected area.

The enacted legislation also shows how Charles Emmanuel I could make the rules governing this space much more restrictive. The alleged reason for the new edict was a threat to the reserved game that came from within. The most apparent problem were soldiers or rural militia who exploited the chance to go around with weapons for poaching. Therefore, weapons restrictions reached a higher level. Members of the rural militia were allowed to carry only war arquebuses and not hunting ones, and not to carry hunting ammunition. The ban on carrying shooting weapons - to which blowguns were also added - was not only renewed but also extended to the simple possession of them in private

houses. In addition, there was a ban on the possession of ammunitions suitable for poaching, especially *dragea*, little lead shots used for the hunting arquebus.¹³⁹

The tightening of controls on the possession of weapons could only increase the pressure to invade the private spaces. The ducal authority then took care to emphasise that intrusions by hunting officers could only take place if there was strong evidence of the presence of hunting devices. Officers themselves, especially gamekeepers and captains of the hunt, were also placed under stricter legislation. In the event of a culpable failure to report offenders, or if they failed to report the exact day and place of the offence, they were liable to pay fines. Furthermore, captains of the hunt were strictly forbidden to receive honours or gifts from the communities under their control. Even at a higher hierarchical level, the ducal judges and fiscal agents in charge of cases against violators of hunting restrictions were similarly bound not to accept any remuneration from the parties involved.¹⁴⁰

The repression of *treacheries* also increased. both from the point of view of moral condemnation and the types of weapons reported. The term *treachery* was in fact associated with the term trickery [*inganno*], specifying that these terms refer to all hunting systems capable of killing and taking wild animals or harming them by cheating, which largely extended the four listed in the 1584 edict. This prohibition did not apply, as in the previous edict, only to the hunting reserved ground but «generally to any kind of person [...] at all times and both in reserved and free areas, except however those in the mountains and hills which are free».¹⁴¹ The process of regulation that had begun within the hunting area had started to transcend its boundaries, and only found a limit in the areas most remote. Restrictions on dogs were also extended. Competition from possible rivals to the ducal hound packs was finally abolished through a total ban on letting dogs free in the countryside, and with regard to some specific territories in the hunting district, such as those that made up and surrounded the Parco, the keeping of dogs was prohibited.

Forest management was also given a new boost. The first prohibition to be renewed was that of lighting fires in the woods in order to avoid the destruction of the wood cover to make space for grazing. A further prohibition was placed, regarding the fine wool sheep,

¹³⁹ DUBOIN, 1114.

¹⁴⁰ *Ivi*, 1116.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

whose damage to the land was so serious that grazing around Turin for eight miles was banned. For the same reason, the extraction of timber from the woods was also strictly controlled: the communities and private landowners who owned these areas were required to carry out an annual sorting of the species that made up the forests, and then to extract only a small part of each species between October and April.¹⁴² In the same areas it was also forbidden to use fire to destroy the stubble because it was used by pheasants and partridges for nesting, just as it was forbidden in the same localities to collect acorns needed for nourishment by wild boars.

Charles Emmanuel I had thus taken the process of disciplining the territory to a new level, but the hunting space still presented some challenges. The two hunting districts, on either side of the Dora Baltea, were still separated; the alpine space still remained outside of it; and the forests south of the Pellice were only partially connected to the rest of the hunting space. All these issues would be overcome with the rise to power of Victor Amadeus I.

A unified hunting ground

In 1633, Victor Amadeus I brought the reserved hunting district to the height of its extension and regulation.¹⁴³ The reasons that led to the issuing of a new general hunting edict were attributed to different factors. First of all, were the conflicts that had marked the last years of Charles Emmanuel I's life, with the second war of Monferrato, and the consequent contagions that led to the weakening of territorial control. At the same time, over the course of twenty years, the multiplication of licences had further damaged the ducal hunts.¹⁴⁴

The first major goal of this new general edict was the definitive construction of a territorially merged hunting space. The hydrographic network came to function as a concrete boundary of it. The area established in 1584 and 1612 extended to include the mountains and their valleys to the river Po, up to the Pellice valley. Lands beyond the Dora were shifted further southwards, forming a sector that stretched from the Dora Baltea to the river Sesia and touching the junction between the Cervo and Sesia streams to the

¹⁴² Ivi, 1114-1115

¹⁴³ Ivi, 1121-1131.

¹⁴⁴ Ivi, 1122. Or. It: «Non si pigli maggiore occasione d'abusarne, come fin'hora e seguito, si per la liberta tuolta nelle passate guerre e contagio che per le molte licenze concesse». On Monferrato Wars, see *The House of Savoy: a bird's eye view*, .

south and as far as the banks of the Po. An absolute new element compared to the past was the extension of the hunting space to the county of Asti. The projection of the hunting space established in 1633 gives a clear image: it covers the most part of the territory of the principedom of Piedmont, the lordship of Vercelli and the county of Asti, reaching as far as the borders of the domains of the House of Savoy with Milan and the Duchy of Monferrato.

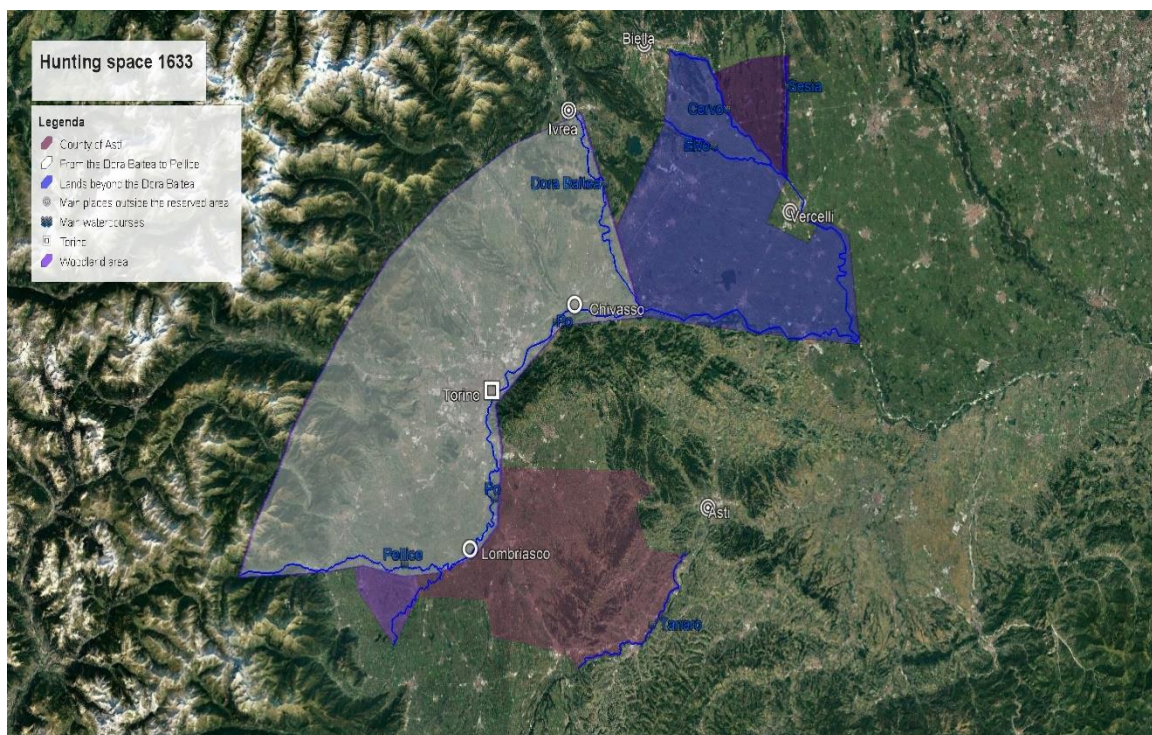


Image 4 - Hunting space projection 1633 based on DUBOIN, 1121-1131

The 1633 edict had the immediate effect of withdrawing all licences concessions granted up to that moment to anyone, thus representing a reset with regard to aristocratic or community hunting rights.¹⁴⁵ Restrictions on the possession of hunting weapons and ammunition were all confirmed for the restricted areas. Some categories of subjects were still a problem: soldiers, as in the previous general edict, but even clerics «who, against the provisions of the sacred canons, lead others along with them, retaining greyhounds, *susni*, bloodhounds and other hunting instruments».¹⁴⁶ Religious cover for poaching was

¹⁴⁵ Ivi, p. 1122.

¹⁴⁶ Ivi, p. 1124. On Church-hunting relationship, see P. Cozzo, *La Chiesa e la caccia: tra prassi, normativa e dimensione devozionale*.

also provided by some devotional centres, such as the Camaldolese Hermitage in Turin. The edict placed particular restrictions on the area around this religious site, pointing out that under the pretext of devotion some could infiltrate this area armed with hunting tools.¹⁴⁷

The forest restrictions were confirmed with a few changes: the ban on setting fire to brushwood was combined with rewards for those who denounced the arsonists; the time during which grazing in burnt woods was forbidden was extended to three years; sheep grazing was allowed from October to March and from March to May only in common pastures, but never in the woods. In this regard, however, a regulation was introduced that was destined, as will be seen, to deeply influence the future of the hunting space: in order to safeguard the woods necessary for princely hunts, Victor Amadeus I instituted a 10 Piedmontese miles circle around the capital, covering only territories west of the Po, in which it was forbidden for forest owners to cut more than a seventh part of it.¹⁴⁸

The prohibition of possessing *trickery* and *treachery* to catch or kill game was no more limited to the reserved areas but extended to all the Duchy as a general law. The weapons restrictions confirmed most of the previous regulation. The ban on keeping weapons and carrying arms and ammunition for hunting was confirmed throughout the territory reserved by the edict for the Duke's hunts, A new hierarchy based on the carrying of arms was also established among those who were in charge of controlling areas, such as gamekeepers. A first substantial difference was made between the keepers appointed by the Duke, who were allowed to carry arms, and those appointed by the feudal lords in their territories, who although recognised, were not allowed to carry arms. This implied a definitive submission of all other forms of hunting control to the ducal one, the only one that could effectively exercise violence and have a deterrent function. Within this new hierarchy, a difference was made between the ducal officers. Those who were guaranteed a horse to perform this function were likened to cavalry soldiers, which allowed them to carry any kind of weapon, while those who were footed could only carry staffed weapons.¹⁴⁹ The nobility were also again forbidden to send servants on hunts, as they could only go there based on privileges granted by the duke.¹⁵⁰ Restrictions on dogs were fully confirmed. As a demonstration of a clear animal hierarchy reflecting the human one,

¹⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 1123.

¹⁴⁸ Ivi, p. 1125.

¹⁴⁹ Ivi, pp. 1126-1127.

¹⁵⁰ Ivi, 1124.

the residents were ordered to hand over to the ducal officers all hounds belonging to the duke's hunting crew that were found loose within the restricted areas, and these hounds were made recognisable by a cross branded on their body.¹⁵¹ Finally, a fundamental passage broke the deal between the Duke of Savoy and the city of Turin on the freedom to hunt in the so-called "mountain", granted as previously mentioned by Emmanuel Philibert. Although the prohibition was not extended to the owners of the vineyards, who could hunt to defend their harvest, nevertheless the concession was lost for the side of the mountain that bordered the Po River.¹⁵²

From the point of view of hunting space, the general edict of 1633 issued by Victor Amadeus introduces three fundamental elements: the creation of a unified, legislatively uniform territory, determining the maximum extent ever achieved by the reserved hunting district; the establishment of the 10-mile circle around the capital and the strengthening in it of forestry legislation; and the start of the integration process of the mountains of Turin into the reserved territory. All elements destined to come back again in the future history of House of Savoy's princely hunts.

¹⁵¹ Ivi, pp. 1129-1130. The edict mentioned an earlier order of 1624, pertaining to the same matter, which had evidently had no effect.

¹⁵² Ivi, p. 1123.

1.2 A beastly court

Hunting trinity, reserved prey and exotic menagerie

In March 1608, Charles Emmanuel I was ready to strengthen two important alliances for his Italian policy. His two daughters, Marguerite and Isabel, were about to get married to Francis Gonzaga and Alphonse of Este, the eldest sons of the dukes of Mantua and Modena. The House of Savoy was eager to exhibit all its magnificence for claiming its rightful place among the dynasties of northern Italy. The feast celebrating both marriages took place in a hall of the Turin castle adorned with many allegories of the House of Savoy's states: «the most beautiful and the most elegant [...] both because of its size and its beautiful view, surrounded by the *Parco* and the Dora river, the mountain and the city, the fields and the gardens».¹⁵³

The two foreign delegations were welcomed at the Susa Gate and *Valentino* with the highest honours. A few days after their arrival, Charles Emmanuel I had a huge fence erected in the castle square. The duke aimed to prove to his guests that the House of Savoy was able to provide a spectacle worthy of a royal court. Many animals were brought inside the fence for a spectacular fight: two *lions*, two *tigers*, a *wild boar*, a *mule* and thirty *Corsican dogs*. In this way the House of Savoy proved that it boasted a large menagerie of animals. There would have ensued an extremely violent fight that most certainly would have made an impression on the people attending the event.¹⁵⁴ However, expectations of a bloody show were dashed by terrified reaction of the animals within the fence: although the animals were stirred up with fires and shouts, none of them dared to move. This outcome was interpreted as a sign of auspiciousness for the newlyweds: the peace

¹⁵³ P. BRAMBILLA, *Relatione delle feste, torneo, giostra, etc. fatte nella corte del Serenissimo di Savoia, nelle reali nozze delle Serenissime Infanti Donna Margherita e Donna Isabella sue figliole*, Torino, 1608, p. 15, ACTO, Simeom, Serie C, 44: 2377. Or. It.: «il più bello e il più vago [...] si per l'impiezza d'esso come per la bellissima veduta, con cui d'ogni intorno signoreggiano il Parco, la Dora, la Montagna, la Città, i prati e i giardini». See P.P. MERLIN, *Tra guerre e tornei*, 171; C. ARNALDI DI BALME, F. VARALLO, *Feste barocche. Cerimonie e spettacoli alla corte di Savoia tra Cinque e Settecento*, Torino 2009, 172.

¹⁵⁴ The daughters' weddings were not the first occasion on which Charles Emmanuel I exhibited the most wonderful, and more evocative of sovereignty, animals from his menagerie. At the baptism of his eldest son Philip Emmanuel, in 1588, a winged cart carrying a column of ice, drawn by two *lions*, was paraded before the ambassadors of the main European powers. D. F. BUCCI, *Il solenne battesimo del Serenissimo Principe di Piemonte Filippo Emanuele*, Torino, 1587, p. 16, ACTO, Simeom, Serie C, 44: 2374. On baptisms and other court ceremonies in the Duchy of Savoy see T. BRERO, *Les baptêmes princiers. Le cérémonial dans les cours de Savoie et Bourgogne (XVe–XVIe s.)*, Lausanne 2005 ; EAD., *Rituels dynastiques et mises en scène du pouvoir. Le cérémonial princier à la cour de Savoie (1450-1550)*, Firenze 2018, 325-326.

amongst the animals celebrated the political one that was being consolidated on that day.¹⁵⁵ These impressive ceremonies with animals fitted with the House of Savoy strategy to represent itself as a court reborn after the eclipse of the sixteenth century, showing its renewed strength and vitality.

Celebrations were also organised by the Gonzaga court, which in June arranged a triumphant parade of elephants, rhinos, camels and giraffes in Mantua.¹⁵⁶ The marriage between Marguerite of Savoy and Francesco Gonzaga had been prepared in December 1607 during a negotiation that took place on the border between the states of the House of Savoy and the marquisate of Monferrato, ruled by Gonzaga. The two delegations met at the city currently known as Livorno Ferraris, halfway between Casale, the capital of Monferrato, and Turin. To seal the agreement between the two houses, the Dukes joined in for a big hunt which immediately turned into a great spectacle for the local population: «a large number of villagers from the surrounding villages and castles flocked to the edge of the forest, on horseback, on foot, with women and children». The Duke of Mantua and Charles Emmanuel I gathered in a large field together with their court personnel «on foot and horseback, many with dogs on leash, others with sparrowhawks and falcons».¹⁵⁷

The creation and management of such a large menagerie were only a prerogative of the greatest European courts. It reveals how, alongside the territorial reorganisation, there was a parallel reconstruction of the *animal court*: the ‘hunting trinity’ of hounds, horses, and hawks; the exotic and unusual animals; the reserved prey or *royal animals*.¹⁵⁸ In the following pages I will trace the creation of the House of Savoy’s animal court in the late

¹⁵⁵ ACTO, Simeom, Serie C, 44: 2377, 24.

¹⁵⁶ F. ZUCCARO, *Il passaggio per l’Italia, con la dimora di Parma*, Bologna, 1608, 38.

¹⁵⁷ Ivi, pp. 11-12. Or. It. : «vi concorse appresso tanto numero de paesani da villaggi e castelli intorno, a cavallo e a piedi, con donne e fanciulli [...] vedevasi ancora i messaggieri di una parte e l’altra a piedi e a cavallo, molti vi erano con cani a lassa, altri con sparavieri e falconi». Cfr. V. DEFABIANI, *La «Misura reale»*, 117.

¹⁵⁸ Horses were only partly used for hunting because their extensive use was reserved for riding and coaches. Unfortunately, it is not possible to identify precisely which ones were used for hunting so the overall data will be analysed. Animals such as cats, lapdogs or farm animals are not included in the definition of “*animal court*”, see D. ROCHE, *La culture équestre de l’Occident, XVI^e–XIX^e siècle. L’Ombre du cheval*, vol. 1, *Le cheval moteur. Essai sur l’utilité équestre*, Paris 2008; N. WEBER, *Das Bestiarium des Duc de Saint-Simon. Zur “humanimalen Sozialität” am französischen Königshof um 1700*, in «Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung», 43 (2016), 27–59; C. JASER, *Racehorses and the Competitive Representation of Italian Renaissance Courts: Infrastructure, Media, and Centaurs*, in M. HENGERER, N. WEBER (eds.), *Animals and Courts. Europe, c. 1200–1800*, Oldenbourg 2020, 175–195; K. MACDONOGH, *A Woman’s Life: The Role of Pets in the Lives of Royal Women at the Courts of Europe from 1400–1800*, in Ivi, 323–342.

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and through that I will show the relevance of animals in the ongoing performance of sovereignty. In the first section of the chapter, I will analyse the restoration of the hunting trinity in the first decades after the return of Emmanuel Philibert. Then I will analyse the evolution and expansion of the category of reserved preys, and the construction of the exotic menagerie as a mirror of the renewed power. Finally, attention will be drawn to the consolidation and transformation of the hunting trinity in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

Restoring the hunting trinity

Before going on to analyse the evolution of the hunting trinity during the Emmanuel Philibert years, it may be useful to know what was the previous reality. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the number of animals used in ducal hunts at Charles II's court was relatively small. The hounds numbered around 24 dogs, managed by 4 governors, and 3 or 4 falconers, handled 4 birds each under the direction of a Grand Falconer. The falconers were supported by servants or *strozzieri* who were entrusted with less important tasks. It is hard to determine the number of horses in the ducal stables but, likely, they never exceeded 100 units.¹⁵⁹

During the years of French occupation, the Duke of Savoy maintained a small hunting crew. Emmanuel Philibert, engaged in the service of the imperial court, was very active in sending valuable animals to his father from the Spanish Netherlands. He used to send mainly dogs and falcons that he employed during his numerous stays in Savoy, where he accompanied his father on long hunts.¹⁶⁰ As their correspondence shows, the presence of Emmanuel Philibert in Brussels guaranteed useful contacts for buying valuable animals. In 1548, he was waiting for the English ambassador to bring him some hunting dogs which he intended to send to Chambéry together with some birds. As recommended in many falconry treatises, which are also to be found in the ducal library, it was a good idea to train birds of prey together with hounds, to get them used to each other's presence.¹⁶¹ As there were delays in the arrival of the dogs, Emmanuel Philibert decided to send only the falcons as the winter season was approaching and it would not be possible to send them

¹⁵⁹ For this data see A. BARBERO, *Il ducato di Savoia*, 223.

¹⁶⁰ P.P. MERLIN, *Emanuele Filiberto. Un principe tra il Piemonte e l'Europa*, 173.

¹⁶¹ ASTO CORTE, Biblioteca antica, JA VIII 2 - JA VII 10. These are two important falconry treatises: *Degli uccelli di rapina*, a work of Giovanni Pietro Belbasso published in 1503, and the Italian translation of the *Moamyn*, edited by Sebastiano de Martinis in 1517.

any later.¹⁶² These falcons also had a political value: Emmanuel Philibert, aware of the passion that the Prince of Spain Philip of Habsburg had for falconry, was eager to give a few away «to offer him some entertainment».¹⁶³

Once he returned, Emmanuel Philibert did his utmost to rebuild a suitable hunting crew. The evolution of the hunting trinity at his court seems in some ways to be following that of Charles II. The governance of the animals did not change significantly in the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1562 only two falconers were present and a *strozziere*. Each falconer was entrusted with 4 falcons, at £4 a month to maintain each bird of prey.¹⁶⁴ The fact that the allocation of 4 animals per falconer suggests that the total number of birds should therefore not have exceeded ten in these early years. In this initial phase, in comparison to Charles II's reign, the ducal aviaries underwent a reduction of officers that decrease the number of animals, process confirmed in 1565 with the presence of a single falconer.¹⁶⁵

This undermanning lasted only a short time, as a new falconer was introduced in 1567.¹⁶⁶ Pierre Viennois, who was born in Cusy-en-Bauges, was appointed as early as 1565 «*fauconnier, tenditeur d'oyseaux de proye et garde des chasses*» in Savoy before arriving in Turin.¹⁶⁷ The arrival of this falconer is indicative of how the supply of birds of prey had more than one channel in addition to those derived from foreign trade. His appointment followed the removal of another falconer and gamekeeper, François Consorge, originally from Provence. This removal might have arisen from the lack of protection for birds of prey and collaboration with poachers interested in taking possession of the specimens that were born on the Bauges massif. This mountainous area was of prime importance as a nesting place for many species of birds. Although not comparable to the specimens coming mainly from northern Europe, they provided the ducal falconry with an internal

¹⁶² In November the trade in birds of prey from northern Europe came to a halt because weather conditions would have damaged the animals B. BORBÁS, *Falcons in Service of the Teutonic Order at the Turn of the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Century*, in «Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU», 26 (2020), 133–149.

¹⁶³ ASTO CORTE, *Lettere duchi e sovrani*, 8: 71.

¹⁶⁴ ASTO CORTE, *Miscellanea, Miscellanea Quirinale*, mz. 1, f. 212. ; ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 3: 359-360.

¹⁶⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 1: 1565, f. 54.

¹⁶⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 1: 1567, f. 105.

¹⁶⁷ ADS, 2B–Archives propres du Sénat, 205 : 100v.

stock of animals to draw on in case they were needed.¹⁶⁸ In Pierre Viennois's letter of appointment, it was therefore specified that his task was to ensure adequate surveillance of this area to ensure that «*les oyseaux de proye soient gardez et preservez pour nostre service et plaisir*».¹⁶⁹ From 1567 Pierre Viennois, as stated above, appeared among the falconers of the Duke's household, but this did not excuse him from his duties in Savoy. In 1577, ten years later, the falconer was still paid £60 to go to the Bauges massif in Savoy to check on the nests of the goshawks.¹⁷⁰

It is worth noting that Antonio Guerra, who was not a huntsman or a dog keeper but the person in charge of the household administration [*foriero di palazzo*], was assigned a group of 4 birds of prey even though he was not a falconer. Payments to Guerra in 1568 and 1569 also make it possible to provide an estimate for the cost of maintaining the single birds of prey. The payments made, unlike most of the falconers' ones that included wages, were solely for the maintenance of the animals. From February to December 1568, payments for 4 birds amounted to £67 in total and for all the 1569 to £73: then the monthly cost for 4 birds was £6. In 1569, Pierre Viennois was paid for the maintenance of four falcons, receiving the sum of £89.¹⁷¹ Sometimes such variations were dictated by the need to purchase new material such as hoods, chains and *logori*.¹⁷² On average, the cost of caring for a single bird of prey was 1 *soldo* a day, and that within a month amounted to £1 and half, but the cost of maintenance depended greatly on the different species of bird, and in the ducal falconry there were three: falcons, goshawks and sparrowhawks.

A similar trend can be observed for the pack of dogs. In 1565 is reported only a pack of *gran levrieri di Bretagna*, a dog breed mainly used in the deer hunt, assigned to a dogkeeper enlisted in the Duke's household.¹⁷³ From the following years onwards, however, appeared the first break from the past. From 1566 onwards, the handling of hunting dogs was split between the Duke's household and Altessano Superiore, where the

¹⁶⁸ Alongside trade and the safeguarding of areas where birds of prey proliferated, Emanuele Filiberto also issued protectionist ordinances: in 1570, an order prohibited any export of birds of prey and all those passing through the territory had to have a ducal licence, otherwise they would be confiscated, ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, Serie rossa, 227: 151.

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 10: n16.

¹⁷¹ Ivi, 3: 347.

¹⁷² The term *logoro* refers to the instrument, made of leather or other materials, used by the falconer to train the falcon to return. Its shape recalled that of a small bird, made more realistic by the addition of feathers, and it was swung to simulate a prey in flight.

¹⁷³ ASTO RIUNITE, Cam. Piem., art. 217, 1: 1565, f. 62.

duke had set up a group of huntsmen, with a pack of twelve dogs. The dog pack of the household counted about 4 *gran levrieri di Bretagna*, a rather small number but not surprising considering how valuable and expensive these animals were.¹⁷⁴ The hunting dog pack at Altessano was instead enlarged and diversified. In the mid-1568, payments covered expenses for 8 hounds and 18 mastiffs.¹⁷⁵ After an initial reduction in numbers, comparable to that of falconry, the number of dogs exceeded that of Charles II's court. The two most important changes to the previous management structure were on the one hand the division enabling the establishment of a pack in the territory of Altessano, comparable to Charles II's 24 dogs, and the presence at the court of the most valuable specimens to be used in deer hunts. In 1568, it still a rather small group of huntsmen and hunting dogs, which did not cost more than £2,300.¹⁷⁶

Finally, in contrast to the increasing expenses for hawks and hounds, the ducal stable pursued a more linear path which led within a few years to an increase in the number of horses closely matching the numbers of Charles II. The budget of 1562 reported the presence of 13 horses to ride, at £9 per month each, 4 stallions at £6 each and 30 foals also at £6 each.¹⁷⁷ The ducal stables in 1562 housed half the number of horses kept at the time of Charles II. They were cared for by a group of 12 grooms. The costs of maintaining these horses amounted to less than £4,000 without taking into account the wages of the grooms. As with the other two branches of the hunting trinity, the management of horses saw a change in the second half of the 1560s.

Budget 1562	N. of horses	Lire/month	Tot. month	Tot. year
<i>Riding horses</i>	13	9	117	1,404
<i>Stallions</i>	4	6	24	288
<i>Foals</i>	30	6	180	2,160
Total	47	21	321	3,852

Table 1 - Ducal stable in 1562 based on ASTO CORTE, art. 259, Par. 2, 1: f. 22.

¹⁷⁴ Ivi, 1: 1568, f. 84. In the years 1567 and 1568, another keeper was also associated and was given two more *gran levrieri di Bretagna*.

¹⁷⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, Cam. Piem., art. 689, 22: ff. 49-49v.

¹⁷⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁷ ASTO CORTE, *Bilancio della Casa di S.A. per l'anno 1562*, Art. 259, Par. 2, 1: f. 22. In 1565, in order to limit the scattering of horses, Emmanuel Philibert commissioned the city of Torino to build a stable large enough to house them all, P.P. MERLIN, *Amministrazione e politica tra Cinque e Seicento: Torino da Emanuele Filiberto a Carlo Emanuele I*, in RECUPERATI, *Storia di Torino*, III, 118.

The account written by the treasurers Francesco Carbonato and Giacomo della Porta for the expenses of the stable from 1565 to 1567 gives a complete overview of what was going on at the stables.¹⁷⁸ Expenditure on horses in the last two months of 1565 amounted to £992 which, if calculated on an annual basis, brings expenditure to £5,952 for the whole year. This figure is perfectly in line with that of the following two years, which saw costs first reach £6,539 and then exceed £7,000 per year. Based on the average cost of horses from the 1562 budget of £7,5 per month for each horse, the stables could in 1567 have numbered less than 80 horses. To these must be added, of course, the expenses for the stable staff, grooms and servants, which followed the trend of the expenses for horses. The account show a real effort on the part of the ducal authorities from a financial point of view: the entire sum collected for the three years from the taxes of the towns Villafranca and Vigone, amounting to £22,474, was entirely spent on expanding the stables and the extra costs allowed the reconstruction of this fundamental part of the animal court to be paid out of debt.

The next ten years, until the end of Emmanuel Philibert's reign, confirmed the previous trends. In the early 1570s, the number of falconers stabilised at three, each maintaining four birds of prey. Hunting dogs, conversely, increased considerably once again. In 1578 the baker Vincenzo Vincedetto received £9,956 for the annual supply of grain for the duke's dogs.¹⁷⁹ This figure can provide a rough estimate of the number of hunting dogs. Using payments made in years close to 1578, it is possible to calculate how much a hunting dog cost on average. The actual figure varied widely depending on the type of dog. In 1575, a payment was made for the cost of 22 hunting dogs: payments for 10 hounds at 1 *soldo* per day each, and 12 Aragonese mastiffs, at 1 and a half *soldo* each.

In 1582, an account of 'expenses for our dogs' gives a more varied picture.¹⁸⁰ As the payments show, hunting dogs were not only assigned to huntsmen and keepers but were also widely managed by unskilled court staff. A dog defined as "*grosso*", the breed of which is not specified but which in view of its name can be identified as a large dog for wild boar or bear hunting, cost as much as 5 *soldi* and 4 *denari* per day, while two other unspecified dogs cost 4 *soldi*. All other dogs on the list cost 2 *soldi* a day, except for a large pack of 24 dogs assigned to the washerwoman. The same number of dogs, identified as

¹⁷⁸ ASTO CORTE, art. 86, 1, *Conto reso da messer Francesco Carbonato e Giacomo della Porta per le spese della scuderia di S.A.*

¹⁷⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 14:1.

¹⁸⁰ ASTO CORTE, art. 259, par. 2, mz. 1: 21, *Spesa dei nostri cani*, ff. 9-9v.

chien d'Artoys, had been assigned to the cook Francesco Gilotto the year before.¹⁸¹ The cost of these Picard bloodhounds used for hunting small game came down to 1 *soldo* and 4 *denari*. The *gran levrieri di Bretagna* mentioned above, on the other hand, cost the most at 5 *soldi* and 5 *denari* per day. In the light of this, it can be established that the average cost of the Duke's hunting dogs in the second half of the 1570s was 3 *soldi* a day, making an annual cost of around 53 *lire*: this gives us an estimate of about 180 hunting dogs in the last years of Emmanuel Philibert's court.

	Soldi	Denari
<i>Cane grosso</i>	5	4
<i>Gran levriero di Bretagna</i>	5	5
<i>Chien d'Artoys</i>	1	4
<i>Aragonese mastiffs</i>	1	
<i>Hounds</i>	1	6
	13	19
<i>Equal to soldi</i>	14,6	
<i>Daily average</i>	2,92	

Table 2 - Daily cost per dog in soldi and denari.

The squires provided useful support in the management of hunting dogs. As early as 1567, they were given one dog each to look after.¹⁸² During this second phase, they played an increasing role in the management of the dogs. This is confirmed by the rise in their salaries during the decade from 1570 to 1580. The stable staff consisting of grooms, squires and pages were usually paid £33 per quarter. During the decade, they kept their number constant at 10 units plus a head groom. These variations can be explained in the light of the progressive role played by this part of the stud staff in the management of hunting dogs.

As with falconry, the expenses for the management of horses remained relatively constant during the decade. The money allocated for their maintenance varied between £7,000 and 10,000.¹⁸³ The aggregate expenditure for saddles, harnesses and the shoeing of horses did not have such a significant impact, bringing the total costs for the

¹⁸¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 20: 282.

¹⁸² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 1: 1567, f. 39v.

¹⁸³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 3-10, 14, 16, 18.

management of horses, for example, to £11,539 in 1580. During the decade the accounts only showed a sharp fall in expenditure in 1574. This sudden contraction is also reflected in the number of grooms and stud pages in the years immediately following: both categories, which in 1572 numbered 21, had fallen to 13 by 1576. This reduction was not due to the equine epidemics that decimated the ducal stables or to the sale of a large number of the horses owned at the time, but can more likely be explained by the intention, carried out in July 1575, to create an *haras*, a stud farm, near Nice.¹⁸⁴ The decrease in the number of horses at the ducal stables in Turin, therefore, may have been due to the movement of many of them (especially the horses most suitable for reproduction) from the capital to the new stud farm. In the following years, however, this decrease promptly recovered.

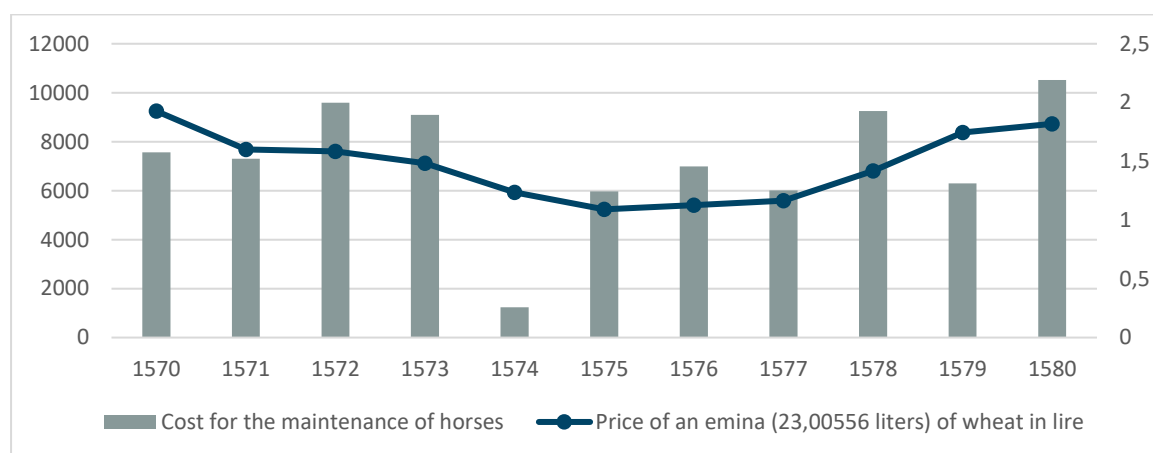


Chart 7 - Expense for horses 1570-1580 compared with price of an emina of wheat based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 3-10, 14, 16, 18

Chart 7 shows the trend of horse maintenance expenditure in relation to the price of an emina of wheat.¹⁸⁵ In addition to what has been stated for 1574, it can be seen how basically the expenses follow the price trend, thus demonstrating substantial stability within the ducal stables. This further shows how Emmanuel Philibert aimed to substantially restore the ducal stables but not at their expansion, as also claimed by diplomatic sources.

¹⁸⁴ M. GENNERO, *La rimonta nella Scuderia sabauda del Sei-Settecento* in BIANCHI, PASSERIN D'ENTRÉVES, *La caccia nello Stato sabauda*, 113.

¹⁸⁵ Partial data on the cost of wheat in the first half of the sixteenth century are provided by L. BERTELLI, *Il movimento dei prezzi nel Piemonte sabauda dal 1559 al 1580* in «Giornale degli economisti e annali di economia», 25-5/6 (1966), tab.1.

A mirror of power: reserved preys and exotic menagerie

After the hunting trinity, the focus can be switched to another part of the animal court consisting of the reserved prey and exotic menagerie. These represent two very different parts of the animal court: the first is symbolically related to the ruler; the second is mainly related to prestige. If the growth of the hunting trinity was partially dependent on trade exchanges and imports, the presence of reserved game depended essentially on the reserved hunting grounds.¹⁸⁶ The game within the animal court was regulated, as was the whole of hunting, by two variables: space and time. These two variables established a hunting hierarchy that changed over time and implied the progressive enlargement of sovereign prerogatives. It is possible to subdivide this part into three major categories: the reserved prey for the sovereign; vermin, such as bears, wolves and foxes that could cause damage to people and crops; and the remaining game, both birds and mammals.

Looking at the previous House of Savoy, it is already possible to highlight this tripartition. Indeed, the statutes issued by Amedeo VIII in 1430 provided for different approaches according to the prey.¹⁸⁷ Among the royal animals, although this designation was not yet present in name, there was only the deer, which could not be caught from October to May, but could be during the rest of the year. However, this possibility was limited by both feudal and ducal privileges, which restricted the areas in which even this game could be hunted. The vermin, including bears, wolves and wild boars, but also any other species that could cause damage «*vineas, bladas et caeteros terrae fructus*», could be hunted without any limitation in time or space, so as to protect crops. The ducal legislation said nothing about the remaining animals, leaving the limitations, if any, to local rural bans. A comparison of the three previously mentioned general edicts on hunting - 1584, 1612 and 1633 - provides a clear picture of the evolution of this tripartition and the extension of the concept of regal animals.

The first general edict of 1584 shows how the old legislation had been largely overcome by the re-establishment of the House of Savoy's dominions.¹⁸⁸ In 1584, the number of royal animals types rose to four – pheasants, roe deer, deer and wild boars – and the ban was extended to the territories reserved for the ducal hunt.¹⁸⁹ This enlargement shows

¹⁸⁶ The deer population may have been partially boosted by the import of animals from abroad as payment for the shipment of a deer from Sardinia to Nice would seem to suggest, ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 26: 585.

¹⁸⁷ DUBOIN, 1093.

¹⁸⁸ DUBOIN, 1095.

¹⁸⁹ Ivi, 1096.

two directions: the first is represented by a shift from animals previously considered simply as pests, such as roe deer and wild boar, to being protected game; the second is the inclusion of a bird species; the pheasant, a game sought after for its meat and prized on ducal tables, as were partridges. The inclusion of certain pests was at the root of the depopulation process described in the previous chapter that led to the construction of the wall in the early seventeenth century. The tightening of the vermins in favour of the protected ones was accompanied by a general measure affecting all animals throughout the duchy: the prohibition to hunt from March to June.

With the second general edict on hunting in 1612, the number of animals under ducal protection was confirmed, but the ban on hunting royal animals was extended to all the territories on the Italian side of the duchy («*al di quà dei Monti*»)¹⁹⁰ Much more relevant was the evolution within the reserved areas where the ducal authorities forbade their subjects to hunt any kind of animals, both mammals and birds, thus placing these areas under the supremacy of the hunter-prince.

The reservation of game reached its widest scope with the edict of Victor Amadeus I in 1633, which was taken up by hunting legislation throughout the seventeenth century. The four previous species were joined by herons, evidence of the Duke's interest in falconry, and bears, whose addition coincided with the extension of the reserved hunting district to the mountain valleys where the plantigrades were widespread.¹⁹¹ The inclusion of another species of vermin within the royal animals proves a further shift which might also suggest a motive linked to the representation of the Duke as protector of his lands and subjects from the ferocious animals which populated them. This is confirmed by an edict issued against wolves in 1622 in which this function is explicitly expressed.¹⁹² In that year, the surroundings of Turin were the scene of numerous attacks by wolves, which, despite the measures taken by the capital's subjects, such as not taking carcasses of dead animals outside the city walls that might attract predators, showed no sign of stopping. The Duke of Savoy pointed out that although he and the Prince of Piedmont had often engaged in wolf hunts, «because of the desire that we have always had to protect our beloved people from any inconvenience», the predators continued to cause damage, forcing him to alert the family chiefs of each locality in the vicinity of Turin so that they would not go out into

¹⁹⁰ DUBOIN, 1115.

¹⁹¹ DUBOIN XXIV, 1122. About the bear hunting see M. PASTOREAU, *L'ours. Histoire d'un roi déchu*, Seuil, Paris 2007; Angus, Caterina, *Il tempo dell'orso, l'orso nel tempo: l'exemplum dell'arco alpino occidentale* in Comba, Emilio; Ormezzano, Daniele (eds.), *Uomini e orsi: morfologia del selvaggio*, Torino 2015, 15-41.

¹⁹² ASTO CORTE, Editti originali, 7: 3.

the countryside without weapons for the next three months and would proceed with the total eradication of the wolves.

The protection of reserved prey now covered all the territories of the duchy: the process of symbolising was therefore completed and the ban on hunting coincided with that of the duchy itself, thus becoming a concrete representation of sovereign power. In the reserved territories, which as we have seen in 1633 covered a vast area, the ban on hunting any animal species was maintained, as was the ban on hunting in the non-reserved territories from March to June. Some specific prohibitions were added to this, showing how the reign of Victor Amadeus I coincided with an increasing focus on the protection of wildlife. The punishment was increased for offenders who, while hunting between March and June, killed cubs or damaged bird nests. The depth of this edict was also evident from the fact that it also protected the skies: in fact, it was forbidden for anyone to shoot at ducks on a long stretch of the river Po from Lombriasco to Chivasso.¹⁹³ The afforded protection allowed the animal court to populate the parks where they were both hunted and preserved. The three urban parks were rich in the most varied game. The woods of Miraflores on the banks of the Sangone were a place populated by hares, pheasants, partridges and many other birds like herons, «flying so incessantly that they can easily be attacked with birds of prey», such as Robert de Salnove, author of an important hunting manual and in the service of the House of Savoy during the years of Victor Amadeus I.¹⁹⁴ On the other side of the castle, the woods that stretched across Stupinigi were favoured by the deer because of the fresh waters where they would stop to drink.

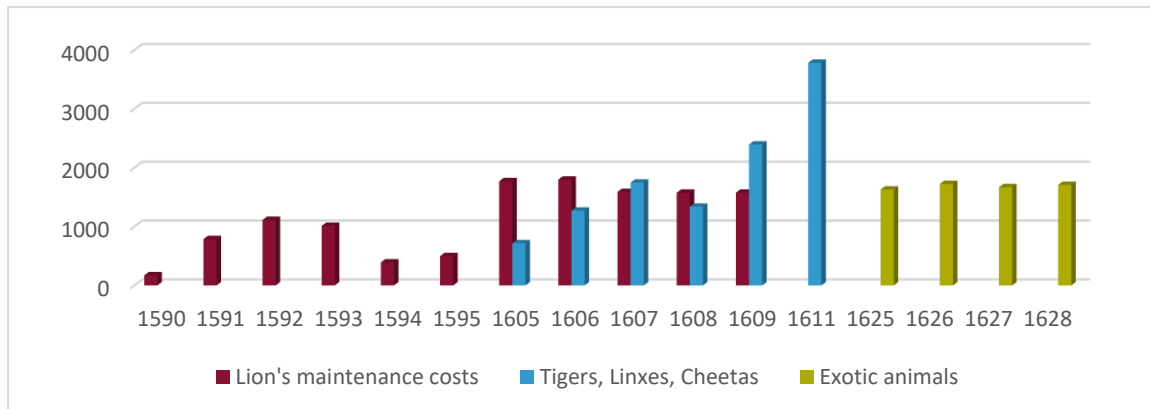


Chart 8- Exotic managerie's expenses in £ based on ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 72, 73, 74, 75

¹⁹³ DUBOIN XXVI, 1123.

¹⁹⁴ R. DE SALNOVE, *La Venerie Royale*, Antoine de Sommerville, Paris 1655 180-181.

Having outlined the expansion of the sovereign's reserved prey, we now turn to sketching the construction of the exotic menagerie. The animal court was then made up of the exotic animals, which, as we have seen, Charles Emmanuel I used to impress foreign princes. The lions, present from the last years of Emmanuel Philibert's life, represented the core of the exotic menagerie. The pair of lions used during the christening of Philip Emmanuel were housed at the castle of Moncalieri in 1582, and a third lion was brought to the citadel in 1592.¹⁹⁵ From the early seventeenth century onwards, the exotic menagerie was assorted with other species: tigers and cheetahs increased in number and temporarily replaced lions in 1611. Even lynxes, a non-exotic but unusual feline known as the 'deer-wolf' (*lupo cerviero*), became part of the ducal menagerie. Cheetahs, attested since 1609, may have been used as hunting assistants, as this was widespread in the Italian Renaissance courts but, in general, these animals had a theatrical function to express power.¹⁹⁶ In any case, the exotic beasts brought high maintenance costs and risks. Inexperience in dealing with such beasts led to their rapid replacement due to the injuries suffered by Giacomo Giordano, the first governor of exotic animals.¹⁹⁷ The *chart 8* shows the trend of the cost for the exotic menagerie in three different phases of Charles Emmanuel I's reign. The expense for lions in the first half of the 1590s shows that these animals tended not to live long, probably because of climate and poor care. The expenses for the maintenance of the lions doubled from £700 to 1,500 per year in the twenty years in which they were kept at the castle of Moncalieri. The same cost was incurred for the tigers that remained at the Savoy court for the entire reign of Charles Emmanuel I. In the last years of Charles Emmanuel I's life, unlike the rest of the animal court, there was no increase in expenditure but rather a consolidation and progressive stabilisation.

The menagerie also hosted exotic animals that were of a peaceful nature. For instance, the mongoose, named 'rat of the Pharaon' (*ratta faraona*) is mentioned in the accounts, and this belonged more to the category of curiosities. Likewise, fallow deer fell into this category. These animals, originally from the Far East, were introduced in the last years of the sixteenth century and they were assigned to a governor who took care of them. The value of the fallow deer at the Savoy court is testified by the continuity of their presence. Initially, they were placed in a fenced area of the Parco, but they were moved following

¹⁹⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 28: 148; 39: 70.

¹⁹⁶ Ivi, 57: 203. On hunting with cheetahs, see. T. BUQUET, *Hunting with Cheetahs at European Courts: From the Origins to the End of a Fashion*, in *Animals and Courts*, 17-43.

¹⁹⁷ Ivi, 35: 162.

the preference of the dukes: in the seventeenth century, indeed, they were placed at the *Valentino*.¹⁹⁸

A trinity in transition

With Charles Emmanuel I, a new phase began that saw a real expansion of all three branches that made up the hunting trinity at the court. Its management in these years can be divided into two phases: from 1580 to the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century and from 1609 to 1630. In this first phase, there were some changes compared to the past. Starting with the ducal stables are concerned, a comparison of five household budgets over the course of the 1580s (1581, 1584, 1586, 1587, 1588) shows a clear increase in the number of horses.¹⁹⁹ The cost of maintaining the horses in the budget went from almost £12,000 in 1581 to 15,000 in 1588, which compared to twenty years earlier suggests a doubling in the number of horses.

In 1584, expenditure on horses exceeded £20,000: the increase coincided with the preparations for the wedding between Charles Emmanuel I and the *infanta* Catherine Micaela of Habsburg, which took place in March 1585 in Saragossa, and allowed the duke to present the Spanish court with an adequate number of steeds that could show the capacity of the ducal stables. The positive growth trend of Charles Emmanuel I's stables was confirmed over the next twenty years. The expenditure on horses increased continuously, reaching £42,000 in 1601 and then stabilising between £25,000 and 29,000 until 1609. In this first phase, there was also a first important division within the ducal stables: the grooms were divided between *gran cavalli* and *cortaldi*. Separate management was created for those horses whose value was certainly higher and needed different care, the *gran cavalli*, to the horses whose main purpose was to carry loads on the move, the *cortaldi*. Compared to Emmanuel Philibert, Charles Emmanuel I, therefore, showed much more attention to the ducal stables: if Emmanuel Philibert also favoured the use of *cortaldi* for hunts, it is probable that at the court of Charles Emmanuel I an idea of hunting closer to the French *chasse à cour* began to spread, in which the rapidity and agility of the horse began to play a more central role.

¹⁹⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti di Piemonte, Feudalità, art. 809, *Stato del Valentino Reale*.

¹⁹⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 259, par. 2, *Redditi e spese dello Stato, entrate e spese per la Real Casa*, 1: 20, 24, 27, 30, 32.

The presence of the great horses immediately emerges as a fact of political relevance in conveying the image of a sumptuous court, able to offer to the foreigners present the image of a prince who did not go hunting only for his exercise in the art of war but also to offer a spectacle to those watching. This can be confirmed by the types of hunting dogs that were housed in the kennels in those years.

Under Charles Emmanuel I the management of dogs was in many respects still conducted in the same way as in previous years. Thanks to a second general payment for all the duke's dogs, it is possible to see an increase in the number of hunting dogs from 1581 onwards. Compared to 1578, the expenditure for bread had increased to £11,181, thus showing that the number of hunting dogs was now around 200.²⁰⁰ As we have seen, under Emmanuel Philibert there were mainly mastiffs or greyhounds. In 1583 the account of the house shows some payments for 4 big dogs, 8 greyhounds, 6 *chien d'Artoys* and 3 Corsican dogs: to these, however, were added 16 the *chiens courant*.²⁰¹ The introduction of these dogs at the court of the House of Savoy can be read as a confirmation of the progressive adoption of a different hunting style. The presence of these dogs at court is confirmed for the following years. Although it passed into the hands of other dog owners, this new group of hunting dogs remained the same size until the first decade of the 17th century. The *chiens courant* thus became a fixed element of the new hunting crew created by Charles Emmanuel I. They were associated with the great Breton greyhounds, which by 1609 numbered 9, thus doubling their presence compared to the years of Emmanuel Philibert. Another new type of dog introduced at the Savoy court in the early seventeenth century was that of the *susni* dogs, first reported in 1603 when a group of 14 dogs was assigned to the dog keeper Giovanni Angelo Femelli.²⁰² Alongside the dogs housed at the Duke's household, Charles Emmanuel I also maintained a second pack at Altessano Superiore: these dogs remained largely Aragonese mastiffs, as reported in 1584, and numbered 16 dogs, a number that is likely to have been maintained considering the stability of payments that remained at £1,500 until the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Finally that year onwards, the falconry underwent a profound reorganisation that changed its management, on it was placed under the control of a single falconer who was assigned a fixed budget. The accounts granted him 1,000 annual *scudi oro*, equal to £3,600, both for his salaries and for all «the birds of prey, hounds, horses and servants

²⁰⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art 217, 20: 2.

²⁰¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 23: 245, 273-277.

²⁰² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 51: 1159.

that he keeps for the service of our hunts». ²⁰³ The image of falconry that emerges in this new phase is extremely different. It is no longer a question of individual falconers being paid separately, but rather of the creation of a hunting department with its organic structure and financial stability as it has a fixed annual budget. The listed categories of expenses also show that falconry did not only manage birds of prey but also some horses, with which the falconers were equipped, and dogs, which as we have already seen were often trained together with the birds.

The ascent to the throne of Victor Amadeus I coincided with another major turning point in the management of hunts: the creation of the *venerie*. The payments made for the grain of the dogs between 1631 and 1634 clearly show the transition from the hunting model still present under Charles Emmanuel I to the proper *chasse à courre*. The management of bread for the dogs of the Venaria was entrusted to the general munitions officer [*munizioniere generale*], a position entrusted in those years first to Francesco Verdina and then to Marc'Antonio Gambetta. The munitions officers were given sacks of wheat of 5 *emine* each, equal to about 120 kg. The first payments were recorded between April and May 1631, when 35 sacks of wheat were allocated for the dogs of the *venerie*. ²⁰⁴

In 1632 a second payment, amounting to 150 sacks of wheat, was made to the general munitions dealer: this time the wheat was not intended for the *venerie*'s dogs, but more generally for the maintenance of the Duke's hunting dogs. ²⁰⁵ This difference, although subtle, is not secondary: it shows not only the persistence of two different groups of dogs but also their differentiation according to the type of hunt. This is confirmed by the payments made in 1632. The sacks of wheat for maintenance exceeded 400, but the capacity was reduced to 3 *emine* (69 l): they were used to maintain the «*venerie*'s dogs and others for our hunt» [*«cani della Venaria e altri della nostra caccia»*]. The presence of two distinct groups is therefore confirmed by the same payments. The dogs entrusted to *veneurs* and simple groomers are once again of the first reported breeds: *susni*, mastiffs, greyhounds and *Gran levrieri di Bretagna*. ²⁰⁶ Obviously, as with the payments in lire, the amount of wheat allocated to each animal varied according to breed. In 1633 there was a general increase in the amount of wheat allocated. The payments made this

²⁰³ ASTO RIUNITE, art 687, 20: f.162.

²⁰⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 101: ff. 92-93. A payment of 1638 documents that the *venerie* was officially established on 13 October 1632, lvi, 116: f. 47.

²⁰⁵ lvi, 104: f. 114.

²⁰⁶ lvi, 107: ff. 13-14.

year further confirm the division, but also show an imbalance towards the *venerie* dogs: in August 349 sacks of grain are paid just for these dogs.²⁰⁷

The payment provides further details about the dogs of the *venerie*, which would be located in Altessano Superiore. In the light of this, it is clear that Altessano Superiore was again the centre of gravity of the House of Savoy's hunting area, continuing the role it had previously played. The packs of dogs that had been established in the area since the first territorial acquisitions were developed and expanded to include packs specifically trained for a type of hunting. The extent to which these packs had now acquired their shape, which no longer only united dogs of the same breed but was based on a division by prey, is clearly shown by the payments of 1634 and 1635. These payments were for the maintenance of five packs of hunting dogs assigned to five hunting crew members.

The first team of 150 dogs, defined as *correnti* [*courant*] and therefore specific for *chasse à courre*, can be identified with those of the ducal *venerie*, and were used for deer, hare and wolf hunting.²⁰⁸ Among them, there were the *limieri*, i.e. dogs whose superior sense of smell and training enabled them to identify prey to be hunted before the hunt. Of the 1,226 sacks established for the year 1634, this group, partly because of its size, was the one that used the most grain, 876 sacks. A second pack, that of the *Gran levrieri di Bretana*, already mentioned above as the most valuable during the years of Emmanuel Philibert and Charles Emmanuel I, of 15 dogs consumed 80 sacks of grain per year. A third pack was that of 12 small *susni* dogs, specifically used in fox hunting. They were guaranteed 70 sacks a year. Finally, the hunting dog packs of Victor Amadeus I had two groups of mastiffs of 20 dogs each to which 100 sacks per year were assigned.

The data relating to the first years of the duchy of Victor Amadeus I, therefore, provide a precise figure of the dogs in the ducal hunting troop: they amounted to 217 dogs. This precise figure confirms the estimates offered by the previous general payments made in 1578 and 1581, demonstrating the progressive enlargement and structuring of the Savoy hunting dog packs. The details of the payments no longer show a division between the dogs.

The enhancement of the trinity of hunting and the whole animal court was evident to the contemporaries, as again emerges from Valeriano Castiglione's biography. Castiglione's

²⁰⁷ Ivi, 103: f. 73; 104: f. 133.

²⁰⁸ Ivi, 106: 184.

biography, on the other hand, is less reliable when it comes to the quantities of animals and hunting expenses incurred by the Duke of Savoy. According to the biographer, Victor Amadeus I's annual expenditure was around 100,000 *ducatoni* per year, because «in addition to the salaries, it fed all the appropriate hunters in the countryside for the fact».²⁰⁹ This figure would show a much higher expenditure than in the accounting records if it were not for the fact that Castiglione added that the expense «used to be made by Galeazzo [Visconti] Duke of Milan, who had 3,000 dogs fed by his peasants, was much lower».²¹⁰ Considering that the entire 1608 household budget amounted to around 76,000 *ducatoni*, the figures provided by Castiglione appear to be more of an attempt, therefore, to place his sovereign above the other princes.²¹¹ The author would be suggesting that Victor Amadeus I's hunting dogs would have exceeded 3,000 units, a figure which as it turns out is very far from the real one. Concerning horses, Castiglione gives a figure of between 50 and 60 horses for deer hunting, all of which the prince would have been able to 'name distinctly'. This figure was not so far from reality, although it is very difficult to establish.

In attempting to provide a celebratory picture of the duke as the greatest hunter-prince, the abbot was not exempt from distorting the reality, associating him with mythological elements:

*It is noteworthy that he met a monstrous dragon in the woods, whose appearance he does not lose heart over, like King Henry who, in the great forest of Fontanello [Fontainebleu], met a wild man who questioned him and let him know that he was the God of Hunting, known as Silvanus.*²¹²

If, for Emmanuel Philibert, the reconstruction of the animal court was a means to make visible the renewed sovereignty of the House of Savoy over his territories, and for Charles Emmanuel I was essentially a diplomatic and theatrical tool, with Victor Amadeus I the animal court and hunting activity reached the highest level.

²⁰⁹ ASTO CORTE, *Storia della real casa*, 16, 379.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹¹ BRT, MSS SAVOIA, I, 1, *Bilancio 1608*.

²¹² ASTO CORTE, *Storia della real casa*, 16, 380. Or. It.: «Non è da tacersi essersi egli incontrato fra boschi in un monstrosissimo drago, per lo cui aspetto non si perde di cuore, al pari del re Henrico che nella gran selva di Fontanello [Fontainebleu] si incontro con un huomo selvatico che lo interrogò facendogli sapere ch'egli era il Dio delle Caccie detto Silvano».

1.3 Hunting with the Duke

Captains, falconers and huntsmen at the court of Savoy

In Victor Amadeus I's biography by Valeriano Castiglione, the image of the hunter-prince was condensed into a few lines, give us a glimpse of the duke waiting to engage the hunt:

*The land of Altessano was [the duke's] residence for deer hunting, because there were plenty of them in the surrounding forests. There, he waited for the reports of the chief huntsmen and lived as a hunter-prince. He ate in the public square, under a pavilion of green foliage, surrounded by huntsmen and dogs, enjoying watching them devouring deer.*²¹³

Altessano Superiore is once again indicated as the great theatre where the duke staged his favourite hunts. Castiglione puts Victor Amadeus I at the centre of this bucolic scene, intent on eating while he admires his dogs ravaging the carcass of a deer, a hunting practice aimed at ensuring the hound's fierce determination in pursuing the quarry.²¹⁴ Shifting the focus from the quiet centre of the scene, it becomes evident that the duke is only a gravitational centre around which flows the intense work of huntsmen and hunting officers who survey the woods in search of the best prey for the sovereign to make his trophy.

But what were the characteristics of a sixteenth – seventeenth century huntsman? If we read what Eugenio Raimondi wrote in 1622 in his treatise on hunting, dedicated precisely to Victor Amadeus I, we see that the hunter was a versatile figure, who was required to learn a considerable number of notions through experience.²¹⁵ After an initial, generic reference to the morals that the huntsman must keep, as a follower of Diana «who most likes chastity», Raimondi lists the main qualities of the huntsman: physical resistance to extreme hot and cold weather; the refusal to be idle and the ability to fight; astrological

²¹³ ASTO CORTE, Storia della Real Casa, *Historia della vita del duca di Savoia Vittorio Amedeo*, 377-380. Or. It: «La terra di Altessano era l'habitatione sua per la caccia del cervo, trovandosene quantità ne' contorni vicini delle molte selve. Colà aspettando i rapporti de' Capi Cacciatori si tratteneva et con forme proprie di Prencipe Cacciatore se ne viveva. Nella piazza pubblica sotto un padiglione di verdi frascure mangiava, circondato dalli cacciatori et dai cani a quali nel medesimo tempo gustava di vederli divorar un cervo».

²¹⁴ About the purpose of this practice, see D. BOCCAMAZZA, *Gli otto libri quali narreno de varie et diverse cose apertinenti alli cacciatori*, M. Gyronima de Cartolari, Roma 1548, 90-91.

²¹⁵ E. RAIMONDI, *Le caccie delle fiere armate e disarmate*, Bartolomeo Fontana, Brescia 1621.

and meteorological knowledge; and a mastery of weapons.²¹⁶ All these skills had to be acquired during youth, when the mind and body are predisposed to learning and when one is willing to follow the footsteps of others, even those of animals. The historiography about princely hunting forgot to give proper attention to the vast world of expert huntsmen, experienced falconers and loyal gamekeepers that constituted a crucial element of the hunting system. Moreover, this world in which skill gained through direct experience, knowledge of the territory and animals, and mastery of the hunt were a sure way of gaining access to the prince's favour. This chapter examines the hunting officers who entered service between 1559 and 1637 and whose features are drawn from three types of sources: the *patenti camerali*, which include all the letters of appointment and provisions assigned by the sovereign, the *patenti controllo finanze*, which include the payment orders assigned by the sovereign, and the treasury accounts, mainly those of the General Treasury of Piedmont. The cross-analysis of the three sources has therefore made it possible to identify the presence of 139 ducal hunting officers in the above-mentioned period and their role in the princely hunt.²¹⁷

A general profile

As a whole, officers can be distinguished according to three fields of activities. In the first, the ducal falconry, 31 hunting officers were appointed and operated during the period under review. The second lends itself to less clear-cut demarcation. This includes huntsmen and those who looked after hounds. As will be seen, from the 1630s onwards an actual ducal venery started to take shape: the huntsman was replaced by the *veneur*, and the dog keeper by the *valet de chiens*. Overall, this second field consisted of 44 officers. The hunting conservancy, the last area of responsibility of the officers, was the largest with 64 officers. Because of their territorial supervisory role, the captains of the hunt were also included in this group. However, they were hybrid figures, who were also in charge of the management of hunting equipment and who, as Castiglione's description states, played a prominent role thanks to their knowledge of the territory. They were therefore huntsmen in all respects, and are sometimes referred to as such, but their main function was to ensure compliance with the hunting edicts.

²¹⁶ IVI, 11-15.

²¹⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 17—19: 22; 27; 50; 70; 72-74; 83; 87; 95II; 101; 103-104; 106-107; 110-111; art. 687, 16-20; 24-41; 44; 46; 47-50; art. 86, 10-17; 20-23; 28-36; 38-48; 50-61; 63-65; 66; 69; 72; 73-78; 82-85.

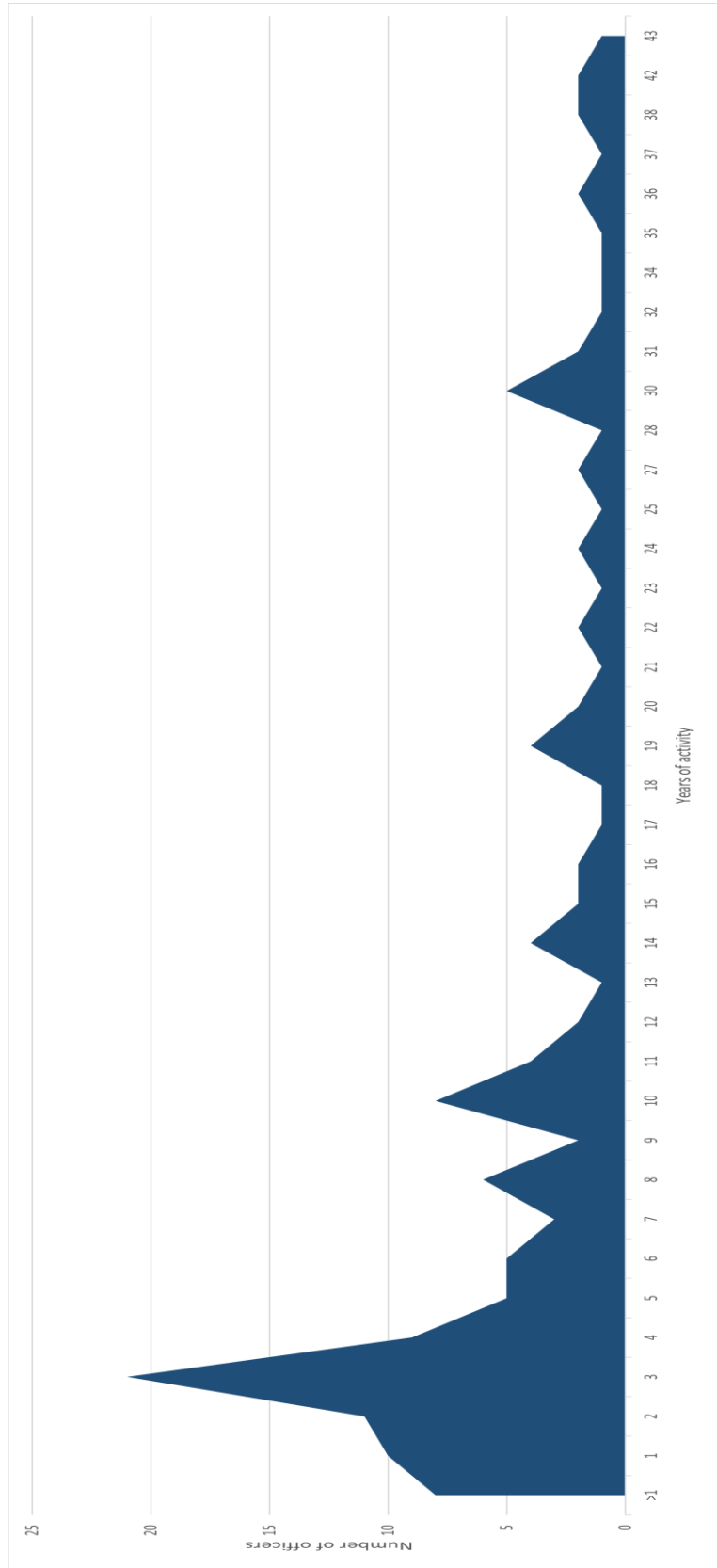


Chart 9 - Hunting officers' time range of activity

The internal allocation within the different fields of activity obviously resulted in a greater number of lower offices. The highest functions were almost always entrusted to members of the aristocracy, who accounted for 15.8% of the hunting officers. In the few cases where these were not entrusted to nobles, they were either temporary positions or held by people whose hunting skills were recognised as deserving of trust in the management of ducal hunting. However, only 11.5% belonged to old aristocratic families, the remaining 4.3% being people who had been ennobled in recent times. More than 80% of the offices were thus held by people from the third state.

About hunting officers' places, among the 22 aristocratic members, 8 of them came from the nobility whose fiefs were located between Ivrea, Biella and Vercelli and the same number came from the nobility who had built their territorial strength around Turin, while only 3 officers were members of the feudal aristocracy in southern Piedmont. Only one hunting officer, who did not hold one of the highest positions, came from the other side of the Alps, from Nice. The remaining two did not have roots in the states of the House of Savoy, but came from Picardy and Flanders. With regard to non-aristocratic officers, it is more difficult to trace their exact origin, but for 65 of them it has been possible to establish it. Around 57% of them came from the area around the capital, including all the captains of the hunt. A large percentage, 33%, came from outside the states of the House of Savoy: mainly from France and Flanders, but also from other important Italian cities such as Milan, Lucca, Florence and Vicenza. Hence a composite and dynamic reality that easily crossed political boundaries and feudal ties, allowing the transnational value of hunting skills to emerge.

Concerning the permanence of hunting officers in their positions, even in this case it is not easy to trace the exact year of entry into the ranks of the ducal hunts, especially for lower positions, just as it is not always clear to establish the year of death or cessation of office. However, payments from treasuries give a fairly clear picture of the activity time range, as it shown in the *chart 9*. A significant proportion of hunting officers remained in office for less than 1 to 5 years. A much shorter period compared to the French example a century later. It should be noted, however, that most stayed in service for a medium to long period, ranging from 5 to 30 years, which in many cases meant spending a large part of their careers as hunting officers.²¹⁸ Those who served instead for more than 30, some reaching even more than 40 years of service, were a small minority but this is significant because it shows that one in ten hunting officers devoted practically their whole life to

²¹⁸ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Regime*, 245-273.

the duke's hunts. The general analysis of the hunting officers' profiles has provided an effective overview, but a detailed insight will reveal more clearly the evolution of the structures and dynamics underlying this world.

The hunting hierarchy

The hierarchy of officers and their position within the court varied considerably throughout the period under review, only to find a clear stabilisation in the late 1630s. In order to make this evolution more comprehensible, it is better to break down this analysis starting with the highest-ranking positions within these structures over the years. In an early phase, which ran from the early 1560s to the 1580s, falconers and dog keepers were among the *Scuderia* personnel, being therefore subject to the Grand Squire, as were grooms, attendants and pages. As one of the three *Grandi di Corona*, i.e. the highest offices at the court of Savoy, the Grand Squire could not be properly considered a hunting officer. At the head of this branch of the court was Robert Roero of Sanseverino, lord of Revigliasco.²¹⁹ An early group of falconers can be found within the *Scuderia* he led. This first group of falconers was composed by Achille Isnardo, François Corteaux from Varey, and a falconry servant named Antonio. Achille and Antonio had joined the ducal falconry in July 1559: Achille Isnardo had been entrusted with 4 falcons, at £4 a month to maintain each bird of prey.²²⁰ François instead replaced the previous falconer Francesco Pedrina from Chivasso in 1562.²²¹ The process of reduction of falconry highlighted in the previous chapter at this stage led to the presence in 1565 of only the falconer Domenico Bottazzo: as mentioned above, the arrival of the Savoy falconer Pierre de Viennois will bring the number of officers back down to two.²²²

Alongside Viennois and Bottazzo, in 1569 a falconer from the territories dominated by the House of Este, Niccolò Macoli from Ferrara, joined the ducal falconry.²²³ The presence of this falconer in the household lasted only a few years, until 1571 when he was replaced by Giovanni Malocchia, but it is possible to find the record of «*Niccolò, falconiere della*

²¹⁹ On this aristocratic family, see A. MERLOTTI, *Disciplinamento e contrattazione. Dinastia, nobiltà e corte nel Piemonte sabauda da Carlo II alla guerra civile* in *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo Medioevo e prima età moderna*, P. BIANCHI – L. C. GENTILE (eds.), Zamorani, Torino 2006, 263, 272-275.

²²⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 3: 359-360.

²²¹ IVI, 2: f.12v.

²²² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 1: 1565, f. 54.

²²³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 2 : 116; 187; 244; 363-364.

Porta di Susa» who in 1573 was paid for 50 partridges hunted for the Duke's table. He was not the only falconer to remain in contact with the ducal court even after his replacement. Francois Corteaux, one of the first falconers, also reappeared in the accounts in 1579 in which reimbursement for the purchase of 12 birds of prey is mentioned.²²⁴ The preservation of connections shows how important these links were for both sides: falconers' skills were in demand, as were the earning opportunities offered by the court. Within the *Scuderia* were also the dog keepers, who governed the packs of *Gran levrieri di Bretagna*. There were initially two, but the office was later held by one person. Until 1568 Toussen de Sassy and Giovanni Vueglion took care of these valuable animals that were essential for the Duke's hunting; then Toussen de Sassy remained the sole dog keeper, replaced by a dogkeeper from Picardie, Antonio Macquel, in 1573.²²⁵

However, the hunting officers were not limited to the *Scuderia*. A second group of huntsmen, led by Major Huntsman Dieudonné d'Englebert, settled in Altessano. Dieudonné was a huntsman born in the Habsburg Netherlands where he served the archdukes. He had followed Emanuel Philibert to the Duchy of Savoy in 1559. They had probably met during some hunts in which the future Duke of Savoy had taken part during his stay at the court of Brussels. The first information about this huntsman comes from the accounts registers, which record his activity as early as 1560.²²⁶ Dieudonné d'Englebert was the most important of Emmanuel Philibert's hunting officers. In 1563, his experience in hunting earned him the title of '*Venatore della prelibata di S.A.*'.²²⁷ The term '*prelibata*' almost certainly indicated Emmanuel Philibert's favourite game. His safety was also of the utmost importance to the duke. In a letter that the duke sent on 8 November 1564 to his councilor of state, Filiberto Pingone, Emmanuel Philibert warned his high councilor of the extreme dangers faced by those who wished to reach Piedmont by crossing the Alpine passes, since «they are forbidden to pass by our subjects and are threatened with arquebuses». ²²⁸ The Duke ordered that all those who had a pass drawn up by a Savoy official be allowed to pass unharmed and that a person be sent «to the foot of the mountain» in order to guarantee the return to Piedmont of the «president of our

²²⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 25: 556.

²²⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 6: 9.

²²⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 1: 204.

²²⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 5: 196.

²²⁸ ASTO CORTE, Lettere duchi e sovrani, 9: 261.

Chamber of Accounts, Baron de Monfort, the lord of Logrà, Dieudonné our huntsman and John, falconer of the lord of Salnove».²²⁹

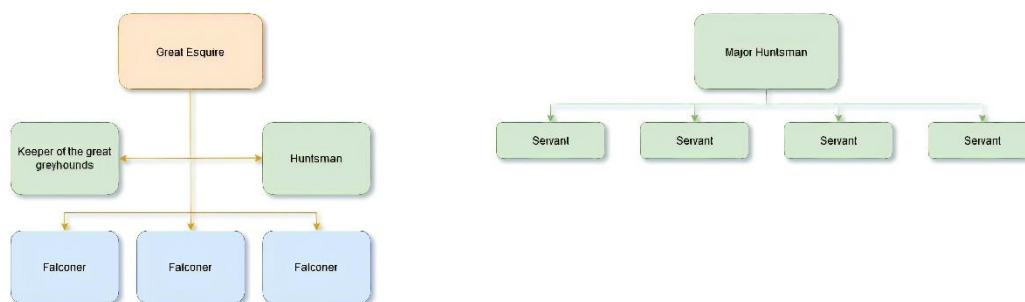


Figure 1 - Structure of the hunting officers under Emmanuel Philibert

Officially appointed hunter in 1565, D'Englebert was placed in Altessano where he was assigned 4 servants, a horse and a pack of 12 dogs.²³⁰ Over a few years his importance grew so much that he reached the position of First or Major Huntsman: that was not an official charge, but it was more a title he was awarded for his great hunting expertise rather than an actual office.²³¹ On 1 January 1565, he was given an annual salary of £1,328 and 12 *soldi* to support his living and to cover the maintenance of a horse, four servants, six greyhounds and twelve other dogs.²³² The Savoy administrative apparatus was still highly inefficient, causing huge delays in payments. The many arrears accumulated by Dieudonné forced the Duke to burden the local communities with this expense. Starting in March of the following year, Emmanuel Philibert ordered that «the money communities and people of San Maurizio and Altessano Soprano owe for their taxation» should be paid «by the hand of the mayors or agents of these places to Dieudonné d'Englebert, Flemish huntsman».²³³ The choice of Altessano Superiore was not accidental. The tax burden was reconfirmed in 1567 and in 1570 the Duke granted Dieudonné financial aid to build his first dwelling in Altessano Superiore.²³⁴ Emmanuel Philibert strengthened and increased this core located in what was an important strategic territory throughout the following

²²⁹ Ibidem.

²³⁰ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, 225bis: 18; ASTO2, art. 687, 17: 59-59v.

²³¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 259, par. 2, 1: 8, *Stato della Casa si S.A. per l'anno 1568*, 3v; 11, *Stipendiati del 1572*, f. 13v; 13, *Stato generale di Piemonte*, 21v.

²³² ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della Corona, 225bis: 18.

²³³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 18: 50.

²³⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 21: 150.

years. The statement of expenditure in 1575 shows a clear increase to 1,558 lire and 15 soldi in order to maintain ten hounds and twelve Aragonese mastiffs, three dog keepers and two assistants: Francesco and Umberto Ingle de Vella.²³⁵ The two brothers, were huntsmen from Brabant who came with Emmanuel Philibert to Piedmont or at some time shortly afterwards. In April 1567, Umberto Ingle received 300 lire from the Duke « for marriage with the daughter of Dieudonne, our first hunter». ²³⁶ The position of First or Major Huntsman shows the important role played by D'Englebert within the complex Savoy hunting structure and consequently the importance assigned to the Upper Altessano area where he settled. The family ties established between the Brabant hunters were certainly a determining factor in allowing a smooth handover between D'Englebert and De Vella. From 1576, in fact, Ingle took over from Dieudonné due to either his death or advanced age.

A comparable evolution took place in the hierarchical structure of falconry. After the initial phase, falconers came from the staff directly subordinate to the *Scuderia* and the Grand Squire and were progressively placed under the charge of a Major Falconer and then the Grand Falconer. Actually, the rank of Grand Falconer already existed during the earlier phase. Indeed, this rank was the first high hunting office to be conferred by Emmanuel Philibert in February 1560 from Nice, even before his return to Piedmont, and was assigned to Bertone Ponzone di Azeglio.²³⁷ He informed the duke of the «much sufficiency and experience that [Bertone] has in the profession and exercise of falconry». Bertone was awarded all the prerogatives and honours pertaining to this office and an annual salary of 200 *scudi*, albeit that it existed only in formal terms at the time.²³⁸ The tax reform was still a long way off and the duke had not yet made the agreements that would enable him to obtain more fiscal revenue, hence the duke declared that the terms of payment of the incomes would be established when he returned to Piedmont. What made this office substantially different from its counterparts in other European courts was the duke's decision to also give Bertone d'Azeglio the general authority over hunts. This resulted in the Grand Falconer also assuming the title of General of the Hunt at the Court of Savoy,

²³⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 27: 21v

²³⁶ Ivi, 19: 28. Or. It.: «a contemplazione del maritaggio ch'egli fa con la figliola de Dieudonné nostro primo cacciatore».

²³⁷ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 223bis: 71.

²³⁸ The value in *lire* for this period is difficult to give, although in these years it was about 3 *lire* for *scudo*, E. STUMPO, *Credito private e credito pubblico*, 54.

thus placing him at the head of the captains of the hunt who were assigned territorial control and whose structure took shape from the 1580s onwards.

The charge of Grand Falconer was not the only one to be assigned to Bertone Ponzone di Azeglio. At the same time, the Duke of Savoy created a new position with the express purpose of ensuring the observance of ducal orders relating to the protection of the reserved game in the territories beyond the Dora: the General Captain of the Hunts. This office had an eminently conservative function in relation to reserved prey, though it did not have any territorial structure: the General Captain of the Hunts was expected to ensure that ducal orders were respected «through all the ways and means that seem most appropriate to him». His trustworthiness was largely guaranteed by the income that could be derived from careful surveillance: half of the money from fines imposed on those who violated hunting regulations was assigned to him and the other half to the person accusing the criminal.²³⁹ Unfortunately for D'Azeglio, the new Grand Falconer did not have the slightest opportunity to take advantage of the revenue from these combined two charges, because he was the General Captain of the Hunts for just one day. On the 14th of February, this office was handed over to Agostino Avogadro di Valdengo. He was a member of an ancient family from Vercelli that began to extend its fiefs around the town from as early as the 11th century, later splitting into many branches.²⁴⁰

This appointment is of the utmost interest because it shows how quickly Emmanuel Philibert formed the highest positions required to lead his hunts. In conferring on him the office of General Captain of the Hunts «in what concerning the big beasts» beyond the Dora, the duke pointed out how this constituted «a particular charge» that had to be considered «beyond the Great Falconer's general authority on hunts». This means that in the space of two days, the Duke had defined the roles of the two highest offices: the Grand Falconer had jurisdiction over the ducal falconry, but was also the General of the Hunts as his authority extended to the entire hunting domain. The General Captain of the Hunts, on the other hand, was in charge of enforcing the prohibitions in the reserved territories and was entitled to the revenues of any violations of these.²⁴¹ In addition, it was assigned the task of conserving the «toiles and all the tricks that are used in hunting big beasts». Toiles, nets and yarns were used to trap many animals and the General Captain of the

²³⁹ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 223bis: 71.

²⁴⁰ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 223bis: 74.

²⁴¹ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 231: 20.

Hunts was ordered to keep a detailed inventory of them in order to be able to give an account to the Duke whenever he requested it.

In 1566 the position of Grand Falconer was transferred to Fozaro Piosasco Folgore of Scalenghe.²⁴² Unfortunately, it is not possible to establish how long Fozaro di Scalenghe held the office of Grand Falconer, but it is possible that this period coincides with his stay in the states of the House of Savoy and that from 1574 onwards the office was returned to the hands of someone else, or that Fozaro held it until the year of his death in 1580. However, in the light of the treasury registers, payment orders and letters of appointment, it seems that this important office was eclipsed as there is no trace of payments. The reasons that led to this temporary disappearance may be of a different nature but, considering that, as we have seen, the falconers were still within the Scuderia and could therefore be managed by the Grand Squire, it could simply be due to the lack of aristocrats really capable of taking on this role.

The evolution that ducal falconry took in the following years seems to enhance this hypothesis. From the end of the 1580s it was no longer run by a Grand Falconer but by a Major Falconer, a figure similar in many ways to that of the Major Huntsman. As long as this office was active, it was entrusted to two members of the Calvi family. Francesco Calvi, alias *Il Rozasco*, had already been in service as a simple huntsman under Emmanuel Philibert and his expertise and competence was even appreciated by Charles Emmanuel I.²⁴³ For this reason he received the charge of Major Huntsman in 1589 with 1,000 *scudi oro* a year to pay for the «hounds, horses, birds and servants that he keeps for the service of our hunts».²⁴⁴ Francesco Calvi, no longer young given his many years of service to the Dukes, died in 1590. His brother Alberto succeeded him in office, keeping the nickname of *Rozasco*.²⁴⁵ Unlike Francesco, Alberto Calvi was a falconer but as it can be deduced from the tasks assigned to the Major Huntsman, skills in hunting had to be versatile and not limited to a single field. Alberto Calvi remained Major Falconer until 1609 when he died and the funds reserved for him were diverted to the new Great Falconer, Giulio Cesare

²⁴² Ivi., 226: 208.

²⁴³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 20: 22.

²⁴⁴ Ivi, 162.

²⁴⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 21: 110v.

San Martino d'Agliè.²⁴⁶ He held the office until 1612 when it passed into the hands of Lelio Roero of Monticello.²⁴⁷

The Grand Falconer was reacquired to fully manage of the falconers and the supplies for the birds of prey after the first phase within the Household and after the second under the Major Huntsman. In August 1620, Victor Amadeus I's gentleman of the chamber, Giovanni Francesco Provana di Druent, took the place of Roero di Monticello.²⁴⁸ Francesco Provana was the last Grand Falconer to be appointed before the outbreak of civil war, being reappointed by Christine of France in 1637 after the death of Victor Amadeus I.²⁴⁹

As mentioned, the Grand Falconer was also holding the position of General of the Hunts, meaning that he commanded the captain conservators of the hunt or captains of the hunt responsible of the territories control. These last came into being as a result of the creation of captaincies in the 1580s, after which a dual process of expansion of personnel on the one hand and administrative centralisation on the other began. Over a period of forty years, the number of captains multiplied by six.

Within this category of hunting officers, a distinction must be made according to social and hierarchical position. The General Captain of the hunts were always held by aristocrats by members of the Turin aristocracy. The remaining captains came instead from family groups settled in the main hunting localities around the capital, who used the ducal hunts as a means of personal and family promotion. Two paradigmatic cases show the potential that preserving hunts for the duke could mean for individual groups.

Firstly, there were the Benedettos, a family group living near Robassomero, a village not far from Altessano. They appear since the foundation of the captaincies and their first exponent, Gaspare Benedetto, served as lieutenant of Ingle de Vella. His territorial proximity to Altessano guaranteed him access, on De Vella's death in 1602, to the office of keeper of the toiles, a post held by the Flemish hunter throughout his life.²⁵⁰ The position of cloth keeper was obviously a position of considerable importance, which not only guaranteed an increase in salary, but also placed the hunting captain in direct contact

²⁴⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 29: 224v; art. 689, 70: 107. MANNO, II, 325.

²⁴⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 31: 312.

²⁴⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 36: 439v. See G. SCARCIA, *Le élites del territorio piemontese e corte sabauda tra XV e XV secolo* in *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda*, 165-166.

²⁴⁹ DUBOIN, 1133.

²⁵⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 26: 389v-390.

with the sovereign, who demanded strict control over this type of hunting equipment and who needed the assurance that it would be transported and properly positioned during the hunt. This position was also enhanced by donations and salary increases received on several occasions.²⁵¹ Controlling the Robassomero territory was another exponent, Giovanni Battista Benedetto. Taking over from captain Simone Marchetto in 1621, Giovanni Battista was immediately guaranteed the support of a gamekeeper's helper, who was found in what was most probably either Simone's son or nephew, Giovanni Marchetto.²⁵² The Benedettos held control of this *piazza* until the death of Giovanni Battista in 1631, just as they held control of the cloths until 1642, when Gaspare died.²⁵³ The strength of this family group is shown, however, by the presence of another of its exponents, Giovanni Antonio, who had been among the captains of the hunt since 1623. His was a long tenure in the ranks of hunting officers that lasted beyond the middle of the century and did not end until 1659. The *piazza* assigned to him was not that of Robassomero or one nearby, but that of Alpignano where, however, a second family group had taken root for decades: the Danzeri. The first exponent of this group was Captain Giovanni Battista Danzeri, who joined the ranks in 1597 and was assigned the *piazza* of Rivoli.²⁵⁴

As for other captains, the *piazza* assigned may not have been those of origin, also to prevent overly close territorial ties from influencing the smooth running of the captains. Another member of this group who played a leading role was Giovanni Pietro Danzeri: he joined the hunting officers in 1607 and when Gaspare Benedetto died, it was he who took over control of the hunting nets.²⁵⁵ Similar to the captains of Robassomero, the Danzeri also had their own exponent, Gaspare, who managed to hold the role of captain for almost forty years, from 1618 to 1660, taking over from Giovanni Pietro after his death.²⁵⁶ As can be seen between the two family groups, there were entanglements and alternations that show how the structure of the hunting captains was not something evenly fragmented over the territory, nor something left to chance: the office of captain was assigned to well-defined groups who held the sovereign's trust and who were moved around the hunting area according to the needs of the hunt. That this structure, little considered until now by

²⁵¹ Ivi, 31: 66-67; 33: 13v.

²⁵² Ivi, 37: 382-382v; 38: 128-128v.

²⁵³ Ivi, 39: 24v-25.

²⁵⁴ Ivi, 25 : 28v-29.

²⁵⁵ Ivi, 39: 24v-26.

²⁵⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 66: 360; 111: 281.

literature on princely hunt, constituted a much more complex and centralised mechanism is suggested by the changes it underwent in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Beside the increase in the number of officers the relocation of most of the hunting captains within the city was undoubtedly the most significant change in the organisation of the House of Savoy's princely hunt. In 1627, a direct order from Duke Charles Emmanuel I created an internal division of hunting officers. Of the 20 captains present that year, five were left outside Turin to manage the hunting cloths, while the other 15 were among those «who will be inside Turin». Regarding the function itself, this development did not bring great changes, as the captains' assignments remaining identical to before. The centralisation however led to greater control of the central power over this peripheral hunting structure, motivated by the need to avoid illicit behaviour on the part of the captains mentioned in all the general edicts on hunts. Such illicit behaviour included avoiding arresting poachers or accepting donations from the communities in order to adopt a more laxist attitude. Untouched by the centralisation, were those who took care of the hunting toiles, because they had to operate outside the city and manage the logistics of the hunting gear.

A second process, which took place after the centralisation, was the development of a greater institutional framing under Victor Amadeus I. Between 1634 and 1635, in fact, the duke issued a series of provisions aimed at better framing this office. Following the general edict of 16 April 1633, the extent of the ducal hunting area had reached its maximum expansion and this necessitated an adequate number of conservators or gamekeepers to be placed under the control of the captains. Each captain could have up to 50 gamekeepers under him: considering a variable number of captains, which, at most amounted to 20, the maximum extent of the system of hunting conservation and repression implemented by Victor Amadeus I can be calculated at 1,000; a figure that gives an idea of the political scope, once again, of the hunting plans of the hunting prince. The captains and gamekeepers were also assigned a uniform, a tunic of argentine cloth for which the duke would provide the trimmings, which would make them recognisable to every subject in the duchy.²⁵⁷ In this way, Victor Amadeus I's plan to establish the largest hunting space since the reconstitution of the Duchy could be realised through capillary control of the territory, which was divided into 20 sectors, one for each hunting captain.

²⁵⁷ ASCTo, C 158: 10210, *Istruzione di quanto dovranno osservare li capitani e conservatori della caccia*, 21 January 1635.

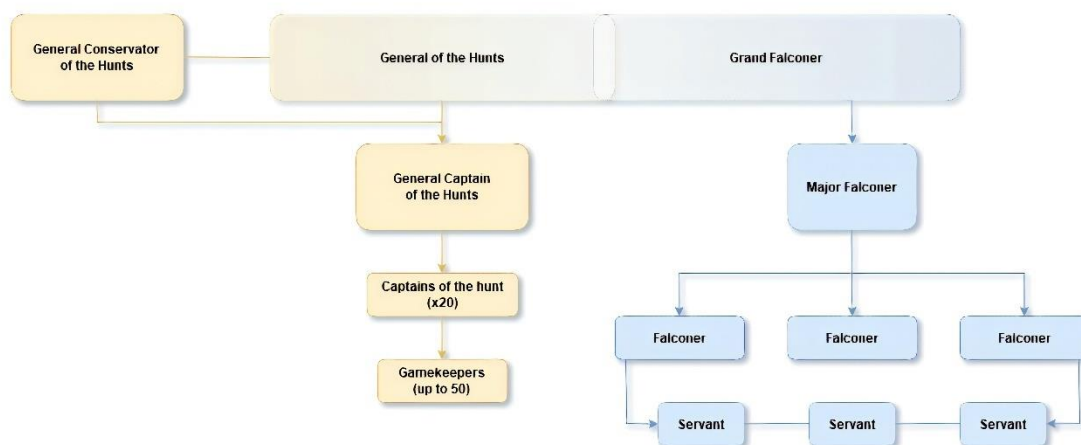


Figure 2 - Structure of the hunting officers over Victor Amadeus I

With centralisation and institutionalisation came hierarchy. A first difference that immediately created a clear break between the captains and the gamekeepers was the allocation of a horse to each of them, which would allow them to move faster across the territory. The gamekeepers, on the other hand, would have to provide for the maintenance of a horse at their own expense. The second was the granting of a gun licence for the rifle arquebus to go hunting and for the arquebus *a ruota* and pistols to travel on horseback: the permission to carry pistols, which being smaller in size could be easily concealed and lead to criminal deviations, shows how much the central authority trusted these low-ranking officers. Gamekeepers were instead allowed to carry only the wheeled arquebus.²⁵⁸

Missing from the evolution of the hunting structure outlined so far is a role that had always played a leading function in the rest of the European courts, but which had struggled to take shape thus far for the House of Savoy: the Gran Veneur. This office, in fact, had been earlier attested at the court of Charles II at Chambéry, held by Paul Gordeauz de La Vergnaz who was entrusted with 24 dogs and 4 servants.²⁵⁹ At the time of the transition to the new capital, however, this office was not entrusted to anyone. This is understandable in the light of what was said earlier about the presence of the Huntsman

²⁵⁸ Ivi, 8 February 1634.

²⁵⁹ A. BARBERO, *Il ducato di Savoia*, 223.

Major who filled the functions of the Grand Veneur. We have to wait until 1603 for the first attestation of this office. In November of that year, Charles Emmanuel I was awaiting the arrival of an important guest, Cardinal Francesco Sforza. For the occasion, he decided to organise a hunt to entertain his guest during his stay in Turin. To this end, the duke sent a letter to the marquis of Vinovo, his major butler, who was identified as the duke's Grand Veneur. Charles Emmanuel I ordered him to go to the surroundings of Cirie and Leini to find a large wild boar and six pheasants; prey worthy of a high-ranking guest.²⁶⁰ However, this first attestation of the office raises questions about its function. The Marquis of Vinovo was not asked to take part in the hunt or to prepare the packs of dogs, nor was he asked to gather the hunters needed. The task assigned to him was to capture the best prey alive and bring it to the Duke and the cardinal who would proceed to kill it, most probably within an enclosed area.

The Gran Veneur, therefore, appears to be a figure who in these years did not actually manage a part of the ducal hunting machine but served the duke in the capture of prey and the preparation of hunts. This hypothesis would explain the absence of this office from the treasury registers and the lack of an actual appointment: the Gran Veneur was assigned individual tasks for which it was not necessary to have stable payments and was not at the head of an actual chain of command. For a change in the function of this office, we have to wait, once again, until the early 1610s. The appointment of Jean Wicardel de Fleury as Grand Veneur stands as a turning point. Originally from Picardy, De Fleury was appointed in 1618 in place of Baron de Monteu because he was 'no longer able to perform his duties' due to his age, receiving an initial fixed payment of £4,000 with which he was to manage some dogs. There was thus a radical change in the office that became effective in every respect.²⁶¹ However, the position of Grand Veneur was only fully effective when the *venerie* was established by Victor Amadeus I in 1630s. In 1637, when the formation of the *venerie* was completed, it consisted of 8 horseback *veneurs* or *gentiluomini della venaria*, 5 *gran valets de chiens*, 4 *valets* in charge of the *limier* dogs, 6 other *valets* in charge of dogs and two huntsmen. The structure of the *venerie* was completed by the presence of a marshall, an armourer and a muleteer. For the rest of the seventeenth century, the structure of the *venerie* did not undergo any major changes and the Grand Veneurs followed in its leadership.

²⁶⁰ ASTO CORTE, Lettere duchi e sovrani, 26: 1.

²⁶¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 34: 167.

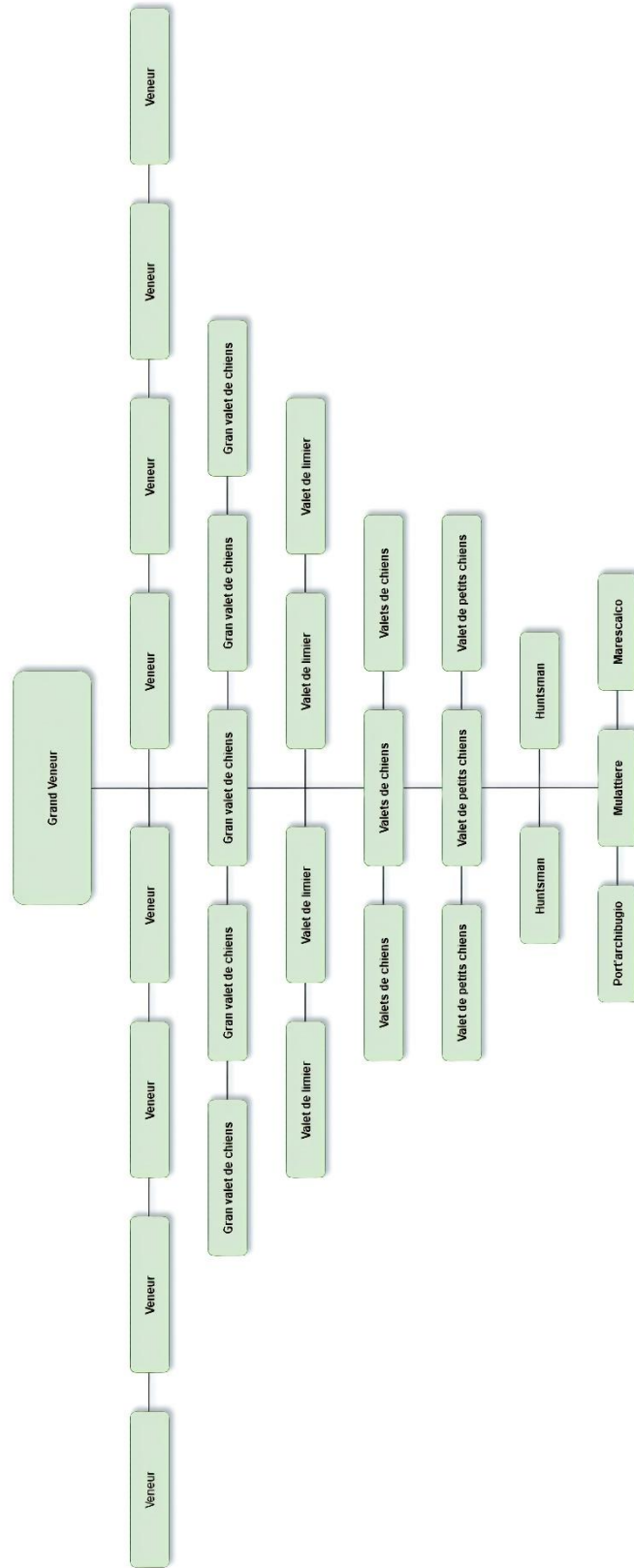


Figure 3 - Structure of the venerie under Victor Amadeus I

An economic overview

The economic compensation of hunting officers offers the final piece in understanding how the hunting officers were centralised, institutionalised and professionalised. The economic compensation of hunting officers was very fluid and multifaceted. The same office could be rewarded with lower or higher salaries depending on the officer's seniority or whether he was entrusted with additional tasks: hunting toiles or nets management, the keeping of valuable dogs or birds or, if the officer was in control of a *piazza* of certain relevance (e.g. the Park, Mirafiori, Altessano), as the different areas in the charge of captains of the hunt were called. Moreover, during the period under consideration, many offices were created at different times, while others were held for a short period. It is thus difficult to make a direct and serial comparison showing the progressive development of payments, but an overview of the salaries based on the treasury accounts and budgets of the ducal household can be provided. At this stage, an overview of the economic compensations given to the offices will be outlined and later they will be described in detail.

Looking at the period 1566 – 1573 a quite clear economic hierarchy can be outlined. On the two highest position was occupied by the Major Huntsman, who was not an aristocrat and was guaranteed an annual wage of £1,375, although he was required to maintain animals and servants.²⁶² The other one was the Grand Falconer. In that year a new Grand Falconer was appointed «with the honours, authorities, pre-eminences, prerogatives, privileges, immunities, rights and duties expected and agreed to by this rank and which other Grand Falconers usually have».²⁶³ The amount of the salary is not specified, but considering that his predecessor appointed in 1560 was paid 200 *scudi*, equal to £600, it is very likely that this figure was maintained.²⁶⁴ The three lower positions, huntsmen, dog keepers and falconers, were well placed below: £158 for the first, £144 for the second and only £108 for the third.²⁶⁵ General captains of the hunt did not yet receive a salary but

²⁶² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 10: 144.

²⁶³ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 226:208. Or. It. : «con gli honori, autorità e preminenze prerogative commodità, immunità diritti et carichi che a tal grado aspettano et convengono et che sogliono haver altri gran Falconeri».

²⁶⁴ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 223bis:71. The equivalence *scudo d'oro* : £ for the years 1559 – 1561 is based on A. GARINO CANINA, *La finanza del Piemonte nella seconda metà del XVI secolo*, Collegio degli artigianelli, Torino 1924, 97.

²⁶⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 217, 2: 31v, 40v, 58, 68; TC, 2: 38, 56, 77, 109; ASTO RIUNITE, art. 259, par. 2, 1, *Stipendio o sia salario sopra il servitio della casa del Ser.mo Duca di Savoia del 1573*, f.5v.

were guaranteed half of the income from payments for breaches of the hunting laws.²⁶⁶ The captains of the hunt had not yet been formed.

In the period 1584 - 1590, twenty years later and with a new duke, we find a reality only marginally changed. As will be shown later, from these years onwards the Major Falconer, once again not an aristocrat, took over from the Grand Falconer and was awarded an annual income of no less than £3,600, with which, however, he was also expected to maintain animals and falconers.²⁶⁷ The latter had kept their salaries almost unchanged, standing at £120 in 1584.²⁶⁸ The offices of Major Huntsman and Captain General of the Hunt were held by the same person, who had recently joined the ranks of the nobility, but which had not seen a great change from the past, as he was given £1,528.²⁶⁹ By contrast, the role of ordinary huntsman had seen his income double to £300; the hunting captain of Turin, the only one to appear in the accounts after the constitution of the captaincies in 1584, could count on a less substantial salary of £150.²⁷⁰ The role of general captain of the hunt became autonomous again from 1603 and was entrusted to a new officer who no longer relied on income from breaches but was granted £240 annually.²⁷¹ Dog keepers could receive salaries ranging from £600 to over £900.²⁷²

In the period between 1590 and 1609, many captains of the hunt were appointed to their office, but salaries were only fully stabilised with the drawing up of a list of conservative captains in 1611.²⁷³ The payments in the list are in *scudi oro*, but the ducal treasury account of the same year confirms the inflation rate of 1609.²⁷⁴ As General of the Hunt we find once again the Grand Falconer, who was entitled to £1335. Below that, the Captain General of the Hunt could count on £961 annually. The captains were divided into three groups: the conservators of the main *piazze* and those who managed nets and hunting toiles, with salaries ranging from £432 to 288; the conservators of the secondary *piazze* with salaries ranging from £288 to 180; the conservators with secondary roles or

²⁶⁶ ASTO CORTE, Protocolli dei notai della corona, 223bis: 74.

²⁶⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 36: 334.

²⁶⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 259, par. 2, 1-24, *Stato della tesoreria della Casa di S.A. l'anno 1584*, f. 5v.

²⁶⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 36: 309.

²⁷⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 259, par. 2, 1-32, f. 5.

²⁷¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 27: 13.

²⁷² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 27: 14, 143v; 29: 106v.

²⁷³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 73: ff. 96-97.

²⁷⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86,, 63: 226; 1393-1407; 1409-1411.

assistants whose pay was limited to at £130. To these were added the dog keepers, who received between £360 and 720.

In the period 1609 - 1613, the picture changed. In 1609 the office of Grand Falconer reappeared and to whom the £3,600 previously given to the Major Falconer was transferred.²⁷⁵ It should be noted, however, that the silver £ used in the territories of the duchy had begun to suffer a serious devaluation during these years compared to the golden scudo; the currency of reference for the rest of the Italian peninsula. While in the second half of the sixteenth century, the *scudo* was worth £3, from 1609 onwards it began a gradual decline: in that year, the £3,600 were worth only 1,000 *scudi*. This situation worsened during the 1620s, when 1 scudo was exchanged for £8. The disastrous monetary situation was only rectified with the reform promoted by Victor Amadeus I in the 1630s, which restored the value of the scudo to £3.²⁷⁶ Taking this kind of currency fluctuation into account is crucial to understanding the true value of the compensation. The rate of devaluation fortunately remained unchanged even in 1613, when a payment order revealed the internal composition of the ducal falconry, describing how the £3,600 repeatedly mentioned was to be divided: £720 to the Major Falconer, five falconers paid £216 each, three servants paid £86 each and the remaining £1,540 for the maintenance of the birds of prey.²⁷⁷ This reveals that the position of Grand Falconer re-established in 1609 was to all intents and purposes an honorary one, since the person appointed did not receive a salary.

In the following years there were no more radical changes but a process of expansion, with the entry of many new huntsmen and conservators. A list of hunting officers in 1627 reports the entire hunting sector: huntsmen and captains or conservators of the hunt numbered of 20 and falconers were still 6. The firsts were divided in two groups: 15 of them were part of a group of officers who settled in Turin, the other 5 stayed outside the city to manage hunting toiles.²⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, the period around the turn of the twenties was characterised by the greatest monetary instability. Between 1624 and 1627 the rate of devaluation brought the salaries of hunting officers to unprecedented levels.²⁷⁹ The general captain received £1,402 in 1624. In that year there still existed a great disparity: those in charge of the hunting cloths received £534, while those in charge of the

²⁷⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 29: 224v-225; ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 57: 145.

²⁷⁶ E. STUMPO, *Dall'Europa all'Italia*, pp. 54-55.

²⁷⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 31: 312.

²⁷⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 95\2: 162.

²⁷⁹ *IVI*, 87: f. 130.

yarns got 427. In 1624 the rest of the captains received a salary that averaged £352. The falconers were the ones who saw the biggest increases: the senior falconer got £1,913, while the other officers of the ducal falconry saw their salaries increased to £1,780 and 1,335.²⁸⁰ It is worth noting that all the falconers' salaries were equal to or higher than that of the Grand Falconer, the only hunting officer to keep his salary unchanged, who received an extra £890 for the mere reason of maintaining two horses. This shows once again that this office was largely honorary and derived its importance solely from the status it conferred. In 1627 a reordering of the officers' charges led to greater homogeneity even though the currency devaluation showed no sign of diminishing. The major officers kept their salaries unchanged while most of the captains of the hunt stood at £427, a further increase on three years earlier. Among falconers, salaries also levelled off at £1,335. The rapid increase in expenditure on hunting officers during the 1620s as shown in the *chart 10* must therefore be read in the light of this devaluation process which led to expenditure on officers reaching almost £30,000 in 1624, then falling to £20,323 in 1626 and returning to above £27,000 between 1628 and 1629. This increase reported in the treasury accounts did not therefore coincide with an increase in the number of hunting officers or with a real increase in their economic strength; on the contrary, for those posts that did not see such large percentage increases, it meant a reduction in wealth.



Chart 10 - Expenses for hunting officers in £ (1611-1632)

²⁸⁰ The 1624 order also records a payment to a falconer for £7,667. Such a high amount, in no way justified by monetary devaluation, most probably also included the maintenance of birds of prey in the ducal aviaries.

As mentioned before, this situation was only resolved with the reform promoted by Victor Amadeus I. The payment order of 1632 for hunting officers confirms the return of the value of the golden scudo to £3 and a half.²⁸¹ Salaries consequently stabilised and so did the internal economic hierarchy: the Grand Falconer was paid £1,750, his lieutenant £1,050 and the Captain General £900. All hunting captains were paid £200 annually, rising to £300 for those who managed hunting cloths and dogs. Falconers remained the highest paid of the minor hunting officers, receiving between £700 and 934 annually.

However, as the structure of the hunting was finally stabilising, Victor Amadeus I's burning passion for hunting, combined with the influence of his French wife, led in October 1633 to the creation of an actual ducal venery.²⁸² In that year, the *venerie* it had about 22 officers, rising to 25 in 1634, whose total payment amounted to £17,315.²⁸³ Considering that expenditure on officers in 1632 amounted to £16,532, the creation of this new ducal hunting structure meant an immediate doubling of costs. The ducal *venerie* placed a new economic hierarchy alongside the previous one. At the top we find the gentlemen of the *venerie* or *veneurs*, whose salaries ranged from the lowest pay of £700, to an average of £1,300 for intermediate salaries up to the highest salary of over £4,000 which was due to the first of the gentlemen. Immediately below this were the grand valets of the dogs who were guaranteed £300 per annum, the valets of the small dogs paid £200 and finally the ordinary huntsman who could only rely on £100 a year.

The analysis of profiles and economic data has allowed large differences to emerge. A fundamental fact to underline in this regard is the role played by figures without noble extraction but with great experience in the art of hunting, such as the Major Falconer and Huntsman who were appointed to lead their respective fields and who spent years managing it before their role was transferred to a position held by a nobleman.

Servitutis condigna merces

If we focus on individual figures from the collection of hunting officers, we can see how proximity to the duke through inclusion in the hunting ranks was an extraordinary instrument of social promotion. This is certainly demonstrated by the events regarding the second Major Hunter: Humbert Ingle de Vella. In April 1567, Ingle de Vella received

²⁸¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 101: 261-262.

²⁸² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 82: 544.

²⁸³ Ibidem, 546.

£300 from the Duke «in contemplation of the marriage he makes with the daughter of Dieudonné, our first huntsman».²⁸⁴

Although he did not inherit the title of first huntsman, perhaps due to his lesser competence in the art of hunting, Ingle de Vella maintained the consistency of the dog packs and consolidated the link between the territory, and the core of huntsman established under Emmanuel Philibert and the sovereign power. Following a dispute, the Chamber of Counts of Piedmont had in 1579 confiscated the property of Pietro Cava, who owned numerous properties in Altessano Superiore, and Emmanuel Philibert decided to donate them to his best hunter. It was the 'fourth part of the palace that belonged to the late Guglielmo Arcore of the lords of this place of Altessano Superiore', plus a small house, a stable and 52 *giornate* (20 ha) of woodland, meadows, fields and *alteni*. Unfortunately for the duke, Pietro Cava's heirs succeeded in winning the lawsuit against the Chamber of Accounts, thus inhibiting the success of the agreement between the duke and his huntsman. Charles Emmanuel I, in order to prevent this donation from succeeding, was forced to buy up all the aforementioned properties in 1582 so that he could cede them «to [our] beloved hunter or huntsman Ingle de Vella resident in Altessano».²⁸⁵

The territorial consolidation process with the Brabant huntsmen reached its peak between 1584 and 1585. In January 1584, Charles Emmanuel I issued his general hunting edict and Ingle de Vella was obviously appointed Hunting Captain of the Altessano territories and was flanked by lieutenant Gaspardo Benedetto di Robassomero.²⁸⁶ A few months after his appointment as head of the captaincy of Altessano, Ingle de Vella received one of the highest honours a junior hunting officer could aspire to: the letter of nobility. On 10 July 1584, «*Ingle natif de Bouchefort en Brabant*» was declared worthy «*d'estre agregée au rang et tiltre de noblesse*», and from then on his children were to be recognised as «*vraie nobles, comme s'ils estoient yssus de parentes nobles et d'ancienne race*». The noble title was granted for the sincerity, loyalty and affection with which Ingle had served the dukes in his office as a huntsman; a role that was directly reflected in the symbolism of the arms and crest granted together with the title. De Vella's arms was, in fact, «*un escu de sinople à une fasse d'argent*» bearing a boar's head between two golden Savoy knots and for his crest, «*un brac d'argent avec colle de sinople bordé et broché*

²⁸⁴ Ivi, 19: 28. Or. It.: «a contemplacione del maritagio ch'egli fa con la figliola de Dieudonné, nostro primo cacciatore».

²⁸⁵ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 17: 180v-183.

²⁸⁶ DUBOIN, 1098.

d'or». Coming from the ranks of hunting officers was therefore a source of pride for the Brabant huntsman, who did not hesitate to emphasise his origin by displaying clear hunting symbolism. Thus was his social ascent, resulted from his service alongside the dukes in the forests of Altessano, proudly summed up in the motto given to his new house: *servitutis condigna merces*.²⁸⁷

This recognition was followed in 1585 by the extension of the family's properties to Altessano. On the death of donna Petrina Vasco, daughter of the Guglielmo Arcore, whose property had already been partly ceded to De Vella, another part of the palace in Altessano was donated to the noble captain of the hunt. Other land and buildings were associated with this: 34 *tavole* of garden; 1 *airale* with stable, house and courtyard; 10 *giornate* (4 ha) of alveno; 22 *giornate* (8 ha) of mixed meadows and *gerbi*; about 8 *giornate* (3 ha) of fields to be cultivated and 15 *giornate* (6 ha) of woodland.²⁸⁸ Over a period of six years, the Dukes of Savoy donated more than 107 *giornate* (41 ha) of land and buildings to house their most important huntsman, his family, the best dogs for the hunts and servants in charge of their care.

Ingle de Vella led the hunting captaincy from Altessano for sixteen years. His was undoubtedly an important position, also in economic terms. In addition to his salary including the maintenance of dogs and servants, which had increased from 352 to 382 Piedmontese *lire* per quarter from 1577 to 1583, the position of captain of the hunt guaranteed him an additional £60 per quarter from 1595 and Charles Emmanuel I did not hesitate to favour him with further donations.²⁸⁹

The death of Ingle de Vella in 1601 led to a real fragmentation of the assignments accumulated by the Brabant hunter over almost forty years. The hunting dog pack consisting in 1602 of sixteen mastiffs, two greyhounds and four *chien d'Artois* was entrusted to the hunter Matteo Cengione, who was assigned a retainer of £900.²⁹⁰ Cengione, also a resident of Altessano Superiore, had joined the ducal hunters in 1595 although he was not guaranteed any salary but only reimbursement for the maintenance

²⁸⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 8: 286v-287v.

²⁸⁸ *IVI*, 19: 22.

²⁸⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 28: 211-213; 29: 127-129; 42: 209. In 1585, Charles Emmanuel I granted him a donative of 500 *scudi* equal to £1,500, which was paid to him over a period of four years from the rate of Collegno.

²⁹⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 26: 395v. The following year, he received an increase of about £20 per quarter to also maintain a *limier* dog.

of a greyhound given to him in care.²⁹¹ He was integrated as an ordinary hunter only six years later.²⁹² The position of General Captain of the Hunt was transferred to Giovanni Francesco Capris, another prominent member of the Altessano community.²⁹³ The reassignment of all the positions held by De Vella was a process that took several years. In 1605, we find Giovanni Angelo Femelli listed as «keeper of the current dogs and hunting of Altessano», flanked by the Altessano huntsman of Savoyard origin Matteo Bruno.²⁹⁴ It ended only in 1609 with the awarding of a grant to the French hunter Guillaume La Grange of Chamoux, who was appointed «in the *piazza* where Captain Inghel was».²⁹⁵

With the death of Umberto Ingle de Vella, the fundamental phase in the history of Savoy hunting of the Brabant *veneurs* came to an end. It reopened briefly with the appointment in 1618 of his nephew Rinaldo as head of the hunting captaincy of Altessano, «for the long and faithful service rendered to us by Captain Ingle his uncle».²⁹⁶ Rinaldo de Vella, however, can be considered a mere heir, as to all intents and purposes a Savoy subject born and raised in Altessano. The community that was to see the Venaria Reale rise a few decades later was not only a destination for the migration of skilled hunters, but also produced some of the officers of the hunt. An example of this was the aforementioned Giovanni Francesco Capris, who came from the ranks of the local nobility that had been infeudated in Altessano Superiore for more than a century at the time of his appointment as General Captain. Hunting officers also came from less elevated social ranks in the community. This was the case with Michele and Martino Davi, who served among both the captains of the hunt and the servants of the Venaria over a period of almost thirty years. Michele Davi appeared among the captains in 1624 and three years later was assigned to a group of huntsmen.²⁹⁷ Martino, on the other hand, had a longer and more fortunate career: he joined captains in 1632 and the following year he was entrusted with a pack of eight mastiffs that allowed him, in 1636, to join the staff of the ducal *venerie*.²⁹⁸

²⁹¹ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, Piemonte, tesoreria generale, 42: 210.

²⁹² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, Patenti camerale, 26: 111.

²⁹³ Ivi, 26: 389v-390.

²⁹⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 168, Tesoreria della Milizia, 36: 45.

²⁹⁵ Ivi, 29: 281v.

²⁹⁶ Ivi, 34: 218v-219; ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 50: 43.

²⁹⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 687, 46: 222v.

²⁹⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 101: 261v.

Martino Davi had a long career as *valet de chiens*, appearing again 20 years later among the hunting officers of Charles Emmanuel II.²⁹⁹

The birth of the House of Savoy's *venerie*, which developed properly under Victor Amadeus I between the 1620s and 1630s, coincided with a second phase of huntsmen settlement. Among the twenty-four members of the *venerie* in 1636, six were resident or owned property in Altessano Superiore: Fidèle Torret, Antoine Rochiet, François Meyner, Marcel de Bornardel, Pierre Clement Goville and the aforementioned Martino Davi.³⁰⁰ As Davide de Franco pointed out, this second phase of settlement was the result of a migratory process from France and Savoy following the consolidation of a hunting practice traditionally linked to the French geographical area.³⁰¹ In the space of a few years, this new group of *veneur* acquired more and more social and economic weight within the Altessano community, which ensured that most of them were able to have a long career within the ducal *venerie*. Besides the aforementioned Davi, Fidèle Torret and Pierre Clement Goville were the two most prominent cases. Having arrived from France together with Robert, another member of his family, Fidèle would serve as *piquer* for at least forty years, appearing together with two other French *veneurs*, Dupernon and La Forea, still among the servants in 1676.³⁰² The same applied to Pierre Clement Goville, who served for at least twenty years in the ranks of the *venerie* where he managed an increasing number of hunting dogs. In 1652 he was entrusted with seventy-four hunting dogs to which a further twenty dogs were added just two years later from the *venerie* of Prince Thomas Francis of Savoy-Carignano.³⁰³ Goville's career went hand in hand with the strengthening of his social and economic position in Altessano and secured one of his heirs, Giovanni Stefano, entry into the crew as *valet de chiens* in 1669 and shortly afterwards his appointment as Captain of the *venerie's* toiles.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ *Ivi*, 135: 73.

³⁰⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 84: 116.

³⁰¹ DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altessano Superiore: partecipazione della comunità e mutamenti negli assetti economici e sociali del territorio* in P. BIANCHI, P. PASSERIN D'ENTRÈVES, *La caccia nello Stato sabauda*, 59.

³⁰² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 152: 120v.

³⁰³ *Ivi*, 131: 126; 133:8.

³⁰⁴ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 129: 1042.

Conclusion

The analysis outlined so far has shown how in the eighty years from the return of Emanuele Filiberto to the death of Victor Amadeus I, the dukes of Savoy rebuilt, expanded and brought their hunting system to its maximum expansion, re-establishing a direct connection between their sovereignty as hunter-princes and the territories once lost.

Looking at the broader European context, one can find some interesting comparisons between the evolution of other hunting systems and the House of Savoy case, even though they occurred in completely different contexts and starting conditions. Regarding the construction process of the hunting space, the Danish case offers the most points of contact. Indeed, the same processes of land acquisition, agrarian reorganisation, territorial regulation and infrastructural optimisation connected to princely hunting can be observed in the Kingdom of Denmark between the 1560s and the 1580s the same years in which Emmanuel Philibert started the land acquisition process for building urban parks. Frederick II of Denmark had to deal with a range of issues very similar to those faced by the House of Savoy.³⁰⁵ Playing a prominent role was certainly the presence of competitors powers. Areas reserved only for royal hunting (*Fredejagt*) were limited to private rights and communities over vast portions of land (*Vildtbane*). This led the Danish king to engage in a series of acquisitions, partly as a result of exchanges and negotiations with other territorial players. Through the cession of what had been possessions belonging to the Benedictine Abbey of Sjælland, secularised after the Reformation, Frederick II was able to gain control of Hillerødsholm Castle, together with a large area around it: the former became Frederiksborg castle, the main hunting palace of the king; the latter was reorganised to improve agricultural and farm production. Territorial hegemony was followed by the need to bring the area under control to prevent the damage of forests and game. A network of game keepers and foresters was thus established, branching out over the new area designated for the king's pleasures. Concluding this territorial and landscaping operation was the construction of roads to connect new hunting sites, to which others had been added over the years, with Copenhagen, the centre of political power.

³⁰⁵ J. R. CHRISTIANSON, *The infrastructure of the Royal Hunt. King Frederik II of Denmark (1559-1588)* in A. MERLOTTI, *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*, Olshcki, Firenze 2017, pp 3-20. On the same subject, see also ID., *The hunt of King Frederik II of Denmark: structures and rituals* in «The Court Historian», 18-2 (2013), 165-187.

As can be seen, there are many similarities. The construction processes of the hunting space hardly took place through confiscations or impositions, but rather through political and economic exchanges, as in the case of Turin Park and the Abbey of SS. Peter and Andrew in Rivalta. However, mere possession of the territory was not enough. Hunting officers were needed to ensure its capillary control and security and a repressive apparatus of laws and regulations. Finally, the hunting area had to be connected to the political centre, as happened in Denmark but also in the Duchy of Savoy with the evolution during the years of Charles Emmanuel I and even more so under Victor Amadeus I.

With regard to the animal court, in his study of Louis XIV's royal menagerie, Peter Sahlins presented the transition from ferocious animals used for fighting to exotic birds shown for their beauty as a process of civilisation of the French court.³⁰⁶ In the case of Charles Emmanuel I and of the House of Savoy there was a combination of these two languages: the ferocity and wildness of the beasts and the beauty and curiosity aroused by the exotic and the unusual animal. In this regard, the Venetian ambassadors' assessments of the Duke of Savoy's animality and his intense interest in natural studies cannot fail to come to mind: the duke who wanted to live like *an animal* could not avoid surrounding himself with them. In this case, the developments of the exotic menagerie with Charles Emmanuel I do not speak the language of civilization. For the Duke of Savoy, shows with ferocious and exotic animals were part of the language of diplomacy. Similarly, hunts, at which he always listened and negotiated, were a means of making diplomatic agreements with other princes.

As far as hunting officers are concerned, the French case comes into play again. Philippe Salvadori's work devotes part of its analysis to the profile of the huntsman observing the composition of 262 officers working between 1705 and 1709.³⁰⁷ Louis XIV's hunting officers. According to Salvadori's analysis of a sample, 20.8% were noble, 8.4% were newly ennobled and 70.8% were members of the third estate. This reflects the structure of princely hunting which, both in eighteenth-century France and in the Duchy of Savoy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, consisted for the most part of low-value offices with a few top positions firmly in the hands of a small entourage. Of these 262, the officers of the royal venery numbered 107, the vast majority of whom held their posts for more than 20 years, with only a residual number remaining in the ranks of the *veneurs* for less than 10 years. This world also drew strength from its geographical proximity to the seat

³⁰⁶ P. SAHLINS, *The Royal menageries of Louis XIV and the civilizing process revisited* in «French Historical Studies», 35-2 (2012), 237-267.

³⁰⁷ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Regime*, 245-273.

of the court: the same sample shows that more than 70% of the officers came from the regions around Paris.³⁰⁸ This data shows how the reality of Savoy hunting officers in the sixteenth – seventeenth centuries differed in many respects from that analysed by Salvadori for France a century later. The percentage of nobles in the ranks of the ducal hunts was about half of that which emerged for France, still leaving plenty of opportunity for those who, not coming from that elite aristocratic society, made hunting their profession.

The hunting officers formed a network through which links developed both horizontally, through familial and geographical ties, and vertically, through bonds of loyalty with political power. The horizontal links led to a gradual entry of members of the same family into specific charges, while the vertical ones allowed for an actual social ascent, which was guaranteed by proximity to the duke himself and his family, or to those who held the highest positions in the management of hunts. Participating in the duke's hunts, ensuring their success and guaranteeing the protection of the territory reserved for them, represented a formidable strategy of social promotion for a small group of professionals who came from the duchy and from abroad. As can be seen, the House of Savoy case presents similarities with other contexts but above all peculiarities of its own dictated by the specific circumstances that linked the rebirth of the hunting system to that of the House of Savoy states.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the brief reign of Victor Amadeus I is of crucial relevance in the history of House Savoy's princely hunts. The young prince took the hunting space to its maximum extent, identifying many of the territories that made up Piedmont as his personal hunting reserve and building the largest territorial control system that could number up to a thousand personnel between gamekeepers and captains of the hunt. A space, which was framed in the most extensive legislation ever enacted by the Dukes of Savoy until then, led to incorporating more reserved preys than his predecessors, including bears, thereby also imposing his sovereignty over mountainous areas.

Victor Amadeus I framed hunting dog packs for each part of the game, including wolves as also evidenced by the 1622 order, in which the prince appears as protector of his subjects even before becoming duke. He led the number of dogs to exceed two hundred units, introducing the *chien courant*, the basis for the future development of *chasse à*

³⁰⁸ Ivi, 264-265.

courre, the main elements of which will be addressed in the next section of the thesis. Finally, as for the huntsmen, he constituted the structure able to guide the newly formed *venerie*. His early death in 1637 prevented him from completing his reform of the hunting system and the flames of the civil war that followed destroyed much of what he had achieved.

Part 2 **A disputed sovereignty**

In this second part, I will address the evolution of princely hunts after the short reign of Victor Amadeus I. His death in 1637 left the duchy at the mercy of opposing factions. Christine of France, regent and *Madame Reale*, a transposition of the title that regents assumed in France, was the reference for the pro-French faction, referred to as *madamista*. The two brothers of Victor Amadeus I, Prince Francis Thomas of Savoy and cardinal Maurice, had instead placed themselves at the head of the pro-Spanish faction, named *principista*. The two parties faced each other for four years and the conflict even led to the siege of the capital. In 1642, through a series of agreements, a peace was finally reached and the legitimacy of the regency of Christine of France recognised.

If the regency succeeded in restoring external peace, it did not put an end to the internal conflict, which moved from the brothers-in-law to the future Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel II. Indeed, the regent was determined to keep the levers of power firmly in her hands well beyond the end of her legitimate regency. Although Charles Emmanuel II had legitimate access to the throne in 1648, Charles Emmanuel II was always kept away from any political decisions and a princely education that could provide him with the basis of leadership, with the exception of hunting.

Of this internal clash within the House of Savoy, the Venetian ambassador Francesco Michiel presented a very clear picture more than twenty years later, in 1670, when Christine was already dead, and Charles Emmanuel II had been able to take full command of the Duchy of Savoy. In his report to the Senate, he describes Charles Emmanuel II's youth as follows:

Finally, I shall to speak about the lord the duke by saying that he lived several years as the second-born prince, deserving, after the death of [Francis] Charles Hyacinth, the regeneration of his sovereignty; his youth was entangled in the bonds of maternal severity, which, in order to reserve for itself the command of the states, did not leave other reins in his hands than those of his own pleasure, ordinary destination of the less mature thoughts. He was constantly surrounded by a hundred courtiers who, as many-eyed Argos, carefully watched the prince's actions to

*merit the most distinguished graces by telling his mother that he was only going to the genius of hunting and court entertainment.*³⁰⁹

If this judgement might seem too harsh, the report of Alvise Sagredo, ambassador in 1662, fully confirms Michiel's words:

*Madama, careful to preserve not only the regency but the despotic rule of the states, has industriously procured that her son be educated with little application to government, so that as a result, not having applied in his studies, in the reading of history, nor in what is most fitting for a prince, he has greatly enjoyed hunting.*³¹⁰

Christine of France's strategy to keep away her son from power heavily surprisingly involved princely hunting: the regent made sure that it was Charles Emmanuel II's only concern, along with courtly entertainments, so that he did not meddle in state affairs. The princely hunt thus seemed to have become *a space of internal competition* within the House of Savoy. A competition that takes on even wider proportions if we consider also Louise of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel II's sister, whose role in ending the civil conflict was crucial. In order to seal the new political course, in the 1642 the cardinal Maurice demanded, and later obtained the 13-years old princess Louise as his wife. The relevance of the marriage between the young princess and her uncle, the cardinal, was also evident to the Venetian ambassador Michiel:

About princess Louise, his sister, I will say that she sacrificed herself in her younger years to extinguish the burning flames of civil wars. The bonds of marriage with Prince Maurice, her uncle, were the ones that freed the people from their chains, and the squares and states from their

³⁰⁹ RAV, 968. Or. It.: «Mi ridurrò infine a parlare del signor duca, con il dire che visse più anni principe secondogenito, meritando dopo la morte di [Francesco] Carlo Giacinto la rigenerazione alla sovranità; la di lui gioventù fu involta tra i lacci della materna severità, che per riserbar a se il comando degli stati, altre redini non gli lasciava in preda, se non quelle del proprio piacere, meta ordinaria de' pensieri poco maturi. Aveva di continuo all'intorno cento cortigiani, che, Arghi oculati, rimiravano le azioni del principe per meritar le più distinte grazie con il riferire alla madre ch'egli s'incamminava al genio solo delle caccie ed alle ricreazioni di corte».

³¹⁰ Ibidem. Or. It.: «Madama attenta a conservarsi non pure la reggenza ma il dominio dispotico degli Stati, abbia industriosamente procurato che il figlio fosse educato con poca applicazione al governo, onde in conseguenza non avendo affaticato nei studii, nella lettura delle istorie, né in ciò che più convenga ad un principe, si è divertito assai nella caccia». Cfr. A. MERLOTTI, «Cacciator Reale». *Carlo Emanuele II e la caccia* in Id., *Le cacce reali nell'Europa dei principi*, 215.

*encirclement, while peace appeared at once and there was no one who did not bless her name with tears of jubilation.*³¹¹

But further impressive is the connection the ambassador identifies between the princess and hunting:

*She possesses her mother's respectable virtues, in her affability and generous manners; she resembles an Amazon in the exercises of the hunt, in handling a horse and in playing with spear and pistols. Because of her noble conditions, every kind of people would acclaim her command and sovereignty.*³¹²

The glaring contrast between the two descriptions, that of the Duke of Savoy and this of princess Louise, places princely hunting in a completely different light. For Charles Emmanuel II it is related to the *inherent weakness of his power*, for the princess it is an expression of *a potential sovereignty*. A potential whose realisation is even foreseen by Michiel:

In the event, God forbid, that the father [Charles Emmanuel II] should be dead with his son [Victor Amadeus II], whereas by getting married to the Prince of Carignano who would be the legitimate first-born successor of Prince Thomas [...] although of an idiot nature and with an ill-shaped body [...] notwithstanding this, there would be no one who would not acclaim her sovereignty and willingly subject oneself to the burden of

³¹¹ RAV, 975. Or. It.: «Della principessa Lodovisia sorella del signor dirò d'aversi sacrificato negli anni più giovanili per estinguer le fiamme ardenti delle guerre civili. I vincoli del matrimonio del principe Maurizio suo zio furono quelli che sciolsero dalle catene i popoli e dalle circonvallazioni le piazze ed i stati, mentre apparve immediata la pace e non vi fu chi non benedisse con lagrime di giubilo il di lei nome».

³¹² Ibidem. Or. It.: «Possiede le virtù riguardevoli della madre, nell'affabilità e nelle maniere generose; rassembra un'amazzone negli esercizi della caccia, nel maneggiar un cavallo e nel giuocar la lancia e la pistola. Per le di lei nobili condizioni ogni condizione di persone l'acclamerebbe al comando ed alla sovranità».

*obedience and to the obligation of a subject of such a great and admirable princess.*³¹³

The death of Charles Emmanuel II and his heir Victor Amadeus II, would open up the possibility for Louise to marry Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy Carignano, son of Francesco Tommaso of Savoy-Carignano and therefore heir to the throne in the event of the main branch of the dynasty dying out. In the diplomatic account, the male figures only serve as a backdrop to Louise's political stature. The duke and his heir stand out as obstacles to her possible ascent and the prince of Carignano is, unfairly, portrayed as physically and mentally handicapped in stark contrast to the princess Louise's athletic abilities. Hunting, assumed, therefore, a central role in the clash between Christine and Charles Emmanuel II, but likewise became a formidable means of self-representation for a crucial player like Louise of Savoy.

The shift to hunting as an internal competitive space within the House of Savoy also had repercussions in terms of hunting infrastructure. Considering that Charles Emmanuel II was therefore driven to devote himself solely to pleasures of hunting, which became for him the only space in which to express his sovereignty, it should come as no surprise that he built a new, magnificent hunting palace. The duke in fact had between 1659 and 1661 in Altessano Superiore built the palace of the Venaria Reale, at the same time his personal hunting palace and residence outside the capital from which to contest his mother's power. Thus, in the history of the House of Savoy, the term *venaria*, in addition to indicating the hunting dogs and crews for the *chasse à courre*, also came to indicate the place where they were located. The internal political division was also reflected in this spatial aspect, and once again the Venetian ambassador Sagredo identifies this evolution:

Two meetings I have had with these Highnesses in the present week. I will say of the first with the Duke, who invited me to the deer hunt. Then,

³¹³ Ibidem. Or. It.: «in caso, che Dio non voglia, che mancasse con il padre il figlio, mentre stringendosi in matrimonio con il principe di Carignano che sarebbe legittimo successore primogenito del principe Tommaso fu di già fratello del duca Vittorio Amedeo padre del vivente, ancorché di natura imbecille e di corpo nell'interno male organizzato, privo a nativitate della facoltà dell'udire e per conseguenza incapace di sciogliere la lingua ad altro che a muggiti, non ostante dico non vi sarebbe chi non acclamasse la di lei sovranità per soggettarsi volentieri al giogo dell'ubbidienza ed all'obbligo di suddito d'una sì grande e così ammirabile principessa».

*of the other with Madame, who revered me in the Cabinet inside the Camera di parata.*³¹⁴

Two very different scenarios then: the pursuit of a deer in the woods around the hunting palace and a formal *rendezvous* in the palace. The ambassador also gives us one of the first descriptions of the duke's new palace, which makes a direct link between the hunting architecture and the vision of Charles Emmanuel II:

*So I came to the Venaria, which is a palace with two very magnificent courtyards, surrounded by guest quarters, with stables for a hundred horses and with every other comfort and delight that can be desired for the service of hunting; three miles from Turin, but built within the space of only two years, all of His Highness's design and architecture, so that if speech and writing are taken as an effigy of our soul, it seems to me that it is also licit to attribute to the merit of the good genius of this Prince such a building and such a proportionate construction.*³¹⁵

Sagredo described the meeting with the duke held at the Venaria Reale, where Charles Emmanuel II «was surrounded by a large number of huntsmen». Hunting, as under the previous dukes' rule, turned out to be an excellent diplomatic forum: the ambassador reported that, «as our horses were united in certain passes and fording small streams, where no one could approach us», the duke told him some confidences.³¹⁶ In particular, the duke dwelt on something that was of particular concern to him at that point: his future marriage to Françoise Magdalaine of Orleans.

³¹⁴ ASVE, Dispacci Savoia, 72: 36. Or. It.: «Due congressi io ho havuti con queste Altezze nella presente settimana. Dirò del primo col Duca, che m'invitò alla caccia del cervo. Poi, dell'altro con Madama, che mi riverì nel gabinetto dentro la Camera di Parata».

³¹⁵ ASVE, Dispacci Savoia, 72: 36. Or. It. « Capitai dunque alla Venaria, ch'e' Palazzo con due cortili assai magnifici, attornati da Forestarie, con stalla per cento cavalli e con ogn'altro commodo e delitia che possa desiderarsi per servizio della caccia; distante da Torino tre miglia, ma fabbricato dentro il spatio di due soli anni, tutto di disegno et d'architettura di Sua Altezza, onde se il discorso e lo scrivere sono ricevuti per effigene dell'animo nostro, parmi che anco sia lecito addattare a merito del buon ingegno di questo Principe simil edifitio e cosi' proporzionata inventione».

³¹⁶ Ibidem, Or. It.: «L'incontro con il duca, circondato da buon numero di cacciatori fuori di tutte le stanze, e sin nel cortile stesso, ove io smontai di carrozza, et con particolare affetto nostro d'accogliermi, poiche quando si poteva stringer meco, massime stando uniti i cavalli nostri in certi passi e nel guaradar piccioli torrenti, dove alcuno non poteva accostarci si esprimeva sempre meco con cadenza».

At the end of the hunt and the lunch that followed, Sagredo moved to the capital, to meet Christine of France:

Per Madama; having been granted due service by me for the honour of the hunt and its aftermath, she let me know about the arrival of a their courier from Paris on the 7th with the certainty that the bride the Princess of Valoys will be arriving in Lyon by the first day of January and will perhaps be accompanied by her mother, Madame of Orleans. In which case the duke himself will also go to Lyon to meet and greet her.³¹⁷

For Christine, however, even the prospect of her son and duke's marriage was not a perspective that could convince her to relinquish power. She expressed to Sagredo that the only condition for her to resume the control of the Duchy was that Charles Emmanuel II would reach an agreement with the House of Gonzaga for the control of Monferrato – a basically impossible task.³¹⁸

In fact, when she died on 27th December 1663, she still held her hegemony over the duchy intact. If the death of the regent had brought an end to the internal conflict within the House of Savoy, the challenges to Charles Emmanuel II's sovereignty were not over and once again involved the hunting sphere. In August 1670, the court of Charles Emmanuel II was rife with rumours arising from a long, confidential meeting the Duke of Savoy had had with the marquis of Louvois, *secrétaire d'Etat de la Guerre* of the King of France Louis XIV.³¹⁹ The *rendez-vous* lasted for more than two hours giving rise to speculation as to which foreign policy issues they had discussed. What the duke and the French diplomat actually discussed animatedly during that meeting was instead related to a very domestic

³¹⁷ Or. It.: «Per Madama; supplitosi da me al dovuto negotiamento per l'honore della caccia e conseguenze sue, mi diede lei parte dell'arrivo d'un loro partito da Parigi ai 7 con certezza che la sposa Principessa di Valoys capiterà per primi di Gennaro a Lione e forse sarà accompagnata dalla Madre, Madama d'Orleans. Nel qual caso si porterà a Lione pure il duca stesso ad incontrarla e riceverla».

³¹⁸ Ivi. Or. It. : «Et infine mi disse che alli ultimi segni della sua perfetta consolatione non restava altro che vedere il duca suo figliolo aggiustato con la Casa di Mantova per gl'affari di Monferrato. Et quando Dio gl'havesse concessa questa gratia non solo prontamente rinontiava il Governo, ma volentieri cedeva la propria vita».

³¹⁹ François Michel Le Tellier de Louvois (1641-1691), was one of the most important diplomats of the 17th-century France and, together with his father, the reformer of the kingdom's military apparatus. Louvois played a leading role in Louis XIV's absolutist policy, see J. P. CENAT, *Louvois, le double de Louis XIV*, Tallandier, Paris 2014.

issue: poachers.³²⁰ Charles Emmanuel II complained about the organised action of the inhabitants of Pinerolo, the Alpine stronghold ceded to France in 1631, who «were disturbing the reserved hunts in the nearby countryside under the control of these states», asking *monsieur de Louvois* to intervene.³²¹ The long conversation, the contents of which were made public, again reveals the complex intertwining of hunting and politics, especially over the years of Charles Emmanuel II.

The first chapter of this second part will therefore address how Christine of France, through a controlled demolition of the hunting system, intended to enhance her power on the Duchy while limiting Charles Emmanuel II's. Then, I will explain how Charles Emmanuel resisted and tried to rebuild the hunting system. Because of this competition, the connection between sovereignty and princely hunting was however transferred onto Louise of Savoy, an outsider of the conflict as will be shown at the end of the chapter.

The central chapter will focus on the multiple transitions in princely hunting resulting from the construction and evolution of the Venaria Reale. The building of the Venaria Reale, indeed, became a part of these competition between Christine and Charles Emmanuel II, configuring itself as a space in which hunting performance radically changed. From a hunt that still provided for different approaches, dictated by the different prey and the different peculiarities of the territory, it passed to the *chasse à course* where deer hunting was the main aspect. But with the Venaria Reale, a different relationship was also established with the territory itself and the animals that populated it, especially with competitors. The link between this space, traditional for the hunting use that was done there but renewed by the construction of such an imposing infrastructure, also produced a transition to a more ritualised hunting. Finally, its construction led to an optimisation and centralisation of hunting officers.

In the third chapter, I will move from internal to external conflict related to princely hunting by analysing poaching in Savoy and Piedmont from the last years of the Charles Emmanuel II's reign until 1730s, when hunting crimes emerged most clearly in terms of sources. Obviously, this also means analysing this phenomenon during the years of the second regency, that of Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours, and Victor Amadeus II, who became king of Sardinia in 1720. As will be outlined, this does not pose a methodological problem, because the legislative framework of princely hunts did not

³²⁰ ASVE, Savoia 78, 126: f. 2.

³²¹ Ibidem. Or. It. : «sturbavano le caccie riservate nelle vicine campagne di ragione di questi stati».

change until the 1740s, when a new general edict on hunts was issued. Therefore, in the period from the death of Charles Emmanuel II in 1675 to the 1730s, the phenomenon of poaching can be studied consistently.

2.1 A bloody interregnum

Hunting as a space of competition after the Civil War

As ironic as it may seem, Christine's death did not resolve the friction between her and Charles Emmanuel II. Five years later, during the celebrations that were held each year in honour of her memory, Francesco Michiel noted in one of his dispatches the lack of involvement of the Duke:

Having attended the public ceremonies of the chapel on the first day of the Holy Christmas, the Duke left the city so as not to be saddened by the anniversary of the Duchess Mother, and he remained at his usual delights at the Venaria.³²²

Therefore, having fulfilled his religious duties, Charles Emmanuel II did not wait a moment to leave the city, intent on remembering the one who had kept him from power for so long for devoting himself to the pleasure of a hunt at the Venaria Reale.

The clash previously delineated between the regent and Duke of Savoy opened an interregnum in the history of the princely hunts of the House of Savoy, whose consequences will be felt for decades to come. In the following pages, how Christine of France skilfully made princely hunting a tool for her objectives will be identified first. The main reforms from the years of the civil war to her death will be discussed, showing the long-term changes they produced. Secondly, the ways in which Charles Emmanuel II dealt with the model of hunting system set up by his mother and regent will be analysed, as well as the directions he personally gave to the princely hunt once he became duke and the obtained results. Finally, I will explore Louise's empowerment process through hunting. The analysis will start from her private spaces, which will show how much she identified with the figure of the huntress. I will then define but also her relationship with other auxiliary animals revealed by an exceptional document, a hunting report, written by her and sent to Duke Charles Emmanuel II.

³²² ASVE, Savoia, 78: 5, f.1. Or. It. : «Supplito alle funtioni pubbliche della capella nel primo giorno del Santo Natale, il Signor Duca è sortito di questa Città per non ricever *spiacere* nell'anniversario della Duchessa Madre, che per il corso di otto giorni si sono replicati i suoi funerali, in tanto s'è trattenuto alle solite sue *delitie* della Venaria».

In order to understand how the princely hunting became a competitive space, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between Christine and hunting even before the actual outbreak of the civil war. Since the first months of regency, the Royal Madame promoted a gradual and systematic dismantling of the hunting system built by the previous dukes, especially by Victor Amadeus I. On November 3rd 1637, Christine issued a general plan of reforms in which she listed the cornerstones of what she wanted to be her political action as regent of the states.³²³ The plan started with an implicit threat, or perhaps a full-fledged declaration of war, to the «*beloved* brothers-in-law» Maurice and Francis Thomas. Christine had immediately confiscated «the fiefs and possessions of the Cardinal Prince and reduced those of Prince Thomas», and she decided to remit all properties to the princes so that «they could be *good uncles* to the Royal Highness the Duke».³²⁴ In this way, the properties, which the princes were previously the rightful owners of, were graciously granted by the regent, who thus showed that she could dispose of them as she pleased.

The six articles that made up the plan dealt with very different subjects, but they played an important role in the management of the states and in dealing with the social groups that constituted them. First of all, Christine's reform envisaged a tolerant posture towards the religious minority of the Waldensians who populated the mountainous Val Pellice.³²⁵ The presence of this minority within the states of the House of Savoy, which had adhered to Calvinism after the Chanforan synod of 1532, was consolidated and ensuring their protection meant that no further conflicts within the duchy could be initiated. With the same aim of guaranteeing a general social peace, the second article stated a harsh repression of all kinds of duels.³²⁶ The construction of a climate of internal harmony went together with the expectation of loyalty to the new political order that the regent sought to establish: every town and community was required to take an oath of allegiance to the duke and thus by extension to Christine, who ruled the states for him.³²⁷ Loyalty was immediately rewarded by the next article, which provided for a fiscal appeasement through the suspension of most of the delegates sent by treasurers and other creditors in order to obtain the payment of their debts from the communities.³²⁸ This plan, which can

³²³ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 111: ff. 235-238.

³²⁴ Ivi, f. 235.

³²⁵ Ivi, f. 235v. About the relationship between the Duke of Savoy and the Waldesian in the mid-seventeenth century, see *The house of Savoy: a bird's eye view*.

³²⁶ Ivi, f. 236..

³²⁷ Ivi, f. 237.

³²⁸ Ibidem.

be described as a political masterpiece, also envisaged a comprehensive monetary reform that would ensure greater financial stability.³²⁹

Alongside these five pillars aimed at reforming the ducal system and strengthening the regent's control over the state, Christine of France initiated a radical reform of princely hunts. The reform implied the complete removal of all captains of the hunt, associated with a threat of fines if they interfered with the new course, and provided for the complete devolution of the conservation and territorial control to the feudal aristocracy, in lands of their competence, and to judges and prefect in those under direct control of the crown. This initiative was justified by three factors used in Christine's narrative:

*The abuses that have been committed in hunting require that they should be corrected as well, while the young age of Royal Highness, my beloved son, does not allow him to go there, and as the practice of hunting belongs more to the people of the nobility than to others, the care and custody of hunting should be given to them.*³³⁰

About for the first reason, the violation of the laws was always a reason, logically, for the strengthening of territorial control and the extension of the number and powers of the captains of the hunt and not for their weakening or removal. The young age of the future duke then has no connection with the territorial control exercised by the captains. What reveals the nature of this measure is the last argument which brings out Christine's pro-aristocratic will. The main objective was gaining the favour of the aristocracy by ceding control over the hunts and at the same time taking it away from the ducal authority.

The effort in this regard was not entirely successful but it was the first step taken by Christine to dismantle the previous hunting system and rebuild it in a way that would guarantee support for her power. In January 1638, Christine issued new hunting orders where the pro-aristocratic tendency and the intention to weaken hunting as a political instrument in the hands of the ducal authority persisted and were intensified compared

³²⁹ Ivi, f. 238.

³³⁰ Ivi. Or. It: : «Gl'abusi che si sono introdotti per ordine della caccia richiedono che anco vi si ponga rimedio, mentre la tenera eta' dell'Altezza Reale, diletto mio figliolo, non gli permette d'andarvi et come l'esercitio della caccia è cosa piú appartenenti alle persone nobili che alle altri cosi ancora a quelle dovendose commettere la cura et custodia»..

to the previous attempt. The incipit of the 1638 order made Christine's intentions very clear:

*Wanting to respect the concessions, privileges and investitures to the nobility, as well as to the communities and anyone else with an interest in hunting and our beloved peoples, we want to considerably extend the freedom to hunt.*³³¹

The large hunting district built by Victor Amadeus I in 1633, which ran from Vercelli to Asti and 1634 had been divided into 20 zones, each administered by a hunting captain, was dismantled. In its place, the reserved hunting district was reduced to the 10-miles district around Turin, also established by Victor Amadeus I in 1633, which passed from being an area with more restrictive forest regulations to being the only one where the sovereign had exclusive hunting rights.

The new hunting district had completely different characteristics to those previously established.³³² The first difference was the confirmation of the right for aristocrats whose lands fall within the ten-miles limit to be able to hunt without a prior ducal license, thus undermining the very nature of the reserved hunting district.³³³ Equally important was the concession for them to send their servants to hunt in their place in stark contrast to any previous hunting regulations issued in the Duchy, as well as in most European courts. That guaranteed a position of absolute pre-eminence of the nobility in the new hunting reality.

The nobility was not the only group to benefit from the new regulation. The lower social strata also obtained concessions. Indeed, it was not only the size of the restricted area that was reduced, but also the list of those illicit weapons mainly used in the countryside by the rural populations. Christine wanted most of the weapons used to no longer be subject to repression by the sovereign power, thus giving the local populations a large degree of freedom to hunt wildlife. The so-called *treacheries* were limited to only «pit,

³³¹ DUBOIN, 1133. Or. It. : «Hora volendo di piú che siano all'istessa nobiltà osservate le loro concessioni, privilegi et investiture, come ancora alle comunità, et a ad ogni altro che n'havesse interesse nel particolare d'esse caccie et a nostri ben amati popoli ampliare alquanto la libertà di cacciare».

³³² The 1638 order still provided for a small portion of reserved territory around Santhià, which would be eliminated in later years.

³³³ Ibidem.

laces, sleeves, lumens and nets for hunting birds with dogs». ³³⁴ As if that were not enough, the time limit for grazing sheep was also extended by two months, from October to May. To complete this systematic reduction of sovereign power over the hunting system, Christine promoted what can be considered to all intents and purposes an amnesty for poachers who were on trial: all cases arising from articles contained in previous edicts and no longer renewed were declared null and void. ³³⁵ Finally, the hunting captains relieved of their duties in 1637 are relocated within the 10-mile district only. ³³⁶

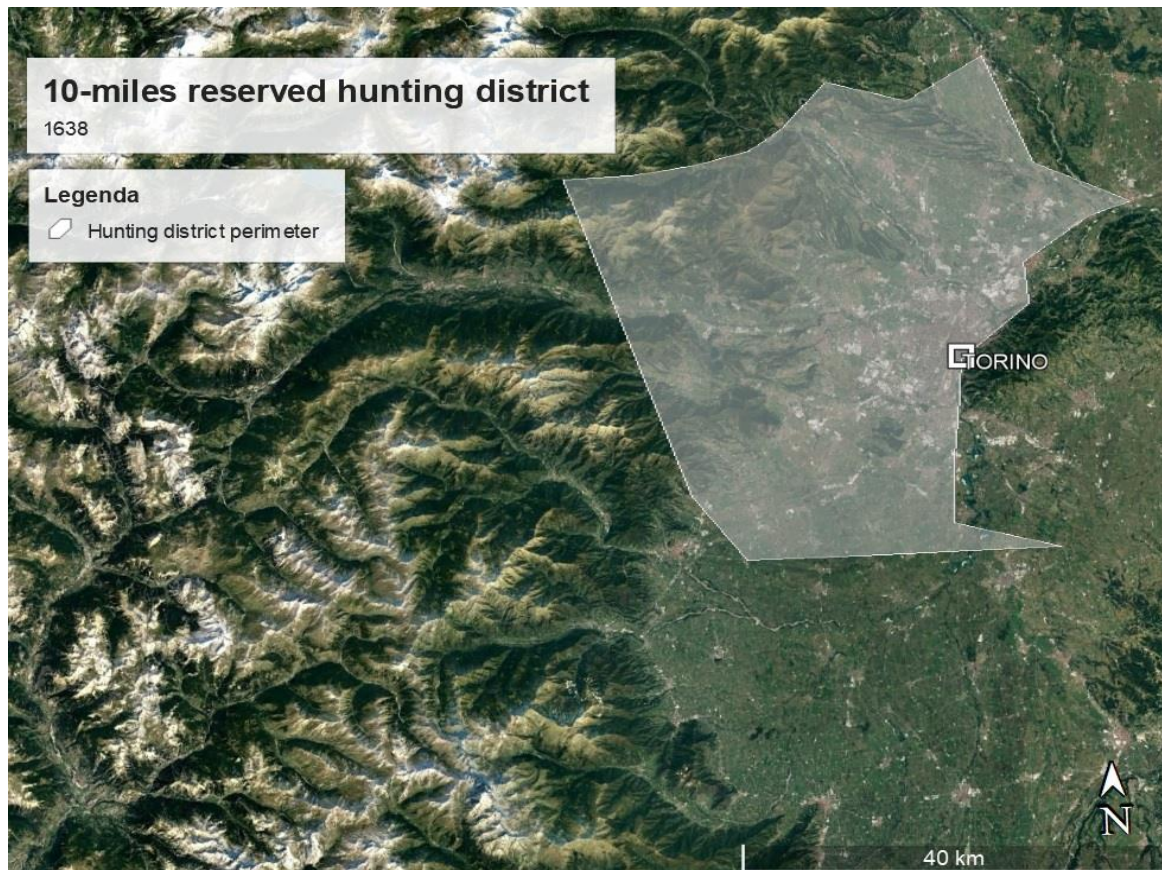


Image 5 - 10-miles reserved hunting district 1638 base on DUBOIN, 1137

The nature of the new hunting legislation during wartime had the obvious aim of gaining the support of the population for the *madamisti*: promoting pro-aristocratic legislation would have guaranteed her the support of the nobility in the struggle with the princes and

³³⁴ Ibidem.

³³⁵ Ivi, 1135.

³³⁶ Ivi, 1136-1137.

in the administration of the state; relieving the communities from the limitations that the hunting space had imposed until then, thus ensuring their loyalty; appeasing the lower strata of the population by reducing the repression of poaching practices through the pardon of those who had violated previous legislation. The breadth and depth with which the new legislation strikes at the previous hunting system, however, reveals a broader strategy that goes beyond the dynamics of the civil war. Looking at the overall picture, what Christine achieved was to hand over to the future duke a hunting system that was disempowered territorially and greatly weakened from a political and symbolic point of view. Christine's wish that Charles Emmanuel II, once he came to power, should devote himself exclusively to the pleasures of hunting must therefore take into account this process.

Christine of France: the controlled demolition of the hunting system

That the attitude of Christine of France was exclusively due to a political design and not so much to her opposition to the practice of hunting or in direct contrast with hunting officers is also proved by the involvement of some hunting officers, particularly amongst the *veneurs*, in the events of the civil war. As outlined in the previous chapter, the creation of the *venerie* by Victor Amadeus I in 1632 had resulted in the arrival of many French huntsmen who had gone on to form the backbone of the new sector. In the clash between *madamisti* and *principisti*, many of them obviously took the side of the pro-French faction, putting themselves at the service of Christine. In at least two cases, of significant relevance, we have direct evidence of this. In the midst of the siege of Turin in 1639 by the *principisti*, Christine managed to send *monsieur* de Piberne to Pinerolo in order to obtain information about the troops that had come to the rescue from France and what concessions she could make to the princes engaged in the attempt to take the capital.³³⁷ De Piberne, one of the leading *veneurs*, joined the hunting officers from 1634 and his payments to maintain dogs and horses continued until 1639.³³⁸ In another case, that of Pierre Clement Goville, whose career among hunting officers has already been traced, there was the complete involvement of a huntsman in the fighting. As Davide de Franco points out, the huntsman, following personal events in which he was involved in serious crimes, decided to enrol and fought in the ranks of Christine's army.³³⁹

³³⁷ G. CLARETTA, *Storia della reggenza di Cristina di Francia*, vol. 1, Civelli, Torino 1868, 432-433.

³³⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 106: f. 151; 117: f. 159.

³³⁹ D. DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altessano Superiore*, 60.

Nevertheless, officers and the expenses related to the maintenance of the animal court also suffered as a result of the Christine's resolutions. Under the pretence of possible savings in court expenses, a restructuring of the various departments was undertaken. The reduction was already apparent in 1638 when, with the new establishment of the *venerie*, expenses amounted to £12,333, including payments for dog packs, which were reduced to two, a larger one of 50 *chiens courants* and a smaller one of 20 greyhounds, making a total of only 70 hunting dogs instead more than two hundred.³⁴⁰ Expenses for hunting captains, who, as mentioned above, were replaced, and falconers also fell sharply: in the same year, expenses amounted to only £9,610.³⁴¹ But it was at the end of the war events, in 1642, that the effects of Christine's policies showed their results: in that year, in fact, the total expenditure for hunting officers reached £11,068. Respectively, £6,268 were paid for the entire *venerie* and £4,800 for falconers and captains, thus leading to a further halving of expenditure for hunting officers compared to that before the civil war.³⁴² Reserved prey also suffered a contraction with the edict of 1638, being restricted only to pheasants, deer, roe deer and herons, eliminating thus bears from the list.³⁴³

In November 1641, Christine issued a new hunting edict, which was presented as a new edition of the one ordered by Victor Amadeus I ten years earlier even though it repeated some articles and the only modified others. In this way, Christine was able to integrate the new reality she had created into the previous hunting legislation. The repealed and amended articles confirmed Christine's wishes, because the strongest social groups received confirmation of their new protections, while others saw them downgraded. The article that obliged local communities, vassals and other individuals in possession of particular licenses or concessions to present them in the hands of the General Conservator of Hunts, in charge of validating or rejecting them in case of falsifications, and the article that absolutely forbade vassals from sending servants in their place for hunting, were abrogated. The aristocracy and local communities thus saw their privileges confirmed once and for all, decreeing a sort of supremacy above the sovereign authority over hunts.³⁴⁴

Grazing rights, expanded during the years of civil conflict, were reviewed and restricted again. The concession previously made, which allowed grazing sheep from October until

³⁴⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 116: ff. 46-47.

³⁴¹ IVI, 113: ff. 64-65.

³⁴² IVI, 121: f. 44; f. 152.

³⁴³ DUBOIN, 1134.

³⁴⁴ DUBOIN, 1147.

May, was only partially confirmed. The new General Conservator of Hunts appointed by Christine could in fact decide whether to allow grazing until that time or to push it back to March.³⁴⁵ In any case, grazing was only allowed on common land, preventing woods or cultivated fields from being damaged by livestock. In this regard, it is curious to see that to the captains of the hunt, who numbered 18 and had all been relocated to the capital, it was specifically forbidden to accept any form of goods - particularly cheese - from the shepherders in order to allow the cattle to pass through. This reference to bribery through a commodity of modest value such as sheep's cheese shows how the reduction of hunting expenses and the consequent lowering of salaries had a significant impact on territorial control.³⁴⁶

The end of the conflict in 1642 led to the full formalisation of this new reality. The restructuring of the hunting system carried out by Christine of France therefore had two main directions: the first towards the aristocracy, specific economic groups and local communities in order to secure their loyalty in turbulent years; the second within the House of Savoy, with as objective the reduction of the duke's authority over the territory. The gradual dismantling and reshaping of the hunting system offered to *Madama Reale*, intent on keeping power in her hands even beyond the limits of her regency, the chance to prevent the legitimate heir to the throne from making use of it. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the construction of the hunting space under Victor Amadeus I turned into a real political design, going so far as to weld various parts of the Duchy into a spatial *unicum* over which the hunting prince ruled. The restriction to the small circle around the capital had caused this project to finally fade away, leaving Charles Emmanuel II only a pale memory of what it had been a few years before.

The attack on the heart of princely hunting promoted by *Madama Reale* is at the origin of the transformation into an area of competition between the regency and the Duke of Savoy. The main consequence of the political attack to princely hunting by Christine of France was to put an end to the process of structuring the territory that had progressed from Emmanuel Philibert to the outbreak of the civil war: as will be seen, the hunting space will not undergo great changes, no longer achieving the extension and organisation that was lost. That would have significant consequences for the political meaning of princely hunting in the following decades, starting with the transition from princely

³⁴⁵ Ibidem.

³⁴⁶ Ibidem.

hunting as a territorially unifying element for the Duchy of Savoy to a system of residences around the capital, within the 10-mile circle.

Charles Emmanuel II: the pursuit of power

Once his mother's regency ended, at least formally, in 1648, Charles Emmanuel II had no choice but to attempt to partially reconstruct the hunting system as to bargain for his due sovereignty. The consolidation of power achieved by Christine, who maintained a tight grip until her death in 1663, and the degree to which the hunting system had been dismantled made this a tough task. The first attempt in this direction was made by finally including the mountain of Turin, which until then had always remained under urban jurisdiction, within the reserved hunting territory.³⁴⁷ As seen above, Victor Amadeus I had broken the agreement made by Emmanuel Philibert with the capital for the concession of hunting in the hilly area adjacent to the city, partially integrating it into the reserved hunting district. The expansion was slight, but at least the 10-miles reserved hunting district around the capital established by Christine presented itself as being free of enclaves, thus expelling the last competitor, the urban community, from the surrounding capital's hunting area. However, this little success did not serve to restore the hunting territory to its former glory.

To contain the losses caused by the regent, Charles Emmanuel first attempted to gradually oust the aristocracy from the reserved district. To begin this process, he used the systematic violations committed against the game and officers in every season:

We have persuaded ourselves that the orders of our Most Serene Predecessors and Madama Reale, my Lady and Mother, by which it is strictly forbidden to hunt any kind of game from the first day of March until the end of June of each year, especially in the woods at that time, since the nests and eggs of pheasants, partridges and other game are ruined and the deer and roe deer herds are injured, must be kept in due obedience. But be assured that without any consideration in defiance of

³⁴⁷ ASTO CORTE, Editti originali, 9:12.

*the said orders they make it lawful to hunt as and where they please threatening even the keepers and captains of the hunt.*³⁴⁸

The order continues with a general prohibition of hunting in the forbidden months. Then, it proceeds to establish an area within the district forbidden even to the privileged nobility:

*We forbid all persons of whatever rank and quality, none except those who are privileged, to go hunting at any time during the aforesaid period. Furthermore, we forbid any person, as above, to go hunting at any time and in any season in the Meysino [riverbank], called Sassi, starting from the Rivo di Muschie to the church and to the Rivo de Sassi, as well as the Mountain, starting from the Vigna of my uncle the prince Maurizio and continuing as far as Cavoretto, in the woods beyond the Stura river, starting from the Bertola woods and continuing along the Settimo territory, San Moro and as far as the Brandizzo giara.*³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Ivi, 9bis: 31. Or. It. : «Ci siamo persuasi che gl'ordini de Serenissimi Predecessori e di Madama Reale mia Signora e Madre per quali viene rigorosamente proibito d'andar a caccia di qual si voglia venaggione dal primo del mese di marzo sino per tutto giugno di cadun anno, massime ne li boschi in tal tempo poiche' si guastano li nidi et ova de fagiani, pernici et altra venaggione et si danneggiano li allevami de cervi e caprioli dov'essero contenere le persone nella dovuta ubbidienza. Ma venendo assicurati che senza riguardo alcuno in sprezzo di detti ordini si fanno lecito cacciare come et ove loro piace minacciando etiandio li conservatori et capitani di caccia».

³⁴⁹ Ibidem. Or. It.: «Prohibiamo a tutte le persone di qual si vogli stato grado e qualità, niune eccettuate ancorché privilegiate, d'andare d'hor avanti alla caccia durante il sudetto tempo. In oltre proibiamo a qualsivoglia persona come sopra d'andar in qualsivogli tempo e stagione a caccia nel Meysino detto de Sassi cominciando dal Rivo di Muschie sino alla Chiesa e Rivo de Sassi sudetto, come ancora nella Montagna cominciando dalla Vigna del S. Prencipe Maurilio mio zio e continuando fino a Cavoretto, nelli boschi oltre il fiume Stura, cominciando dalli boschi di Bertolla continuando al longo del territorio di Settimo, San Moro e sino per tutta la giara di Brandizzo». ³⁴⁹ Ivi, 9bis: 31. Or. It. : «Ci siamo persuasi che gl'ordini de Serenissimi Predecessori e di Madama Reale mia Signora e Madre per quali viene rigorosamente proibito d'andar a caccia di qual si voglia venaggione dal primo del mese di marzo sino per tutto giugno di cadun anno, massime ne li boschi in tal tempo poiche' si guastano li nidi et ova de fagiani, pernici et altra venaggione et si danneggiano li allevami de cervi e caprioli dov'essero contenere le persone nella dovuta ubbidienza. Ma venendo assicurati che senza riguardo alcuno in sprezzo di detti ordini si fanno lecito cacciare come et ove loro piace minacciando etiandio li conservatori et capitani di caccia».

...

It would be virtually impossible to delimit this area exactly because it is bounded by elements that cannot be located today, such as churches and single woods. What is important, however, is that with this first order, Charles Emmanuel II began to re-establish his sole sovereignty in the hunting district.

In 1652, with a new order, Charles Emmanuel II enlarged this area and intervened in the possibility granted to the nobles by Christine to send their servants to hunt for them:

Many, on the pretext of being sent by noblemen and with null licences, do not cease to go hunting in the places especially forbidden and reserved for our recreation and pleasure, even in the four months, and by shooting, hunting in Piedmont, where it once abounded, is quickly dissipated [...] By the present, we forbid all persons of any status, rank or quality, none excepted, even privileged, under any title or privilege, to go or to send any person to hunt.³⁵⁰

Besides affecting the rights reserved to the sovereign, it also limited the ease in which the aristocrats could send their servants to hunt, which had nourished a rich market of false licences and given many the opportunity to take advantage of the lack of controls.³⁵¹ The territory was further expanded in 1656, but again by just a few kilometres.³⁵²

In addition to wanting to reduce the weight assumed by the nobles in the management of the hunts and establish a new territorial continuity, Charles Emmanuel II also attempted to restore the urban parks; in particular that of Mirafiori. The woods around

³⁴⁹ Ibidem. Or. It.: «Prohibiamo a tutte le persone di qual si vogli stato grado e qualità, niune eccettuate ancorché privilegiate, d'andar d'hor avanti alla caccia durante il sudetto tempo. In oltre proibiamo a qualsivoglia persona come sopra d'andar in qualsivogli tempo e stagione a caccia nel Meysino detto de Sassi cominciando dal Rivo di Muschie sino alla Chiesa e Rivo de Sassi sudetto, come ancora nella Montagna cominciando dalla Vigna del S. Prencipe Mauritio mio zio e continuando fino a Cavoretto, nelli boschi oltre il fiume Stura, cominciando dalli boschi di Bertolla continuando al longo del territorio di Settimo, San Moro e sino per tutta la giara di Brandizzo».

³⁵⁰ DUBOIN, 1150-1151. Or. It.: «Molti sotto varii pretesti d'essere mandati da cavaglieri e di licenze nulle, non cessano d'andar a caccia nelli luoghi specialmente proibiti e riservati per nostra ricreazioni e diporto, etiandio nelli quattro mesi, e col tirar al volo resta tosto dissipata la caccia in Piemonte, ove prima abbondava [...] In virtu delle presenti, proibiamo a tutte le persone di qualsivoglia stato, grado e qualita', niuna eccettuata, ancorche privilegiata, sotto qualsiasi titolo o privilegio d'andar ne mandar d'hor avanti alla caccia».

³⁵¹ DUBOIN, 1150-1151.

³⁵² DUBOIN, 1152.

the castle of the same name, once widely used for hunting by his predecessors, were traversed by carts and cattle, which damaged the local game's feeding.³⁵³ Four years later, however, the situation seemed even worse: the Mirafiori territory was subject to the systematic theft of timber, diversion of water and destruction of the palisades used to canalise the Sangone stream. Furthermore, carriages and livestock continued to inflict heavy damage on the territory.³⁵⁴

In any case, by the end of the 1650s work had already begun on the building of the Venaria Reale, which would give the Duke a new residence for his hunts. It is interesting though to note that in Jan Miel's "Cycle of hunts", which as will be seen is an important iconographic source for reconstructing the transition from the performance before the construction of the Venaria Reale and after (see the following chapter), the ritual of the *curée* is depicted right in front of Mirafiori Castle, thus crediting an attempt to restore the castle acquired by Charles Emmanuel I for hunting purposes.

The extreme attempt to entirely restore control over the reserved hunting district led the Duke of Savoy to adopt the only instrument of legitimisation he could count on to take away from the aristocracy those privileges granted by Madama Reale: the 1633 general hunting edict of Victor Amadeus I. On May 6th 1669, taking advantage of the harsh conditions of the past winter that had decimated the game, Charles Emmanuel II issued a hunting order reinstating the edict of 1633:

Since the rigidity of the past winter, together with the abundance of snow, has caused a great destruction of the hunts, because of the number of deer and other animals that have been devoured by wolves, others killed by dogs, and others who have died because they have not been able to find food, as is well known, we are obliged to give further consideration to hunting [...] and so in order to take away from any person any lure, as already for a long time, that no prohibition and general order has been published [...] we have estimated without

³⁵³ ASTO CORTE, Editti a stampa, 9bis:73.

³⁵⁴ DUBOIN, 1152-1153.

*making in a new order the repetition of the above-mentioned of 16 April 1633 to which nothing can be added.*³⁵⁵

The legitimation offered by the edict of Victor Amadeus I allowed Charles Emmanuel II to re-establish his sole authority over the entire hunting district. The reintroduction of the edict could suggest that Victor Amadeus I's hunting space had also been re-established, yet an order of 1671 shows that the hunting district continued to be only that of the 10 miles around Turin, on which, however, all the privileges granted by Christine of France no longer existed. From the point of view of hunting space, this was the greatest result, together with the construction of the Venaria Reale, achieved by Charles Emmanuel II.

In terms of spending for the animal court, the results were no greater. Between 1648, when, at least officially, Christine's regency came to an end, and 1658, the year before construction of the Venaria Reale began, the expenses for the *venerie* officers did not vary greatly, revealing a scenario of virtual stagnation. In 1648 the total expenses, including the *venerie*, falconry and conservatory, amounted to £14,368. The internal officers of the ducal *venerie* absorbed the largest expenditure, amounting to £6,268, while the 16 captains of the hunt required £4,500 for their salaries. Falconry was now down to the bone with a single falconer: of the £3,600 paid, £3,000 corresponded to the salary of Grand Falconer Carlo Provana di Druento, while falconer Filippo Fagge could only count on the remaining £600.³⁵⁶ This trend continued until 1652, when a second falconer was introduced, but once again the charge of Grand Falconer, who could now also boast a £2,000 pension, was the first item in expenditure, which had by then risen to £6,200. In 1653 there was an initial attempt to reverse this trend with an increase in the number of officers at the *venerie*, but this proved to be largely insufficient so that not only was this increase not maintained, but there was a further deterioration in the expenditure for officers.

The same happened in 1656 when Charles Emmanuel II attempted an actual re-founding of the branch. In April of that year, the Duke of Savoy tried to establish an organic fund

³⁵⁵ DUBOIN, 1154-1155. Or. It.: «Havendo la rigidezza del scaduto inverno, con la gran copia delle nevi dato causa a una gran distrutione di caccia per la quantita' de' cervi et altri animali stati divorati da lupi, altri ammazzati da cani, et altri morti per non haver ritrovato da nutrirsi, come ne resta cosa notoria, ci obliga a considerare maggiormente la caccia [...] e cosi' per levar a qual si voglia persona ogni apiglio che sia gia di longa mano che non si sia publicato alcuna prohibitione et ordine generale [...] habbiamo stimato senza fare in un nuovo ordine la repetitione del suddetto delli 16 aprile 1633 a cui niente si puo aggiungere».

³⁵⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 100: 148, 334.

with which to finance his venery amounting to £25,557: the list shows a hunting crew of 17 officers, the Grand Veneur Marquis of Caraglio, a muleteer and a stable master amounting to £16,570.³⁵⁷ They were allocated funds to maintain 18 horses for the officers and a pack of 150 dogs at a cost of £8,987. The reality was, however, that in the following years and until the foundation of the Venaria Reale in 1659, this increase did not take place, remaining only a will written on paper. It was in fact the foundation of the new hunting palace that finally allowed for the increase in the expenses, which did not however reach the levels that Charles Emmanuel II had set. The expenses for officers amounted £12,390 in 1659 but from the following year, they rapidly decreased to around £11,000 and were maintained at this level for the next fifteen years.³⁵⁸

The competition between Christine of France and Charles Emmanuel II for power over the Duchy of Savoy had as its victim the hunting system, which was only partially rebuilt and maintained a weak profile for the next few decades in terms of hunting space, animal court and hunting officers. This clash led outside observers to identify the relationship between hunting and sovereignty in Charles Emmanuel II as an element of the duke's weakness. Something that did not happen with those who, like Louise of Savoy, stayed out of this competition.

Louise of Savoy: the daughter of Artemis

In this last part I will explore how hunting, differently than for Christine and Charles Emmanuel II, was for Louise of Savoy a mean of empowerment. Louise's relevance in the events of the civil war, as mentioned earlier, emerges in 1642 with her marriage to her uncle the cardinal. A letter sent to him by Louise in August 1642, informing him that the dowry contract had been signed, revealed all the restlessness that lurked in the young princess, then 13 years old:

From the Marquis of Dogliani, sent expressly by Madama Reale my Lady et Maman to keep Your Highness informed of the underwriting of the dowry contract, you will be told with what sweet violence I feel ravishing

³⁵⁷ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 689, 135: ff. 73-74.

³⁵⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 110: 161, 969.

*and ravished, bounding and bound, held ever tighter by the execution of that irreversible promise that makes me today more his than mine.*³⁵⁹

The marriage took place in September of the same year, following the cardinal's renunciation of his position.³⁶⁰ Apart from her mediating role in the post-war events, the historiography has not developed a specific interest in Louise, relegating her to subordinate roles first as niece and consort of Maurice of Savoy, who died in 1657, then as daughter of the regent Christine of France and finally as sister of the duke Charles Emmanuel II. The figure of Louise of Savoy remained shrouded in her passivity, a result of having been an instrument of political mediation.

Venetian Ambassador Michiel's assessment in the introduction reveals how, over a period of thirty years, Louise went from a position of passivity to one of acknowledged strength, the primary expression of which coincided with her image as a huntress. Indeed, it was the very image of the huntress Louise of Savoy that Francesco Michiel saw last before leaving the Savoy court in September 1670. She «had taken herself to enjoy the recreations of hunting in a place not far from the capital», welcomed the Venetian ambassador in 'hunter's clothes' and took him for a walk through the gardens «with such generous senses that I could not help but leave with a thousand chains of debt».³⁶¹

Research on female princely hunting has attracted the interest of many scholars in recent years, as has its connection to a precise symbolic imagery. In most cases, however, this was an expression of a real power that found in it a valid instrument of self-representation.³⁶² In the case of Louise, we are dealing with a princess who never came

³⁵⁹ ASTO CORTE, *Lettere principi diversi*, 20: 19, Ludovica Maria di Savoia a Maurizio di Savoia, 2 agosto 1642. Or. It. : «Dal Marchese di Dogliani, mandato espressamente da Madama Reale mia signora et *maman* per tener Vostra Altezza avisata (sic!) della sottoscrizione del contratto dotale, le sarà insieme rappresentato con quale *dolce violenza* io mi senta rapire e rapita, legare e legata, stringer sempre più forte all'effettuazione di quella irreversibile promessa che mi fa hoggi di più sua che mia».

³⁶⁰ For an up-to-date critique of the figure of the Cardinal of Savoy, see the proceedings of the conference held in Turin in 2021 and recently published, see *Il Cardinale. Maurizio di Savoia mecenate, diplomatico e politico (1593-1657)*, J. MORALES, C. SANTARELLI, F. VARALLO (eds.), Roma, Carocci 2023.

³⁶¹ ASVE, Savoia, 78: 129, f. 1.

³⁶² K. FIETZE, *Im Gefolge Dianas. Frauen und höfische Jagd im Mittelalter (1200–1500)*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte Heft 59, Wien, Böhlau Verlag 2005; R. ALMOND, *Daughters of Artemis. The Huntress in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer 2009; J. BAAGØE, B. OLESEN, *Dianas døtre : kvindelige*

...

to hold high positions, but led a long life of widowhood at the margins of the Savoy court. A profile that appears very far removed from the strength that flows from the words of the Venetian ambassador. In the case of Louise of Savoy, it was more an instrument of emancipation both on personal and political level.

Looking at her inventory from 1679, which describes in great detail the princess's living quarters at her villa at a fairly late phase of her life, the materiality of the objects listed conveys how important the hunting dimension was for Louise. It shows how the princess had adorned her private rooms, over the previous decades, with a large number of woodland-themed tapestries. Amongst the most peculiar items were a hunting pavilion and a camp bed that she used during longer hunts. Standing out among the paintings that populated the walls of the rooms, most of them being dedicated to religious themes or representing members of the House of Savoy, is a painting depicting three huntresses intent on pursuing their prey. Paintings depicting women engaged in hunting are very rare, and when women are present they are normally complementary to the male hunting action..³⁶³ But how did it emerge?

The years of Louise's hunting education are difficult to trace. Young princes were introduced to the world of hunting around the age of 10, while falconry could be even younger.³⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Victor Amadeus I died when Louise was only 8 years old, so her hunting education could not benefit from her father's closeness. Once the marriage was contracted, she could also not count on her consort's passion for hunting. Although Maurice of Savoy practised hunting as his birth right, he was not a hunting prince, unlike, for example, his brother Thomas Francis, who owned a *venerie*.³⁶⁵ Moreover, the couple lived mostly away from the court of Turin, in Nice. This was, nevertheless, a phase in which the princess enjoyed a far from ample autonomy in economic terms. The situation that arose a few years later saw her in severe straits that forced her into debt to maintain her

jægere dengang og nu, Hørsholm, Dansk Jagt og Skovbrugsmuseum 2011; D. VAN DER CRUYSE, «*Madame sein i sein ellendes Handwerck*». *Liselotte von der Pfalz, eine deutsche Prinzessin am Hof de Sonnenkönigs*, München, Piper 1997; K. DE JONGE, *Le parc de Mariemont. Chasse et architecture à la cour de Marie de Hongrie (1531-1555)* in *Chasse princière dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, a cura di C. D'ANTHENAISE, M. CHATENET, Actes Sud, Paris 2007, 269-289 ; D. M. NEIGHBORS, *Elizabeth I, Huntress of England : Private Politics, Diplomacy, and Courtly Relations Cultivated through Hunting* in «*The Court Historian*», 28: 1 (2023), 49-79.

³⁶³ ASTO CORTE, *Materie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Principi Maurizio e Ludovica di Savoia*, mz. 1, *Inventario della guardaroba della Serenissima Principessa fatto li 18 maggio 1679*.

³⁶⁴ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Régime*, 137.

³⁶⁵ The Thomas Francis of Savoy-Carignano's hounds pack of about 20 dogs was attached to the ducal pack in 1654, ASTO RIUNITE, *Camera dei conti, Patenti controllo finanze*, 133: f. 8

status. This was mainly due to the fact that the agreements guaranteeing her a set annual sum for her own particular expenses were not respected by Maurice of Savoy, forcing her into a state of «continual need and harassed by various debts made for not having had the funds of past years».³⁶⁶

The return to Turin in 1652 changed this situation as it finally allowed the princess to take part in the princely hunts at the court of Charles Emmanuel II. It can therefore be assumed that Louise of Savoy's hunting education began at a later age. This fact should not be surprising if one considers that, as Simon Adams points out, Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, both assiduous huntresses, also began their hunting career after the age of twenty. This, moreover, indicates a more conscious choice on the part of the princess in the absence, as Adams also points out, of any formal encouragement to hunt aimed at women.³⁶⁷

What is certain is the mastery Louise achieved in the space of a few years. In fact, since her return to the court of Turin, it was evident that she did not stop showing off her hunting skills. Her first big chance came a few years later, in 1656, when a major event involved the entire court of the House of Savoy: the arrival of Christine of Sweden to Turin. A magnificent hunt was held outside the city in honour of the former sovereign, whose name was in those years travelling through all the courts of Europe. Christine of Sweden, who had abdicated two years earlier and converted to Catholicism in 1655 to the great scandal of Protestant Europe, had settled in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome from where she occasionally left for other European capitals.³⁶⁸ Returning from a stay at the court of Paris, Christine of Sweden passed through the states of the House of Savoy. As she was a symbol of Catholicism's victory over the Protestant world, Christine of Sweden's reception at

³⁶⁶ ASTO CORTE, *Lettere, Lettere principi diversi*, 20: 84, Ludovica di Savoia a Maurizio di Savoia, 25 febbraio 1649.

³⁶⁷ S. ADAMS, 'The Queenes Majestie...is now become a great huntress': Elizabeth I and the chase in «The Court Historian», 18:2 (2013), 163.

³⁶⁸ For an overview of studies devoted to the figure of Christina of Sweden see M.-L. RODÉN, *Ett ständigt skiftande porträtt. Kristinabilder i historieskrivningen 1750-2000 in Bilder av Kristina. Drottning av Sverige - Drottning i Rom/ Images of Christina : queen of Sweden, queen in Rome*, P. SANDIN (ed.), Stockholm, Livrustkammaren 2013, 39-59; V. NIGRISOLI WÄRNHJELM, *Gli studi italiani sulla regina Cristina di Svezia negli ultimi cinquant'anni in Studi di italianistica nordica*, ROSATTI, M. GARGIULO, M. HAGEN (eds.), Roma, Aracne 2014, 355-377.

court was impressive with grandiose installations inspired by the work of Emmanuel Thesaurus, the court's leading man of letters.³⁶⁹

The former sovereign's opinion of the Savoy court, written by her own hand, leaves little doubt as to the impression she and the duke had on her. On October 24th 1656, the Savoy court organised a great deer hunt. A detailed description of this event can be found in a letter written by Salvatore Castiglione, a Genoan nobleman serving at the court of Savoy.³⁷⁰ Christine of Sweden rode alongside Charles Emmanuel II, followed by «huntsmen with a confused disarray of dogs, servants, horses, knights, ladies and princes, all of whom were actors in this spectacle, and who aspired with no other effort than to seize not the wounded deer, but the exhausted one, the last end of such a hunt».³⁷¹ This detail in the report refers to the fact that in the deer *chasse a courre*, the hunters selected a specific prey that had to be hunted: therefore any other animals in the hounds' trail could not be killed.

The narrator's admiring gaze immediately shifts, however, to Princess Louise engaged in pursuing the prey with a pack of bloodhounds. Her equestrian skills stand out in the chaotic throng of dogs and huntsmen leading to the admiring reaction of Christine of Sweden and on the other hand the reluctance of the author, Salvatore Castiglione:

H.M.[Christine of Sweden], who with her heroic valour cannot receive for the first time that a princess should rise so high above her sex, confessed that she had never seen anything like it in her life when she affirmed with what gracefulness the Serenissima [Louise], in the greatest boiling of the generous animal, fired her pistols for amusement and, without

³⁶⁹ *Memoires concernant Christine Reine de Suede, pour servir d'eclaircissement a l'histoire de son regne et principalement de sa vie privee, et aux evenemens de l'histoire de son tems civile et litteraire*, t. I, chez Pierre Mortier, Amsterdam 1751, 557.

³⁷⁰ ASCTo, Simeom, C46: 2415, S. CASTIGLIONE, *Copia di lettera scritta dal Signor Salvatore Castiglione nobile genovese a Giovanni Filippo Spinola principi di Molfeta, etc. Circa l'entrata & accoglienze fatte dall'AA.RR. di Savoia alla Regina di Svecia nell'augusta città di Torino*, 11.

³⁷¹ Ivi, 10. For an in-depth analysis of the elements related to equestrian culture in Salvatore Castiglione's text, F. VARALLO, *Il tema della caccia nelle feste sabaude nei secoli XVI e XVII* in *La caccia nello Stato sabaudo*, vol. I, 144-148; Ead., «...Era un sottilissimo nastro, con che frenava il cavallo». *Ritratti equestri, cerimonie e loisir nella corte sabauda del XVII secolo* in *Las caballerizas reales y el mundo del caballo*, J. ARANDA DONCEL, J. MARTINEZ MILLÁN, Córdoba, Litopress 2016, 365-370. Or. It.: «cacciatori con un confuso scompiglio di veltri, di serventi, di cavalli, di cavaglieri, di dame e di principi, che tutti attori in questo spettacolo, altro non aspiravano con simile fatica, che a cogliere non il cervo ferito, ma stanco, ultimo fine di simil caccia».

*fail, hitting where she had pointed, even at a considerable distance, actually at the whole range of the pistol.*³⁷²

The first fact to emerge from the 1656 hunt is the perfect fit with what the Venetian ambassador reported in 1670. All the elements that Michiel placed at the centre of his report on Louise - 'she resembles an amazon in the exercises of the hunt, in handling a horse and in playing the spear and the pistol' - had already been consolidated within a few years after her return to Turin. But even more evident is the fact that the hunting qualities of the princess assume even then the value of a mean to rise above the limits imposed 'over her sex'. There is also a kind of climax here on the part of the author, who seems almost to find it hard to admit the gifts of Louise: from the mere amusement or amusement with which Louise initially seems to use firearms, to the acknowledgement of the undeniable aim she showed, up to the admission that the huntress princess was able, launched at full gallop, to hit a running deer at the considerable distance of about fifty metres.

Also striking is the prominence given to the use of a firearm such as the pistol. This was an unusual weapon for deer hunting, where, following the ritual of the *chasse à courre*, it was preferred to exhaust the deer with the pack of hounds and then finish it off with a rifle shot or stabbing it with a hunting dagger. The use of this weapon, associated with the spear mentioned by Michiel and referred to by the *venabulum* in the well-known engraving depicting Louise engaged in a fox hunt, [fig. 1] refers to equipment typical of light cavalry.³⁷³ But above all, it shows how Louise did not shy away from vigorous hunting, which placed her in a close position to her prey and thus in a potentially dangerous condition.

³⁷² Ivi, 11. Or. It.: «S.M. che col valore suo heroico, non può ricevere per nuovo che una Principessa tant'oltre si sollevi sopra il suo sesso, confessò non haver visto giamai cosa pari in sua vita, quando affermò con qual leggiadria la Serenissima, nel maggior bollore del generoso animale sparava per trastullo le pistolle, e senza fallare coglieva di mira dove accennava, anche in distanza consiederabile, anzi a tutta la portata della pistola».

³⁷³ Although unusual, the use of this type of mounted weapon for fox hunting is not without precedent and harks back to classical and oriental motifs, see H. L. BLACKMORE, *Hunting weapons: From the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, New York, Dover 1971, 105. Furthermore, in Miel's painting of fox hunting, one can see in the upper left-hand corner a hunter finishing off his prey with a similar spear. On the link between the spear-pistol pair and light cavalry see W. BARBERIS, *La 'lancia' di Carlo V. Una proposta iconografica in «Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa»*, 9-2 (2017), 45.

Salvatore Castiglione's description of Louise transgressing the gender norms can be confirmed when looking at Jan Miel's cycle of hunts, painted between 1659 and 1661, one can see that the female presence on the hunting ground was highly disciplined. The only hunt in which there is an active female presence is the hare hunt, in which, however, none of the female hunters takes up arms to bring down the prey, taking on more the features of an equestrian performance. In the painting of the ritual of the *curée*, male and female figures crowd the centre of a scene in which the hunt is now over. The two most dangerous hunts, the bear hunt and the boar hunt, show instead a female presence enclosed in a raised stage, at once a protective space and an observation point from which to admire the violence of the scene.

Although the description by the ambassador depicts Louise in her role as a huntress, it does not allow the princess to be observed unfiltered. Fortunately, a detailed hunting report was left by Louise herself, which reveals her hunting personality in depth. This document is of some relevance both in terms of the House of Savoy's history, but also for hunting history as there are not many direct reports, and women's ones in particular. The report was written on April 2nd 1663 in Turin, in French, and no explicit reference is made to the addressee.³⁷⁴ The information inside, however, makes it easy to recognise her brother and Duke Charles Emmanuel II. The princess took her leave, begging her counterpart, who was not at court, «to assure Madame the Royal Duchess of my most humble respects and obeisance », closing the report with a rhetorical greeting.³⁷⁵ The Duchesse royale referred to can only be Françoise Magdalene d'Orleans, who had married Charles Emmanuel II by proxy in March 1663, thus becoming to all intents and purposes duchess of Savoy. The official ceremony was to be celebrated in Annecy the following day, April 3rd 1663, which was why the Duke of Savoy had left the seat of his court. The recipient, therefore, was another great hunter, Charles Emmanuel II, and this represents a not secondary detail.

Louise opened the report with a formal apology: «I haven't told you about the hunt we went on last week, as I had to be drained for three days».³⁷⁶ Due to a health problem, the princess was therefore unable to write and send the report. This suggests that it was common practice for Louise to keep the duke updated on her hunting activities. If in the

³⁷⁴ ASTO CORTE, Lettere principi diversi, 20-5: 23.

³⁷⁵ Ivi, f. 2v. Or. Fr. : «D'assurer Madame la duchesse Royale de mes très humble respects et obeisance».

³⁷⁶ Ivi, f. 1. Or. Fr. : «Je ne vous ay point mande la relasion de la chasse que nous fisme la semaine passee car je me fis saigner illiat trois jours».

relationship between Charles Emmanuel II and Christine hunting had taken on the meaning of competition, between the Duke of Savoy and the princess it was taken on as a common language. She described a roe deer hunt gone wrong that had taken place the week before:

*I will tell you, therefore, that when I had the toiles drawn and there were two animals in the woods, they were so big that the toiles that we had with us were not enough and that we had to remove them and get others but, in the meantime, they left.*³⁷⁷

The princess had asked for a portion of the forest where *deux chevreux* had been spotted to be enclosed, but the operation had proved more complex than expected. The amount of toiles carried had not been sufficient to fence off the area and the two animals had found safety by running away. The environmental conditions also did not help, as «the woods are so pale and the dry leaves have not yet fallen», thus preventing the huntsmen under the princess's orders from easily finding traces of the roe deer that had escaped over the next two days.³⁷⁸ Louise had therefore decided to move to another area in the *Gran Paese*, the territory reserved for ducal hunts adjacent to that of the Venaria Reale, so that new prey could be found:

*I went to Venaria where I visited the pheasants who are in very good condition. I was in the wood and I saw neither chevreux, not hares [...] Fabrisi told me that since your departure many of the cheuvreux had died and that there were only 9 or 6 left.*³⁷⁹

The first element to emerge is her presence at the palace of Venaria Reale. It must be remembered that Louise was in fact not a guest at the hunting palace of Charles

³⁷⁷ Ibidem, Or. Fr. : «Je vous dirai, donc, coume je fis tirer le toyle et qu'il y avoit deus cheuvreux de dans mes lansüle, se trova si grande que les toile qu'on avoit a porte ne sufisent pas et il falut les reser et ananvoiet prendre des autre et que, dans ce temps la, il s'analerent».

³⁷⁸ Ivi, f. 1v. Or. Fr. : «les bois sont si cler et le foeuillie seiche ne sont encore tumbée».

³⁷⁹ Ibidem. Or. Fr. : «Je fus alla Venerie ou je visitai les fesans qui son en tres bon estat. Je fus dans le bois me je ne vis point de cheuvreux, ni de lievres [...]. Fabrisi me dit que de puis vostre depart ill restoyt mort beaucoup de cheuvreux et qu'il nen restoit que 9 ou 6». The *Fabrisi* of whom the princess speaks confidentially, so informed about the number of prey present, can be identified as Fabrizio Meulandi, a hunting officer who held the position of Captain of the Venaria Reale until at least 1685, ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti, Miscellanea di patenti, ordini e provvidenze, par. 10, Patenti e biglietti sovrani riguardanti le cacce, 1 non inv., *Lista degl'officiali della Venaria per il loro trattenimento e gaggio delli mesi di Genaro, Febraro e Marzo, primo quartiere corrente anno 1685*, f. 40v.

Emmanuel II, but a legitimate resident. As Amedeo di Castellamonte recalls, in fact, the princess «had a large building at the Venaria Reale with stables, coach house, courtyard and servants' rooms».³⁸⁰ The hunting palace was thus a place shared by Charles Emmanuel II with his huntress sister, whom he often accompanied on hunts.³⁸¹ The second element is the huntress' attention to the health of the pheasants in the aviaries at the Venaria Reale. Care was not only reserved for the birds, but the hounds of her pack were also given special care:

*I have seen the dogs of the pack, which are in good health and are very fat, and they must be taken twice a week to hunt for hare. There are two that are slightly unfortunate: one that was bitten by the other and another that got a rash. But nevertheless they were all well-kept: I shall not tell you their names because I have forgotten them.*³⁸²

What identifies Louise not as a mere aristocrat who went hunting, but as a real huntress is precisely this last sentence: the professional hunter knows the name of every single dog in the pack. The fact that she feels obliged to apologise to her interlocutor for this lack of knowledge shows how she was aware that this was part of her 'duties'.

For Louise, hunting was an exceptional instrument that not only allowed her to 'rise above her own sex', but also to reshape the place assigned to her as the 'object of a diplomatic exchange' into a space in which she could build her own autonomy and from which she could communicate a strength that could be attributed to the potential of command and sovereignty. This was as true outside as inside the Savoy court, as demonstrated by the words addressed to her by the architect Amedeo di Castellamonte when describing the painting that portrayed her hunting at the Venaria Reale:

In the act of wounding the beast with a dart in one hand and boldly handling the blazing horse with the other is Princess Louise Marie, first sister of His Royal Highness and widow of Prince Maurizio of Savoy, who was unfairly favoured by Nature, because having endowed her with all

³⁸⁰ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *Venaria Reale, palazzo di piacere e di caccia*, 5.

³⁸¹ *Ivi*, 18.

³⁸² ASTO CORTE, *Lettere, Lettere principi diversi*, 5: 23. Or. Fr. : J'ay vœu les chiens de la mute qui ce porte bien et sont bien gras, l'on les doit mener deus fois la semaine alla chasse du lieuvre. Illianavoyt que deus qui estoit un peu malmesse : l'un qui at este mordé per les autre et l'autre qui lui est sorti une repreansion. Mes pourtant il garison bien tous deus : je ne vous mande point leur noms car je les ay oublie.

the Virtues required to command a Sceptre and Arms, then enviously deprived her of the opportunity.³⁸³



Image 6 - Ludovica Maria di Savoia and Francesca Maria Cacherana Contessa di Bagnasco in A. di Castellamonte, *Venaria Reale*, 1679

³⁸³ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *Venaria Reale*, 29. Or. It. : «La prima che V.S. vede in atto di ferir con una mano col Dardo la Fiera, e maneggiar con l'altra arditamente l'infocato Cavallo è la principessa Ludovica Maria, prima sorella di S.A.R. e vedova del Principe Maurizio di Savoia, a cui fece torto la Natura, perché havendola dotata di tutte quelle Virtù che si richieggono al governo d'un Scettro e dell'Armi, gli ne ha poi invidiosa tolta l'occasione».



Image 7 – Bear hunting 1659, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)



Image 8 - Hare hunting 1659-1661, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)



Image 9 - Fox hunting 1659-1661, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)



Image 10 - Wild boar hunting 1659-1661, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Palazzo Madama)



Image 11 - The huntsmen gathering 1660, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Musei Reali-Galleria sabauda)



Image 12 - The curée 1661, J. Miel – Venaria Reale (Musei Reali-Galleria sabauda)



Image 13 - Deer hunting 1661, J. Miel – Venaria

2.2 A palace of hunting and power

The turning point of Venaria Reale

There is no news of the continuing illness of this lord duke other than the certainty of his illness, which has been made evident [...] with amazement, it is noted that he nevertheless wants to make up for his talent in the orders concerning not only the most important things but also those concerning the pleasant exercise of hunting [...] he delights in the progress of his buildings at the Venaria, and every three days he arranges the order of the hunt, with the same measure, as if he himself were to be involved in it.³⁸⁴

In September 1669, the Venetian ambassador Michiel reported about the medical conditions of Charles Emmanuel II. The Duke of Savoy was in a precarious state of health due to the constant fevers that afflicted him. The ambassador noted, with surprise, that even this did not stop the duke from remaining focused on the hunt, for which he set the order of execution twice a week, as became routine from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards. In addition, Charles Emmanuel II continued to closely follow the construction and extension of the Venaria Reale, the hunting palace whose work had begun ten years earlier in Altessano Superiore, the main hunting ground used by the Dukes of Savoy since the mid-sixteenth century, and a space of central significance for the competition between Charles Emmanuel II and Christine of France.

The Palace of Diana, the main building of the princely site, was built between 1659 and 1663, before the death of Christine of France, it was thus the Duke of Savoy's main space to reclaim his powers through hunting. Work on the completion of the entire structure lasted for another twelve years, ending in 1675, the year of Charles Emmanuel II's death. The palace was inspired by the typical Roman models, while the overall rebuilding of the village was indebted to French experience and the contemporary work begun at

³⁸⁴ ASVE, Savoia, 78: 72, f. 1-1v. Or. It. : «Non si scuopre all'avantaggio nella malattia continua di questo Sig. Duca, che la sicurezza del suo male, reso patente e chiaro [...] con stupore s'osserva, non ostante, voler supplir il suo talento agl'ordini non solo che riguardano le cose piu considerabili ma ancora quelle del piacevole esercizio della caccia [...] Si diletta con il raguaglio dell'avanzamento di sue fabbriche alla Venaria e ogni tre giorni dispone l'ordine della caccia, con la stessa misura, che se dovesse egli stesso intervenirne».

Versailles.³⁸⁵ The almost 20-year building process eventually reached a cost of £200,000, a figure that was equal to that spent during the same period on payments to the staff of the *venerie*.³⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the complex underwent considerable extensions until the first half of the following century, with the architectural interventions of two important architects such as Michelangelo Garove (1648-1713) and Filippo Juvarra (1678-1736).³⁸⁷



Image 14 - Regiarum venationes aedes regiae, Theatrum Sabaudiae, Amstelodami 1682

³⁸⁵ P. CORNAGLIA, *Venaria Reale e le residenze nobiliari: architettura e distribuzione tra modelli francesi e tradizione seicentesca* in Id. (ed.), *MICHELANGELO Garove 1648-1713, un architetto per Vittorio Amedeo II*, Campisano, Roma 2010, 159-172; Id., *Venaria Reale. La più importante residenza dei duchi di Savoia e dei re di Sardegna* in E. CASTELNUOVO (ed.), *La reggia di Venaria e i Savoia. Arte, magnificenza e storia di una corte europea*, Umberto Allemandi, Torino 2007, 185-186.

³⁸⁶ D. DE FRANCO, *Burocrazia finanziaria del ducato sabauda e cantiere di Venaria Reale nel XVII secolo* in A. MERLOTTI, C. ROGGERO (eds.), *Carlo e Amedeo di Castellamonte. 1571-1683, ingegneri e architetti per i duchi di Savoia*, Campisano Editore, Roma 2016, 310-311.

³⁸⁷ C. CASTIGLIONI, *Biografia e professione di un ingegnere-architetto a servizio del duca* in P. CORNAGLIA, *Michelangelo Garove 1648-1713*, 109-117; A. GRISERI, *Il nuovo tempo della capitale: Juvarra con Vittorio Amedeo II e Carlo Emanuele III* in C. ROGGERO, A. MERLOTTI, P. CORNAGLIA, *Filippo Juvarra. 1678-1736, architetto dei Savoia, architetto in Europa*, vol. I, 18-25.

The first phase of this work, however, was entrusted to court engineer Amedeo di Castellamonte (1613-1683).³⁸⁸ In addition to being the architect of the project, Castellamonte was also a skilful propagandist for it through his work *Venaria Reale, un palazzo di piacere e di caccia*. Written in 1672 and published seven years later - although the first edition bears the date 1674 - Amedeo di Castellamonte's book consecrated the palace conceived by Charles Emmanuel II among the great European hunting residences.³⁸⁹ The work, which opens with a dedicatory letter to the «*not fairytale Diana*» the duchess Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours, second wife of Charles Emmanuel II and *Madama Reale* after his death in 1675, takes care from the very first pages to describe the landscape in which the duke's *loisir* place arose. Considering what has already been pointed out in the first part of this work, it is not surprising that emphasis was placed on the link with water:

*The woods are so far away that they cannot prevent the northern winds, which purge the air of malicious fumes. Waters around it are pure and clear, springing and of good taste; there are no swamps or backwaters, and those few that were there have dried up and been taken away by the filling in of land by the widening of the gardens. The Chiaronda river, which flows at the lowest part of the site and is so swift with such clear waters that it does not contradict its name and far from causing any inconvenience, it makes the whole site delightful and vague, as do the beautiful views of the nearby hills covered with green woods and fruitful vineyards.*³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Son of Carlo di Castellamonte, court engineer and architect, he was one of the main protagonists of the architectural renewal of the second half of the seventeenth century, see M. BENETOLLO, M. F. BOCASSO, *Per una biografia di Carlo e Amedeo di Castellamonte* in A. MERLOTTI, C. ROGGERO (eds.), *Carlo e Amedeo di Castellamonte. 1571-1683*, 23-33.

³⁸⁹ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *Venaria Reale, palazzo di piacere e di caccia*, Bartolomeo Zapata, Torino 1674 [1679].

³⁹⁰ IVI, 4. Castellamonte uses the hydronym "*Chiaronda*" (*clear wave*) for the stream that flowed near Altessano Superiore. This is actually the stream Ceronda, whose hydronym has no connection with the etymological meaning allegedly sought by Castellamonte. Or. It.: «Li boschi sono tanto allontanati che non possono impedire li venti settentrionali, che purgano l'aria da cattivi vapori. Le acque de' suoi contorni sono limpide e chiare, sorgenti e di buon sapore; non vi sono paludi, né acque stagnanti, e quelle poche che vi erano si sono seccate e tolte via con li riempimenti di terra, per li allargamenti de Giardini. Il fiume Chiaronda che vi scorre al piede nella parte piu bassa del sito e rapido con acque si chiare che non smentiscono il suo nome, e ben lontano da apportarvi alcun incommodo rende anzi a tutto il sito delitia e vaghezza: come pur fanno le belle vedute de vicini colli coperti di verdi boschi e di fruttifere vigne».

The construction of the hunting palace thus brought about a real process of transformation of the natural, urban and economic landscape of Altessano Superiore. From a *picciol villaggio* with twisting streets and small, rustic houses, the efforts of the Duke of Savoy «had removed the sterility from the land», making the Venaria Reale *una ben ordinata città*.³⁹¹ The Venaria Reale thus emerged as a turning point in the hunting history of the House of Savoy. Born of Charles Emmanuel II's strong will to recover areas of power following the action of Christine of France, the Palace of Diana and the large, landed estate built up around it became something more than a sumptuous hunting lodge. Starting from Castellamonte's work, in the following pages we will analyse the changes it produced from an administrative, symbolic, and economic point of view, leading to a revolution in the House of Savoy's hunting system.

Una ben ordinata città

As has already emerged from the previous chapters, the relationship between the Dukes of Savoy and the territory of Altessano Superiore is rooted in the second half of the sixteenth century: the transition from the small village to the town with the great hunting residence in those years must be interpreted as the high point of a process that spanned over the last decades of the sixteenth century. As pointed out by Alessandro Cappelletto, although the first known agreement between the community of Altessano and the Dukes of Savoy dates back to 1616, the text indicates that the measures put in place dated back to at least the 1580s and were periodically renewed.³⁹²

These renewable contracts were stabilised in 1632 at the behest of Victor Amadeus I.³⁹³ Inhabitants were exhausted by the constant demand for labour and hosting huntsmen and dogs, along with the destruction wrought on cultivation by wild boars and other animals, so the Duke relieved them of the payment of ordinary and extraordinary taxes, cancelling past debts. The community always had to provide for the logistics of the hunting toiles within the ten-mile district around Turin, «to close in on wild boar, deer, roe deer and wolves», for which it was required to provide twelve men and eight servants,

³⁹¹ IVI, 5.

³⁹² A. CAPPELLETTO, *La costruzione e l'amministrazione di Venaria Reale (secoli XVII-XVIII)* in BSBS, 89-2 (1991), 448.

³⁹³ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, II, capo 18 - Venaria Reale, mandira di Chivasso e loro dipendenze, § 1, m. 1: f. 1, 2v. See CAPPELLETTO, *La costruzione e l'amministrazione di Venaria Reale*, 449; DE FRANCO, *Venaria Reale*, 69.

in charge of their assembly, and oxen-drawn carts and cattlemen for their transport.³⁹⁴ As long as the hunts took place within the ten-mile circle, this would be paid for entirely by the community: in the case of journeys further afield, however, the duke would pay for them in full.



Image 15 - Venaria Reale, Regiae venationis aedium, Theatrum Sabaudiae, Amstelodami 1682

Furthermore, Altessano Superiore had to provide eight men to lead the mastiffs to the boar hunt: once again, this would be at the expense of those involved, while the duke was only willing to pay in the case of hunts lasting several days. The community then had to provide housing for dogs and horses, setting up stables equipped with planks, blankets and a small cooker for preparing food for housing dogs, as well as stables equipped with a manger for the horses. To prevent the animals from escaping, it was also ordered that

³⁹⁴ The community's participation in this kind of hunt is already attested in the 16th century, but like other tasks it was of an occasional nature. Instead, the agreements of 1632 stipulate that it must always participate, see DE FRANCO, *Venaria Reale*, 66; ID., *La caccia ad Altessano Superiore*, 58.

these stables be enclosed with walls. The duties also concerned housing the huntsmen: six beds were to be provided for the huntsmen and two for the baker and his servant, who were to be provided with clean sheets every twenty days. The baker was also to be provided with an oven for the exclusive use of baking for the huntsmen with an adjoining granary next to the house where he would live. The duties did not end there. The dogs' stable had to be provided with 480 *rubbi* (4,426 Kg) of straw per year and 500 bundles of wood to heat their stables, and it was also necessary to prepare their food and medicaments. In return, manure produced by animals, particularly horses, could be used to fertilize the ground. A further 1,500 bundles of wood were to fuel the baker's oven, and the flour was to be produced in the two mills in Altessano for the production of bread for both «deer and wild boar hounds».

These agreements stabilised the relationship between the Duke of Savoy and his main hunting sites, as it put a hold on protests from the population. It also led to a further development of the basic hunting infrastructure, such as stables and kennels, which extended those built for Flemish huntsmen in the second half of the sixteenth century and for the French *veneur* in first of the seventeenth century.³⁹⁵ This system lasted throughout the regency until the 1650s when the intention to build the hunting lodge became clear and led to the expansion of ducal properties in Altessano through a series of purchases that continued until 1718.³⁹⁶ This new phase was in any case a continuity of the previous settlements, as the first of these purchase deeds, dated April 5th 1655, is evidenced. Actually, it consisted rather of an exchange of goods: the gentleman Giovanni Morando di Vinovo asked to pay the rent of some goods in the territory of Stupinigi through the cession to the Duke of a «house he owns in Altessano Superiore, bequeathed by Francesco Brunetto, known as Cadet, huntsman of Prince Thomas of Savoy».³⁹⁷ In addition to this house, Giovanni Francesco Brunetto, head of Francis Thomas of Savoy Carignano' venery, also owned more than 64 *giornate* (24 ha) of meadows and woods according to the 1652

³⁹⁵ See P. CORNAGLIA, *La Reggia di Diana e i suoi giardini: una villa tardomanierista tra Roma, Parigi e Torino* in A. MERLOTTI, C. ROGGERO (eds.), *Carlo e Amedeo di Castellamonte, 1571-1683. Ingegneri e architetti per i duchi di Savoia*, Campisano, Torino 2016, 333.

³⁹⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, II, capo 18 - Venaria Reale, mandira di Chivasso e loro dipendenze, § 1, m. 1, *Registro instromenti 1632-1737*; lvi, *Registro instromenti 1711-1718*.

³⁹⁷ lvi, *Registro instromenti 1632-1737*. Or. It.: «una casa che possiede in Altezzano Superiore pervenutagli in heredità lasciatagli dal fu Francesco Brunetto detto Cadet cacciatore del principe Thomaso di Savoia». See CAPPELLETTO, *La costruzione e l'amministrazione di Venaria Reale*, 454.

cadaster.³⁹⁸ The previously mentioned huntsmen settlement thus functioned as the starting point for the new territorial structure.



Image 16 - The palace of Venaria Reale with his hunting ground, the Gran Paese, ASTo Corte, Carte topografiche e disegni, Carte topografiche segrete, Venaria Reale 23 A VII Rosso

³⁹⁸ D. DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altessano Superiore*, 60.

After this initial exchange, the process of acquiring some properties for the ducal domain only really started in 1660, when an agreement was also signed with the neighbouring community of Druent to channel water towards Venaria Reale.³⁹⁹ In this way, the site could take on its own autonomy from an agrarian perspective, as with the other former residences, yet the dimensions of the project showcase the radical difference from the past. As pointed out by De Franco, over a period of forty years, the territory had reached an extension of 3,925 *giornate* (1492 ha), of which more than half, or 2,048 *giornate* (778 ha), consisted solely of forest. Overall, the duke owned about 20% directly, and the same extension was composed of commons: in total, with the palace and other outbuildings, the Duke of Savoy owned more than 30 per cent of the land, which secured him a territory on which his could express his ducal powers and compete with the capital as centre of power.⁴⁰⁰

The new hunting hierarchy: the birth of the Gran Cacciatore

The developments at the Venaria Reale had concrete consequences for the hunting system, the first one, which as the core of this chapter's section, was the re-organisation of the hunting officers, from the lowest ranks up to the highest level. The analysis will start from the lowest ranks, showing the transition from captains linked to a territory to more flexible mounted gamekeepers, before moving to the higher ranks, in which the transformation processes led to the creation of the centralised function of *Gran Cacciatore* of the House of Savoy.

First, the lower officers. Amedeo di Castellamonte, describing the captains of the hunt in charge of territorial control, inferred that the construction of the Palace would have resulted in a more than considerable increase in the number of captain conservators of the hunt: the author claims that there were «24 conservators who continually ran the country to prevent the failure of the hunt, and there were more than 150 on the borders of the Venaria Reale».⁴⁰¹ This would lead to a real explosion in the number of low-ranking officers involved in the hunting system, for a much smaller portion of territory than in the

³⁹⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, II, capo 18 - Venaria Reale, mandira di Chivasso e loro dipendenze, § 1, m. 1, *Contratto seguito tra SAR e la comunità di Druent per l'introduzione e la manutenzione dell'acqua*.

⁴⁰⁰ Dimensions are based on the 1703 measurement DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altessano Superiore*, 56, 63. See also ID., *Metamorfosi di un territorio di caccia: il caso di Venaria Reale (1589-1703)* in «Bollettino storico bibliografico subalpino», 109 (2011), 567-606.

⁴⁰¹ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *Venaria Reale*, 14.

past. A closer reading clarifies this passage, which if not incorrect, is however inaccurate. In fact, the analysis of the accounting registers from 1658 to 1680 provides a different reality in line with the new territorial dimension represented by the ten-mile district around Turin with Venaria Reale as its new pivot.⁴⁰² As can be seen from the graph, the number of captains of the hunt gradually decreased following the creation of the new hunting palace, reaching a minimum of 7 in the years immediately following.

The number did not recover until the 1670s and reached 16 captains again in 1680. The captains of the hunt, therefore, never reached the amount of 24. As for the simple gamekeepers, they were not officers in their own right, but were selected by the captains to whom they were attached. The reported figure represents valuable information on the shape taken by the territorial control system. Not having direct sources on their number, one must rely on the figure of 150 gamekeepers provided by Castellamonte. The *chart 11* refers to the 1670s when the average number of captains was 11, which makes an estimate of around 15 gamekeepers per captain. The result of this collapse was due to the dismantling of the hunting space implemented by Christine, whose restriction of the hunting area to the 10-mile district had made such a deployment of guards in the territory largely unnecessary.

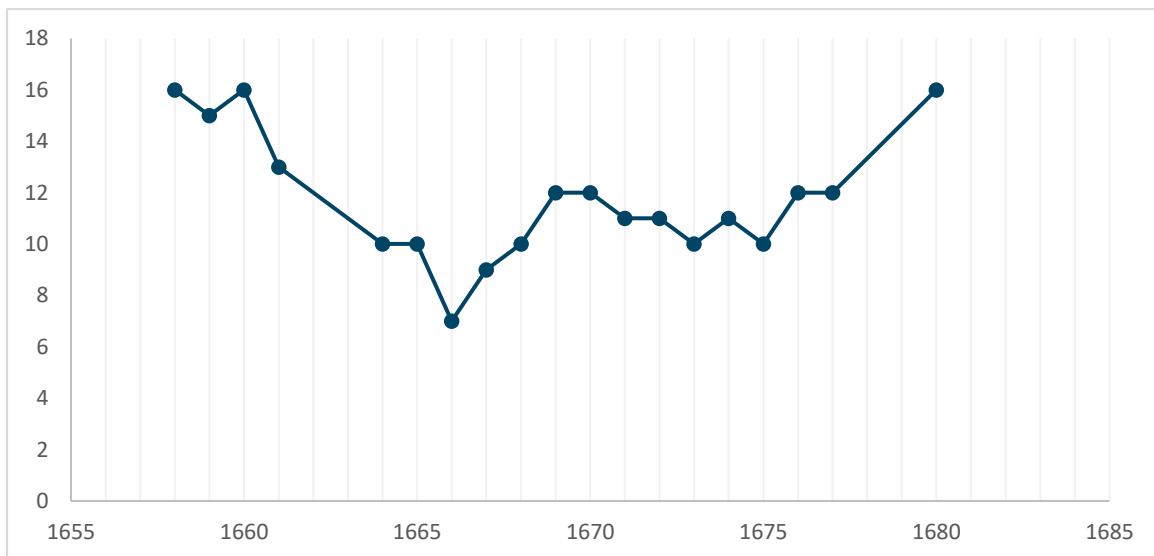


Chart 11 - Number of captains of the hunt (1658-1680) based on ASTo Riunite, art. 86, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 126 and DUBOIN, 1164-1165

⁴⁰² ASTo CORTE, art. 86, 109 (1658); 110 (1659); 111 (1660); 115-128 (1664-1677).

What is certain, is that it reflects Charles Emmanuel II's desire to keep the structure created by his father intact; a will that clashed, however, with the new reality imposed by an hunting space pivoted on the Venaria Reale. The system implemented between the years of Emmanuel Philibert and Victor Amadeus I was designed to ensure widespread control over a very large territory through a centralised structure. The creation of the Venaria established a precise centre of gravity of the princely hunts, which made such a system unnecessarily excessive and impractical.

The system of hunting captains, long the main territorial control body of princely hunts, was gradually replaced by a group of mounted gamekeepers, also known as gamekeeper dragoons, whose structure was decidedly more flexible and more mobile over the territory. As will be seen, the formalisation of this transition would only take place in 1680, with a direct order from the new regent and Madame Royal, Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours replaced by 30 mounted gamekeeper dragoons.⁴⁰³ A payment in the account of the year 1674 shows that the Duke of Savoy had already established a first nucleus of 12 mounted dragoons reimbursed for «the expenses they make in beating the countryside for hunting conservation».⁴⁰⁴

It was not only the lowest but also the highest offices that were impacted by the construction of the Venaria Reale: the General Captain of the Hunts, the Grand Falconer and General of the Hunts, and the Gran Veneur. The table shows the names of those who held these posts between the close of the Civil War and the end of the seventeenth century:⁴⁰⁵

Name	Office	In charge
Gabriele Tana	<i>General Captain of the hunts</i>	1643-1656
Guido Spatis	<i>General Captain of the hunts</i>	1657-1666
Carlo Vignati, count of San Gillio	<i>General Captain of the hunts</i>	1667-1675

⁴⁰³ DUBOIN, 1164-1165.

⁴⁰⁴ ASTO, Corte, art. 86, 126: 987.

⁴⁰⁵ The data are based on treasury accounts and two hunting orders: Ivi, 96-110; 114-124; 126-128.

Ludovico Bertone, count of Crillon	<i>General Captain of the hunts</i>	1676-1696
Francesco Giovanni Provana, count of Altessano	<i>Grand Falconer and General of the Hunts</i>	1620-1647
Carlo Amedeo Provana, count of Druent	<i>Gran Falconer and General of the Hunts</i>	1648-1664
Tommaso Isnardi, marquis of Caraglio	<i>Gran Veneur and Governator of the Venaria Reale (post-1661)</i>	1642-1681
Amedeo del Pozzo, marquis of Voghera	<i>Grand Huntsman</i>	1682-1699

Table 3 - Highest hunting officers 1642-1699

The only office that did not undergo substantial changes was the office of General captain of the hunts, which was retained without interruption until the end of the century. The office of Grand Falconer, who, as we have already seen, also held the function of General of the Hunts since the mid-sixteenth century, was assigned until 1664, a few years after the first work on the Venaria Reale hunting palace was completed. After this date the office was no longer assigned to a single person. The office of Grand Veneur, on the other hand, was held throughout the second half of the century by Tommaso Isnardi, marquis of Caraglio. Castellamonte, describing the hunting officers, calls him Grand Huntsman [*Gran Cacciatore*] and claims that he also held the office of governor of Venaria Reale.⁴⁰⁶ Actually, this office would never be officially used until the 1680s: in fact, the first to be appointed with this title was the marquis of Voghera, Andrea del Pozzo, in 1682.⁴⁰⁷ In an order issued by him at the turn of the century we get a better understanding of what the Great Hunter was actually, because Amedeo del Pozzo signed the order as «Grand Veneur, Grand Falconer and General of the hunts».⁴⁰⁸ Thus, between 1664, the year of the death of the last falconer, and 1682, the year of Andrea del Pozzo's appointment, a

⁴⁰⁶ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 13, 16.

⁴⁰⁷ ASTO CORTE, *Materie politiche per rapport all'interno*, Cerimoniale, Cariche, 1 non inv., *Giuramento del Marchese di Voghera per il carico di Gran Cacciatore*.

⁴⁰⁸ ASTO CORTE, *Materie economiche, Caccia e boshci*, 6: 4.

transition had occurred that would last until the end of the eighteenth century. The gradual loss of importance of falconry, the demise of the territorial structure of hunting captains entrusted to the Grand Falconer, and the creation of the Venaria Reale had created a process of simplification and centralization of offices. First unofficially to Tommaso Isnardi Marquis of Caraglio and then officially to Amedeo del Pozzo Marquis of Voghera were assigned the offices of Governor of Venaria Reale, Grand Veneur, Grand Falconer and General of the Hunts: the *Gran Cacciatore* of the House of Savoy was born. This office will command hunting officers for the rest of the eighteenth century.

Regarding to rest of the officers, the description made by the House of Savoy's architect deserves attention. The structure outlined is partly reminiscent of the one created by Victor Amadeus I in 1632, with eight huntsmen on horseback forming the core of the *venerie*. To these were added three leading positions, named *gentiluomini della venaria*, all members of the high aristocracy and who already held other court positions.⁴⁰⁹ Two payment records reveals a more articulated reality of the evolution between 1676 and 1685.⁴¹⁰ The first record, dated 1676 or later, lists the three aristocratic offices under the heading of *cavalieri della venaria*, while the mounted huntsmen or *piquers*, numbering 6 and not 8. To these were added three *valet de limiers* and 11 *valet de chiens*, which do not even appear in Castellamonte's description. The structure of the *venerie* was thus almost unchanged from the one created by Victor Amadeus I, even if in a certain respect it also presented a contraction in the number of officers, as they amounted to 23 officers against the previous 25.

This was even more evident in 1685, when the number of noblemen was reduced to 2, *piquers* to 5 and *valets* to 8, making a total of 15. Even if it can be assumed that such a drastic reduction could be attributable to the death of individual officers or a temporary reduction in staff, it must be emphasised that the creation of the Venaria Reale not only did not radically alter the previous House of Savoy *venerie* but did not even produce an increase in the number of officers employed. About the management of hunting toiles, Castellamonte does not give any new information who was in charge, which therefore remained the same, but he did provide an estimate of the extent of the toiles that could

⁴⁰⁹ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 14.

⁴¹⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti, art. 690, Patenti e biglietti sovrani riguardanti le cacce, mz. 1 non inv., *Miscellanea di patenti, ordini e provvidenze riguardanti le cacce*, ff. 1, 40v.

have closed an area five miles in diameter.⁴¹¹ The 1685 payment shows how this function had now passed from the hunting captains, no longer in existence, to the *piquers*.⁴¹²

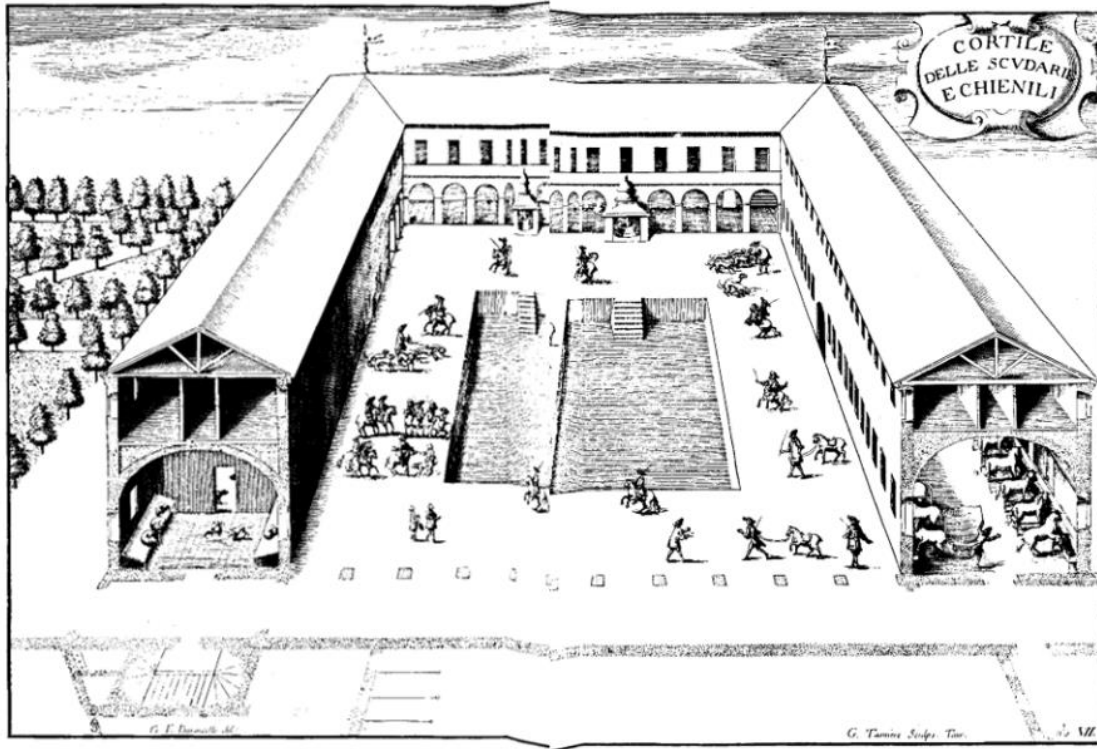


Image 17 - Kennels and stables at the Venaria Reale, A. Castellamonte, *La Venaria Reale*, 1679

The animal court: a new approach

As far as the hunting trinity is concerned, Castellamonte offers some numbers on dogs and horses:

He has one hundred ordinary running horses, destined solely for the use of hunting to serve his person, and others distributed among the aforementioned Gentlemen and Hunters. He has two hundred running

⁴¹¹ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 14.

⁴¹² ASTO RIUNITE, art. 690, f. 40v.

*dogs, in addition to the limiers, and greyhounds, the breed of which he has presently introduced in his own State with a great deal of expense.*⁴¹³

As far as horses are concerned, two budgets of Charles Emmanuel II's stable, from 1662 and 1666, offer much smaller figures. In 1662, the expenditure for the maintenance of the Duke of Savoy's horses amounted to £35,624. The stables of Charles Emmanuel II had 122 horses distributed as follows: 14 grand horses, 12 *coureux de personne* (i.e. the current horses used in the *chasse à courre*), 27 horses for the squires, 10 for other personnel, 8 for straddling and 51 carriage horses, which of course represented the majority of the equines.⁴¹⁴ In 1666, the Duke's stable had 159 horses at a total cost of £56,940: 15 grand horses, 12 *coureux de personne*, 30 squires' horses, 19 *strapasso*, 51 carriage, 12 *lived* and 53 horses from the stable of the duchess Marie-Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy Nemours.⁴¹⁵ The number of running horses is much lower and could hardly have increased tenfold in ten years. It is more likely, therefore, that the stables could simply accommodate up to two hundred horses, but not all runners.

With regard to dogs, however, Castellamonte refers to two hundred current dogs, greyhounds and greyhounds whose breed was allegedly imported to economise. As we have seen, the *gran levrieri di Bretagna* used since the 16th century, were animals with a very high maintenance cost. The presence of a breeding facility ensured that the breed could be selected, producing stronger animals and thus avoiding the need to spend large sums on importing the best specimens from France and England. In light of the fact that the dog pack in 1656 amounted to 150 dogs, it is possible that after the construction of the Venaria Reale these reached two hundred.⁴¹⁶

The reference being made is to runner dogs only, that is, those used for *chasse à courre* to deer. However, Castellamonte also refers to Jan Miel's cycle of hunts [figg.], in the Hall of Diana within the palace, that represents the «six ways of hunting different animals His Royal Highness used to practice, such as deer, bear, boar, wolf, fox and hare».⁴¹⁷ The first

⁴¹³ A. CASTELLAMONE, *La Venaria Reale*, 15. Or. It.: «Ha cento Caualli corridori d'ordinario, destinati solamente per l'uso della caccia a servir la sua Persona, e altre tanto d'altri distribuiti fra li sudetti Gentilhuomini, e Cacciatori. Ha ducento Cani corridori, oltre li Limieri, e Leurieri, la razza de quali presentemente ha introdotta ne propri Stati

con grande sparagno di spesa».

⁴¹⁴ BRT, Casa Savoia, I: 1, *Bilancio della casa del duca Carlo Emanuele II per il 1662*.

⁴¹⁵ IVI, *Bilancio della casa del duca Carlo Emanuele II per il 1666*.

⁴¹⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, art. 86, 100: 148, 334.

⁴¹⁷ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *Venaria Reale*, 31.

fact to emerge from this cycle is the variety of prey, the same as those listed in the foundation of the ventry by Victor Amadeus I with regards to the different packs of hounds. In the different paintings it is possible to clearly see the different packs of dogs chosen in 1632. Large dogs and mastiffs were those used in big game hunts such as bear and wild boar; greyhounds dominate the hare hunting scene; in fox hunting, which depicts different ways of flushing out the animal, the dogs used are small hounds.

Of these hunts, however, Castellamonte gives no description, dwelling only on the deer hunt and his different phases:

The first, l'andar per bosco, when the huntsman early in the day goes into the thickest of woods looking with the escort of the Limiere for the trail of the Deer [...]

The second is the assemblea, where H.R.H. gathers with all the huntsmen for lunch under the shade of some beautiful vegetation awaiting the return of the huntsmen [...]

The third is the lasciar correre, which is after having elected the deer and the part of the wood to run, distributed the dogs and discovered the deer, launching the dogs to the race [...]

*The fourth is the curée, which is done after the killing of the deer, with taking off its skin, separating its limbs, distributing the main ones to the Huntsmen, the remainder leaving it to the prey of the Dogs[...]*⁴¹⁸

These four stages described by Castellamonte represent the heart of the rite of deer *chasse à courre*.⁴¹⁹ The fact that only this hunt is described in detail is indicative that from its construction in the late 1650s, when Jan Miel painted his pictures with the different hunts, by the time Castellamonte wrote there had been an imbalance in favor of the

⁴¹⁸ Ivi, 32. Or. It. : «La prima, l'andar al bosco, quando il cacciatore avanti giorno si porta nel più folto de Bofchi cercando con la scorta del Limiere la traccia del Cervo [...] La seconda è l'Assemblea, ove si raduna S. A. R. con tutti li Cacciatori a pranzo sotto l'ombra di qualche bella verdura attendendo il ritorno de' Cacciatori [...] La terza è il lasciar correre, che è dopò d'hauer eletto il Ceruo, & il Paese da correrfi, distribuiti i rilasi, e scoperto il Ceruo, slassari Cani, e lanciarli alla corsa. La quarta è la Curea, che si fà dopò la presa del Cervo, con leuargli la pelle, separargli le membra, distribuirne le principali a Cacciatori, il restante lasciarlo in preda de Cani».

⁴¹⁹ See P. P. D'ENTREVES, *Il cerimoniale della caccia al cervo*, 201-222.

chasse à courre, which had deer as its only prey. A process that as we shall see would find its completion in the eighteenth century.

From this point of view, the shift to *chasse à courre* created a simplification of the hounds pack and thus of the animal court as a whole. A simplification that also occurred because of the parallel decline of falconry, affected by several factors. The first, as mentioned above, was definitely the predominant status now assumed by the *chasse à courre* at the expense of other methods. The second was the high cost and the problems in obtaining the animals on the European market. A confidential and undated report sent by a falconer reveals the complexities of this trade.⁴²⁰ It records expenditure of almost £1,000 for ten birds because many falconers preferred to travel to northern Europe, particularly to Flanders, to buy the best animals to bring back to Piedmont. The report exposed the misconduct of some falconers, and the author suggested some solutions to put an end to this behaviour. Indeed, the long voyages and the high cost of the animals allowed some falconers to take advantage, declaring higher expenses and thus receiving higher compensation. To contain these rises, the falconer advised the duke to move his trade to Switzerland, where he could find valuable animals at a much lower cost. In addition to these problems, rifle hunting was gaining popularity, with the establishment of personnel expressly dedicated to hunting with firearms, which was certainly cheaper and more practical for the hunting of game birds.

The trinity of hunting was thus progressively losing one of its three vertices, becoming more and more a pair consisting of the increasingly close relationship between dog and horse. Falconry was thus gradually replaced by shooting hunting, which had its most coveted prey in the pheasant. Evidence of this transition is evidenced by the creation of the pheasant stud farm [*faggianeria*] within the Venaria Reale, where these animals were raised and kept by a *faggianaro*. Castellamonte described this space in detail. The birds were housed in a lodge on the ground floor throughout the winter to protect them from the cold. This was flanked by a fenced area in which they were enclosed in March; five females and one male, for breeding. The hatching of eggs was left not to the pheasants themselves but to the hens, so as not to fatigue these animals and allow them to remain

⁴²⁰ ASCTO, Collezione Simeom, 8471, *Memoria della Falconeria di SAR*, f.1. The report dating back to the last years of the seventeenth century or the first years of the following century because is mentioned the Grand Huntsman Arduino Tana. Cfr. P. PASSERIN D'ENTREVES, *La caccia reale tra Piemonte e Savoia nei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII*, 199-213.

healthy at all times.⁴²¹ This transition found its zenith in the founding of a new pheasantry in 1739, by which time all trace of falconry had disappeared.⁴²²

As can be seen from these new hunting performance, a different conception was being formed, far removed from a direct confrontation with the prey, as in the past. A move that also regarded competing animals such as wolves and foxes. The territory of Venaria Reale became in many ways a space constructed to nullify the competition of other animals with the prince-hunter. Prior to its construction, the relationship with other predators - wolves, foxes, martens, and birds of prey - was dominated by the competition that these animals still managed to exert against the ducal hunts, net of the periodic hunts that were carried out against foxes and wolves. Instead, the processes highlighted so far led to a completely different approach that aimed at the extermination of all forms of competition. This approach soon took on the characteristics of an administrative process that provided precise rewards per animal killed, based on age and how dangerous they were. At the top of this scheme, we obviously find wolves, whose culling was rewarded with 4 lira per specimen, which decreased to 2 in the case of cubs. At the same lower level, equal to £1 per animal killed, we then find, foxes, martens, and what are generally referred to as wild cats. The elimination of adult birds of prey were also rewarded with the same amount, while at the base of this pyramid we find fox cubs and raptors chicks, for which half a *lira* was paid.

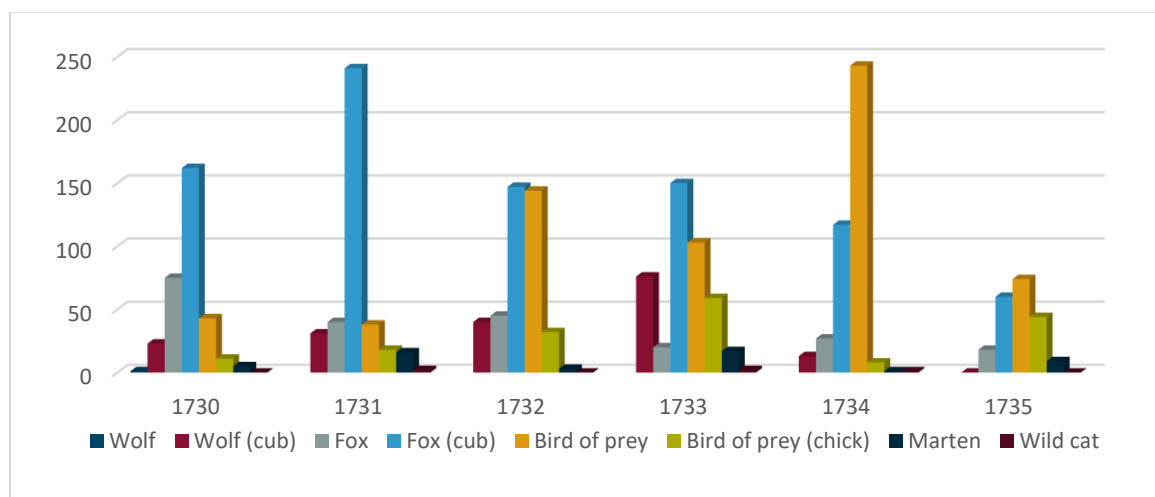


Chart 12 - Number of competitors killed per year 1730-1735 based on ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, Seconda archiviazione, Capo 18, Registri di cassa 1730-1735

⁴²¹ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 70-71.

⁴²² ASTO CORTE, *Caccia e boschi*, 1-II: 2, *Conti per la creazione della regia faggianeria*.

Unfortunately, detailed accounts of competitor consignments, as those shown in *chart 12*, can be found in relatively late sources, such as the cash registers of the Venaria Reale from the 1730s. This does, however, offer a stark picture of what Venaria Reale had become. Taking the data for the years 1730 to 1735, it can be seen that the systematic culling of wolf cubs had led to the population being almost wiped out. The same argument can be made for the presence of foxes, largely the competitor on which the greatest efforts were focused.⁴²³ Even adult birds of prey were systematically destroyed, showing how much the relationship toward them had changed considering that between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were protected to feed the falconers' ducal aviaries. The elements outlined so far were instrumental in radically changing the hunts at the court of Savoy and constituted the main features of the royal hunting of the eighteenth century. The rite of *chasse à courre* also imposed a different use of spaces, both inside and outside the Venaria Reale.

A ritual space

With the construction of the Venaria Reale, Charles Emmanuel II hunted at least twice a week since, knowing every inch of the territory surrounding the palace, distributing dogs and huntsmen so well that hunts that once took the whole day were completed, according to Castellamonte, in four hours.⁴²⁴ He reported how Charles Emmanuel II used to wait in the courtyard for the reports from the different huntsmen, and there he would gather the hunters' *assemblée* to decide upon the deer to kill and order the distribution of the dogs. It was from there that the entire hunting crew left and then returned to celebrate the *curée*.⁴²⁵ The Venaria became the *alpha* and *omega* of the different hunting phases. The Venaria Reale now ensured not only a suitable space to stage them all, but a real routine that made the functionality of these stages pass into a ritualistic dimension, repeated weekly by the duke. Through the Venaria Reale's status as an alternative seat of the entire ducal court, hunting took on, perhaps for the first time truly, a dimension of an actual court ceremony. The accentuated ceremonial character that was consolidated had immediate repercussions on the relationship between the duke and those who

⁴²³ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale delle finanze, Seconda archiviazione, Capo 18, Venaria Reale e mandira di Chivasso, Cassieri, 1730-1735.

⁴²⁴ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 17.

⁴²⁵ *Ivi*, 10.

accompanied him on hunts, leading to the institution of strict instructions, which were formalized in the decades to come. How exactly did the ritualised hunt?

A regulation established during the 1680s, during the regency of Jeanne Baptiste de Nemours, details precisely this.⁴²⁶ The first to be taken to task were the squires. The Grand Esquire, or in case of his absence the first and the second, was required to give orders to the stable to prepare horses as soon as the duke decided to leave for the hunt and during this he was required «to run immediately after His Royal Highness».⁴²⁷ He was followed by the master of the stable and the first page, who had to carry the so-called *mala*, i.e. a bag of spare clothes for the duke. The task of dressing the duke in case of need again fell to the first squire.⁴²⁸

Then there were the duke's *valets a pié*, all of whom were required to take part in the hunt, in particular their caporal. Marshallers were also required to take part in each hunt and intervene on the horseshoeing in the event of damage, and grooms had to mount the horses of the second squire while leading those of the first by hand.⁴²⁹ A special role was played by the man who was in charge of carrying the duke's arquebus. He was required to stand beside the duke and load the firearm according to the game being hunted. He could not, however, hand it to the duke directly but, as in the case of the *mala*, it was the first squire who handed the weapon to the duke.⁴³⁰ As can be deduced, they had now distanced themselves from the very medieval hunts still practised by Emmanuel Philibert or even Victor Amadeus I, which involved less court participation and a more direct relationship with the huntmen. With Charles Emmanuel II, the figure of the prince-hunter had by then achieved its own autonomous sphere and could only be accessed through the intermediary of the court that followed him.

The ceremonial and ritualistic dimension only increased in the following years. As can be seen from a second ceremonial project, this time from the 1720s, *etiquette* had also become established around the various types of hunting.⁴³¹ In the deer hunt, the Grand

⁴²⁶ ASTO CORTE, *Materie politiche per rapport all'interno, Cerimoniale, Cariche di Corte, Cerimoniale ossia Regolamento per la grandi cariche della Real Corte di Savoia, annessovi a ciascheduna gli obblighi de suoi subordinati.*

⁴²⁷ Ivi, cap. 10.

⁴²⁸ Ivi, cap. 17.

⁴²⁹ Ivi, cap. 24.

⁴³⁰ Ivi, cap. 26.

⁴³¹ BRT, 720:2, *Progetto di cerimoniale di corte.*

Huntsman was required to hold the duke's *estortuaire*, a stick used to prevent tree branches from hitting the prince when he rode into the wood.⁴³² The ceremonial of 1720 still reports a ritual related to falconry, which, however, will already see not the presence of the Grand Falconer but that of the Grand Hunter, who as we have seen had absorbed its functions. Even in falconry, the prince's private sphere could not be accessed directly: one of the gentlemen of the Venaria was in charge of taking the falcon from its perch and handing it to the Grand Huntsman who would place it on the prince's fist. Once the prey had been caught, it was not handed over to the duke in full, but only three feathers taken from the head of the bird that had been killed.⁴³³ In the hunt with toiles, there was also a specific procedure for sorting numerous preys, which would be set out in an enclosed area: the hunter-prince would proceed to choose the best prey for himself, and then let the Great Huntsman distribute the remainder. In his absence, the distribution would be ensured by the First Gentleman of Venaria and the General captain of the Hunt.⁴³⁴ These rituals were complemented by other more specific moments, such as the feast of St John the Baptist, Turin's patron saint, during which the Grand Huntsman used to deliver three large partridges.⁴³⁵

But there is no doubt that the zenith of this process of ritualisation of hunting was the celebration held on 3rd of November, the day of St Hubert, patron of huntsmen.⁴³⁶ The

⁴³² Ivi, f. 68v.

⁴³³ Ibidem.

⁴³⁴ Ivi, f. 69.

⁴³⁵ Ivi, f. 67.

⁴³⁶ The devotion to this saint and his connection with the hunting world spans the centuries and is rooted in a hagiographic plot. A symbolic date is 3 November 743 when the canonisation of Hubert was held at the basilica of Saint-Pierre in Liège. He had been bishop of Tongres-Maastricht between the end of the seventh century and the first half of the next. Through the rite of *elevatio*, the relics of the bishop, who died in Tervuren in 727, acquired a prominent place in the sacred architecture of the basilica. Almost a century later, in 825, the relics were transported to the monastery of Saint-Lambert in Andage, near Ardennes. The bishop's life and his canonisation were intertwined with the power dynamics of the Pipinid-Carolingians, whose members took part in the ceremony and were the founders of the seat that eventually received the relics. From the 11th century onwards, Hubert's relics at the monastery henceforth named after him became a pilgrimage destination on account of the anti-rabies power recognised in them, a thaumaturgic element confirmed in the miracle books written by the monks. The curative practice was the *incisio* or *taille*, which involved inserting a fibre from the holy bishop's stole into the forehead of the sick person. See J.-L. KUPPER, *Qui était saint Hubert ?* in *Le culte de saint Hubert au Pays de Liège*, éd. A. DIERKENS ET J.-M. DUVOSQUEL,

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celebration of St Hubert was widespread in many other European courts, especially in France, but at the court of Turin it took on peculiar elements that were more reminiscent of the practices in use in the Germanic area. The ritual involved the use of some special laces called "St. Hubert's laces." These were presented by the Grand Hunter to the dukes or kings, while the *valets de limiers* presented them to the other participants. This practice harks back to the anti-rabies rite formerly practiced with the stole at the monastery of Andage.⁴³⁷ At the end of the handover of the laces and mass, a grand and magnificent hunt was then held.

The emergence of this kind of hunting ritual at the court of the House of Savoy had its roots in the spaces created by Venaria Reale. Castellamonte himself specified that every year the duke used to hold a much more solemn assembly at the Venaria Reale on St Hubert's Day, the hunters' feast day. The focal point of the celebration was the chapel built at the Venaria Reale, dedicated to the Virgin Mary:

*On this other side, to the left, you will see the chapel, richly ornamented with stucco and Corinthian architecture, adorned with paintings by the hands of four of the country's best painters, entitled to the Virgin Mary and Saint Roch, and in it rests the sacred body of Saint Hubert in a rich silver case.*⁴³⁸

The chapel had become the theatre of the celebration precisely because of the relics kept there. Charles Emmanuel II petitioned Rome for some relics of the saint to be placed in the chapel in June 1669. The saint's body had in fact been destroyed in the 16th century Huguenot assaults, so a replacement had to be found. This was identified in a martyred Saint Hubert, whose remains were found in the catacombs of the Pretestati by Pope Clement XII. As Alessandra Castellani Torta and Marinello pointed out, therefore, the Duke of Savoy and the entire court staged a real theatrical fiction.⁴³⁹ The presence of the relics at Venaria Reale and the hinging of devotion on the broader ceremonial of hunting, transformed the celebration of St Hubert's Day into a cornerstone of the hunting calendar

Saint-Hubert, Centre Pierre-Joseph Refouté 1990, 13-19 ; P. GALLONI, *Sant'Uberto. Caccia e santità in La chasse au Moyen Age. Société, traité, symboles*, éd. A. PARAVICINI-BAGLIANI et B. VAN DEN ABEELE, Firenze, Edizioni del Galluzzo 2000, 33-53; A. DUPONT, *Aux origines de deux aspects du culte de saint Hubert : Hubert guérisseur de la rage et patron des chasseurs in Le culte de saint Hubert au Pays de Liège*, 19-31.

⁴³⁷ P. PASSERIN D'ENTREVES, *Fanfare e messa di Sant'Uberto*, 81-85.

⁴³⁸ A. CASTELLAMONTE, *La Venaria Reale*, 10.

⁴³⁹ A. CASTELLANI TORTA, G. MARINELLO, *La queste di Sant'Uberto* in F. PERNICE (ed.), *La chiesa di Sant'Uberto a Venaria Reale. Storia e restauri*, Celid, Torino 2003, 85.

at the Savoy court. During this day, the court engaged in larger hunts but, especially from the first decades of the 18th century, it became a central day connected with the centralisation of expenses for the maintenance of hunting equipment. The *Saint Obert* was in fact an opportunity for huntsmen to receive new hunting clothes, called *sourtout*.⁴⁴⁰

The Pope also sent some relics of St Eustace, who had the same patronage function for hunters as St Hubert and to whom first had been referred the legend of the stag and the crucifix.⁴⁴¹ The cult to St Eustace, which spread throughout Europe and the rest of Italy from the 9th century onwards, never found a place in the devotions of the Savoy court, overshadowed by Hubertus.⁴⁴² The competition between the two saints and the supremacy of the Tervuren bishop has its roots in the history of Savoy's hunting as has been traced so far. The earliest evidence of the inner veneration for Hubertus at the court of Savoy, combined with the celebration of the 3rd of November, does not date back to the years after the arrival of the relics but well before; in the first half of the seventeenth century. In November 1633, Thomas of Savoy was in Chambery and in a letter sent to the brother Victor Amadeus I he described his last hunts:

*The count of Val d'Isère reported me about the hunts of His Highness. Here we join the weather when it is possible, having been in a bad way for a while. Yesterday, I caught a stag and the day of S. Hubert a daquet, which drowned in the Isère river and we could not fetch it since the fast pace rising water and passed through the ruins of Montmelian mine, close to the city gate, and in that of the suburb with rain all day long.*⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ A. PASSERIN D'ENTREVES, *Le cacce reali a Stupinigi: la "Saint Obert"* in *Il sentimento religioso e le cacce reali*, 17-18.

⁴⁴¹ The legend passed later in the Hubertus' hagiography. The roots of the deer vision and its symbolism can be found even in other religions, see H. PETERSEN, *Les origines de la légende de saint Eustache* in «Neuphilologische Mitteilungen», 26-3\4 (1925), 65-86; A. HAGGERTY KRAPPE, *Il cervo di S. Eustachio* in «Lares», 4-1\2 (1933), 3-6.

⁴⁴² G. MARINELLO, A. CASTELLANI TORTA, *Il culto di Sant'Uberto alla corte sabauda* in *Il sentimento religioso e le cacce reali*, 34-38.

⁴⁴³ The *daquet* is a young male deer, see. A. CORVOL, *La chasse*. Or. It.: « Il conte della Valdisera mi ha fatto relazione delle caccie di V.A. Qua si va godendo il tempo quando ce lo permette, essendo stato da un pezzo in qua pessimo. Jeri presi un cervo et il giorno di S. Umbert un *daquet* qual si negò nell'Isèra et non lo potessimo ricuperare crescendo l'acqua a vista d'occhio et andò a passare nelle rovine della mina di Monmeliano vicino alla porta della villa et dentro quella del faubourg et avessimo la pioggia tutto il giorno addosso».

Although there was no official ceremonial yet, veneration for the saint of the Ardennes was already widespread among the members of the House of Savoy. This early origin of the court devotion and the different choice compared to the rest of Italy leave room for some hypotheses. Undoubtedly, the location of the Duchy of Savoy within the cultural space of the Holy Roman Empire had facilitated the adherence to the cult of saints which was widespread in north-central Europe. Likewise, the great influence exerted on the Savoy hunting model by France, where the celebration of Saint Hubert was already part of the court ceremonial, certainly contributed to establishing the pre-eminence over Saint Eustace. However, it is essential to keep in mind the internal events within the duchy itself and its hunting history. As we have seen, leading the reconstruction of the Savoy hunting system in the second half of the sixteenth century was a group of huntsmen whose homeland territories were precisely those that represented the centre of the cult of Hubertus. Moreover, they maintained important roles among the hunting officers, with the presence of Rinaldo de Vella, at least until 1618, a date very close to this first attestation of a worship to St Hubert by the House of Savoy. Thus, it can be hypothesised that the adherence of the House of Savoy to the cult of Hubert and the later elaboration of a ceremonial were in some way constituted through a bottom-up process, which began with the settlement of the Flemish huntsmen in Altessano Superiore.

This chapter outlined the three main transformations related to the hunting system that resulted from the construction of the Venaria Reale palace. The developments highlighted so far show also how the construction of the Venaria Reale had relatively little impact on the increase per se of hunting crews, showing itself more as a factor of centralization and rationalization by bringing about radical changes in the structure of hunting officers that would be kept unchanged in the following decades. The establishment of the charge of Grand Huntsman was undoubtedly the most notable fact, unquestionably linked to the new hunting hub desired by Charles Emmanuel II.

The transition from the princely hunts that had their origin in the animal court of the years of Victor Amadeus I, still traceable in Jan Miel's cycle of hunts, which therefore had different packs of hunting dogs, depending on the prey reserved for them, to the ritual of the *chasse à courre* that had in the deer the main prey and in the ritualisation of the space centred on the Venaria Reale its territorial expression.

A ritualisation that found its greatest expression in the cult of St Hubert celebrated on 3 November, already present for decades at the Savoy court, but which was only formalised through the acquisition of the relics and their deposition in the church of Venaria Reale. Not coincidentally, as we shall see in the next chapter, with the construction of the hunting lodge at Stupinigi where the gravitational centre of the hunts moved to, the relics

will also be moved to the chapel in the new lodge. From 1730 onwards, the rite of St. Hubert was celebrated at Stupinigi. The Venaria Reale palace was the main weapon of Charles Emmanuel II in his competition for power with Christine of France. Its construction, however, led to radical changes in the hunting system of the House of Savoy that would be consolidated in the eighteenth century. However, as seen in the introduction to the chapter, internal competition was not the only one challenging sovereignty over the Duke of Savoy's hunts, because it was during these years that poaching emerged most visibly.

2.3 The hound and the wheel

Poaching and hunting crimes in Savoy and Piedmont

This chapter will analyse the phenomenon of poaching between 1680 and 1730 in Savoy and Piedmont. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to return for a moment to what, according to the ambassador, were the complaints made by Charles Emmanuel II to the Marquis de Louvois in their conversation. Indeed, Michiel speaks in his report of people «*sturbavano le cacce riservate*».⁴⁴⁴ This terminology leaves room for some preliminary thoughts on poaching, in particular on the dimensions it assumed in the territories of the House of Savoy. The first is semantic. The verb used is *sturbare* or *disturbare*. The verb does not indicate a precise action, such as killing animals or setting traps in the woods, but rather refers to a broad spectrum of actions that in various ways interfered with hunting laws in the countryside. This type of interference, of which no further details are given, could have been related to hunting at prohibited times or practising methods, like trapping, not permitted by law or in areas precluded to hunting activity.

The second point is therefore spatial. Poaching is not identified as an attack committed against a specific territory, such as parks, but as a hunting crime perpetrated against the entire territory subject to a sovereign power, particularly when directed at that part of the animal court, consisting of the royal animals, which fell under princely protection. Once again, the term *hunts* takes on different meanings. In this case, reference is made to the reserved preys that roamed a territory belonging to the states of the House of Savoy, just beyond the border with the stronghold, outside the ten-mile reserved district.

Here the third and final point emerges. The presence (and movement) of animals throughout the territory further extends the concept of poaching. Hunting crime took on different guises depending also on the prey hunted. The same lexical difference used to refer to this act in different languages, *braconage/braconaggio* in French and Italian or *poaching/furtivismo* in English and Spanish. The first terms refer to the use of dogs, *bracques* or *bracchi*, which refers to hunting medium to large prey or in any case a hunt conducted with the use of rifles and therefore less concealed. The second terminology refers instead to nocturnal hunting and the stealthy use of traps to hunt medium or small prey, especially feathered game.

⁴⁴⁴ ASVE, Dispacci ambasciatori, Savoia 78, 126: f.2.

These different modes coexisted, making this illegal activity not relatable to a single behaviour. Poaching is therefore identifiable with any action that damages the established order of hunting in terms of time, space and sovereign prerogatives. In many ways, poaching can be interpreted as the opposite of princely hunting, a denial of the social hierarchies it imposed and a rebellion against the impositions that prevented the free exercise of an activity common to all people.

The years from Charles Emmanuel II to Victor Amadeus II are of particular interest for the analysis of the phenomenon. Philippe Salvadori pointed out that, for the French case, most of the information began to emerge only from the last quarter of the 17th century. The author puts this down to two factors: the forest reform of mid-seventeenth century and the consequent lack of preservation of registers prior to that date.⁴⁴⁵ The information for the states of the House of Savoy also shows almost the same dynamics, suggesting that this could also be due to other factors. The new forest legislation could be a factor, as well as the increased controls exercised through stronger repression systems, as demonstrated in the case of Savoy with the introduction of the gamekeeper dragoons. Salvadori notes how, even following such reforms, the phenomenon never emerges in a prominent way, always remaining under the radar. This is attributable to the fact that the poacher was perfectly integrated within his local community and practised, in the vast majority of cases, proximity hunting.

The literature has often looked more at the phenomenon than at the actors involved, emphasising poaching rather than poachers. The perspective proposed here is instead to start not with the phenomenon but with the individual poachers and the social context surrounding them, which can be partly reconstructed. This approach therefore starts with a different question: who was the poacher?

Robert Manning's work certainly attempted to offer answers based on this very question. The profile of the poacher in early modern England that emerges from his research is certainly more composite than that of the simple criminal. As he himself admits in the introductory pages, «attempts to classify unlawful hunting as crime or as social or political protest» may prove a futile effort since, «in varying degrees, the many kinds of behaviour covered by the term poaching involved aspects of all of these kinds of phenomena».⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ P. SALVADORI, *La chasse sous l'Ancien Regime*, 277-279.

⁴⁴⁶ R. MANNING, *Hunters and Poachers: A social and cultural history of unlawful hunting in England, 1485-1640*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1993, 3.

This also brought out the extent to which the aristocratic element was present within this phenomenon and was a substitute for the duel between nobles.⁴⁴⁷ Here too, however, the poacher remains shrouded in the shadow of the crime committed, which in many cases seems to take on the lines of an action following politically oriented attacks, such as the destruction of deer park palisades or raids in which these animals were simply slaughtered. What emerges, then, is the exploitation of poaching for other purposes rather than the political and social repercussions of the phenomenon.

A trial instituted in the early 1730s against a large group of poachers can provide a good example. The day before Christmas Eve 1731, a group of 16 people coming from the towns of Favria and Front had gathered in the woods between Leinì and Volpiano, within the 10-mile reserved district around Turin.⁴⁴⁸ The term used by the sources is *quadriglia*, which generically refers to a group of people armed or not involved in the same activity. The *quadriglia* of poachers turned out to be good hunters: a roe deer, two pheasants and many other wild animals were slaughtered during the day. The great stir in the woods around the capital not only alarmed the game fleeing the guns of the joyful brigade, but also the gamekeeper dragoons who rushed to stop the carnage. A firefight ensued from which one of the hunting officers was slightly wounded. Most of the poachers dispersed, five of them were placed under arrest and another, identified, managed to escape. On 20th April 1732, the Senate confirmed the sentences for the six poachers: Carlo Valetto of Valperga was sentenced in absentia, having managed to escape, to perpetual rowing in the royal galleys and the confiscation of all his property. The same sentence was also handed down for Domenico Viatino di Graglia, the brothers Martino and Giorgio d'Antonio, Michele Riazetto from Front and Martino Borlo, his servant. Some of them were also sentenced to parade dressed as convicts through many villages in the reserved hunting district, to set an example.

In September 1733, poachers appealed for royal clemency in order to obtain lighter sentences and to be exempted from rowing in the galleys. The demands open a glimpse into the social reality within the group. Carlo Valetto's parents demanded that their son, who had fled, could have his crime pardoned through the payment of 100 lire offered by his father, as «they only owned a small house with one *giornata* of land and the poacher was the only support for his elderly parents».⁴⁴⁹ Domenico Viatino, instead, turns out to

⁴⁴⁷ IVI, 47; 138.

⁴⁴⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, I versamento, Boschi, caccia e pesca, mz. 1: 15.

⁴⁴⁹ IVI, f. 1.

be the servant of one of the other poachers, Michele Riazzetto. Since he is destitute, «miserable with his daily labour», he is forced to seek the same mercy through a loan granted by Riazzetto. The D'Antonio brothers present a tragic picture of their story, fearing the danger of the death of their families: the two men were fathers one of 4 and the other of 3 children, whose economic situation had now condemned them to begging. For Martino Borlo, on the other hand, it was his wife who pleaded, promising the payment of 500 lire, taken from his dowry, and another 160 from his daughters' dowry in order to see her husband, «a man of wealth and who was never used to hunting», return home. The only poacher who did not receive such harsh treatment was Michele Riazzetto, because, on the strength of his high economic status, confirmed by the payment of £3,000, he managed to avoid both imprisonment and confiscation of property. The fact that he was the only one accompanied by a servant further confirms his higher social status.

As can be seen, the internal composition of a group of poachers in the early 18th century was far from homogeneous. Within the same group were men from different social backgrounds and whose relationships were characterised by different ties: familiar, economic, communitarian. Could the motivation that drove them be unambiguous? Did it have a common denominator in acting as one? Can a broader analysis provide further clues, both on poaching patterns and repression? Poaching took on different features within the states of the House of Savoy. When practised around the capital, within the reserved area, it was radically different from when it was practised outside Turin or even beyond the Alps, in Savoy, as shown by the response of the political authority. This composition allows the case of the Savoy states to be used on a comparative level, while remaining within the same state framework.

This chapter will offer an analysis of the phenomenon from the judicial sources that have come down to us, comparing its evolution in the area around Chambery, the former capital of French-speaking Savoy and outside the reserved hunting district, with that around Turin, the sovereign's reserved hunting territory and capital first of the Duchy of Savoy and then of the Kingdom of Sardinia, between the 1680s and 1730s. The selection of around 50 processes divided between Piedmont and Savoy certainly finds the Savoyard trials quantitatively advantaged, as all the files have been preserved, whereas in the area around the capital only the sentences have survived to the present day. These, however, can also be integrated with other kinds of orders released for the reserved district, which are more detailed than in Savoy. The greater breadth and depth of the Savoy sources also allows for a more in-depth theoretical framework of repression, specifically that outside the reserved district but whose cornerstones applied to the fight against poaching as a whole.

«Comme la rouë d'une charrüe»: the theoretical framework of repression

In 1717, a trial was instituted against François and Antoine Doucet, peasants from Faverges, guilty of hunting hares on the property of the Marquis of Faverges with dogs and rifles. In his indictment, Joseph Greytié, advisor to the King Victor Amadeus II and major judge of the Genevois, delved into a broader analysis of the crime, highlighting its theoretical assumptions:

Many on this occasion often leave the cultivation of their land and the exercise of their trades to the prejudice and interest of the public good, and this is what is verified at the foot of the letter among the accused, who are commoners and whose most ordinary occupation is hunting, leaving their business and commerce to give themselves to this noble exercise and even with dogs, a hunt which is due only to a man of condition: the dog, the hawk and the sparrowhawk being the symbol of the nobility, as the wheel of a plough is that of the commoner.⁴⁵⁰

Hunting is presented here as a symbolic as well as a social divide, from which the subaltern or non-aristocratic classes have to be removed. As is evident from the Savoy judge's words, poaching was not the mere violation of a law but a challenge to the vision of a world, that of the *ancien régime*, where the symbolic aspect was by no means secondary. The illegitimate acquisition of one of the elements of the hunting trinity, the dog, by a commoner is to all intents and purposes an invasion into a symbolic space. If the nobility is recognised in what the judge Greytié presented as an imperfect hunting trinity (but to which one could easily add horses) represented by hounds (*chiens*), falconids (*faucon*) and accipitrids (*épervier*), the plough wheel stands as an oppressive symbol of those who, being bound to the earth, were not privileged to enjoy all its fruits. Devoting yourself to hunting meant abandoning work in the fields and workshops: time and its use were tied to the needs of the society, therefore, only the small aristocratic minority and the sovereign authority could turn it into *loisir*.

⁴⁵⁰ ASD, B0 4380 : f. 9. Or. Fr. : «Plusieurs à cette occasion laissent bien souvent la culture de leur terre et l'exercice de leur metairier (sic !) au préjudice et intérêt du bien public et l'est ce qui se vériffié (sic !) au pied de la lettre chez les accuses, qui sont de roturiers et dont l'occupation la plus ordinaire est la chasse, laissant leur affaires, et leur commerce pour sa donner à ce noble exercice et même avec chiens, chasse qui n'est due que un homme de condition: le chien, le faucon et l'épervier estant le simbole de la noblesse, comme la rouë d'une charrüe est celuy de la roture».

The symbolic framework within which illegal hunting was embedded clearly had its theoretical roots in philosophical and religious thought. One of the main pillars lay in the thought of the *doctor angelicus*, Thomas Aquinas. As Judge Greytie himself states in the trial, an important point was expressed in the treatise *De decem praeceptis*, in which, in article 7, the Dominican philosopher reasoned about the fifth Christian commandment *non occides*:

*With regard to this prescription, there is a threefold error. In fact, some argue that it is not licit to kill even wild beasts. But this is false, because it is not a sin to exploit what is subject to the authority of man. It belongs to the natural order that plants are the food of animals, some the food of others, and everything the food of men (Gen. IX, 3) [...] Even the philosopher argues in Politics that hunting is bellum iustum.*⁴⁵¹

Killing «wild beasts is part of the natural right» based on the biblical and Aristotelian tradition, «but, as “Greytie” goes on to say, after the introduction of fiefdoms and the granting of patrimonial justice, this right of people or of nature underwent major changes». The right to take possession of the beasts subject to the dominion was first limited by seigniorial rights and then by «our sovereigns on their own, who established ban on hunting».

Only a few edicts are mentioned in the trial, such as the one of 23 September 1598, issued by Charles Emmanuel I, which punished anyone who caused damage to crops by hunting, especially if *roturier*.⁴⁵² Looking also at the text of another trial held in the same year, the one against the Senate advocate Nicolas Poncet, it turns out that these restrictions actually already dated back to Emmanuel Philibert, who had already enacted legislation to protect cultivation with an order dated 22 May 1568.⁴⁵³ These rules would then be reiterated in very recent years, with an order of 15 May 1709 in which Victor Amadeus II reiterated the condemnation of all those responsible for damaging cultivation.

⁴⁵¹ T. AQUINO, *De decem praeceptis* in *Opera omnia*. Or. Lat. : «Circa quod praeceptum tripliciter est erratum. Quidam enim dixerunt, quod non licet occidere etiam bruta animalia. Sed hoc falsum est, quia non est peccatum uti illis quae sunt subdita hominis potestati. Est etiam naturalis ordo quod plantae sint in nutrimentum animalium, et quaedam animalia in nutrimentum aliorum, et omnia in nutrimentum hominum. Gen. IX, 3 [...] Philosophus etiam dicit in politica, quod venatio est sicut iustum bellum».

⁴⁵² ADS, B0 4380 : f. 8v-9.

⁴⁵³ Ivi, B0 4401: f. 2.

The same theoretical framework can be found in the 1680s, suggesting that it has always been the frame of reference in the suppression of unlawful hunting. The trial against Claude Gaymot known as Tinten, held in 1687, is an example. In the process, it is pointed out that «the view that hunting is a right of nature, or even a privilege that cannot be prohibited for public benefit, has long been abused».⁴⁵⁴ This supremacy of legislation over natural law finds its definition once again from Thomistic philosophy and religious observations:

*The reason for this is quite natural, for the same God who subjugated the animals to the empire of men is the same God who earlier submitted men to the power of their sovereigns, to contain them in peace and in the union of their fellows whom they could have worried by hunting in their own country.*⁴⁵⁵

The conclusion was, once again quoting the philosopher, that «hunting, allowed to everyone, can be forbidden by princes for many reasons». In this respect, the legislative formulation of Emperor Frederick I is taken as the first example of the restriction of hunting freedom, fundamentally linked to social peace: with the *De pace tenenda* constitutions of 1152, it was argued in the trial, for the first time a ban was established on traps for hunting animals, apart from bears, wolves and wild boars.

The theoretical framework within which the repression of the phenomenon of unlawful hunts had developed was therefore intended to divide the world symbolically represented by the dog - that of the nobles and sovereigns -, from that represented by the wheel - made up of the bourgeoisie and workers. Hunting was the paradigm that established a social order, and the repression of poaching was the way to maintain and re-establish it. An analysis of the profiles of the Savoyard poachers, though, reveals a more complex reality.

Shaded by vineyards and crops

A sample of 19 trials held at the Chambéry Senate provides sufficient information to draw a general profile of poachers outside the restricted area and consequently also of the

⁴⁵⁴ ADS, B0 2041: f. 3.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibidem. Or. Fr.: «La raison est parous bien naturelle car le même Dieu qui a assujetti les animaux à l'empire des hommes: le même Dieu a avant soum les hommes à la puissance de leurs souverains pour les contenir dans la paix et dans l'union de leurs compatriots qu'ils aurions pu inquiéter en chassant dans leurs bleds».

phenomenon. The typical poacher was, according to the biographical data present, a man between 25 and 50 years old whose social background did not fall under a specific class. All the different levels were equally represented: one third of the poachers were noblemen, another third were bourgeois or *roturier* and the rest were peasants and workers. This balance defied repressive norms, which provided for radically different punishments according to social background. This difference was formally ratified in the sovereign orders, as the excerpt in the trial against Claude and Pierre Cartier, sons of the castellan of Rumilly, states; the Savoy Senate set a fine of 500 lire against gentlemen, a ban against the bourgeoisie, and jail or the whip for peasants, plus other roturiers as punishments for hunting in the fields and vineyards.⁴⁵⁶ The image that therefore emerges of the Savoy poacher, and consequently of poaching, is that of individuals or men gathered in small groups.

Geographically, it is interesting to note that the places where crimes were committed, gravitated around two main areas, close from residential areas or not. The first is the Geneva border, with villages such as Archamps, Ville-le-Grand, Massongy and Anières. The second is made up of localities surrounding the Bauges massif, a mountainous area already highlighted for its hunting importance, particularly in connection with birds of prey for the ducal aviaries. From this it can be seen that poachers in Savoy took advantage of two types of contexts. The first environment was that of the border area, where controls and jurisdictions were more nuanced so that illegal activities such as poaching or smuggling could be practised more easily. The second environment was composed of mountainous territory, which, as we have seen even beyond the Alps in Savoy, meant fewer controls. The aforementioned massif was another example of a mountainous area with looser control. For sure, in some cases, the movement of some prey, especially the larger ones, ended in the surrounding plains and cultivated fields.

In fact, the main charge brought against the poachers, and for which they were brought to justice, was that of hunting in crops. This brings to light the main way in which poaching was practiced; that of exploiting the presence of fields and vineyards to set up hunting nets for birds and to flush out animals. This type of landscape guaranteed poachers cover for their actions, support for their traps and, above all, the presence of game looking for

⁴⁵⁶ ADS, B0 3296: f. 1v. The fine paid by the gentlemen was usually divided into one third to the sovereign's treasury, one third for repairing the damage caused and another for the nearest charity hotel.

food. What was thus mainly punished by the trials was the damage incurred to crops rather than the illegal killing of animals.

This type of poaching did not require large groups of people; in fact, trials tended to involve either individuals or small groups of at most 4 or 5 poachers. The small size should not, however, lead one to underestimate the potential damage that could be caused, and no single social category can be attributed those crimes as could be imagined – lower crimes with less organisation for lower social groups. The case of the abovementioned Nicolas Poncet, advocate at the Senate of Chambéry, and accused of poaching in 1717 for hunting with dogs and other companions on some sown lands, shows that even those higher social figures, at least formally in charge of prosecuting crimes, were included. Poncet seems to have assumed that he was entitled to a certain level of impunity even with a considerable number of fields devastated by his illegal hunting activities:

On the 5th of the month of last September he hunted with two others and with dogs in a piece of land sown with grain belonging to Jaques (sic!) Blanchet. It must also be proven that the said accused on the same day also hunted in a field sown with oats belonging to Joseph Gissard Colet, and then in another field belonging to Gaspard Carron sown with black wheat and grain, and that afterwards the same accused hunted in another field sown with black wheat, grain and millet belonging to the Sauge consorts and that from there he hunted in a piece of land belonging to monsieur Claude Garond, called buydet, of the same sowing of black wheat, grain and millet. And finally that on the same day the said accused hunted in the black wheat of Jean, son of the former Pierre Jacquet and called polatier and in the grain of Jean, son of the former Jean Jacquet, and in that of Francois Carlet. ⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁷ ADS, B0 4401: ff. 1-1v. Or. Fr.: «Le 5e de moise de septembre dernier il chasse avec deux autres et avec des chiens dans une pièce de terre ensemencée de panis appartenant (sic!) à Jaques (sic!) Blanchet. Il doit être prouvé aussi que le dit accuse le même jour chassa aussi dans un champ ensemencé d'avoine appartenant à Joseph Gissard Colet, et ensuite dans un autre champ appartenant à Gaspard Carron ensemencé de blé noir et de panis, et qu'en après le même accuse chassa dans un autre champ ensemencé de blé noir, panis et millet appartenant aux consorts Sauge et que de là il fut chasser dans un pièce de terre appartenant à monsieur Claude Garond apelée (sic!) *buydet* de même ensemencée de blé noir, grain et millet. Et finalement que le même jour le dit accuse chassa dans le blé noir Jean fils de feu Pierre Jacquet et appelé *polatier* et dans le grain de Jean fils de feu Jean Jacquet et dans celui de François Carlet».

The poachers squad, consisting of just three men, had destroyed the crops of at least eight different people in a single day. However, the damage caused by poaching was not necessarily related to the number of people involved in the illegal activities: these were more to do with the shamelessness of individual poachers, their perception that they could act outside the law.

The reality of these small groups, by the way, opens up a view that has not appeared in previous studies of the phenomenon: the presence of women. It has been said that the general profile of the poacher is that of an adult male; in fact, all those sentenced belonged to the male gender. But one specific process shows how women could take part in the action. In January 1689, Barthelemy Bouvard was called to justice for repeatedly hunting, even with dogs, in the vineyards and fields belonging to the Marquis de Sales. A witness called to testify against the poacher explained that he distinctly saw «on the day of Our Lady of August next past [...] Bouvard and his wife tending quail threads in three different fields».⁴⁵⁸ It might be thought of as a mere assisting role, which, however, presupposed the ability to set nets for the birds, but the witness goes on to claim that this was not the only time he saw the woman participating in poaching activities: he «saw also Bouvard and his wife who were hunting with *sonneaux* [little bells] in the ends of *Vertier* and also in the oats».⁴⁵⁹ In this case the two are unequivocally equated in their criminal action, but the very fact that only Bouvard ended up on trial and not his wife is an indication that the female role in poaching was interpreted always as auxiliary. One can legitimately wonder at this point in how many cases, the individual poacher could make use of the family network, which included wives or daughters, to carry out his work.

A fact not to be underestimated also concerns the days on which poachers preferred to hunt and Bouvard's case also reveals something about that. The first time the poacher and his wife were spotted setting traps was on the feast day of the Assumption of Mary (15 of August). A second time, the poacher was seen hunting «with five dogs on the feast day of St. Matthew» (21 of September).⁴⁶⁰ As was also seen in the case of 1731, the group of Piedmontese poachers had ventured into the woods on the same day as a religious celebration (24 of December). The concurrence with religious celebrations could be motivated by the fact that on feast days the gamekeepers' controls could be weaker, or that the celebration itself prompted many to hunt for the consumption of meat. This

⁴⁵⁸ ADS, B0 2376: f. 6.

⁴⁵⁹ IVI, f. 6v.

⁴⁶⁰ IVI, f. 7.

could, however, aggravate the poacher's own position. For instance, the case of blacksmith Pierre Reynaud, guilty of hunting a doe on the property of the Chartreuse of St. Hugo at the end of Lent in 1687, is exemplary. In the course of gathering information on the misdeeds committed by Reynaud, a witness interviewed reported the version given by the poacher himself:

They will come to speak of the doe which had been killed in the mountain of the said Marquis d'Arvillard [...] the above mentioned Reynaud says that having gone one night at the end of the Caresme close by in the hope of a hare, there comes a doe which he killed with a rifle shot and that he had given the said doe to people who had not given him a piece of the meat.⁴⁶¹

This is a corroboration of what was previously assumed about the poaching modalities. Hunting often began in mountainous and hilly areas and then landed on cultivated land where it was 'punished'. Reynaud's position was very compromising, having gone hunting at night and having killed a royal animal. The blacksmith then claimed that he had gone in search of hares and shot the doe almost by accident, but above all that he had in no way consumed its meat. This is obviously connected with the religious observances during which the consumption of meat was forbidden.

The action of the Savoyard poachers also outlines a degree of common actions carried by individuals from different social classes. Antoine Dorieux was called in June 1683 before Joseph Routh, doctor of law and judge of the Ville-la-Grand lordship, on the border between the House of Savoy states and Geneva.⁴⁶² Dorieux had already been in the dungeon of Ternier Castle awaiting interrogation. He was a 47 year old surgeon from Genevaz from where he had fled following his conversion to the Catholic faith. But religion was not the reason for his detention: the local lord, André Duclos de la Martinière, accused him of repeatedly using dogs and rifles to go hunting and fishing on his territory. The prisoner rejected all the accusations and claimed that they were all false and fabricated because of the *animosité mortelle* that the nobleman had towards him.⁴⁶³ At

⁴⁶¹ ADS, B0 3028, f. 3. Or. Fr.: «Il viendront à parler de la biche qui avoit este tue dans la montagne du dit seigneur Marquis d'Arvillard [...] le dit Reynaud dit qu'estant allé une nuit sur la fin du Caresme proche passé à l'espère d'un lièvre il vient un biche qu'il tua d'un coup de fusil et qu'il avoit donne la dite biche a des gens qui ne luy avoint pas donne un mourceau de la viande».

⁴⁶² ADS, B0 1765: f. 1.

⁴⁶³ IVI, f. 3v.

first glance, this would appear to be the classic case where poaching is linked to a clash between members of different social classes, some holding rights and privileges and others outside this world and therefore ready to challenge the laws to assert their power. But a closer reading shows more complexity. Indeed, Antoine Dorieux admitted that he had gone hunting several times in the Ville-le-Grand territory, not alone, but in the company of two other aristocrats; the lord of Brallier and the lord of Chastel, who had invited him to join them on several occasions. Although the sentence itself emphasises how it «is not right for a private individual, especially a commoner, to hunt impudently in the land of a lord», the clash here seems more internal to different social networks. It seems that there was not therefore always a challenge to the hierarchy from the lower classes with regards to poaching but a more nuanced reality.

Conducting poaching with individuals from different social classes could still acquire a different function. The following year, in the village of Saint-Jeoire-en-Faucigny located a few kilometres from Ville-le-Grand, a noblewoman requested the intervention of ducal officers against those who dared to hunt on her territory. Anne Dagnière, *dame* of Veigy, Valgeres and *condame* d'Hautheville and Vuaz, lashed out at the Maurice de Chaboz, Count of Saint Jeoire guilty of hunting on his land, bursting into vineyards and fields, and swaggering about everywhere:

*The mentioned Lord Count of Saint Jeoyre goes hunting at all times on horseback in the vineyards and in the wheat fields, even during their maturity, with a large number of dogs, his servants and several of his servants, in such a way that, as he is feared in the area, none of the subjects of the cited Lady suppliant dare to say a word, until he has told some of them that, after HRH, he is the absolute master of the States.*⁴⁶⁴

As if all this were not enough, the Count of Saint-Jeoyre seemed to treat this territory as his personal hunting ground, granting access to people close to him. A large group of men consisting of Constantin, referred to as Saint'Jeoire's «*homme d'affaires*», and his sons, his personal hunter Corlan and the sons of a certain Jean Beret, another non-aristocratic man, went hunting in the noblewoman's properties with rifles, partridge nets and dogs

⁴⁶⁴ ADS, B0 5781, f. 1. Or. Fr. : «Le dit Seigneur Comte de Saint Jeoyre sen vat à la chasse en tout temps à cheval dans les vignes et dans les bleds mesme pendant leur maturité avec une grande mute de chiens, ses valets et plusieurs aucun de ses domestiques, de manière que comme qu'il est craint dans le lieu aucuns des sujets de la dite Dame suppliante n'osent dire le mot jusques à avoir dit à quelques uns qu'après SAR il estoit maistre absolu dans les Etats».

from the count's kennel. Poaching was aimed not only at extracting game but also at causing extensive damage to vineyards and crops, and threatening the inhabitants living on Anne Dagniere's lands. The villain of this tale appears to be Maurice de Chaboz, even though he himself brought a case against another poacher, Sigismond Parravel, a sculptor living in the lands of Anne Dagnier, under the specific accusation that he was sent «at the behest of the lady».⁴⁶⁵ Parravel was sent on a hare hunting expedition in the lands of Saint-Jeoire, going as far as the entrance to his residence at Chivry Castle. Anne Dagniere immediately rushed to the sculptor's defence, claiming that his direct opponent could not bring any concrete proof of the crimes he had denounced. Regardless of who started this little dispute involving rides through the vineyards, stalking partridges and stealing hares from their dens, what emerges is that poaching here takes on a function that is anything but interclass rivalry. In this case, the concept of poaching dissipates into an inter- aristocratic contention in which the action is instrumental.

The Savoy poachers show how this phenomenon can hardly be ascribed to a single behavioural type, but also be attributed to a single social category. The most interesting fact is that, in spite of the legislative and theoretical background that would like to frame and sanction it, poaching turned out not to be an act that attempts to affect privilege but a reflection of existing power relations. This was also true for poachers in the reserved area, as will be shown in the rest of the chapter.

Challenging the prince: poaching in the reserved district

The reality within the reserved district around Turin presents different features than the poaching in the Geneva border and the mountains of Savoy. From the point of view of the social background of the poachers, a greater social homogeneity is this time evident. Among the men involved in illegal hunts, we do not find nobles but only members of the lower and middle classes. The sovereign authority's control over this territory therefore had an easy task in keeping the nobility away. The presence of the court obviously facilitated access to the hunt for aristocrats, who could easily follow the prince rather than risk being sanctioned.

Similarly, even the size of the poaching groups was markedly different from Savoy. The phenomenon of *quadriglie*, the large armed groups, absent in Savoy, was widespread. The size could even exceed ten people, as in the case of a trial against some poachers

⁴⁶⁵ Ivi, f. 5v.

accused in 1732 of taking part in a hunt in the woods of Leini and Volpiano with 13 other people.⁴⁶⁶ The need to act in much larger groups than in the past depended essentially on the more coordinated control, between mounted and foot dragoons, to which the territory was subjected. This difference is at the origin of a second major difference with Savoy: the violent reaction of poachers. As has also been demonstrated in the case of modern poaching, the armed reaction of illegal hunters occurs when territorial control systems are set up that are themselves equipped with firearms. Indeed, in the cases mentioned, where the group of poachers exceeded 10 units, there were firefights. The poachers had gone into the woods «all armed with arquebuses and plenty of dogs»: here they had hunted a lot of game, including a roe deer and two pheasants. Once discovered, «they had opened fire with several rifle shots against the game keepers of HH». The dragoon Carlo Francesco Andrietta, nicknamed Jasmine, was injured in the right leg, but the wound was treatable. Thus, the profile of a poacher in Piedmont was therefore very different. He acted mainly in groups, well-armed in the event of encounters with gamekeepers and dragoons, as he could not rely on mountainous cover or the laxity of the border with other states.

Violence was not only expressed in the clashes between ‘guards and thieves’, but also in the very punishments meted out to those caught. The aforementioned case of the 13 men in 1732 led to four of the participants being sentenced not to a simple fine but to forced work in the galleys *vita natural durante*. Similar sentences could occur also in the absence of armed resistance. In 1725, Antonio Tomatis, accused of the illegal carrying of arms, poaching and insulting the royal officers, was condemned to row in the galleys for five years, paying in addition 100 *scudi oro*, or in case of insolvency be punished with a public rope stroke.⁴⁶⁷ Another poacher, Giuseppe Bego was also sentenced to the same penalty the following year, and his sentence does not show any type of resistance.⁴⁶⁸ In some cases the punishment could have been less harsh, but more exemplary. In June 1724, Claudio Garetto was convicted of illegally hunting some pheasants. The sentence was carried out on July 11, at the city tower, where he suffered a stretch of rope in public with the hunted pheasants placed at his feet.⁴⁶⁹

Convictions could be reduced if the offender was young, as the case of 25-year-old Giovanni Stefano Puttero from Reagle shows. In 1734, together with his father and three

⁴⁶⁶ ASTO RIUNITE, Senato di Piemonte, Sentenze, 8: 520, 22 April 1732.

⁴⁶⁷ Ivi, 5: 22, 10 January 1727.

⁴⁶⁸ Ivi, 8: 19, 10 July 1728.

⁴⁶⁹ Ivi, 1: 120, 26 June 1724.

other men, he went «deer-hunting with a rifle in places reserved for H.M. on the 12th and 13th of last May, killing two deer and a roe deer». ⁴⁷⁰ There were multiple offences in this case: hunting in reserved territory carrying weapons illegally during one of the forbidden months and killing royal game. The young poacher was only fined 50 *scudi oro* and six months in prison. Even more striking was the case of Francesco Comba, who was between 14 and 18. In the same year, he was caught by Lorenzo Rivero, a gamekeeper dragoon brigadier, prowling the reserved territories around Turin with a rifle in search of prey. Discovered, he opened fire on the royal officer, wounding him slightly. Taking into account his youth, he was sentenced to pay only 20 *scudi oro*. ⁴⁷¹

The sentences against the Piedmontese poachers also reveal a hitherto undiscovered aspect: that of transportation and fencing. It must be remembered that poaching did not consist merely of illegal hunting, but in many ways also required networks of people, not necessarily hunters, who took care of hiding the stolen game or bringing it into town so that the meat could be processed in such a way as to make it non-distinct from legal game. In this dimension, there was also female presence as with the case of Antonia Maria Bassa, condemned by the General Conservator of Hunts in January 1734. As noted above, previous literature has always pointed to a total hegemony of the male element. Her crime was not that she hunted illegally, but that she attempted to bring six pheasants within the city walls killed by other poachers. ⁴⁷² That leaves room to the hypothesis that women might have carved out a role for themselves in transporting and fencing game, especially the small variety consisting of birds and rabbits.

Of course, women were not the only ones involved in these ancillary trades. A man from a little town within the reserved district, Matteo Ghignone from Volpiano, was found on the same day with the same game near Settimo. ⁴⁷³ A different case was that of Antonio Valmasso from Entracque, a locality located in the south of Piedmont, at the entrance to the Maritime Alps, a long way from the reserved district. The accusation was that he received and hid a doe in his home. Valmasso was not the one who hunted the doe, even though he was vilified as a hunter, but merely the one who received it from one or more persons in order to conceal it from inspection. The penalties inflicted were different: a simple pecuniary sanction for the first two, a five-year ban «for the extension of ten miles

⁴⁷⁰ Ivi, 16: 356, 28 October 1734.

⁴⁷¹ Ivi, 15: 32, 8 June 1734.

⁴⁷² Ivi, 15: 32, 8 January 1734.

⁴⁷³ ASTO RIUNITE, 15: 32, 8 January 1734.

from this city and lands in the said distance comprised and reserved for hunting and pleasure by HM» for the last.⁴⁷⁴

Game could easily be resold within the capital to all those merchants who traded in meat. This is evidenced by a direct order of 1737 issued by Grand Huntsman Francesco Gerolamo Tapparello of Genola referring precisely to this issue within the city:

*All fowlers, sellers or other purchasers and dealers of any kind of game will be obliged to deliver to this office all the animals that they presently have, allowing them also, notwithstanding the prohibitive orders, to be able to take them with them, but that they come from time to time to deliver them to this office and in the event that any are found not to have delivered, they shall be deemed to have incurred the penalties brought by the Royal Edicts and the denouncers will be kept secret and will be remunerated with a competent gift.*⁴⁷⁵

Hence, in those years the authorities were very aware of this issue and took care to assign officers in charge of controlling all the game circulating in the city in order to prevent such under-the-table trades from continuing to flourish. Sometimes, moreover, the purpose of poaching was not to appropriate the animal itself, but only some of its parts, especially in the case of deer. In October 1722, the Grand Huntsman Carlo Amedeo Battista San Martino d'Aglie issued a very harsh statement against those guilty of killing a deer:

It has come to His Majesty's attention that some people who have little fear of justice have had the audacity to kill a deer, the vestiges of which were found on the fifth day of the current [...] and His Majesty wishes that all means be used to discover the criminals. His Holiness desires that all means be used to discover the criminals; therefore he orders us to let everyone know that whoever will denounce the slayer, or slayers, of the said deer, with a semi-full proof, or will discover where the head and the napa (vulgarly called arms and skin) of the said deer were sold,

⁴⁷⁴ Ivi, 8: 520, 18 November 1732.

⁴⁷⁵ DUBOIN, 1199. Or. It.: « Tutti li pollaiuoli, rivendaruoli o altri accompratori e vendenti qualonque sorta di selvagina, saranno tenuti di consegnare a quest'uffizio tutti gli animali che presentemente averanno, permettendogli pure, non ostante gli ordini proibitivi, di poterne accomprare, con cio' pero' che venghino volta per volta a consignarli a quest'uffizio et in caso che alcuno sia ritrovato di non aver consegnato, s'intenderanno incorsi nelle pene portate dai Regii Editti e li denonciatori saranno tenuti secreti e saranno remunerati con un competente regalo».

will be given a prize of 10 doppie and other greater reward, and will be kept secret; and if an accomplice comes to denounce the others, His Majesty M. by his royal clemency grants him impunity beyond the aforesaid 10 *doppie*.⁴⁷⁶

This event signals some differences with previous cases. In this case, the deer carcass testifies only to the willingness to appropriate some economically profitable parts taken for resale on the black market. The meat is not of interest to the poachers, nor is the possible action motivated by recreation or emulation. In some cases deer, the quintessential symbol of royal power and aristocratic prerogatives, were the object of violent actions solely aimed at striking an animal symbolic of an oppressive power. In this case it is a mere appropriation of an economic resource that does not seem motivated by anti-aristocratic resentment or rebellion, but solely done by economic reasons.

How much these restrictive measures were a deterrent to the illegal actions of poachers or how much they were instead counterproductive is demonstrated by the evidence that emerges in the subsequent period. In the general edicts of 1749, the control of all game sold in the city was added to that of all tanned leathers. All those who wanted to possess and sell deer, fallow deer and roe deer furs were obliged to do so only under licence from the Grand Huntsman, under penalty of losing twice their value.⁴⁷⁷ The repression of the phenomenon had not had the effect of reducing poaching, making further trade control measures necessary. Similarly, even the violent repression of large poaching groups had not put an end to the phenomenon, which instead seemed to increase. In 1764, clashes took place between gamekeeper dragoons and two large *quadriglie* of poachers.⁴⁷⁸ The first consisted of 14 members, who after armed resistance killed one dragoon corporal and wounded a second. The second group consisted of 28 people, all of whom managed to escape.

⁴⁷⁶ DUBOIN, 1187. Or. It.: «Sendo venuto a notizia di S.M. che alcuni poco timorati della fiustizia habbin havuto l'ardire di uccidere un cervo, di cui se ne son trovate le vestigie li cinque del corrente [...] e volendo la M. S. che s'usi di tutti li mezzi per scoprirne li delinquenti ; percio' ci ordina di far sapere ad ogn'uno, che chi denonciera l'uccisore, o uccisori di detto cervo, con una prova semipiena o scoprirà dove sii stata venduta la testa e la *napa* (volgarmente chiamate armi e pelle) di detto cervo, gli sara' dato un premio di doppie dieci et altra maggior ricompensa, e sara' tenuto secreto; e venendo un complice a denonciare li altri, S. M. per sua regia clemenza li accorda l'impunita' oltre le dieci doppie suddette».

⁴⁷⁷ DUBOIN, 1215.

⁴⁷⁸ IVI, 1238-1239.

Poaching thus took on a plurality of meanings and functions within the states of the House of Savoy. What emerges, however, is how it was largely the necessary counterpart of princely hunting, not so much its negation. The dog and the wheel were two sides of the same coin, reflecting a society in which hunting became a political paradigm.

Conclusions

In this part of the thesis devoted to the years following the Civil War, it was pointed out how political events had a heavy impact on the hunting system of the House of Savoy and how hunting became a space of competition for power within the dynasty. Christine of France's reforms of the hunting system, which were strongly pro-aristocratic and led to a gradual and controlled demolition of the previous structures formed under Victor Amadeus I, were aiming both at legitimizing her own power and at weakening that of Duke Charles Emmanuel II, for whom depowered hunting was reserved.

Christine's action can be interpreted in as the construction of what Fanny Cosandey called *puissance maternelle*.⁴⁷⁹ Fanny Cosandey defined this as the right of protection that the regents had over heirs to the throne, which, used as a rhetorical argument, was intended to justify the regents' desire «to have unimpeded power».⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, what motivated Christine's reform of the hunting system was precisely the duke's 'minor age', used as the main justification for her political action. The attack on the heart of the hunting system was thus advocated by Christine as a protective measure towards the future Duke of Savoy, when in fact it was one of the strategy Christine used to move from being an «object of diplomatic exchange», as wife of the Duke of Savoy, to the «holder of power», as regent and *Madama Reale*.⁴⁸¹ This emphasized again the inherently political nature of princely hunting.

The use of hunting to transcend one's attributed political function also partly characterized Louise of Savoy's path. The princess was undoubtedly an object of internal diplomatic exchange within the dynasty to end the civil war. Becoming *a daughter of Artemis*, according to Richard Almond's definition, was a language through which she built her identity. Almond reminds «that gentlewomen were not only decorative additions to the field but also active participants during the heat, danger and excitement» of the princely hunt.⁴⁸² Besides being an active and versatile huntress, whose skills were clear to

⁴⁷⁹ F. COSANDEY, *Puissance maternelle et pouvoir politique. La régence des reines mères* in «Clio. Histoire, femmes et société», 21 (2005), 1-15.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ivi*, 6.

⁴⁸¹ E. CONTI, *La princesse européenne, d'objet d'échanges diplomatiques à détentrice du pouvoir : itinéraires politiques des trois filles d'Henri IV et Marie de Médicis (1600-1670)*, Master «De la Renaissance aux Révolutions», sous la direction de Silvéne Edouard, Lyon II Lumière, a.a. 2017-2019.

⁴⁸² R. ALMOND, *Daughters of Artemis. The Huntress in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, D.S. Brewer, Cambridge 2009, 55-56.

anyone who observed her, Louise of Savoy succeeded through princely hunting to rise above her own status and establish autonomous spaces.

Charles Emmanuel II had to deal with the consequences of the reforms made by his mother and regent. Precisely because of this, princely hunting became for him something profoundly linked to the claiming of a power that was denied him. The building of the Venaria Reale and the process of ritualization that princely hunting encountered under his reign and that was consolidated in the following decades find their roots precisely in the need to claim authority. In this respect it is necessary to dwell again on a not insignificant detail reported by the Venetian ambassador Michiel with which the second chapter devoted to Venaria Reale opened: while Charles Emmanuel II was sick, the two weekly hunts established by the duke still took place, as he still provided the hunting order every three days, even if he did not take part. The *chasse à courre* ritual at Venaria Reale could take place even without the prince. Jennifer Mara de Silva, describing how in early modern Europe the relationship between rulers and authority was based on a ritualization of spaces, argues that in the case of triumphal entries « the truth known by all participants, was that a triumph involved many more people than just the leader, and in practice the leader was often represented rather than present».⁴⁸³ Princely hunting thus became a ritual to reaffirm ducal authority, which by its very nature could also be enacted by a *missing prince* as Charles Emmanuel II.

The dynamics that the hunting system of the House of Savoy underwent after the civil war were firmly anchored in the political events that characterised it. Luc Duerloo's work on Archdukes Albert and Isabella in the Habsburg Netherlands between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveals that princely hunting «turned into a performance to consolidate its power in the Habsburg Netherlands» after the civil war.⁴⁸⁴ Likewise, Beaver's work on the explosion of violence against forest regulations and royal hunts before the English Civil War shows how the evolution of political events in the Duchy of Savoy postponed this phase of rebellion:

The violence in Windsor Forest during the late 1630s and early 1640s resulted from political conflicts intensified if not created by the forest eyre. Although most [local communities] understood the law whereby the crown sequestered the forest as a royal hunting preserve [...] continued to believe in the justice of their customs as legitimate claims

⁴⁸³ J. M. DESILVA, *Taking possessions: rituals, space and authority* in «Royal Studies Journal», 3 (2016), 1.

⁴⁸⁴ L. DUERLOO, *The hunt in the performance of the Archducal rule*, 149.

*to the forest's resources, and many local aspirants to gentility, status, and office continued to believe in a necessary competition for honor expressed in trophies of the hunt.*⁴⁸⁵

The reforms of Victor Amadeus I, which implemented forestry legislation over a vast territory, did not have time to show their results precisely because of the outbreak of civil war. Christine of France's controlled demolition of the hunting system defused the possibility that forms of revolt against hunting legislation would take place, precisely because of the greater hunting freedom granted to the local aristocracy and communities.

As seen in the last chapter on poaching, the emergence of even armed resistance occurred in the decades following the reign of Charles Emmanuel II, precisely because of the control re-established by the Duke of Savoy in the 10-mile reserved hunting district around the capital. In the next and final part of the thesis, which will focus on the hunts of the House of Savoy after the acquisition of the title of King of Sardinia, the first chapter will be devoted to showing how the emergence of these phenomena of rebellion affected the princely hunts under the reign of Victor Amadeus II.

⁴⁸⁵ D. C. BEAVER, *Hunting and the politics of violence before the English civil war*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, 115.

Part 3 **A royal sovereignty**

In October 1773, the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Francesco Zon reported about the wedding between Princess Maria Theresa of Savoy and Charles Philippe of France, prince of Artois and brother of the future Louis XVI, destined to be the last king of the House of Bourbon on the throne of France. The royal wedding was to be held within a month at the palace of Versailles, but the court of Savoy also wanted to celebrate the event that would further tie the fate of the Kingdom of Sardinia to that of France. The entire court would leave on the 15th of October from Moncalieri Castle to travel to the hunting palace at Stupinigi. Here a concert would be held, followed by fireworks on the 17th and then a ball three days after. For the occasion, the park in front of the hunting lodge would be illuminated, along with the road leading three miles to the capital.⁴⁸⁶ The itinerary chosen for the wedding emphasised the new court calendar established with the rise of Victor Amadeus III. On the appointed day, the celebration took place and involved a large number of people, including foreign dignitaries and nobility of the kingdom:

The ambassadors and other foreign ministers have been made aware of this through the introduction with a special note; this will undoubtedly lead to a considerable number of this principal nobility and foreigners, who all day long come here to meet on this occasion, so that it is expected that the place will remain somewhat tight because it is not of great extents, like the one that is solely intended for the use of hunts.⁴⁸⁷

The hunting lodge commissioned by Victor Amadeus II, the work on which begun in 1729 again and was entrusted to the architect Filippo Juvarra, was conceived as a grandiose hunting infrastructure. The structure underwent improvements in the 1730s by Benedetto Alfieri, and it was enlarged in the final part of the century with the construction of the new large kennels in 1771 by architect Ignazio Birago di Borgaro and of the new stables in 1790 by architect Ludovico Bo.⁴⁸⁸ The new hunting lodge's territory felt certainly

⁴⁸⁶ ASVE, Dispacci ambasciatori, Torino, 21: 104, f. 1.

⁴⁸⁷ Ivi, 21: 106, ff. 1-1v. Or. It. : «Gli ambasciatori e gli altri esteri ministri ne sono stati fatti intesi dall'introduzione con particolare biglietto; ne lasciera' certamente di essere molto numeroso il concorso di questa primaria nobilta' e de forestieri, che tutto giorno qui giungono per ritrovarsi a questa occasione, cosicche si prevede che il luogo rimarra' alquanto angusto per non essere di una grande estensione, come quello ch'e' unicamente destinato ad uso delle caccie».

⁴⁸⁸ The properties and territory of Stupinigi, which became part of the ducal domain during the acquisition phase after the return of Emmanuel Philiebrt, were ceded in 1573 to the religious-chivalric order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus and remained the property of the order until the end of the eighteenth century, cfr. C. DEVOTI, V. DEFABIANI, *Palazzina, giardini, rotte di caccia: Stupinigi e il suo territorio* in C. SCALON, C. DEVOTI, *Disegnare il territorio di una Commenda magistrale. Stupinigi*, Ferrero editore, Torino 2012, 67-87; V. DEFABIANI, *Stupinigi. Palazzina di caccia in Ville sabaude*, 411.

familiar to huntsmen, because it was located between the Sangone stream, the Po river and the Chisola creek, in which area the castle of Mirafiori was already a reference, but whose size and destruction during the seventeenth century meant that it could not be used as much as the hunting lodge built at Stupinigi was.

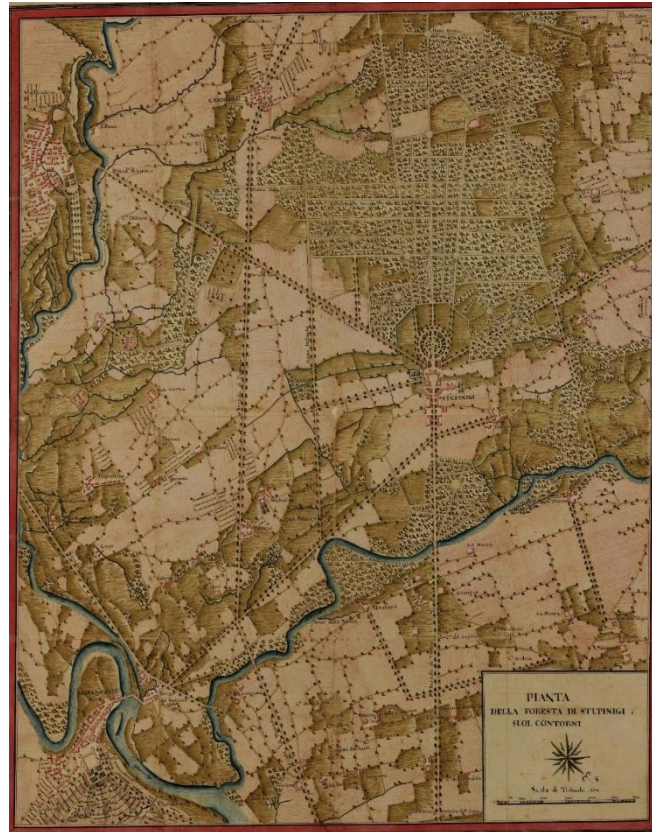


Image 18 - The hunting ground of Stupinigi, ASTo Corte, Carte topografiche e disegni, Carte topografiche segrete, Stupinigi 36 A V Rosso, 18th c.

The integration of the hunting lodge took time and extended throughout the 1730s, resulting in an infrastructure of the surrounding woodlands through a widespread system of hunting routes [*rotte di caccia*].⁴⁸⁹ The system of hunting routes, already in place since the mid-seventeenth century, acquired a new dimension in the Stupinigi territory and a structural involvement of the local communities. These last were no longer asked to temporarily mobilise men to support the hunting officers, as in the seventeenth century but, by the 1730s, a compensation system for expenses incurred by each community

⁴⁸⁹ P. CORNAGLIA, *Cacce, loisir, territori e impianti radiali: Stupinigi tra Regno di Sardegna ed europa* in *Le cacce nell'Europa dei principi*, 241-257.

within the reserved hunting district had been implemented.⁴⁹⁰ The transformation of the territory through the network of hunting routes ensured the maximisation of performance in the royal hunt, allowing the hunting crew to move around the woods quickly while always having capillary control.

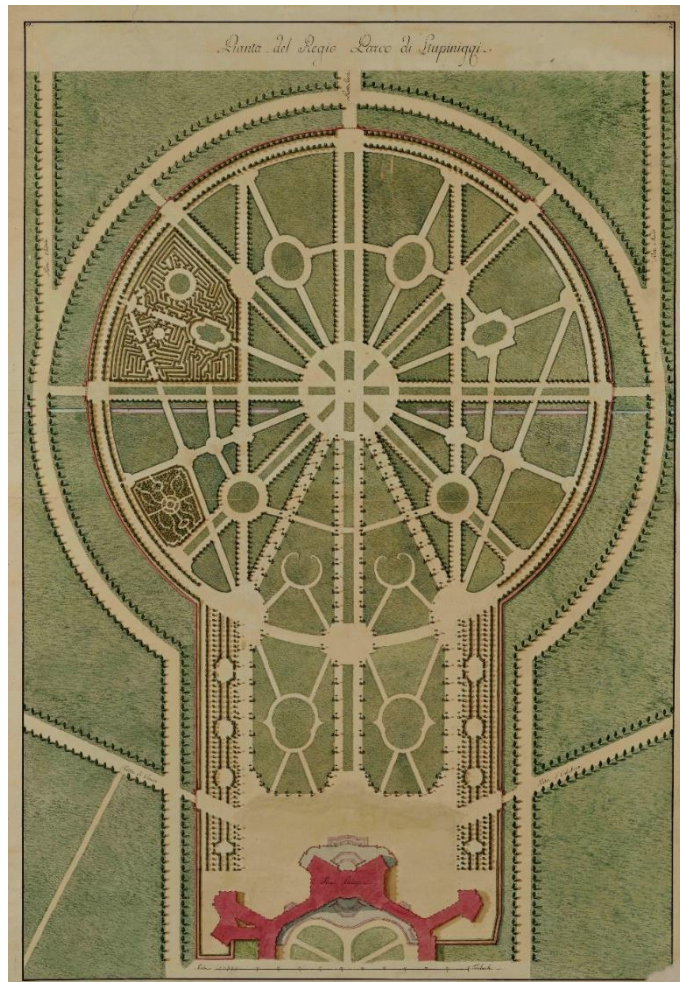


Image 19 - The royal park of Stupinigi, ASTo Corte, Carte topografiche e disegni, Carte topografiche segrete, Stupinigi 37 A V Rosso, 18th c.

⁴⁹⁰ ASTO RIUNITE, Ufficio generale di finanze, I, *Boschi, caccia e pesca*, 2:1, *Stati e dichiarazioni delle comunità a cui si fece la bonificazione per le riparazioni fatte in detti anni alle rotte della caccia, 1737-1738.*

The internal and external projection of the hunting lodge was a testimony of the pivotal role of the House of Savoy in the eighteenth century. In addition to the transfer, as mentioned earlier, of the relics of St. Hubert to the Stupinigi chapel, and the consequent transfer of the 3rd November celebration from the Venaria Reale to Stupinigi, this last also symbolically acquired the role of hunting pivot. The apartments, rooms and the inner hall became a figurative compendium of the royal hunts. The frescoes in the royal chambers combined woodland landscapes with mythological elements related to the hunting world.

The fact that Victor Amadeus III chose to host such a crucial event as the matrimonial agreement in 1773 at the hunting palace of Stupinigi, concludes a forty-year long process which maintained the centrality of palace throughout the century. In contrast, the Venaria had seen a gradual loss of relevance as the main residence of the court, as the function had been handed over to the castle of Moncalieri, but only after Charles Emmanuel III's reign, under which the Venaria had kept its centrality.⁴⁹¹

Surprisingly, the report of the marriage in 1773 offered by diplomatic sources does not refer to the hunts that took place or no longer featured the hunt as the main court language, although it was an important event - the marriage of a princess to an heir to the French throne – which took place close to Saint Hubert's day and at the centre of the royal hunts. It could be argued that this was a choice dictated by contingent factors that led the court to choose not to organise a big hunt that would simultaneously celebrate the patron saint of hunters and a new marriage alliance for the dynasty.

Going back nearly twenty-five years, another episode raises questions about what status royal hunts assumed at the Savoy court in the eighteenth century. In 1750, a predecessor of Zon, Domenico Maria Cavalli, was preparing to leave the Savoy court after an unusual eight-year stay. Before his departure, however, Charles Emmanuel III «urged him to come at the Venaria Reale on a day when, by the newly established method, the other ministers did not attend».⁴⁹² In contrast to the practice up until the first decades of the eighteenth century, when hunting was always an opportunity to meet with foreign dignitaries, a day was chosen when the king was «free from hunting».⁴⁹³ In the ambassador's words, the choice for a confidential, face-to-face meeting with the King of Sardinia considered

⁴⁹¹ A. MERLOTTI, *Una corte itinerante. Tempi e luoghi della corte sabauda da Vittorio Amedeo II a Carlo Alberto (1713-1831)* in *Architettura e città negli Stati Sabaudi*, F. DE PIERI, E. PICCOLI (eds.), Quodlibet 2012, 60-76.

⁴⁹² ASVe, Dispacci Torino, 5: 54, f. 1. Or. It. : «lo eccito a prodursi alla Venaria Reale in una giornata in cui, per il metodo di recente stabilito, non intervengono gli altri forastieri ministri».

⁴⁹³ Ibidem. Or. It. : «l'Eccellentissimo Signore Ambasciatore scelse il venerdì, giorno che suol esser libero dalle caccie».

hunting a personal engagement of the ruler and not a diplomatic space to deal with political matters.

Nevertheless, hunting had not become a closed space for the exclusive enjoyment of the sovereign. Throughout the eighteenth century, many foreign nobles had taken part in the hunts organised at the Savoy court. In many cases these nobles went to court under fictitious names. This is the case of the Prince of Hessen Cassel or the Margravine of Brandenburg, both visiting under a false name at the Savoy court, who joined the royal hunts in 1716 and 1718.⁴⁹⁴ This expedient was used in order to avoid the rigid etiquette at that time assumed by all European courts, including the Savoy's: that was due to the transition of princely hunting, essentially, into court ceremony.

The roots of this shift already lay in a change that took place at the end of the seventeenth century. As the Venetian ambassador Marco Foscarini noted in his report to the senate in 1743:

*The conduct of His Majesty's [Charles Emmanuel III] life is also very similar to that of his father [Victor Amadeus II], at least in the essential parts, I mean in the hours of audiences, church services, lunch, hunting and all other court ceremonies.*⁴⁹⁵

The transition from being an instrument for the education of the prince, a diplomatic theatre, an instrument of control and territorial unification, a means of competition and legitimisation of power, as it had been since the mid-sixteenth century, to pure court *loisir* in the eighteenth century in fact began in the years marking the transition from the rise to power of the second Madama Reale, Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours, to the assumption of power by Victor Amadeus II.

An example comes from one of the first hunting officer appointments. In January 1684, by which *Madama Reale*, Jeanne-Baptiste had retired to her private palace, leaving the duke with full powers, Giuseppe Bonaventura Dentis was appointed to the post of new General Conservator of Hunts by Victor Amadeus II. The appointment was introduced by a preface that, albeit very similar to many others, conveyed a different relationship between sovereign power and princely hunting:

⁴⁹⁴ P. BIANCHI, *La caccia nell'educazione del gentiluomo*, 31-33.

⁴⁹⁵ RAV, 1027.

*The practice of hunting, being one of the principal and most virtuous divertissements used by princes after the painful cares of government and particularly by our predecessors, who therefore made several edicts for the conservation of the same hunts, a good part of which we have renewed, and even enlarged with penal prohibitions, especially for the places that we have reserved for the same purpose.*⁴⁹⁶

The link between hunting space, the preservation of the reserved prey in the animal court, and the legislation remains true for the eighteenth century. It is the underlying background that has changed for the first time. Hunting was described for the first time as *divertimento*; amusement, to which the ruler devoted himself *after* his governmental activity. A gap thus began to open between hunting performance and political function that would gradually bring princely hunting more and more into the sovereign's private sphere, to be a way of *divertir-lo* – of taking him away – from the duties of politics, as shown by the statements of Venetian ambassadors in the second half of the eighteenth century. Considering this background, this last part will investigate the evolution of the princely hunts of three Kings of Sardinia of the House of Savoy: Victor Amadeus II (1720-1730), Charles Emmanuel III (1730-1773), Victor Amadeus III (1773-1796). The first chapter will, however, focus exclusively on Victor Amadeus II and his relationship with princely hunting, which begins in the last two decades of the seventeenth century, as he was the protagonist of the transition from Duchy to Kingdom.

The second chapter will aim to establish the beginning and the features of the royal hunts in the court of Savoy during the short eighteenth century from 1730 to the 1796. To this end, we will cross-reference the data emerging from the legislation that has been issued regarding the expenditure of hunting crews with some data from existing literature. The analysis of economic data will be supplemented with Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli's paintings for the Stupinigi hunting lodge as to provide further details on the composition and size of the hunting crew. A final comparison will then be made between the data from the analysis of the royal hunts and the previous ones.

⁴⁹⁶ DUBOIN, 1172. Or. It.: «l'esercizio delle caccie, essendo uno de' principali e de' più virtuosi *divertimenti stati usati da Principi doppo le penose cure del governo* e particolarmente da reali nostri predecessori, questi perciò hanno fatti diversi Editti per la conservation delle medesime caccie, buona parte de' quali sono stati da noi renovati, ed eziandio ampliati con proibitioni penali, massime per i luoghi che ci siamo riservati per il medesimo fine».

3.1 A storm in the forest

Victor Amadeus II, the hunter. Last duke or first king?

«The two most stable poles, upon which the good government of empires and kingdoms is based, have always been arms and laws». These are the words that open the royal constitutions of the Kingdom of Sardinia; the compendium of laws that Victor Amadeus II, who became king in 1713, wanted to enact after his foreign policy had finally ensured him the much-coveted royal title. The first edition appeared in 1723, three years after the Peace of the Hague that gave the crown of Sardinia to the House of Savoy in place of that of Sicily.⁴⁹⁷ The work was divided into five books and was commissioned with the specific intention of putting previous legislation in order and providing a more coherent legislative framework to the newly born kingdom. A second, expanded edition was printed in 1729, this time in two volumes comprising six books.

The topics addressed in the royal constitutions are the most diverse, and they truly attempt to provide a coherent revision of the previous legislation, positioning it as a new benchmark. Scrolling through them, one finds chapters devoted to the functioning of the main offices of the kingdom as well as magistracies. Other chapters are focused on the various crimes and how trials were to be instituted. They also include economic and religious affairs, as well as relations with vassals and feudal lords. However, there is not a single mention of princely hunting and the prerogatives of the new king in this field, nor does the long list of crimes contain references to poaching or the violation of the reserved hunting district.

If one were to analyse only the royal constitutions, they would reveal that princely hunting was not considered at all in the previous legislation. The only indirect references that can be found are a single mention in which, along with many other court offices, the Grand Huntsman is appointed and a reference to the transfer of hunting and fishing rights to a fiefdom.⁴⁹⁸ Otherwise, a silence seems to have been cast over what had been one of the main sovereign activities and had produced a considerable amount of orders, proclamations and general edicts. This almost total silence about the princely hunt at such a fundamental political juncture, considering that it does become truly royal, cannot but

⁴⁹⁷ *Leggi e costituzioni di Sua Maestà. Da osservarsi nelle materie civili e criminali ne' Stati della M. S. tanto di qua che di là da' monti e colli*, G. B. Valetta, Torino 1723, 1. Or. It. : «I due poli più stabili, sopra de' quali raggrarsi il buon regolamento degl'Imperi e de' Regni, furono sempre le armi e le leggi».

⁴⁹⁸ *Leggi e costituzioni di Sua Maestà.*, G. B. Chais, Torino 1729, vol. 2, 436,

leave room for questions. In fact, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it appeared among the main instruments for promoting the sovereign's image. What led to the ousting of royal hunts from the first legislative output of the fledgling kingdom? Why do hunts seem to have suddenly lost their centrality?

Unlike for other members of the House of Savoy, the bond between princely hunting and the reign of Victor Amadeus II has never been given proper attention. Regarding the figure of Victor Amadeus II, it may be assumed that this could result from a personal disinterest in hunting. Certainly, he was not an assiduous hunter like his predecessor Charles Emmanuel II. Even if Victor Amadeus II liked to devote himself more to repositioning his duchy and at that time his kingdom on the international chessboard than chasing wild beasts deep in the forests, this did not mean that the practice of hunting did not also take on wider meanings under the command of he who first assumed the title of King.

In the course of Victor Amadeus II's reign, 26 orders relating to princely hunting were issued, a significant number even if they did not comprise general edicts, without taking into account that it was during the final years of his reign when the second great hunting palace after the Venaria Reale, Stupinigi, was built.⁴⁹⁹ The analysis of hunting legislation will make it possible to establish what the relationship with princely hunting was at this time but, above all, to determine a fact that is of more general interest. The historiography has largely considered the reign of Victor Amadeus II through the lens of the rising political absolutism, analysing for example the greater centralisation of the state apparatus and the reduction of ancient privileges and freedoms.⁵⁰⁰ Did this process also involve princely hunting or did it once again present itself as a political instrument capable of acting as a space for compromise and compensation? Or, put more boldly, was the princely hunter Victor Amadeus II the last duke or the first king? In this chapter I will analyse the social context that brought Victor Amadeus II to leave the hunts in the shadows. To understand why this happened, it is necessary to look back over his reign from the earliest years, when he was still a duke.

To begin with, it should be considered that the first twenty years of his reign were marked by heavy rebellions around the province of Mondovi, which also found the support of part

⁴⁹⁹ DUBOIN , 1166-1195; ASTO CORTE, *Editti originali*, 13: 8, 12, 33; 13bis: 44, 49, 62, 63.

⁵⁰⁰ We refer here to the work of reference by G. SYMCOX, *Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard state (1675-1730)*, Thames and Hudson, London 1983; this perspective has also remained unchanged in subsequent literature as showed by C. STORRS, *War, Diplomacy and the Rise of Savoy 1690-1720*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004.

of the nobility, caused by the start of the absolutist state-building process that cancelled previous privileges by extending the salt tax to those lands as well.⁵⁰¹

Although the core of these revolts was far from the reserved hunting district, the effects of this political turmoil were not delayed in making themselves felt even around the capital. In October 1682, the situation was clearly getting out of control even in the territories close to the 10-mile hunting district:

The excesses of many inhabitants of the Abbey of San Benigno and the bandits and salt smugglers who live there are so frequent that we have reason to believe there is a public coexistence. Everyone knows the commitment of the troops sent by my lord and father to track down the 150 armed foreigners, among whom were many bandits, who violently travelled through various parts of these states and came to these lands in 1671, entrusted to the assistance and shelter of the men of these lands. These men, abusing the moderation that was practised in their regard on that occasion, also undertook to come quite often in defiance of our orders, armed with firearms, in numerous squadrons to hunt in places that were most reserved for us, with such temerity that the murder of Sebastiano Rasetto followed, while with his other companions, wearing our livery, deputed by us as guards of the hunt, they were invigilating the preservation of it. It is therefore agreed, in our service and the safety of our subjects, to repress and prevent such violent transgressions, the consequences of which are all the more serious and dangerous when committed in places of our divertimento, not far from the principal city of our residence, in the centre of these States.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ See *La guerra del sale (1680-1699). Rivolte e frontiere del Piemonte Barocco*, G. LOMBARDI (ed.), 3 voll., FrancoAngeli, Milano 1986.

⁵⁰² ASTO CORTE, Materie giuridiche, Editti originali, 13:33. Or. It. «Sono così frequenti gl'eccessi di molti particolari delle terre dell'Abbadia di San Benigno e de banditi e sfrozadori del sale in esse ricoverati, che ci danno motivo di credere vi sii una pubblica convivenza, sendo a tutti noto l'impegno in cui si trovarono obbligate le truppe mandate da SAR mio signore e padre di gm in traccia delli cento cinquanta forastieri sfrosadori, armati, fra quali molti banditi, che con violenza traversando varii luoghi di questi stati, si portarono in dette terre nel 1671 affidati dall'assistenza e ricovero deg'huomini d'esse, i quali abusando ...

This passage of the order provides an understanding of the severity. The overlapping of salt riots, banditry and poaching had produced a very dangerous situation on the border of the reserved hunting district, which had even led to the murder of one of the gamekeeper dragoons in charge. The attack carried out by the armed groups had hit what is still referred to as reserved space for the sovereign's *divertimento*, surrounding the capital. This area had already been subject to problems in 1671, as was also pointed out in the order of Victor Amadeus II, but only ten years later, it had gone from general banditry to organised poaching: the attacks were in fact directed at the killing of reserved game. Victor Amadeus II therefore decided to act and «repress and prevent such violent transgressions, of all the more serious and dangerous consequences, as are committed - it was specifically stated - in places of our amusement, not far from the principal city of our residence, in the centre of these states».⁵⁰³

The clash with the inhabitants of the lands of the Abbey of San Benigno of Fruttuaria was an early sign of the social unrest that was brewing. However, Victor Amadeus II refrained from any real repression. Firstly, because this would have led to an indirect conflict with the ecclesiastical authority, but above all because he found an expedient that was to become one of the cornerstones of his political action in hunting matters: the prohibition of the carrying of arms. In this specific case, Victor Amadeus II used the fifth article of the general edict on hunting of 1633, issued by Victor Amadeus I and then confirmed in 1669 by Charles Emmanuel II, with a particular hardening of the rule for subjects from the lands of San Benigno. The article provided for a general ban on hunting and carrying weapons in the reserved hunting areas, but for residents of the San Benigno lands, this rule became a general ban. In fact, they were forbidden to carry arms in any of the territories of the House of Savoy.

The strategy was therefore to disarm the revolt rather than to crush it with violence. Popular discontent was not isolated to the confines of the reserved lands, however, it

della moderazione che in lor riguardo si pratico in detta occasione hanno indi anche intrapreso di venire ben sovente in sprezzo de nostri ordini, armati d'armi da fuoco, in numerose squadriglie alla caccia ne luoghi per noi piu riservati, con temerita tale, che si e' seguito l'homicidio di Sebastiano Rasetto, mentre con gli altri suoi compagni da noi con la livrea nostra deputati per guardie della caccia invigilavano per la conservazione della medesima, convenendo percio a servizio nostro ed alla sicurezza de sudditi, reprimere ed imepdire cosi violenti trasgressioni, di conseguenze tanto piu' gravi e pericolose, quante che si commettono ne luoghi di nostro divertimento, poco distanti dalla citta' principale di nostra residenza, nel centro di questi Stati».

⁵⁰³ Ibidem.

threatened to explode in the very heart of the hunting district at the Venaria Reale. The *ordinata città* designed by Charles Emmanuel II had in fact become a very dangerous place for those who entered it. In 1681, an attempt was made to contain a situation that had become potentially explosive: as night fell, «groups of troublemakers came out of the taverns committing riots, firing firearms and attacking those they encountered, killing them, and throwing stones in the streets to the point of making them unsafe». ⁵⁰⁴ Once again, the sovereign reaction was not violent but merely curbed the problem by banning all taverns, the main meeting places, from hosting overnight guests; an expedient that did not solve the problem but left room for more concrete measures.

In 1683, Victor Amadeus II decided to employ his own bodyguards at the Venaria Reale palace. The decision was justified on the grounds that this would benefit the city's trade by bringing in new inhabitants. As it turned out, the population of Venaria Reale had not in fact needed any help to grow over time, and the limited number of people making up the guards would not have changed the situation that much. The move would, however, have strengthened control over the area, raising the defences around the sovereign's person. ⁵⁰⁵ The decision was accompanied by an ever-present attempt at compromise, which consisted of the renewed concession of a weekly market to the city community.

This concession, which did not bring any new privileges for the community that revolved around Venaria Reale, did not improve relations; on the contrary, it demonstrated the subtle hostility of the people. In January 1686, three years after their arrival, the guards quartered at the Venaria Reale were still even struggling to find hay for their horses at the market kindly granted by Victor Amadeus II. In fact, the people refused to sell it and if someone did sell it, they demanded an excessive price. ⁵⁰⁶ As a result, some neighbouring communities were obliged to make a daily delivery of 180 *rubbi* (1,659 Kg) of hay for the horses, including transport. The hay would still be paid for, at a price of 6 *soldi per rubbo*, though it was deducted from the wages of the guards themselves. The community of

⁵⁰⁴ ASTO CORTE, Materie giuridiche, Editti originali, 13: 8. Or. It. : «Essendo noi informati de gl'eccessi che di notte tempo seguono nel luogo nostro della Venaria, causati da alcuni particolari, i quali, rendendosi nell'ozio si fanno lecito nell'uscire dall'hosterie di commettere diversi disordini, sparando armi da fuoco, attaccando querelle con chi incontrano, dalle quali ne seguono homicidij e tirando sassate per quelle contrade a segno che si rendono impraticabili eziandio fra vicini».

⁵⁰⁵ Ivi, 13bis: 44.

⁵⁰⁶ Ivi, 13bis: 63.

Venaria Reale was obliged, however, to provide at least a large warehouse for feeding the horses.

If securing the main hunting site was problematic, the entire hunting district was disrupted in 1683 by attacks that went beyond a simple violation of forest conservation rules, to touching the limits of social revolt. In April of that year, Ludovico Bertone, knight of Crillon and general captain of the hunts, made a heartfelt appeal to Victor Amadeus II as to how to deal with a by then precarious state of affairs. The clash between livestock grazing and hunting legislation had reached its climax; attempts to keep flocks of sheep away from the hunting district were now futile. The shepherders attacked the gamekeepers, insulting them with the epithet of *'birri'*, and insisted on grazing their animals in the forbidden areas. Moreover, disobedience had now reached the point of a direct and vast attack on the woods:

Under the pretext of burning foliage, they also set fire to bushes, which, being burnt, before they can be extinguished, destroy two hundred giornate or more, to the serious detriment of the owners of these bushes and of the hunting of Your Royal Highness, and whether this is true, YRH shall be informed that for fifteen days now, at least six or seven thousand giornate have been burnt in the areas of Settimo Torinese, Druent and Rubianetta.⁵⁰⁷

Seven thousand *giornate* was an enormous space, equal to more than 2,260 ha and it was the area surrounding the woods belonging to Venaria Reale. But this attack that struck at the heart of the princely hunts was not isolated, and was accompanied by other, equally heated protests. Even the owners of the woods rebelled against the ban on woodland harvesting, limited by legislation to only one seventh of its extension. They took much more, therefore causing the disappearance of much of the forest cover, especially around the Park, and consequently the destruction and disappearance of the game. The challenge was issued directly to the sovereign authority and its direct officers. In fact, the captain-general of the hunts reported that many landowners, working on farmsteads belonging to ministers and gentlemen of the court, dared to invoke the direct action of Victor Amadeus II through his officer: «we are the masters [*padroni*] of the woods, we

⁵⁰⁷ Ivi, 13bis: 62. Or. It. : «Sotto pretesto d'abbruciar delle folie danno anche il fuoco a bussoni quali, acesi, prima di puoterli estinguere abbruciano delle duecento giornate e piu in grave pregiudizio de padroni d'essi e delle caccie di Vostra Altezza Reale, e che ne sia il vero sarà V.A.R. informata essersi da quindeci giorni in qua abbruciate dalle parti di Settimo Torinese, Druent e Rubianetta, almeno giornate sei o sette mila circa».

want to cut and crop as we please; if His Royal Highness wants to defend us, then let him take the land of the woods». ⁵⁰⁸

In answer to the request on how to act by the general captain of the hunts, Victor Amadeus II seemed to maintain a non-repressive and conservative approach even at this point. His response was simply to continue to enforce the regulations as had been formulated and approved. But it was precisely this response that contained the actual instrument through which Victor Amadeus II managed to overcome this extremely turbulent phase.

The castle of Mirafiori was also the target of attacks. In 1685, the prohibitive orders were newly issued specifically for this urban park and work began to repair the damage along the course of the Sangone stream. This involved the construction of new oak palisades covered with tree faggots and stones which served to close off the restricted area or to protect certain portions of the forest or river areas. How deep the damage in the previous years had been, can easily be seen from the cost of repairs. The cost of making and laying the *fiche* amounted to £2,832, which was reduced to £1,426 due to the fact that wood from the Mirafiori forests was to be used. Although costs were reduced, the figure must be viewed in relation to the income generated by the park itself, which amounted to approximately £4,000. ⁵⁰⁹

To understand how the general uprising against Victor Amadeus II's absolutist reforms was connected to the internal protests within the reserved hunting district, we need to briefly look at what Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy Nemours, second regent and *Madama Reale* did from 1675 to 1680, did before the last Duke of Savoy came to power.

The orders of Marie Jeanne Baptiste

During her regency, Marie Jeanne Baptiste, wife of Charles Emmanuel II and then *Madama Reale* between 1675 and 1680, launching a systematic reinforcement of hunting legislation within the reserved hunting district. On 17 December 1675, having just assumed the regency, she issued an order cancelling all hunting licences issued up to that

⁵⁰⁸ Ivi. Or. It. : «siamo noi i padroni dei boschi, vogliamo tagliare e coltivare a nostro piacimento; se SAR vuole difenderci, allora che si prenda la terra dei boschi». DE FRANCO, *La caccia in Altessano Superiore*, 56.

⁵⁰⁹ ASTO RIUNITE, Camera dei conti, Feudalità, Scritture inerenti il castello di Mirafiori – art. 778, *Istruzione per li reperi da farsi a Mirafiori in difesa de' beni di SAR*.

time.⁵¹⁰ In April of the following year, Marie Jeanne Baptiste ordered the captain-general of the hunts to send soldiers to the entire reserved hunting district in order to supervise hunts and the illegal carrying of weapons.⁵¹¹ In 1677, however, she ordered that all new hunting licences issued had to be taken to the Registrar General of Hunts to be duly registered, in order to prevent any counterfeiting.⁵¹²

In 1678, however, three orders were issued: one restricting grazing; a further tightening of the ban on hunting in the district; and finally a ban that was to be the cause of the woodland owners' revolt highlighted above.⁵¹³ The order stipulated that all owners within the 10-mile district could not cut more than one seventh of their woods, obliging them to leave most of their resources untouched and unexploited in order to best preserve the reserved district. In 1680, the regent issued the order, already mentioned, that cancelled the captains of the hunt and formalised the handover of territorial control to the 30 gamekeeper dragoons.⁵¹⁴

Thus, the tightening of control over the reserved district went hand in hand, on the one hand, with its militarisation and, on the other, with an ever-increasing restriction of the freedom to exploit the internal forest resource. The internal revolt within the hunting district that erupted in the 1680s found its origin in this strengthening process.

Downscaling the princely hunt, materialize the boundaries

Once in command, however, Victor Amadeus II largely confirmed the legislation issued by his mother and regent in the previous years.⁵¹⁵ Only three years later, after the outbreak of the riots between 1681 and 1683 highlighted above, he issued an order that went in the completely opposite direction.

The order of January 1st 1683 was issued with the declared intention of clarifying the regulations issued for the reserved hunting district up to that time.⁵¹⁶ From such an order, it would be expected a certain depth and breadth, precisely in order to provide more

⁵¹⁰ DUBOIN, 1159-1160.

⁵¹¹ Ivi, 1160-1161.

⁵¹² Ivi, 1161-1162.

⁵¹³ Ivi, 1162-1163; 1164-1165; ASTO CORTE, Materie economiche, Caccia e boschi, 6: 27 agosto 1678.

⁵¹⁴ Ivi, 1164-1166.

⁵¹⁵ DUBOIN, 1166-1171.

⁵¹⁶ DUBOIN: 1170.

details. Instead, it is an order in eight articles that does not provide a greater understanding of the previous legislation, but radically changed it.

A systematic analysis of the eight articles makes it possible to understand what strategy the last Duke of Savoy adopted to stem the potential danger of the state of revolt that ran through the reserved hunting district. Like most of those previously issued, the general hunting edict of 1683 also opened with an article dedicated to the royal animals that the sovereign guaranteed the preservation of in all the states of the House of Savoy.

The long list of reserved prey that the previous dukes had placed under their protection had been reduced to a minimum: the deer and the pheasant were the only two animals under the special protection of Victor Amadeus II. As it turned out, these two animals had already assumed a prominent position after the construction of the Venaria Reale. This, however, had not ousted other animals that had now become part of reserved preys. If one observes the trend of royal animals from the first hunting legislation issued by Amadeus VIII through all the subsequent general edicts, with that of Victor Amadeus I being the most far-reaching, it can be seen that with the order of 1683 there was an actual return to the pre-1584 situation.

1430	1584	1633	1669	1680	1683
AMADEUS VIII	CHARLES EMMANUEL I	VICTOR AMADEUS I	CHARLES EMMANUEL II	VICTOR AMADEUS II	VICTOR AMADEUS II
<i>Deer</i>	<i>Deer, phaesant, roe deer, wild boar</i>	<i>Deer, phaesant, roe deer, wild boar, heron, bear</i>	<i>Deer, phaesant, roe deer, wild boar, heron, bear</i>	<i>Deer, phaesant, roe deer, wild boar, heron</i>	<i>Deer, phaesant</i>

Table 4 - Reserved preys 1430-1683

The removal of roe deer and wild boar ensured that two of the most crop-impacting species could be hunted, at least outside the reserved district. However, this also facilitated the hunting of these animals within it because they were part of the common game, the illegal hunting of which was subject to milder punishments. Time limits on hunting (March-June) were maintained. The deer obviously could not be excluded as they were intrinsically connected to the aristocratic dimension.

The regulation of wood logging in the district was also *clarified* by Victor Amadeus II. Private forest owners were prohibited from cutting more than one-seventh of the trees, as stipulated in the orders of the second *Madama Reale* in 1678. This confirmation can be attributed to the fact that greater freedom in the exploitation of forest resources in

private hands would only worsen the situation of forests within the reserved district. The duke, however, introduced a difference: those who rented land around major hunting sites, such as the Park or Mirafiori, were also required to comply with logging regulations *but* they were allowed to extract the timber necessary for basic domestic needs. This stratagem allowed Victor Amadeus II to guarantee the lower strata of society the minimum resources necessary for survival, in that way preventing tensions from escalating at this critical moment. A space that the order left unchanged, was the so-called mountain of Turin. The order deliberately maintains a certain vagueness on this area. The mountain is included in the reserved part, but only as far as the places reserved in the previous orders are concerned, while leaving ample freedom for the concessions given to the city of Turin. No more specific reference is therefore made to the private individuals who owned land there, but in general to the prerogatives of the capital that had been superseded by the will of Charles Emmanuel II. In this respect, we are therefore faced with a downgrading of the princely hunt.

Alongside this process of downscaling, Victor Amadeus II initiated a parallel and complementary process of materialising the boundaries of the reserved hunting district. The orders of 1683 provided for the first time for stone pillars to be placed by communities within the hunting district to mark its boundaries. Although this measure may seem marginal, it represents a radical change, as for the first time the hunting district is no longer merely an ideal projection contained in the edicts issued by the various sovereigns, whose boundaries, however established, remained uncertain, but a visible reality.

The materialisation of district boundaries also lent itself to being a formidable tool to defuse the ongoing turmoil. The visual presence of these pillars largely put an end to the uncertainty of the spatial projection of hunting legislation, preventing the violation of edicts from being justified by ignorance. The building of the hunting pillars was part of the more general restoration work for the hunting routes to which the communities in the reserved district were subject. In fact, as reported in an order of April 1683, since the time of Charles Emmanuel II, the communities in the hunting district were obliged «to renovate and build bridges and barricades over rivers, *bealere*, ditches and marshes, as well as to keep forest roads in good condition».⁵¹⁷ Hunting pillars were thus part of the overall infrastructure of the territory.

⁵¹⁷ ASTO CORTE, Materie giuridiche, Editti originali, 13bis: 49.

The 1680s, which saw the most profound phase of turmoil, therefore closed with a substantial involution of princely hunts. In July 1690, in fact, Victor Amadeus II ordered a derogation from his hunting orders, making the mayors and podestas of the local communities responsible for game preservation, as gamekeepers were employed «where the service required».⁵¹⁸ In August 1696, he ordered the republication of the orders of 1683 and 1690 which had thus become the sole point of reference regarding hunting legislation.⁵¹⁹

Overall, therefore, it can be said that the phase leading up to the transition from duchy to kingdom was characterised by a series of measures that downscaled, decentralised and, albeit relatively, mitigated the impact of princely hunts. That this series of measures was sufficient to cope with the period of crisis is shown by the absence of further orders and measures for the next twenty years as well as reports of revolts against hunting legislation. The accession to the throne of the first king of Sardinia therefore brought about a largely and deliberately downgraded form of princely hunting.

The last years of Victor Amadeus II's reign did not bring any significant changes of course. As Grand Huntsman, in March 1722 Carlo Amedeo Battista di San Martino d'Aglié issued a formal order from Victor Amadeus II, now King of Sardinia, to recall the previous hunting legislation. Once again, we are not dealing with a general edict, but solely with a single measure about which, however, it is good to emphasise two aspects. The first is the number of reserved prey: the order in fact restores the number of reserved prey to five, reinstating wild boar, roe deer and herons among the prey reserved for the sovereign alone. The second is the re-centralisation of territorial control into the hands of game keepers and hunting officers. Indeed, nowhere in the order is there any reference to a role for communities within the reserved district. Thus, the anomalies that emerged in the previous phase were rearranged with a simple order.⁵²⁰

The following year saw the first proclamation of the abovementioned royal constitutions. This is not the only aspect absent from the fundamental laws of the new kingdom. Other elements, such as forest and water legislation, related to hunting, remained also unconsidered. The only law worth to be mentioned is that relating to the carrying of

⁵¹⁸ DUBOIN, 1176.

⁵¹⁹ *Ivi*, 1179.

⁵²⁰ *Ivi*, 1185-1187.

arms.⁵²¹ Only in the second edition, that of 1729, were they included in the constitutions, as proof that hunting could also be included. The analysis of these three areas shows, in contrast to hunting, a clear process of centralisation and strengthening of royal prerogatives: the outcomes of Victor Amadeus II's reforms.

The first aspect, that relating to the carrying of weapons, underwent a radical restriction that could not fail to have an impact on hunting as well. The carrying of arquebuses and pistols was prohibited throughout the territory of the newly created kingdom, whether they were wheeled, rifled or held by rope. The carrying of arms, previously restricted only by the presence of the reserved hunting district, was now generally everywhere.⁵²² Possession, on the other hand, was forbidden, in particular for short pistols and bladed weapons, because they could be concealed more easily. Another related aspect is the fact that a precise definition of *quadrille* is given. As seen in the previous section on poaching, this term was used to refer to groups of armed people who went into the woods to hunt illegally. As it turned out, these groups could consist of many people, but the constitution set the limit at only five armed men so as not to incur the aggravating circumstance of constituting a *quadriglia*.⁵²³ The new firearms legislation also framed the killing of the most dangerous pests and predators; in particular, wolves - but others infesting the countryside - are mentioned, thus also confirming from a legislative point of view that shift from princely protection to the organisation of local self-defence groups that were allowed to carry long weapons.⁵²⁴

Water and forest policy also underwent a fundamental change. The previous legislation was reconfirmed as far as the rivers and streams protection was concerned which were all declared *regali*. The waters that had thus fed urban parks and had functioned as vectors and boundaries of hunting reserves now became integral parts of the state property.⁵²⁵ The previous regulations on the protection of forests were also confirmed, and they were placed under the protection of the provincial intendents established after the reforms at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These intendents were also given the role of judges and conservators, who were allowed to determine the amount of wood that could

⁵²¹ *Leggi e costituzioni di Sua Maestà*, Lib. IV, Tit. XXXIV, cap. XIII.

⁵²² *Ivi*, 220.

⁵²³ *Ivi*, 222.

⁵²⁴ *Ivi*, 225.

⁵²⁵ *Leggi e costituzioni di Sua Maestà*, Lib. VI, Tit. VII.

be cut down each year. Many of the elements that were at the basis of princely hunting, even in its absence, were thus integrated into the new institutional order.⁵²⁶

Between 1722 and 1729, there was therefore a partial reorganisation that affected the general framework of princely hunting, which, however, was not hinged on the new political course, but rather restored to its previously established main coordinates. What is also interesting to mention is that between 1724 and 1730, Victor Amadeus commissioned a series of preliminary works on a possible draft for a new general edict, which could then give rise to the first royal hunting legislation inspired by French legislation.⁵²⁷ All these projects never led to the promulgation of a general edict. The evolution of events outlined so far leads to the argument that Victor Amadeus II never assumed the role of hunter-king, which would have made the new title a turning point for the practice of hunting. He therefore rather impersonated the role of the last duke, linked on the one hand to the previous evolution of princely hunting and on the other to a social context that led him to shrewdly choose to limit the hunts themselves. The next chapter will highlight how, after the promulgation of a new general edict on hunts issued by Charles Emmanuel III in 1741, the royal hunts of the House of Savoy could finally emerge.

⁵²⁶ IVI, Llib. VI, Tit. IX.

⁵²⁷ ASTO CORTE, *Materie giuridiche, Caccia e boschi*, 1: 19, *Progetti d'editto per la conservazione de Boschi e della caccia con diverse memorie su tal fatto 1724-1732*, 1,3, 6-8, 12, 15-17, 21, 28-34, 36-39, 44.

3.2 The King's hunts

Apogees and illusions of royal hunting

The transition from duchy to kingdom was thus marked by an anomaly, which did not see a parallel leap forward for the royal hunt but, on the contrary, a downsizing of it, a process that created a discrepancy in the shift that led from ducal to royal hunts. This discrepancy prevented Victor Amadeus II from being identified as the first hunter king, for whom it would be necessary to wait until almost the middle of the century, when Charles Emmanuel III would complete this work, albeit influenced by the evolution that the political events described so far gave to the House of Savoy's princely hunts.

When Charles Emmanuel III ascended the throne in 1730, the hunting lodge at Stupinigi was already largely built and ready to become the hunting pivot for the Kings of Sardinia. Again, as with Victor Amadeus II, this transition did not coincide with issuing a new general edict on hunting that would allow this practice to be framed in the new course of the House of Savoy: the promulgation took place in the 1740s.

This chapter will thus indicate four phases that characterised the development of royal hunts during the eighteenth century: a first phase of stagnation in the 1730s; a second phase of elaboration in the 1740s that allowed the delimitation of the new reserved hunting district; a third phase from the 1750s to the 1770s, with the actual apogee of the royal hunts; a fourth and final phase from the 1770s to the 1790s, with the increase in hunting intensity.

The 1730s: the stagnation

The size of the hunting crew and the hunting dog pack for the 1730s is provided to us by cross-referencing data from the records of the *Azienda della Casa di Sua Maestà* which reports all expenses for the court of the King of Sardinia, comprising the *Stato della Venaria Reale* where are reported the expenses for hunting crew and dogs.⁵²⁸ For the years 1731 and 1732, the registers showing the expenses for the celebration of St. Hubert on 3 November, when the new hunting uniforms were delivered to the crew, provide data on the size of the crew: in both years, the reported hunting crew consisted of 27 officers.⁵²⁹ The 1733 account, on the other hand, provides clear information on the size

⁵²⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, Libri mastri, 215 (1731), 216 (1732), 217 (1733), 218 (1734), 219 (1737).

⁵²⁹ Ivi, 215: f. 79; 216: f. 79.

and type of the hunting dog pack: which would amount to 90 units, which would form a single pack for deer hunting.⁵³⁰ Instead, for the hunting crew, only the general expense of £7,473 is reported.

However, the deer hunting crew was not the only one who kept dogs inside the *venerie*. A small group of 6\8 greyhounds was still maintained for occasional hare hunts, and an average of 3 to 5 gundogs were assigned to a figure who had made his entrance among hunting officers in those same years: the rifle huntsman. The three rifle huntsmen among the hunting officers did not take part in the *chasse à courre* for stags, but presented themselves as those who had replaced the falconers. With the falcon era over, the rifle became the ideal and less expensive weapon for hunting feathered game.

This early data confirms that with the eighteenth century and the final shift to *chasse à courre*, deer hunting was the most widely practiced by the House of Savoy: even the hunting crew in fact is reported as *cacciatori del cervo*. This fact might sound obvious, but the simplification of hunting packs produced a sharp contraction in the number of dogs compared to those of Charles Emmanuel II, not to mention those of Victor Amadeus I who could count on at least two hundreds dogs for their hunts. By 1733 this contraction also reached the lowest ever recorded as in the last quarter of the year deer hounds dropped to 40 units.⁵³¹

The abrupt fall is the cause of an order issued the next year that might seem paradoxical. In 1734, indeed, following numerous appeals by the hunting district communities, several hunting licences were issued exclusively for the culling of deer, whose numbers were now causing great damage to crops. The lack of hounds had probably produced contraction in the number of hunts conducted by the King. They were issued during the months of May

⁵³⁰ Ivi, 216: ff. 110v-115v. Payments for dogs show how a single deer hunting dog cost 8 denarii per day, for a total of £1 per month (240 denarii corresponded to 20 soldi, or precisely 1 *lira*) or £3 per quarter. This figure, confirmed by payments in 1778, ensures a substantial stability of the Piedmontese £ throughout the century, thus allowing a direct comparison of the data recorded in the years after the 1730s

⁵³¹ Ivi, f. 40. The order of the one of March 1733 was reprinted in June 1734, March 1736 and April 1737. The prominence of deer hunting and the existence of a single pack are also evident from a series of orders issued between 1733 and 1737 by the Grand Huntsman, Francesco Tapparello di Genola, which identified the royal pack exclusively with the deer hounds and implemented restrictions on domestic dogs found within the 10-mile reserved district, see DUBOIN, 1194-1201.

and June, i.e. at a time when hunting was generally prohibited, with the clear intention of quickly reducing their numbers.⁵³²

The 1737 account finally gives us a complete picture.⁵³³ Payments for the hunting crew reveal its internal structure: 4 *piquers*, 8 *valets de limier*, 1 caporal, 1 vice-caporal, 9 *valets de chiens*, 4 *valets de petit chiens* [figg.] making a total of 27 officers, confirming the 1732 size. The number of deer hounds had also returned to 80 units. Payments for these officers amounted to £2,117 per quarter, a figure that gives an average cost per quarter for each crew member of approximately £80, which compared to the 1733 figures, showing that in 1733 the hunting crew decreased to 24 officers.

In any case, the State of Venaria Reale also included expenses for other officers not on the crew for deer hunting. Of course, the Grand Huntsman was there.⁵³⁴ Above the Grand Huntsman are two gentlemen of the venery; a role that anticipated the rise to the commander of the deer-hunting crew. The lowest ranks of hunting officers consisted of a surgeon, a doctor, a horse handler, the king's arquebusman, the chief of the pheasant stud and four of the king's personal trumpeters, who had no actual role in the hunts but only an accompanying function.

From the point of view of the overall expenditure for deer hunting crew and hounds and its percentage impact on the total of *Casa di Sua Maestà*, the 1730s do not stand out as one in which there was a significant increase. The hunting expenditure in the last two years of the decade varied from £18,279 to £20,742, then stabilising for the whole of the 1740s at £19,642.⁵³⁵ The 1730s thus presented a general stagnation from the standpoint of hunting crew and hunting dog pack. Likewise, the percentage impact on the total expenditure remained around 1.6%, showing an anomalous figure only in 1743 due to a

⁵³² Ivi: 1196-1197.

⁵³³ ASTO CORTE, Libri mastri, 219: 134-135.

⁵³⁴ These first years present an anomalous situation. The office is held, albeit in different positions, by three personalities: the marquis Antonio Arduino Tana di Verolengo, the second person to be appointed Grand Huntsman after Amedeo del Pozzo di Voghera, marquis Carlo Battista San Martino di Rivarolo appointed Grand Huntsman *in seconda* until 1732 and for this reason still present in the following year's payments, and Count Francesco Girolamo Tapparelli di Genola, appointed Grand Huntsman *in seconda* in his place, cfr. A. MERLOTTI, *Il Gran Cacciatore di Savoia*, 81.

⁵³⁵ ASTO CORTE, Libri mastri, 222 (1743); 223 (1744); 224 (1745); 225 (1746); 226 (1747); 227 (1748).

drastic but temporary contraction in the expenses, most likely due to a lack of accounting that was later integrated in the following years.

These data, cross-referenced with those of the deer hunting crew and the associated hound pack, clearly show a substantial stagnation in expenditures for the deer hunting crew and hounds that will also be reflected in the following decade. As in the case of the Venaria Reale palace, the construction and integration of the hunting lodge at Stupinigi did not in itself lead to an increase in hunting expenses or to an enlargement of hunting officers, nor did it lead to an increase in the number of hounds, thus leading to the apogee of the princely hunts of the House of Savoy. However, the 1740s introduced changes that contributed to its realization.



Image 20 - Valets de limiers 1773, Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli – Stupinigi (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)



Image 21 - Piquers following the deer 1773, Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli – Stupinigi (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)



Image 22 - Valets de chiens and piquers 1773, Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli Stupinigi (Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano)

The 1740s: the territorial scope of the royal hunts

For more than a century, the hunting legislation enacted by Victor Amadeus I in 1633 had served as the basis for the subsequent orders issued by his successors, who made it a legitimate instrument for their reforms of princely hunting, distorting the purpose for which it had been enacted but never rejecting it. As it turned out, neither Charles Emmanuel II, who limited himself to proposing its sterile reissue, nor Victor Amadeus II, who reformulated individual articles to exploit their potential to reduce ongoing frictions, proposed a new legislative framework even though the former was the founder of Venaria Reale and the latter the first to bear the title of King of Sardinia and to build Stupinigi hunting lodge. Anyway, that honour was carried out by Charles Emmanuel III eleven years after his accession to the throne. In 1741, the general edict on hunting was thus proclaimed as an enactment of a «*regia autorità*», representing both the ultimate outcome of the previous legislation and its transfiguration.⁵³⁶

The materialisation of the hunting space through the positioning of pillars took on a new relevance, being placed at the opening of the edict. Thus, the rule designed by Victor Amadeus II to stop ignorance about borders giving the people who were already restless excuses to violate the reserved district, had become essential for determining the territorial projection of the reserved hunting ground. That did not result in the acknowledgement of a rule that had evidently had the desired effect in making the limits of the reservation known, but initiated a specific determination of boundaries. The task was entrusted to the engineer Gian Tommaso Monte, who between 1744 and 1747 carried out an extensive positioning of the hunting district's limits, thus enabling a clear perimeter line to be established.⁵³⁷

The fulfilment of the materialisation of the hunting space was not the only novelty brought about by the new legislation. The legislative framing of royal hunts finally brought out the deepest symbolic links. The articles that established which were to be considered royal animals and what punishments awaited those who did not comply with them established a new hierarchy, in which the deer finally takes clear supremacy over other games, corresponding to a new hierarchy. It was decreed that anyone found hunting

⁵³⁶ DUBOIN, 1200-1207.

⁵³⁷ ASTO CORTE, *Materie economiche, Caccia e boschi*, 2, *Libro primo e secondo degli atti di terminazione del distretto riservato per le Regie caccie formato dall'ingegnere Giantommaso Monte 1744-1747*. Cfr. A. SISTRI, *I distretti riservati di caccia nei dintorni di Torino nel corso del Settecento*, 122-124; V. DEFABIANI, *La Misura Reale*, 119.

within the reserved district would incur a penalty of twenty-five *scudi oro* and two months' imprisonment. This penalty changed to forty *scudi oro* and three months imprisonment if the game hunted was deer, roe deer, hares, herons, partridges or pheasants.⁵³⁸ Equally, such punishment was imposed on anyone who hunted deer, roe deer and pheasants, thus restricting regal animals to these three species outside the reserved district.⁵³⁹ On the other hand, the killing of deer within the reserved district carried a penalty double that of the normal game: fifty *scudi oro* and four months imprisonment.⁵⁴⁰ It was thus only from this precise moment that deer, the quintessential symbol of royal authority, assumed a preeminent role over other game.

As far as the internal legislation of the hunting space is concerned, the royal hunts were more permissive regarding forest restrictions than the previous legislation. The logging of woods within the district could reach two-thirds of the extension with the approval of the Grand Huntsman, while the grazing ban remained unchanged for five years in the deforested parts. As always, sheep grazing was subject to stricter restrictions, as it could only occur between April and October. The strong forestry restriction enacted by the regent Marie Jeanne Baptiste de Savoy-Nemours had thus completely disappeared, showing how Charles Emmanuel III continued what his father Victor Amadeus II had started.

On the other hand, the concern was stronger for the management of domestic dogs within the hunting reserved ground, in line with orders issued in the 1730s: a ban on the possession of hunting dogs, in particular greyhounds and bloodhounds; the obligation to keep them tied up during the hunting season (delayed by one month, from August to March); and restrictions extended to one mile outside the district itself.⁵⁴¹

Feudal lords who held properties within the reserved district were also prohibited from any hunting activities. Restrictions were also placed on attempts at armed resistance to hunting officers. The armed threat alone could be sufficient to lead to arrest. At the same time, the minimum number of people for whom a group could be considered a *quadriglia* [group of armed poachers] was practically reduced to the lowest possible, i.e. two people. In this way, an attempt was made to affect the root of a phenomenon that, as seen in the

⁵³⁸ DUBOIN, 1201.

⁵³⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁵⁴¹ Ivi, 1202-1203.

chapter on hunting, was very much present until the 1760s.⁵⁴² The entire regulatory system, this time, was hinged the general one of the kingdom: all the relevant penalties laid down referred back to the provisions of the general constitutions issued by Victor Amadeus II. Therefore, the break between the transition from duchy to kingdom and hunting legislation could eventually be considered closed.⁵⁴³ With the enactment of the new general edict, the gap created under Victor Amadeus II between the transition to royal sovereignty and the enactment of corresponding hunting legislation was finally bridged, giving a new shape to the hunts of the House of Savoy: a shape that resist only for six months.

In January 1742, due to the numerous grievances brought «by both communities and vassals», the king of Sardinia Charles Emmanuel III was forced to reformulate some of the cornerstones of the general edict that had just been issued.⁵⁴⁴ Alongside some changes made in order to meet the needs of local communities, such as the possibility of cutting small shrubs and the chestnut trees to make vine poles even in the reserved district, or an extension of the grazing rights, concessions were made to the feudal lords which broke the territorial unity, thus determining its concentric transformation. In fact, the amendments made created a large hunting reserve [*Gran riserva*], including all the territories previously included, and within it, a small hunting district [*Piccolo distretto*].

In the latter, the newly enacted legislation remained in force. In the remaining territories, however, the landed gentry was allowed to hunt and keep packs of dogs, although they were prevented from killing royal animals and having jurisdiction over hunting crimes. The great reserved hunting reserve, established by the edict of 1741, included the territories of 92 local communities and those around the capital city of Turin. The small hunting district created a few months later reduced the area of control over which the sovereign's exclusive hunting right was ultimately projected, to the territories of only 40 communities.⁵⁴⁵ The structure of these two different areas did not change until the late 1740s. In 1749, a third general edict, which resumed the previous two in some points, added the territory of Racconigi to the great reserve. This expansion was, however,

⁵⁴² Ibidem.

⁵⁴³ Ivi, 1205.

⁵⁴⁴ Ivi, 1208-1210.

⁵⁴⁵ Ivi, 1210.

immediately curtailed by the sharing of hunting rights in that territory to the Savoy-Carignano branch.⁵⁴⁶

The three edicts thus delineate what was the hunting space of the short eighteenth century of the House of Savoy's royal hunts. The materialisation of the boundaries of the area reserved for royal hunts also led to the cartographic reproduction of it. In 1747, an initial cartography of the large hunting reserve was produced.⁵⁴⁷ In the early 1760s, the cartography of the small hunting district was produced, in three large sheets, of which represents the illustrative model. In order to understand the extent of the small hunting district compared to the large reserve a projection of its boundaries was made on the map of the large reserve of 1747.

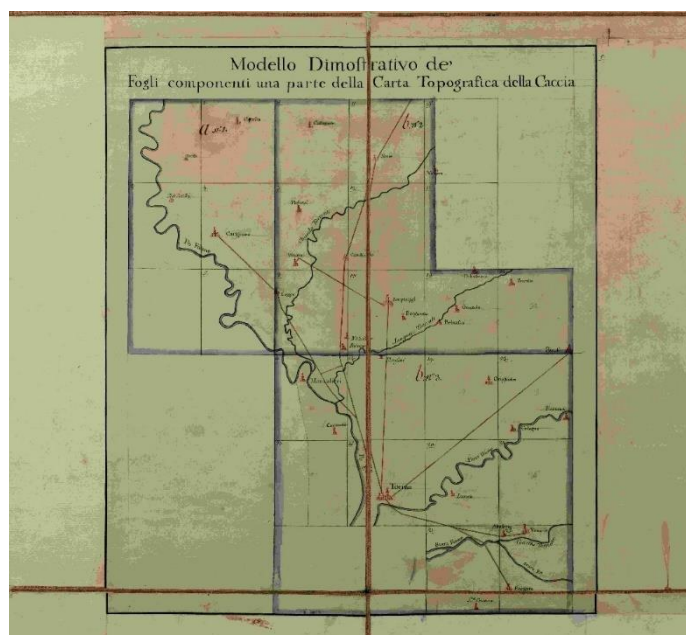


Image 23 - Little reserved hunting district, ASTo Corte, Carte topografiche e disegni, Carte topografiche segrete, Torino 15 A VI Rosso, 1760s [detail]

⁵⁴⁶ Ivi, 1221-1222. The Savoy-Carignano had already received full hunting rights over their appanage since 1718, see Ivi, 1182-1184.

⁵⁴⁷ ASTO CORTE, Carte topografiche per A e B, Torino 18, Carta corografica contenente la linea perimetrale del nuovo Distretto riservato delle regie caccie.

The three macro-areas drawn, had as their southern boundary: the area of Venaria Reale and the *Gran Paese*; the castle of Rivoli and its territories to the west; the course of the Po River to the east; and from the woods of Stupinigi that stretched to the Chisola creek to the north. The map also shows, integrated within the small hunting district, the territories beyond the Chisola creek gravitating around Carignano. The outline of the hunting district thus delineated was to be maintained until the end of the century. The small hunting district was thus delineated as the only hunting area where the kings of Sardinia exercised completely exclusive hunting rights. Taking into consideration what has been said so far, and comparing it with the previous extent of territories reserved for princely hunting especially in the first half of the seventeenth century, it must be admitted that the settling down of the royal hunts in the Kingdom of Sardinia, a long-standing aim pursued by the House of Savoy, also coincided with the maximum contraction of the sovereign's exclusive hunting territory. The clear demarcation of the boundaries of the reserved area, however, contributed to the apogee of royal hunts.



Image 24 - Visualisation of the 'piccolo distretto di caccia' (1742), projected on the 'Grande riserva' (1747), mapped by Giantommaso Monte

From the 1750s to 1770s: the apogee of the royal hunts

Resulting from the data collected, a second phase opened in the 1750s, which after the stagnation of the 1730s and 1740s marked a sharp increase in hunting expenditures, in the percentage increase in total spending, and the size of the deer hunting pack and crew, holding steady for 20 years. As the two graphs showing hunting expenses in the accounts

of the *Azienda della Casa di Sua Maestà* the years from the 1750s to the 1770s represent the highest point of the House of Savoy's.⁵⁴⁸

We can outline the characteristics of royal hunts in their apogee. The registers presenting the entire expenditure category are those of 1753, 1762 and 1773. In the first case, the internal structure of the royal venery did not change, except for the presence of a so-called '*page of the Venaria*'. This position was a precursor to the appointment as commander of the deer hunting crew. Headcount within the crew may be deduced from the recorded payment for hunters' clothing. In December of that year, 34 hunter's outfits (or *sourtouts*) were ordered for *piquers*, *valets de limiers*, *valets de chiens* and rifle hunters. Taking into account that the number of rifle hunters remained stable at three, this brings the number of crew members to 31, who received for the last quarter of that year £2,225, for an average wage of £70 each. This figure compared to the third quarter of 1753 reveals the presence of an even higher number of 35 hunters. There was also a notable increase in the size of deerhounds pack, which reached almost double the previous amount with around 150 dogs. In the two other years under analysis, the internal structure is firmly established, while it is once again the deer hunting crew that changed. Regarding the size of the crew, the values of 1762 and 1773 confirm the stabilisation of the 35 hunters already reached in 1753. Deer hunting dogs, on the other hand, exceeded 150 units in 1762, only to return to around 80 in 1773, as in the phase before the actual emergence of royal hunts.

The figures for total expenditure are complementary. Expenditure rose from £20,321 in 1750 to over 25,000 in just two years, remaining above £27,000 throughout the 1760s, with 1764 representing the highest point reached during the century with £27,242. In the first half of the 1770s, expenditure returned to around £20,000. Finally, looking at the percentage impact on the total expenditure of the House of the King of Sardinia, with expenditure on hunting approaching 2% of the total in 1763, there is no doubt that the apogee of the royal hunts of the House of Savoy occurred in the twenty years from 1750 to 1770. The economic data clearly show the juncture in which the royal hunts of the House of Savoy found the highest expression, but they alone do not provide an explanation as to what produced it.

The element that brought the royal hunts to the fore is, therefore to be found in the years immediately preceding this twenty-year period. All the aspects highlighted above were

⁵⁴⁸ ASTO RIUNITE, Libri mastri, 231 (1753); 245-246 (1762); 270-271 (1773); 284-285 (1778); 297 (1788).

certainly necessary for the opening of the apogee phase of royal hunts but were not sufficient on their own. It was emphasised that the construction of Stupinigi and its integration into the territory in the 1730s was not enough. Similarly, the enactment of the general edicts, which were fundamental in framing the princely hunts within the new royal structure, did not produce any significant change. Moreover, the establishment of hunting district boundaries already between 1744 and 1747, to which the amendments of 1749 made little change, should have implemented the hunts as early as the 1740s, which, however, did not happen.

The most prominent phase of royal hunts in the mid-eighteenth century needed one more element to occur: the political stability. The end of the 1740s marked, indeed the end of the phase of great instability that saw the House of Savoy take part in the wars of succession that characterised the European political scene in the first half of the eighteenth century. The apogee phase of the hunts of 1750-1770 coincides with what diplomatic sources have highlighted: the transition from hunting as a diplomatic space to hunting largely adhering to the sovereign's private sphere. The sovereign, for whom hunting had by then become pure *divertimento*, a detachment from the commitments of politics, needed political stability to dedicate himself fully to the his courtly *loisir*.

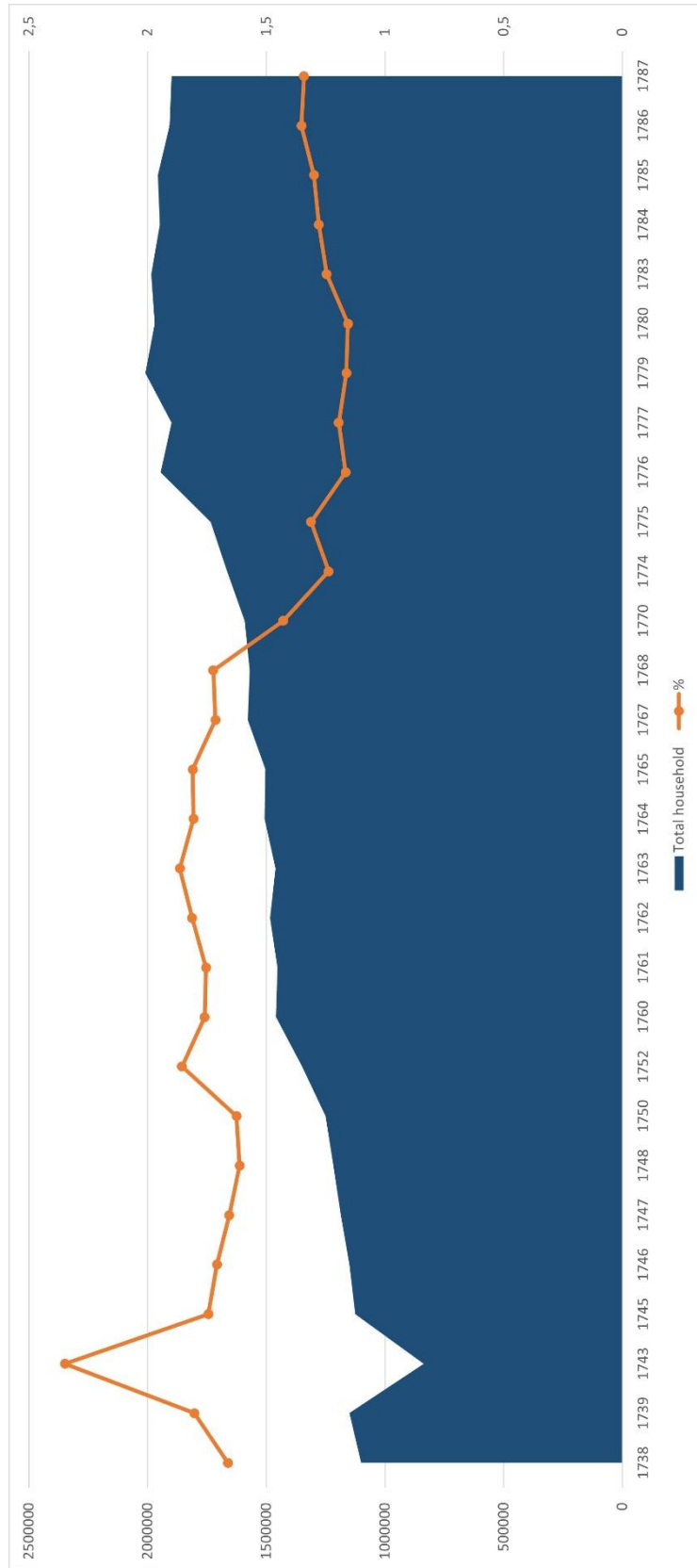


Chart 14 - Deer-hunting crew and hounds 1733 – 1788

A final series of data needs to be integrated to present a complete picture of what the royal hunts of the House of Savoy were in the short eighteenth century: the number of deer hunted per year. Graph [n] shows a projection of the data already collected and published by Pietro Passerin d'Entrevès, ranging from 1737 to 1791.⁵⁴⁹

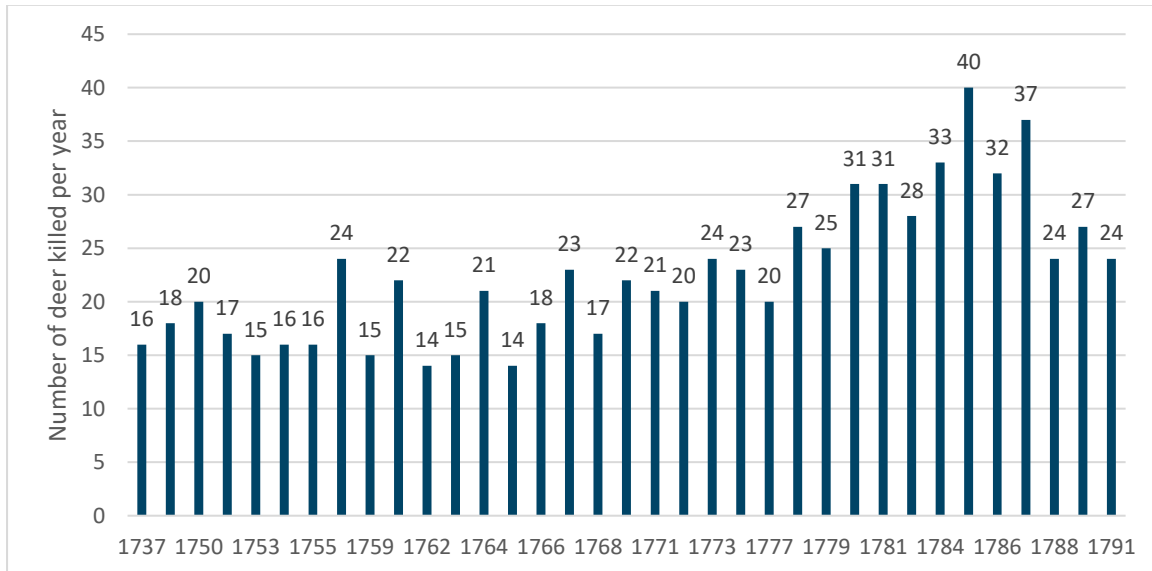


Chart 15 - Hunting intensity 1737 - 1791

The annual average number of deer killed throughout the eighteenth century was 23. In the pre-apogee phase, deer even remained above 20 units. As the graph shows, the number of hunted deer per year increased during the apogee phase, with peaks above 20 units in at least 8 of the 18 years taken as examples by Passerin d'Entrevès, but all around the century average. The last phase of the brief eighteenth century of royal hunts produced the highest level of game killed, coinciding with the reign of Victor Amadeus III. When compared to the large game kills that took place in the rest of Europe during the same periods, particularly in the Germanic area, the intensity of the House of Savoy's hunting appears quite different. The House of Savoy's royal hunting was never focused on the massive slaughter of game. The average of 23 hunted deer per season shows a hunt that aimed primarily at the fun and thrill given by the *chasse à courre* on horseback, more than at the culling of game itself. As seen in the closing of the previous chapter, in 1734, faced with a high presence of deer damaging the land within the reserved district, the King of Sardinia did not increase the intensity of hunts but entrusted the communities with the solution to the problem. Even taking into account this fact, the root of which was

⁵⁴⁹ P. P. D'ENTREVES, *La gestion démographique du gibier et des animaux nuisible*, 140.

mainly cultural, 1785 was the year in which the King of Sardinia, Victor Amadeus III, killed the highest number of deer during the entire eighteenth century. The figure of 40 deer hunted in 1785, however, represents almost twice the century average. Therefore, from this point of view, the years from 1780 to 1790 marked the most intense hunting activity, clearly marking that symbolic relationship between royal authority and its animal counterpart. However, the data relating to Victor Amadeus III's deer hunting crew show a continuity that does not support an explanation related to the latter's size. In fact, the two reference years, 1778 and 1788, show a number of crew members equal or similar to the previous decades; 37 and 33 respectively. One could infer this figure from a personal hunting passion of Victor Amadeus III, but the data for the years immediately preceding and following show a return to the average of around 22 deer shot per year.

What was behind this second increment in the intensity of royal hunts? To understand this trend, we need to look at the two key elements of *chasse à courre*: the deer hounds and the horses. From a strictly numerical point of view, there is no considerable increase in the number of deer hunting dogs, but rather a stabilisation of between 120 and 135 units. The stabilisation was the result of a rationalisation and centralisation of the royal dog pack that took place in 1771 with the construction of the great kennels at Stupinigi. As can be seen from the plan drawn up in preparation for their creation, the kennels showed a layout crossed by canals that allowed for the better feeding of the dogs, a four-way division of the by type and their substantial division into geographical. Given the average number of dogs shown above, the division assured that the dogs could be divided into four smaller packs of around 30 units each. Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli's paintings can provide helpful information for a detailed understanding of the actual use of the hounds during the royal hunts. Looking at the *Partenza della caccia*, dating back in the beginning of the 1770s, one can easily see that the number of dogs actually used during royal hunts in that year was 40 deerhounds, divided into 10 *valet de chiens*. The slight change and stabilisation undergone by the dog pack after the construction of the new kennel ensured that one of the four small pack of 30 dogs per week could be used, allowing perfect rotation during the month and avoiding the use of tired or injured dogs. On the other hand, the data collected by Leila Picco on expenditures for horses and secondary expenses of hunting (purchases of animals put into the reserve, meat poisoned to destroy

competitors, dog breeding, transportation of dead deer, maintenance of hunting routes).⁵⁵⁰

Data on secondary hunting expenditures show the same increase from the 1750s onward. On the other hand, the data on horse expenditures, although as always it is not possible to determine which of these were used in the hunts, are perfectly overlaid with the increase in intensity in the hunts. The construction of the new stables at Stupinigi kept the expenditure figure for horses stable even in the 1790s when hunting intensity became lower again.

The rationalization in dog management and the increase in horse expenditures occurring in the latter part of the eighteenth century are at the origin of this second apogee of the royal hunts of the House of Savoy related to hunting intensity. But this also reveals the illusory nature of royal hunting itself. At the peak of hunting intensity, spending on hunting remained stable at just over £25,000. Still, its percentage impact on the entire house of the King of Sardinia showed a definitive decline. With the reign of Victor Amadeus III, the relevance of royal hunting in the *Casa di Sua Maestà*, which showed substantial growth in these decades, had a drastic decrease in spending moving steadily between 1 and 1.5 per cent of total costs. The hunting performance then reached its climax just as the curtain was closing on the stage of the royal hunts. The echoes of the French Revolution and the end of the aristocratic world of the *Ancien Régime* were getting closer and closer, and the onset of a new, radical political instability put an end to the royal hunts.

⁵⁵⁰ L. PICCO, *Cavalli, caccia e potere nel Piemonte sabauda. L'Azienda economica della Venaria Reale*, 56, tab. 6.

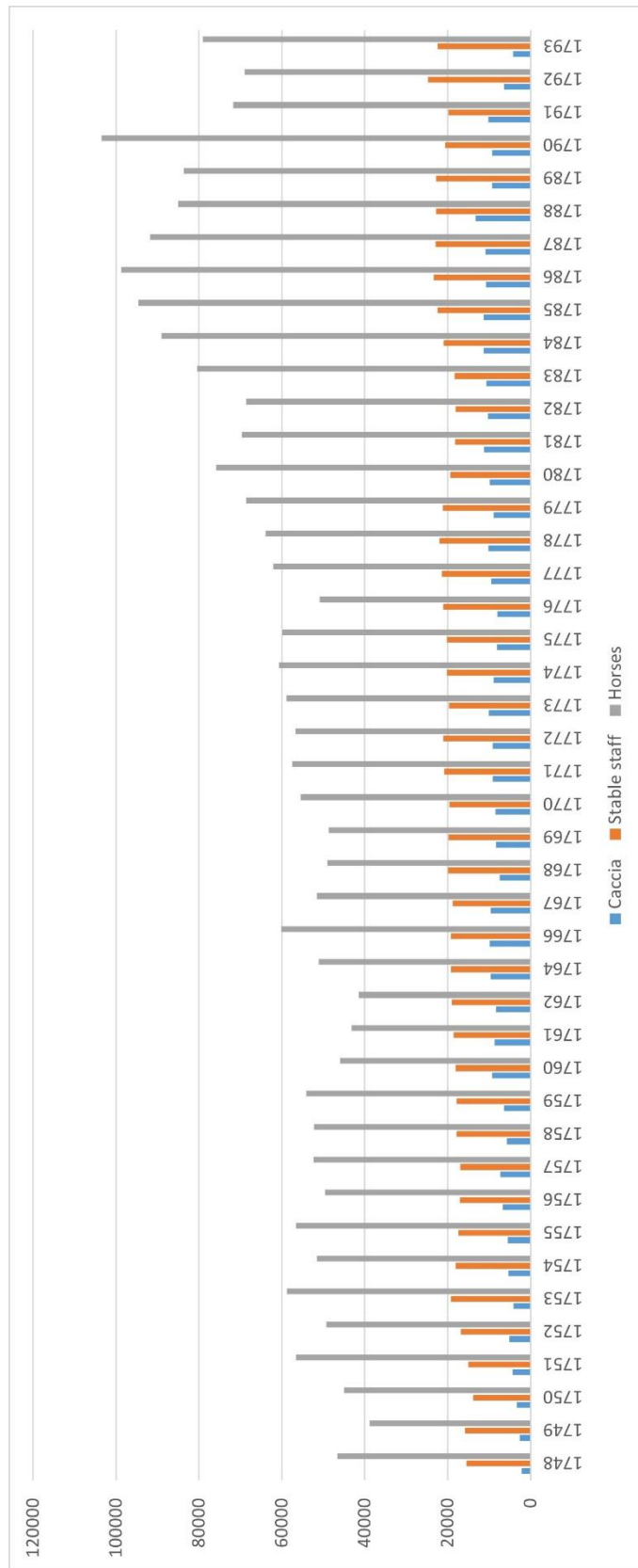


Chart 16 - Expenditure in lire for 'caccia' and horses 1748-1793

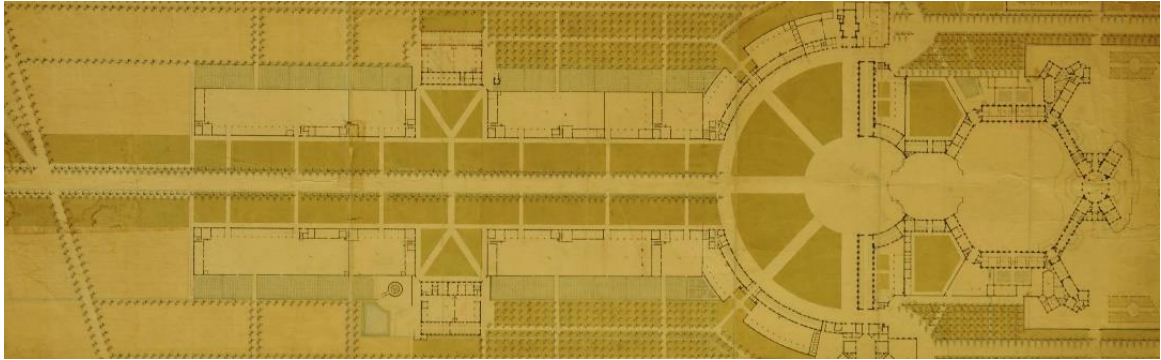


Image 25 - Plant of the Royal palace of Stupinigi with the new stables 1790, Archivio Ordine Mauriziano, Mappe e cabrei, s.s.

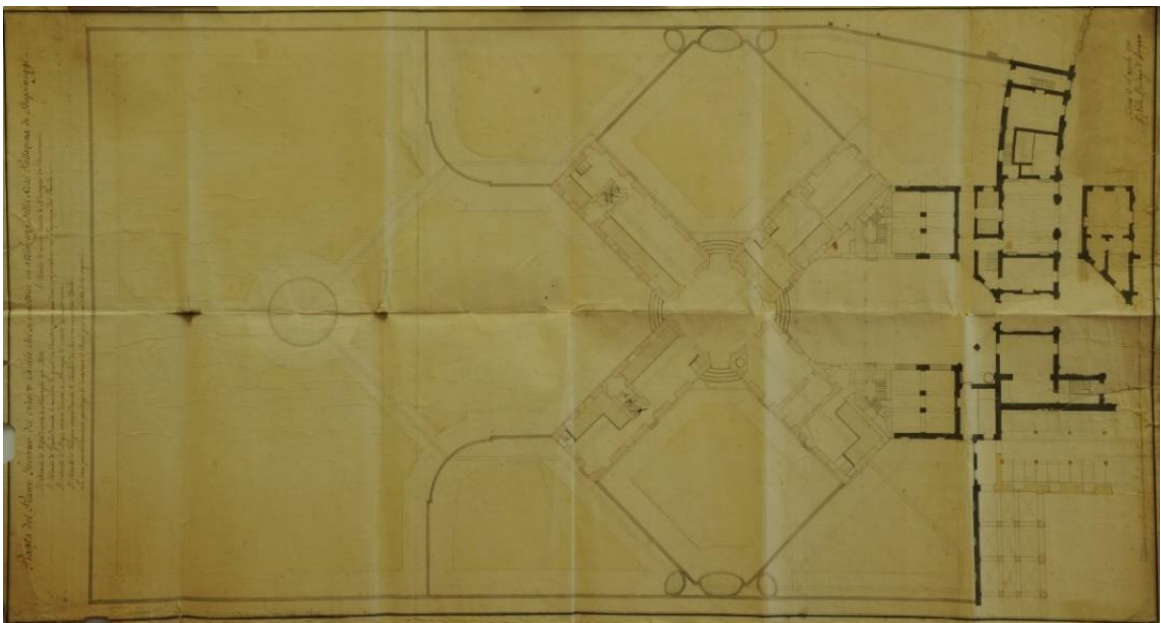


Image 26 - Plant of the new kennel at Stupinigi palace, Archivio Ordine Mauriziano, Stupinigi, 35: c.1062.

3.3 After the fall: a conclusion

The princely hunts in the history of the House of Savoy

In 1792, the French army occupied Savoy and the county of Nice following the Kingdom of Sardinia's entry into the coalition against revolutionary France. Six years later, the French army crossed the Alps and occupied Piedmont, and so, Charles Emmanuel IV, successor to Victor Amadeus III, saw the House of Savoy's domains occupied again like Charles II more than two and a half centuries earlier. The French Revolution wiped out the aristocratic world of the *Ancien Régime* and the very idea of hunting privilege that it embodied. The invasion of the Kingdom of Sardinia hence ended the House of Savoy's princely hunts as they had evolved since the sixteenth century. After the fall of the Napoleonic regime, when the crowns were put back on their thrones in Europe, princely hunting had by then profoundly changed, as so had its meanings and functions in political dynamics. The 1798 invasion of the domains of the House of Savoy, which once again placed its sovereignty in crisis, perhaps even more profoundly than any crisis before, presents itself as the perfect opportunity to look back to, and to answer, the questions with which this thesis opened.

We can thus go backwards, starting from the developments highlighted in the eighteenth-century Kingdom of Sardinia. Princely hunting had undergone transformations at the court of Victor Amadeus III, Charles Emmanuel III and Victor Amadeus II. Royal hunting had fully become a phenomenon intrinsically linked to court life, a routine in which the sovereign was engaged twice a week, as had been established since the time of Charles Emmanuel II, and which had its main spatial projection in the system of residences and hunting palaces built between the second half of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. As we have already pointed out, if we look at this in the long perspective, the territorial projection that the royal hunts assumed in the eighteenth century, particularly in relation to the small hunting district where the sovereign exercised exclusive rights, represents the smallest extension ever recorded between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

Why this evolution? As has been shown, the events of the civil war had enormous repercussions on the hunting space and the legislation for reserved hunting. Christine of France's pro-aristocratic politics reduced what had previously been a huge hunting area extending over a large part of Piedmont to the 10-mile circle. In the same way, the subsequent state of social tension had heavy repercussions on the reserved hunting district with protests and attacks of various kinds. This forced the protagonist of the transition from Duchy to Kingdom, Victor Amadeus II, to delimit (even materially with hunting pylons) his hunting privilege by reducing his prerogatives, particularly on reserved

prey. When he became king, although he planned it, he failed to issue the general edict that would have institutionalised the transition to royal hunts, which could have brought a new impetus. Thus, Victor Amadeus II's project remained but partly realised with the construction of the Stupinigi hunting lodge. The speed with which the small hunting district was established in the mid-eighteenth century also shows how the pressure from the communities within the reserved hunting district and the aristocracy that owned land there had by then easily imposed limits on the king's entertainment.

The cultural aspect of eighteenth-century hunting should not be underestimated in assessing the dynamics transforming the House of Savoy's hunting system. The fact that hunting had completely attained the status of a simple court *loisir* influenced many aspects of eighteenth-century hunting. The key element lies first and foremost in the general low intensity of hunting, whereby the aim was not so much the slaughter of large quantities of game, as in other European courts, favoured by the extension of the reserved hunting districts. The role taken on by the *chasse à courre* to the deer, with all its ritual bearing and court apparatus, was central in the shift to the *ceremonialisation* of hunting that occurred at the end of the seventeenth century and consolidated itself in the following one. This, however, as pointed out, did not lead to an enlargement of the hunting packs but to their simplification. The presence in the brief eighteenth-century royal hunts of only one pack for deer hunting, which at its highest point did not reach 160 dogs, gives a figure far removed from the consistency it had assumed in previous centuries when the other types of hunts were also assiduously practised, together with falconry. Concerning the number of dogs, however, that of the hunting crew must be emphasised. On this point, the eighteenth century really carries the moment when the hunting crew reaches the peak of its expansion, with around 40 officers in the twenty years of the apogee of royal hunts and almost as much in the following years.

From these observations, one must reflect on the closeness between the sovereign and the prey. With a smaller number of dogs and a larger hunting crew, the space between the sovereign and the prey becomes much larger. In Cignaroli's paintings, unlike those of Jan Miel from the mid-seventeenth century, there is less physical involvement of the ruler, if any, and the distance between the sovereign and his prey is maximum, filled by a large procession of *valets de chiens* and huntsmen. The difference with a hunt such as the one still practised by Charles Emmanuel II before the construction of the Venaria Reale is obvious. Hunting was purely personal entertainment for the eighteenth-century sovereign, who in fact devoted himself to it more assiduously when the stability of political events ensured that he no longer had pressing duties. The evolution of hunting in the middle of the eighteenth century, which as we have seen was always, even at its highest point, of low intensity, simply became a ritualised court ceremony, which led princely hunt

to break its ties with the two poles of *zoophilia* and *bestiality* that constituted its link with the very expression of sovereignty, as identified by Jacques Derrida:

*The sovereign makes himself the beast, has himself the beast, sometimes in the most troubling sense of a zoophilia or even a bestiality the historical symptoms of which we would need to inventory, detect, or event interpret.*⁵⁵¹

This link is evident in the hunts that the House of Savoy practised until the construction of the Venaria Reale, from which began the slow process that culminated in the eighteenth century. It is evident in Jan Miel's paintings depicting the various hunts still under Charles Emmanuel II - bear, boar, but also deer - where the beastly struggle with prey is visible and concrete. The bestiality (or, in other words, the more violent side) of pre-eighteenth-century hunting (but in general prior to the Venaria Reale and the adoption of the *chasse à courre* as the only hunting performance) is also evident from the very descriptions of ambassadors and spectators who have left us detailed descriptions studied across various chapters of this thesis. Examples can be numerous: the great hunt of 1656 in which Louise of Savoy took part, where there was no interposition between the princess and the pursued deer, and where she exhibited warlike skills; the direct participation of Victor Amadeus I, together with his father Charles Emmanuel II, in the destruction of the wolves that infested the city limits in 1622; the construction of the exotic menagerie by Charles Emmanuel I and the consequent spectacles with fights between ferocious beasts; Emmanuel Philibert's hunting in Savoy in which, as ambassador Morosini himself reports, the duke even went so far as to anticipate the hunting dogs in contact with the prey in an attempt to shoot it down.

Alongside bestiality in pre-eighteenth-century hunting we also find the other pole, zoophilia. By this term must be understood the bond that united the sovereign-hunter with animals, especially auxiliary animals, evidenced in the hunting relationship exchanged between Louise and Charles Emmanuel II, where the princess reviews dogs and pheasants herself, making sure of their state of health and informing the duke away from the court; or in Victor Amadeus I admiring his dogs devouring the carcass of a deer before the hunt; as well in Charles Emmanuel I evoking for himself a claimed animality; and even in Emanuel Philibert seeing his own falcon shot down by mistake and refraining himself from punishing the clumsy hunter. The zoophilia that emerges from the different hunting performances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is emblematic of a

⁵⁵¹ J. DERRIDA, *The beast and the sovereign*, vol. I, 61.

relationship that in the eighteenth century was diminished by the *ceremonialisation* and *ritualisation* assumed by royal hunting. A process that was thus marked by a shift from a direct bond between hunt and sovereign to one between hunt and court.

Over the years of Charles Emmanuel II until the completion of the Venaria Reale's in 1661, both zoophilia and bestiality were still clearly present in the princely hunts of the House of Savoy, yet, they were to diminish more and more after the interregnum years up to their absence from the hunting history of the royal House of Savoy, which all began with the break caused by Christine of France. Looking at the figure of Christine of France, she could virtually be contrasted with that of the princess and daughter Louise. On closer inspection, however, princely hunting played for both of these two female members of the House of Savoy a function of *empowerment* of their roles, thus intertwining with the gender dynamics within the courtly world. A link with hunting was also visible in the reforms carried out in the 1680s by Jeanne-Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours but whose development was interrupted by the rapid end of the second regency. The role played by hunting during the first regency also emphasises, albeit negatively, what was one of the main functions of princely hunting.

The reasons that led Christine of France to initiate a controlled demolition of the hunting system built up in the previous decades by the dukes of Savoy have been amply described in the relevant chapters, yet could be summarised as following: dismantling the hunting system gave her the necessary support of the aristocracy as to maintain her power over the duke. What I do want to emphasise is the political function assumed by the House of Savoy's princely hunting as *a tool of governance* of internal and external conflicts. Since the time of Emmanuel Philibert, hunting had presented itself as one of the instruments in the hands of the sovereign power to settle conflicts. Examples of this were the process of territorial acquisition initiated for the constitution of urban parks by Emmanuel Philibert and continued by Charles Emmanuel I, with the consequent ousting of competitors from the city perimeter, or the subsequent construction of the park wall, which was built on an exchange between communities and ducal power as to extend the boundaries of the reserved hunting territories.

In this light, the actions of Christine of France represents the strongest, albeit potentially most destructive, utilisation of princely hunting as a tool of governance. The enactment of pro-aristocratic legislation and the contraction of reserved territories proved to be an exceptional instrument of legitimisation of power that the regent and Madame Royal wanted to establish and for which she needed external support in order to emerge victorious from the civil war that had begun with the brothers of Victor Amadeus I. The transformation of princely hunting into an area of competition was among the strategies

that enabled Christine of France to govern the transition after the civil war and to keep power firmly in her hands, leaving Charles Emmanuel II a hunting system that had been depowered in all its structures. This evolution of princely hunting also demonstrates that it was not solely a phenomenon linked to court dynamics, rather conflicts triggered by broader political dynamics could converge in it and find an effective tool of governance in hunting. A fact that emerged even up to the reign of Victor Amadeus II, when the very scaling down of princely hunts was used to defuse ongoing conflicts. This, however, was only possible because the princely hunt, far from being a mere mark or court ceremony, was an effective instrument to enact sovereignty.

The reconstruction of the Savoy states went hand in hand with the reconstitution of the hunting system. The return of Emmanuel Philibert and the transfer of the political centre of the duchy to Turin went hand in hand with the construction of a reserved hunting district that gradually expanded to include the territories around the new capital. Their structuration was deepened by the expansion of hunting officials and the enlargement of the animal court in the following decades. However, all these elements, as has been emphasised several times throughout this thesis, found their highest point in a specific duke: Victor Amadeus I. He ascended the throne in 1630 and within a year signed the Peace of Cherasco that put an end to his father Charles Emmanuel I's expansionist attempts, which had so far ended largely unsuccessfully. As we know looking back at the history of the House of Savoy, this did not seem to stop the will to power of the Duke of Savoy who, no longer able to aim to expand the borders of the duchy, used another route: he declared himself king. On December 23rd 1632, Victor Amadeus I proclaimed himself king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, a title never recognised but claimed by the duke. The proclamation had been anticipated two months after the official foundation of the Venaria, which had endowed Victor Amadeus I's animal court with the largest pack of hunting dogs ever in the history of the House of Savoy. Five months after the proclamation, the Duke of Savoy who wanted to be king instituted the largest reserved hunting district ever promulgated, which was accompanied by stringent hunting legislation leading a large portion of those territories, which recognised themselves as part of the composite monarchy of the House of Savoy, to be legislatively homogenous. In February 1634 Victor Amadeus I expanded the hunting structure aimed at territorial control, which in 1635 was counting 20 hunting departments which each 20 captains of the hunt and up to 1,000 gamekeepers in the territory. At this specific moment in the history of the House of Savoy, the hunting system reached its maximum extension, making of princely hunting an *effective instrument for enacting a royal sovereignty* and make it real Victor Amadeus I's ambitions to be recognised as king and not merely duke. The economic data collected in the course of the analysis give further confirmation of this reality. Previous chapters collected and analysed expenditure on a wide variety of items,

including the cost of dog packs, birds of prey and horses, the payments of territorial control officers, and those for hunters and falconers. A direct comparison of all these expenditure categories could be misleading, as the internal evolution of the hunting system and performance poses more than a limit. Expenditure on falconers and birds of prey, widely present until the second half of the seventeenth century, disappeared in the eighteenth century, when they were replaced by rifle hunting. Similarly, the captains of the hunt, in charge of controlling the territory but involved in princely hunting through the management of hunting nets and cloths, were replaced by the dragoons gamekeeper to whom these duties were never delegated.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that it is impossible to identify a specific category of expenditure that would allow a long-term comparison, particularly as of the years of Victor Amadeus I. Expenditure on hunting officers that formed the *venerie* is an interesting (and reliable) comparative example. Founded in 1633, the *venerie* did not undergo any discontinuity until the end of the eighteenth century. In *chart 17*, exclusively payments made for *veneurs* between 1634 and 1778 identified in the previous chapters were included. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the value of these payments, they were compared with the value of wheat during the same period. The data on this are provided by Carlo Prato's study, which collected annual averages of the price of wheat in the Turin market from 1630 to 1792.⁵⁵² I chose to use the price of wheat since, in addition to being an extremely relevant good, it was always paid in lira, thus allowing it to be used as a comparative data. Moreover, as the price curve trend shows itself, it was highly sensitive to major political events: the 1630s were marked by a decline in prices after the Peace of Cherasco that ended the expansionist policies initiated by Charles Emmanuel I; with the outbreak of the Civil War and Christine of France's policies, there was a new rise in prices that went toward a reduction and stabilization with Charles Emmanuel II; the years of Victor Amadeus II, on the other hand, saw a rise due to the War of the Spanish Succession and a consecutive lowering in the period following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Sardinia; finally, the reign of Charles Emmanuel III was marked by a rise in the phases of the other two eighteenth-century wars of succession and a period of lowering between the 1750s and 1770s. The last phase of the century was finally marked by a new rise, following the French invasion. As can be seen, the same political dynamics that as shown variously influenced princely hunting.

⁵⁵² C. PRATO, *La vita economica in Piemonte a mezzo il secolo XVIII*, Società Nazionale, Torino 1908, 160-161.

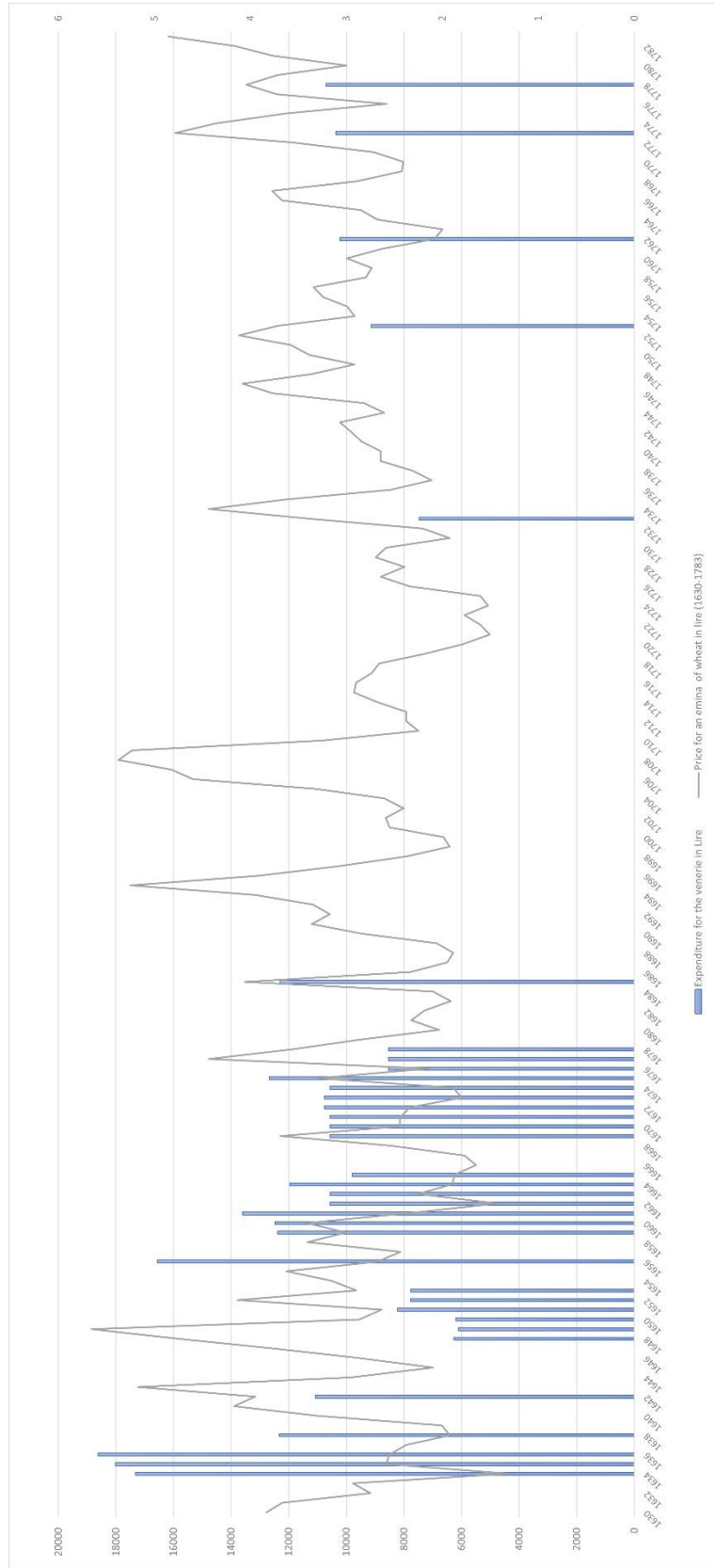


Chart 17 - Expenditure for the venerie compared with the price in lire for a emina of wheat in Turin (1630-1792)

The *chart 17* undoubtedly shows how this category of expenditure, which played a primary role in princely hunts in the period under review, was much higher under Victor Amadeus I than under any of his successors especially in relation to a wheat price that touched its historical minimum in those very years. Further data on currency devaluation, this time provided by Domenico Promis's work on Piedmontese currencies, corroborate this thesis again.⁵⁵³ In the years 1634-1635 from a silver *mark* were obtained between 19 and 20 Piedmontese silver £. By the time of Charles Emmanuel's death in 1675 this figure had doubled to £40 per silver *mark*, and then reached £43 per *mark* in the mid-eighteenth century. The process of devaluation thus confirms that the maximum spending on hunting, specifically on *venerie*, was given out during the reign of Victor Amadeus I. The fact that it was Victor Amadeus I who assumed the most prominent role in the hunting history of the House of Savoy is related to his claim to the royal title, as noted, but also to the intrinsic function of princely hunting as a *tool of political self-representation*.

This thesis began with three questions, assuming that the pervasiveness of princely hunting during the early modern period indicated a more radical status than a purely court ceremonial. Was princely hunting a mere mark or an *effective instrument* in the hands of the prince not just to affirm but to *enact* sovereignty? What was its *political function*? Was princely hunting a phenomenon exclusively dependent on the courtly dimension? The analysis I have carried out in this thesis has shown how princely hunting was an effective instrument for enacting sovereignty, being a tool for sovereigns to govern conflicts, empower their position and construct their self-representation. A phenomenon that, while increasingly integrated within the dynamics of the court, remained a fundamental projection of the sovereigns outside the court's space, in the territories they commanded, and which through it they could shape according to their own will. The history of the House of Savoy, from the rebirth of the sixteenth century to the fall at the end of the eighteenth century, proved to be the ideal field of study to bring out the more political essence of princely hunting.

⁵⁵³ D. PROMIS, *Monete dei reali di Savoia*, Tipografia Chirio, 1841, 491.

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