



WAR, DIPLOMACY AND THE
RISE OF SAVOY, 1690–1720
CHRISTOPHER STORRS

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This book deals with the crucial relationship between war and state formation in early modern Europe by considering the role of the Duchy of Savoy and the rise of this hitherto weak state into one of the regular members of the anti-French coalitions of the eighteenth century.

Through his participation in the Nine Years War (1688–1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), Victor Amadeus II, duke of Savoy, acquired a reputation for unrivalled ‘Machiavellian’ double-dealing on the international stage. The book puts this diplomacy in context, both to justify the duke’s diplomacy and to rehabilitate his reputation. It also charts the process of administrative change necessitated by war – considering how the duke raised men and money (at home and abroad), the administrative changes forced by war, the resulting domestic pressures, and how these were dealt with – while emphasising the continuing importance of traditional structures. In contrast to previous histories, the book explores for the first time the way in which war could provoke opposition to ducal policy and also how it could generate new bonds and an unusual version of state nationalism. There is also a re-evaluation of the role of the nobility in the Savoyard state, which argues that they were as much collaborators with as victims of ducal absolutism.

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Relief of Victor Amadeus' coronation as King of Sicily, Palermo 1714

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THE RISE OF SAVOY
1690–1720**

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For my mother and Anne-Marie

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something different, but I hope he is not too disappointed. On recent trips to Turin I have also enjoyed the hospitality, and otherwise benefited from the enthusiastic interest and help of two new friends, Dr Paola Bianchi and Dr Andrea Merlotti. Last, but certainly not least, I am delighted to be able to give public thanks to two women. One is my mother, who has done so much. The other is my wife, Anne-Marie, an inspiring combination of integrity, intelligence and generosity. Without the affection, patience and support she has shown over many years, this book might not have been completed. It was a lucky day, in October 1978, when I walked into the bar of the Colegio Mayor Padre Poveda in Madrid.

ABBREVIATIONS

Archival references

AST	Archivio di Stato, Turin
BRT	Biblioteca Reale, Turin
CDC	Camera dei Conti
LM	Lettere Ministri
LP	Lettere di Particolari
LPDS	Lettere di Principi, Duchi e Sovrani
MC	Materie Criminali
ME	Materie Ecclesiastiche
MG	Materie Giuridiche
MM	Materie Militari
UGS	Ufficio Generale del Soldo
PCF	Patenti Controllo Finanze
ARAH	Algemeen Rijks Archief, The Hague
EA	Eerste Afdeeling
SG	Staten Generaal
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
E	Estado series

PRO	Public Record Office, London
SP	State Papers
Add	British Library, Additional Manuscripts

Individuals

DLT	Comte and president de la Tour
ST	Marquis de Saint-Thomas (elder and younger)
VA	Victor Amadeus II, duke of Savoy
VDM	Albert van der Meer

Bibliographical

ASI	<i>Archivio Storico Italiano</i>
BSBS	<i>Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino</i>
BSSV	<i>Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi</i> (formerly <i>Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Vaudoise</i>)
CGP	C. Contessa <i>et al.</i> , eds., <i>Le Campagne di Guerra in Piemonte (1703–1708) e l'assedio di Torino (1706)</i> , 10 vols. (Turin, 1908–1933)
DBI	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i> , 33 vols. (Rome, 1960–87)
Duboin	F. A. and C. Duboin, <i>Raccolta per ordine di materia delle leggi . . . emanati negli stati sardi sino all'8 Dicembre 1798</i> , 23 vols. (Turin, 1818–69)
MAST	<i>Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino</i>
MSI	<i>Miscellanea di Storia Italiana</i>
MDSSHAC	<i>Mémoires et Documents publiés par la Société Savoisienne d'Histoire et d'Archéologie</i> , Chambéry
RSI	<i>Rivista Storica Italiana</i>



The Savoyard State, 1690–1720

INTRODUCTION

I

In 1690, the Savoyard state (comprising the Duchy of Savoy, the Principality of Piedmont, the Duchy of Aosta and the County of Nice) was a minor European power, a satellite of its more powerful neighbour across the Alps, the France of Louis XIV, whose troops (garrisoned in the imposing fortresses of Pinerolo in the Val Chisone and of Casale in the Monferrato) threatened the Savoyard capital, Turin, and it was widely regarded as a satellite.¹ However, this would change with Savoyard participation in the Nine Years War (1688–97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13). In the summer of 1690, the duke – whose territories were going to be caught up in the escalating Nine Years War whether he liked it or not² – joined the Grand Alliance powers ranged against Louis XIV by means of treaties with Emperor Leopold and with Spain, England and the Dutch Republic, all of whom promised to help him in his struggle against the French king, and to secure for him Pinerolo. Thereafter, Victor Amadeus II's states became more familiar to informed opinion in Europe as one of the theatres of war. The duke was twice defeated by Louis XIV's forces (at the battles of Staffarda, 1690, and Marsaglia, or Orbassano, 1693) and came close to the complete loss of his

¹ The diplomat, Ezechiel Spanheim thought the Savoyard state less important than the Swiss cantons in 1690: see J. Mathiex, 'The Mediterranean', in J. S. Bromley, ed., *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. VI: *The rise of Great Britain and Russia 1688–1715/25* (Cambridge, 1970), 559. In late 1689 troops from Pinerolo supplemented the ducal forces countering the Vaudois and others who had entered Piedmont in the so-called 'Glorieuse Rentrée', see G. Symcox, *Victor Amadeus II: absolutism in the Savoyard state 1765–1730* (London, 1983), 102.

² The Grand Alliance was preparing, in the spring of 1690, an expedition of Protestant irregulars who were to cross Victor Amadeus' territories (with or without his consent), relieve the remnant of the 'Glorieuse Rentrée' and enter France, see C. Storrs, 'Thomas Coxe and the Lindau Project', in A. de Lange, ed., *Dall'Europa alle Valli Valdesi* (Turin, 1990), 199 ff.

states (particularly in the spring and summer of 1691). But his remarkable steadfastness, and occasional successes – in 1692 he led a brief invasion of Dauphiné, the only allied incursion into France during this war – ensured that he remained one of the great hopes of the anti-French coalition.³ In 1695, anxious that the war was allowing the emperor to become too powerful in north Italy, Victor Amadeus did a secret deal with Louis XIV who surrendered Casale (which was besieged by the allies) to its immediate lord, the Duke of Mantua, rather than to the emperor.⁴ In the summer of 1696, after further secret negotiations with Louis XIV's agents, Victor Amadeus (who increasingly despaired of his allies' commitment to recovering Pinerolo, his main war aim) concluded a separate peace with the French king. This, the treaty of Turin, not only secured Pinerolo but also the recognition by Louis XIV of Victor Amadeus' right to send envoys to, and receive envoys from, other courts (which Louis had effectively vetoed before 1690), a prestigious marriage between his eldest daughter, Marie Adelaide, and Louis' grandson, the Duke of Burgundy (and possible future king of France), and the 'royal treatment' at the French court.

The treaty was a clear measure of the importance attached by Louis XIV to the war in Piedmont, and his desire to end it in order to concentrate his forces elsewhere (above all, on the Rhine and in Flanders). It also held out for Victor Amadeus the prospect of the conquest of the Milanese if his allies rejected peace in Italy. In the late summer of 1696, the duke, now a subsidy-receiving ally of the French king, led a Franco-Savoyard invasion of the Spanish Milanese. This effectively forced his erstwhile allies, led by Spain and the emperor, to agree at last to the neutralisation of Italy in the treaty of Vigevano (October 1696). The emperor's envoy even held out the prospect of Victor Amadeus' mediation of the general peace. This latter prize was denied the duke but within a year the treaties of Turin and Vigevano had been incorporated in the general peace concluding the Nine Years War (the treaty of Rijswijk, 1697), which had itself been hastened by the ending of the war in Italy. The acquisition of Pinerolo, the first accession of territory by the Savoyard state in half a century, increased its security and

³ In 1693 Carlos II's queen argued that Victor Amadeus' imminent capture of Pinerolo (and the French retreat from Catalonia) meant that this was no time for talk of peace: Mariana of Neuburg to the Elector Palatine, 2 Sept. 1693, in duke of Maura and Adalbert of Bavaria, eds., *Documentos inéditos referentes a las postrimerias de la Casa de Austria*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1927–31), II, 128.

⁴ For the recreation of *Reichsitalien* in north Italy in this period, see K. O. Freiherr von Aretin, 'Kaiser Joseph I zwischen Kaisertradition und Österreichischer Grossmachtpolitik', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 215, 1972, 529 ff. and C. Ingrao, *In Quest and Crisis: Emperor Joseph I and the Habsburg monarchy* (West Lafayette, 1979). Developments in the 1690s remain largely unexplored.

independence. That state had also been catapulted, as a result of its crucial role in the Nine Years War, from relative obscurity to one of European prominence. In the summer of 1696, with justifiable exaggeration, Victor Amadeus was seen by some of his own subjects as the arbiter of Europe.⁵

Within a few years, however, the Savoyard state seemed doomed again to Bourbon satellite status (and to the abandonment of all hopes of territorial expansion in north Italy), following the accession to the Spanish throne in 1701 of Louis XIV's grandson, Philip V, squeezing the Savoyard state between Bourbon France and Bourbon Milan. Victor Amadeus, who later argued that the position of the Savoyard state was worse in 1701 than when Louis XIV had held Pinerolo,⁶ was obliged to make the best of a bad job. He joined the Bourbon monarchs in an alliance which provided for the marriage of his younger daughter, Marie Louise, to Philip V and which promised him subsidies and the supreme command of a Bourbon-Savoyard army in a war against the emperor (which, whether he wished it or not, would inevitably be fought in and across his territories, as had the Nine Years War). Not surprisingly, in 1701 Victor Amadeus' imperial suzerain, Leopold, ordered the duke and his ministers to appear before the imperial Aulic Court, in Vienna, to answer a charge of felony against the empire and perhaps to hear sentence stripping him of his imperial fiefs (and freeing all imperial vassals of obligations to him). This threat was underpinned by the despatch to Italy of an imperial army commanded by Victor Amadeus' cousin, Prince Eugene. Good relations with Vienna and imperial grants of one sort and another had contributed enormously hitherto to the emergence of the Savoyard state. All that had been achieved now seemed threatened.

Once again, however, Victor Amadeus transformed an unfavourable situation by means of a diplomatic *volte-face* at the expense of Louis XIV (and Philip V). In secret negotiations, only concluded after Victor Amadeus had broken with his Bourbon allies in October 1703, the emperor and the Maritime Powers promised the duke military and financial aid and territorial gains in north Italy. In subsequent years, again as in the Nine Years War, the duke obstinately held on, despite the fact that the Bourbon powers overran the greater part of his territories. In the summer of 1706 Victor Amadeus was obliged to send his immediate

⁵ C. Contessa, 'I regni di Napoli e di Sicilia nelle aspirazioni italiane di Vittorio Amedeo II di Savoia (1700–13)', in *Studi su Vittorio Amedeo II* (Turin, 1933), 15. For attitudes elsewhere in Italy in 1696, see L. Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, ed. G. Falco and F. Forti, 2 vols. (Turin, 1976), II, 410 ff.

⁶ D. Carutti, *Storia della diplomazia della Corte di Savoia*, 4 vols. (Turin, 1875–80), III, 300.

family for refuge to Genoa and was himself hunted by the enemy across his own territories (taking refuge briefly in the Vaudois valleys). He seemed about to be expelled, possibly for good, from his states. However, Europe was again astonished as Victor Amadeus denied the Bourbons his capital, Turin, and from the autumn of 1706 turned the tide of the war in Italy.⁷ As in 1696, northern Italy was largely neutralised in the spring of 1707, this time at the insistence of the emperor, who (having secured the Milanese), wished to secure Naples. However, that same year Victor Amadeus led an abortive attempt on Louis XIV's great naval base at Toulon; and in subsequent years successful campaigns in and about the Alps secured him a number of invaluable frontier fortresses (including Exilles and Fenestrelle) and the Pragelato valley. In the meantime, the emperor had invested (1707) Victor Amadeus with various territories of the Milanese (Alessandria, the Lomellina, Val Sesia) and (1708) with the Mantuan Monferrato, confiscated from its Gonzaga Duke; and had also confirmed Victor Amadeus' right to acquire limited suzerainty over the imperial feudatories of the Langhe, in accordance with their treaty of 1703. However, his failure to fulfil all the terms – above all regarding the cession of the Vigevanasco (or an equivalent) – embittered relations between Turin and Vienna henceforth. These successes, Victor Amadeus' vital contribution to the defeat of the Bourbons,⁸ and the goodwill towards him of Queen Anne and her ministers, stood him in good stead at Utrecht in 1712–13. Victor Amadeus recovered his lost territories (Savoy and Nice), kept most of his conquests (although he was obliged in return to surrender the Barcelonnette valley to Louis XIV). Against the wishes of the emperor, he also secured Sicily (which he had not conquered and which was at the disposal of British naval power), and with it elevation to true royal status. Victor Amadeus was promised the greater prize of Spain and its overseas empire, if Philip V died without heirs.

By 1713, then, the Savoyard state had been transformed, in a variety of ways. The state and its ruler had freed themselves from French tutelage, secured substantial territorial and other gains (including a more defensible

⁷ For one English politician, this (along with Ramillies and negotiation of the Union with Scotland) was 'one of the great victories' of 1706, G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, 2nd edn. (London, 1987), 85. For changing English perceptions of the duke from c. 1690, see S. J. Woolf, 'English public opinion and the Duchy of Savoy', *English Miscellany*, 12, Rome, 1961, 211 ff.

⁸ According to intelligence received from Berlin in 1708, six Scots exiles at the Court of James II planned to assassinate Victor Amadeus for this reason, A. Segre, 'Negozianti diplomatici della Corte di Prussia e colla Dieta di Ratisbona', in C. Contessa *et al.*, eds. *Le campagne di guerra in Piemonte (1703–08) e l'assedio di Torino (1706)*, 10 vols. (Turin, 1907–33), VI, 316 (hereafter *CGP*).

Alpine barrier against France and, most strikingly, the distant island kingdom of Sicily). Victor Amadeus had also won an enduring European reputation for skilful (even duplicitous) manoeuvring between the greater powers to secure these.⁹ By that date, too, it has been suggested, the duke of Savoy – whose ancestor Charles Emanuel I (1580–1630) had unsuccessfully attempted to exploit the French Wars of Religion to expand into southern France – had largely abandoned any lingering hopes of conquests in France. Henceforth the Savoyard state would see its future in Italy.¹⁰ The prospects there were the more promising because that state was now also more clearly distinguished from its Italian neighbours, many of which had merely exchanged the dominion of Habsburg Spain for that of Habsburg Austria. At the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, many observers anticipated a glorious future for what just a generation earlier had been a minor power.¹¹

Subsequently, however, the Spanish conquest of Sicily (1718–19) and the decision of the Quadruple Alliance (Austria, Britain, the Dutch Republic, France) that Victor Amadeus must exchange Sicily for the much inferior island kingdom of Sardinia – finalised in August 1720 when Victor Amadeus' first viceroy took possession of Sardinia, completing the transformation of the 'risen' Savoyard state into the newly independent kingdom of Sardinia, by which name it would be known until the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 – revealed that the Savoyard state was weaker than many observers realised in 1713. Nevertheless, that state had expanded substantially and enhanced its standing, and did not revert after 1713 to its earlier obscurity, while later commentators could justifiably see Victor Amadeus II as the re-founder of his state. Many of those who have taken this view have in mind both the territorial and the domestic transformation of the Savoyard state which occurred after 1713, notably the overhaul of the army, the administration and the finances –

⁹ That Victor Amadeus soon acquired a reputation for treachery and machiavellianism is clear from the work of one of his admirers, the Genoese Paolo Mattia Doria: see F. Torcellan Ginolino, 'Il pensiero politico di Paolo Mattia Doria ed un interessante profilo storico di Vittorio Amedeo II', *BSBS*, 59, 196. A host of references could be cited to demonstrate the extent to which Victor Amadeus II remains a byword for 'Machiavellian' manoeuvring on the international stage: see G. M. Trevelyan, *England under Queen Anne, 1: Blenheim* (London, 1930), 314–15 and (in the sphere of international relations theory) M. Wight, *Power Politics* (Harmondsworth, 1979), 263.

¹⁰ A. Lossky, 'International relations in Europe', *NCMH*, VI, 159. Victor Amadeus had hopes in 1690 of gains in France, C. Storrs, 'Machiavelli dethroned. Victor Amadeus II and the making of the Anglo-Savoyard alliance of 1690', *European History Quarterly*, 22, 3, 1992, 361.

¹¹ Typically, the Tuscan representative at the peace congress at Utrecht thought the Savoyard state the only one in Italy of any independent importance there: A. Bozzola, 'Giudizi e previsioni della diplomazia Medicea', in *Studi su Vittorio Amedeo II*, 145.

above all the so-called *perequazione* and the revocation of fiefs held by the nobility.¹² These were important developments, and have attracted substantial historical attention. They were also, in part at least, forced by the need to protect and maintain the enlarged and reshaped state (and the new status) won between 1690 and 1713 without the foreign support which had been so important in their acquisition. Indeed, one of the contentions of the present study is that the overhaul of 1717 was in part a response to the threat to Victor Amadeus' enhanced territory and status. However, as the present study also hopes to show, by 1713, and largely because of the need to wage war, the 'unreformed' Savoyard state had in fact experienced important domestic changes. Many of these anticipated the reforms of post-1713 and were the domestic counterpart of the Savoyard state's transformation on the international stage.¹³

The transformation of the Savoyard state after 1690 was clearly related to the larger European picture, and above all to the struggle over the Spanish Succession and the desire of many of France's neighbours to restrain and reduce Louis XIV. It is no coincidence that Victor Amadeus, descended from a daughter of Philip II, was one of the claimants to that succession and therefore due some increase in territory (and dignity) after the death of the last Spanish Habsburg, Carlos II. However, this is not the only explanation for Victor Amadeus' success. Also important was the fact that the Savoyard state straddled the Alps between Louis XIV's France and Habsburg Lombardy. In wars in part fought over the latter, Victor Amadeus might facilitate the conquest of Lombardy by the forces of Louis XIV. Alternatively, he might ensure a successful allied invasion of southern France, and perhaps trigger a Huguenot revolt. Naval operations, particularly against the recently developed French naval base at Toulon, might make use of the duke's one important harbour, Nice. For the Grand Alliance, then, Victor Amadeus' states seemed to offer the opportunity for a decisive breakthrough denied them on other fronts. Indeed, following the invasion of Dauphiné in 1692, William III even

¹² See G. Quazza, *Le riforme in Piemonte nella prima metà del Settecento*, 2 vols. (Modena, 1957) and Symcox, *Victor Amadeus*, passim. For G. Ricuperati, 'L'Avvenimento e la storia: le rivolte del luglio 1797 nella crisi dello stato sabaudo', *RSI*, 1992, 349 ff., a long reform era began in 1696. For V. Ferrone, 'The Accademia Reale delle Scienze: cultural sociability and men of letters in Turin of the Enlightenment under Vittorio Amedeo III', *Journal of Modern History*, 70, 1998, 528–9, the elevation from ducal to royal status was a crucial stimulus in the ensuing reconstruction of the Savoyard state.

¹³ See Storrs, 'Savoyard diplomacy in the eighteenth century', in D. Frigo, ed., *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, forthcoming). For later perceptions of Victor Amadeus, see Foscarini's *relazione* (1743), in L. Cibrario, *Relazioni dello stato di Savoia negli anni 1574, 1670, 1743, scritte dagli ambasciatori veneti Molini, Bellegno, Foscarini* (Turin, 1830), 89 ff.

thought of himself taking troops to north Italy to launch just such an attack.¹⁴ For his part, Louis XIV was obliged to divert (to a border hitherto considered safe) forces which might otherwise be used to decisive effect elsewhere – in Flanders, on the Rhine or in Catalonia – in order to deny his enemies the strategic advantages against himself which Victor Amadeus' states offered, and to exploit those they offered him for intervention in Italy.¹⁵ However, despite a recognition by historians of a new importance of Italy in international relations in the half century and more after 1680,¹⁶ the military struggle there continues to be overshadowed by that in Flanders, on the Rhine and (at least during the War of the Spanish Succession) in Spain and by the war at sea.¹⁷ This focus, admittedly, reflects contemporary military and political priorities. Both Louis XIV and the allies invariably made their greatest efforts in the Low Countries, fielding there armies of 100,000 and more during the Nine Years War. But the inevitable stalemate in Flanders (at least in the 1690s) underpinned the view that a decisive breakthrough could and should be effected elsewhere.¹⁸ It is hoped that the present study, besides contributing to a fuller understanding of the development of the Savoyard state during the Nine Years War and the War of the Spanish Succession, will also enhance knowledge and understanding of the war in Italy (and its importance) in both these conflicts.

¹⁴ C. Storrs, 'Diplomatic relations between William III and Victor Amadeus II 1690–96', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1990, 160 ff. Perhaps the best assessment of the strategic role of the Savoyard state, as a guardian of the Alpine passages, although dealing with the later war of the Austrian Succession, is S. Wilkinson, *The Defence of Piedmont 1742–1748: a prelude to the story of Napoleon* (Oxford, 1927), 3–5.

¹⁵ In 1704, Victor Amadeus justified his requests for military help from his allies as his own situation deteriorated on the grounds that the diversion of French troops to Italy had contributed to the recent Allied victory in Germany, VDM to Fagel, 12 Sept. 1704, Turin, ARAH/EA/VDM/29, 159.

¹⁶ A. Lossky, 'International relations', 159 ff.; G. Quazza, *Il problema italiano e l'equilibrio europeo 1720–1738* (Turin, 1965), *passim*.

¹⁷ In an otherwise excellent study, for example, David L. Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles 1603–1707: the double crown* (Oxford, 1998), 308 notes that the peace of 1697 reflected stalemate in the Nine Years War, but makes no mention of the contribution of the war in Italy or Victor Amadeus' separate peace of 1696, and also ignores the war in Italy in the following conflict. Symptomatic of this neglect is the fact that many accounts incorrectly conflate the Casale deal of 1695 and the *volte-face* of 1696: see G. Clark, 'The Nine Years War 1688–97', *NCMH*, VI, 250.

¹⁸ See the figures in Clark, 'Nine Years War' and A. J. Veenendaal, 'The War of the Spanish Succession in Europe', *NCMH*, VI. In the winter of 1695–6 William III refused Victor Amadeus additional troops (for his intended siege of Pinerolo) from Flanders because Louis XIV was believed to be planning to put into the field in the Low Countries in 1696 30,000 more men than in 1695. William believed that Louis could only do this by weakening his forces in other theatres, including Piedmont, making the diversion unnecessary, DLT to VA, 20 Dec. 1695, London, AST/LM/GB, m. 8.

Whether the duke of Savoy could exploit these advantages was another matter. Other lesser princes with a claim on the Spanish Succession – including Victor Amadeus' cousin, the Wittelsbach electoral prince of Bavaria, Max Emanuel – might have been expected to do well in these decades. Indeed, with his appointment as governor of the Spanish Low Countries from 1691, the elector seemed to be making more headway than Victor Amadeus. But Max Emanuel did disastrously in the War of the Spanish Succession. On the other hand, other lesser princes, without any claim on the Spanish Succession, did well. These included the Hohenzollern electoral prince of Prussia (elevated to King in 1701) and the duke of Hanover, promoted ninth elector in 1692 and elevated to the throne of Britain in 1714. In part the difference between success and failure between 1690 and 1713 depended upon good decisionmaking. But Victor Amadeus' success also rested upon his ability to mobilise effectively the necessary resources (essentially men and money). This, in turn, depended in part upon the extent to which an effective state structure of sorts – and political and social cohesion – existed, or could be developed, to mobilise those resources.¹⁹

II

The experience of the Savoyard state between 1690 and 1713 largely conforms to a larger European pattern of successful state formation – the emergence of a territorially well-defined sovereign unit, whose independence was in part underpinned by the development of institutions mobilising its resources in favour of its prince or government – by contrast with, for example, the 'failure' (and disappearance) in this period of the Gonzaga Mantuan state, hitherto one of the Savoyard state's rivals in north Italy. The question of state formation has recently come back into fashion among historians.²⁰ But the issue is not a simple one, not least because of the many different conceptions of the state. For some time, the early modern state in process of formation has been conceived of as approximating to the modern state: characterised by all-powerful, centralised, bureaucratic government of the sort specified by Max Weber, whose view that 'the state is that agency in society which has a monopoly of legitimate force' underpins that of many subsequent historians.²¹ Not

¹⁹ See G. Symcox, *War, Diplomacy, and Imperialism 1618–1763* (London, 1974), 1 ff.

²⁰ See E. Fasano Guarini, "'Etat moderne" et anciens états italiens. Éléments d'histoire comparée', *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 45, 1, 1997, 15 ff.

²¹ Cited in T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars 1787–1802* (London, 1996), 30. See C. H. Carter, *The Western European Powers 1500–1700* (London, 1971), 28 ff. For a simple schema of the distinguishing features of 'modern' states and societies,

all historians share this view, which is increasingly recognised as too stark for early modern Europe,²² where the ‘proprietary dynasticism’ identified by Herbert Rowen seems at least as convincing an interpretation of the relationship between princes and their states.²³ In fact, these differing perceptions of the state are not necessarily wrong, because the state is in a constant process of formation, undergoing (or in need of) constant ‘modernisation’ (a concept which poses at least as many problems as it seems to solve).²⁴ Indeed, the nature of statehood and the institutions of the state have varied over the centuries, so that the typical state – if there was such a thing – of the Renaissance differed from that of the Baroque and that of the age of Enlightenment from that of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁵ The present study takes the view that there was a Savoyard state, one conforming to the definition of state used by John Brewer (and which more or less approximates to that given at the start of this paragraph),²⁶ and one contemporaries clearly recognised. It also assumes that that polity experienced a recognisable phase of state forma-

see T. C. W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (London, 1994), 20–1. For Blanning, Joseph II’s ‘Enlightened despotism’ was essentially about the creation of an Austrian Habsburg state.

²² See G. Chittolini, ‘The “private”, the “public”, the state’, in J. Kirshner, ed., *The Origins of the State in Italy 1300–1600* (Chicago, 1996), 545. (This collection was originally published as a special supplementary issue of the *Journal of Modern History* in 1995.) Modern historians are more likely to accept the criticisms of Weber’s approach and definitions associated with, for example, Otto Brunner: see H. Zmora, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: The knightly feud in Franconia 1440–1567* (Cambridge, 1997), 6.

²³ H. H. Rowen, *The King’s State: proprietary dynasticism in early modern France* (New Brunswick, 1980).

²⁴ See the critical discussion of ‘modernisation’ concepts in H. G. Brown, *War, Revolution and the Bureaucratic State: Politics and army administration in France 1791–1799* (Oxford, 1995), 265 ff.

²⁵ See F. Chabod, ‘Y a-t-il un état de la Renaissance?’ *Actes du Colloque sur la Renaissance* (Paris, 1958), English translation in H. Lubasz, ed., *The Development of the Modern State* (New York, 1964); W. Barberis, *Le armi del principe: la tradizione militare sabauda* (Turin, 1988), which is informed by a sense of a distinct ‘baroque’ state; and M. Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: social and institutional change through law in the Germanies and Russia 1600–1800* (New Haven, 1983). Blanning’s perception of Joseph II (above) is founded in part upon an acceptance of Robert Evans’ compelling argument that until at least 1700 the Habsburg monarchy was not a monolithic state characterised by powerful central institutions, but a highly successful alliance of dynasty, nobility and Church. R. J. W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700* (Oxford, 1978), *passim*.

²⁶ ‘a territorially and jurisdictionally defined political entity in which public authority is distinguished from (though not unconnected to) private power, and which is manned by officials whose primary (though not sole) allegiance is to a set of political institutions under a single, i.e. sovereign and final, authority’, J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: war, money and the English state 1688–1783* (London, 1989), 252 n. 1.

tion, defined as a twin process of asserting itself as an independent player in the European power system, which was in turn founded (in part) upon the development of more effective means to mobilise its own resources – what Ricuperati still prefers to call ‘modernisation’ – between 1690 and 1713.²⁷

Seen as process, state formation comprised a number of distinct developments. Firstly, there is territorial expansion. This is possibly the simplest aspect. Nevertheless, growth of this sort meant, on the one hand, a great increase in the potential resources of the state (armed manpower, tax and other revenues), and might represent a distinct and conscious alternative to state-building by administrative centralisation.²⁸ On the other hand, territorial expansion posed problems of integration. Secondly, there is the assertion of the state’s independence on the international scene, which was increasingly the preserve of not just sovereigns but of sovereigns of a certain resource and standing.²⁹ As we have seen the Savoyard state effectively threw off its satellite status in and after 1690. But that achievement must be qualified in two important respects: firstly, by the extent to which Victor Amadeus depended upon his allies for the resources to combat the French and Bourbon threat; and secondly, by the extent to which the Savoyard state was juridically part of the Holy Roman Empire and subject to the (Austrian Habsburg) emperor, whose authority in those parts of north Italy which were traditionally subject to the empire, *Reichsitalien*, was reasserted in this period. This could create problems for the duke of Savoy. However, as member of the empire, he could also expect imperial protection, while as agent of the emperor he could seek grants (office, fiefs). Indeed, the rise of the House of Savoy (and most of its titles) since the middle ages – as ducal ministers were well aware when they debated how to react to the developing crisis in north Italy in 1690 – had been founded on a close association with empire and emperor.³⁰ Thus, the sovereignty of this small state might at the same time be underpinned and qualified by its imperial status.

²⁷ ‘L’Avvenimento’, 349.

²⁸ This notion is articulated by Paul Sonnino in an e-mail review (H-France, 2 Apr. 1998) of J. Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle: the French army 1610–1715* (Cambridge 1997). On frontiers, see P. Sahlin, *Boundaries: the making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989).

²⁹ Lucien Bély, *Espions et ambassadeurs au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1990), 215, discusses the abortive efforts of the cardinal de Bouillon and the princesse des Ursins (who sought an independent princely sovereignty) to have the Utrecht congress deal with their private concerns and ambitions.

³⁰ See *mémoire* regarding the policy Victor Amadeus must adopt as war threatened in north Italy, Feb. 1690, AST/Negoziazioni/Austria, m. 4/24. Against the pressure from Louis XIV to declare for him it was pointed out that no duke of Savoy in recent history had fought the emperor.

The third major process in the larger one of state formation was the creation of new state structures to make more effective the authority of the central government, i.e. the prince and his ministers, and to integrate newly acquired territories. Victor Amadeus was obliged to make enormous demands on his subjects (seeking men for his armies, and money), who also had to bear all the suffering associated with war. It is inconceivable that these demands should not have affected his subjects and territories. In fact they contributed to, even necessitated, important administrative and political changes which anticipated the larger transformation which occurred after 1713 and which also add up to the achievement of a political stability which could not be assumed before 1690. Before Victor Amadeus' 'coup' of 1684, when he had effectively seized power from his mother, the regent Madama Reale (Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours), the latter had taken a number of initiatives which historians increasingly recognise as a 'state project' of sorts.³¹ However, despite these efforts, it seems fair to say that before the cycle of wars which began in 1690, and particularly before 1684, the Savoyard state was disturbed by domestic disorder in a way which it was not after 1720. We must not exaggerate the contrast, or relate the change too exclusively to participation in the Nine Years War and the War of the Spanish Succession. Nevertheless, the resolution of some of these issues was closely related to the wars, such that the domestic and 'foreign' aspects of state (trans-)formation represented two sides of the same coin.

This aspect of state formation is related to an important historical debate, not always easily distinguished from that about the nature of the early modern state, regarding the degree to which that state was 'absolute'. Until about a generation ago, historians seemed broadly agreed that 'absolutism' was the defining characteristic of the European monarchies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to this view, the era was characterised by the rule of more powerful monarchs, their authority backed by new resources and instruments of coercion (standing armies, centralised bureaucracies and greater revenues), so-called 'administrative monarchies' able to reduce the independence of any independent or rival forces in the state (peripheral provinces, great nobles, representative tax-voting assemblies) which had hitherto obstructed princely power. Essentially, the state, or absolute monarch, exemplified in the person and reign of Louis XIV, was seen as imposing his will on the rest of the state/society from above. Historians might disagree about just

³¹ See C. Rosso, 'Il Seicento', in P. Merlin *et al.*, *Il Piemonte Sabauda: stato e territori in età moderna* (Turin, 1994), 260 ff.

why absolutism happened – some urging its function as defender of the interests of the traditional landed noble elite, others preferring to emphasise the role of ideologues and others, finally, stressing the primacy of war – but that absolutism was a reality few denied.³²

Since at least the 1960s, however, this image of the absolute state has come under sustained attack. For one thing, the contemporary understanding of absolutism has been refashioned, above all to differentiate it from despotism and tyranny. Historians have also sought to distinguish the assertions and claims of royal apologists from a reality which, it has been argued, was far from 'absolute'. William Beik, in one of the most impressive and influential reinterpretations of the phenomenon of French absolutism, accepts that Louis XIV's rule was more effective, but seeks to explain the obedient order which distinguished the reign of the Sun King from the disorder of the preceding decades by reference to the fact that – at least in Languedoc – the king was ruling with, and in the interests of the elite.³³ Sharon Kettering, another influential revisionist, has emphasised the role of local power brokers in making effective the will of the prince and his ministers in the locality, rather than the nascent bureaucracies (which, on closer investigation can often reveal themselves as clienteles of ministers and others).³⁴ Recently, too, Andreas Gestrich has argued that in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Germany supposedly absolute regimes were even then aware of a 'public' and the need to court (or at least inform) it, well before the acknowledged emergence of Habermas' late eighteenth-century 'public sphere',³⁵ while Beik has argued that the politically excluded classes were not without means of dissent, opposition and resistance.³⁶ Alternative, less traditionally absolutist models of state formation have been suggested, notably that of Robert Evans for seventeenth-century Austria, while the nobilities, hitherto regarded as among

³² See M. Beloff, *The Age of Absolutism 1660–1815* (London, 1954), and F. Dumont, 'French kingship and absolute monarchy in the seventeenth century', in R. M. Hatton, ed., *Louis XIV and Absolutism* (London, 1976), 55.

³³ W. Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: state power and provincial aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, 1985). See Jeremy Black's definition of absolutism not as a constitutional structure but as a way of conducting politics which essentially represented a compromise between prince and elites: *A Military Revolution? Military change and European society 1550–1800* (London, 1991), 67–8.

³⁴ S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford and New York, 1986). For the incorporation of this approach into modern textbooks, see J. B. Collins, *State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 1995); and W. Reinhard, ed., *Power Elites and State Building* (Oxford, 1996).

³⁵ A. Gestrich, *Absolutismus und Öffentlichkeit: politische Kommunikation in Deutschland zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1992).

³⁶ W. Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: the culture of retribution* (Cambridge, 1997).

absolutism's most striking victims, are increasingly seen to have shown remarkable resilience.³⁷

The revisionists have not had it all their own way. What we might call traditionalists, or counter-revisionists, have reasserted the reality of what they label absolutism.³⁸ Nor are the revisionists confined to France.³⁹ Indeed, John Brewer has reasserted the importance of the effective assertion of a monopoly of tax-raising and military might (the two often, of course, closely related) in a study of a Britain which after the Revolution of 1688 looks more like the traditional 'absolute' European state.⁴⁰ The issue is of course in part a relative one, and one of perception. For the observer in Cracow, where the monarch really was weak, the authority of Louis XIV, whatever revisionists might say about it, looked formidable.⁴¹ Not surprisingly, many historians of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe, while not necessarily giving it the same content as their predecessors, continue to find the label 'absolutism' useful.⁴² Nevertheless, the effect of the accumulated attack on the traditional image and understanding of absolutism in early modern Europe has been to raise important questions about the effective power of the early modern state within its own borders, to question whether that state was quite so independently all-powerful *vis-à-vis* the forces in state and society over which it once seemed to dominate serenely, and to suggest that 'absolutism', in part redefined as simply a less disordered polity, was more of a compromise with (than an imposition on) the ruled.⁴³

³⁷ See H. M. Scott and C. Storrs, 'Introduction: the consolidation of noble power in Europe c. 1600–1800', in H. M. Scott, ed., *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (London, 1995), I, 1 ff.

³⁸ R. J. Knecht, *Richelieu* (London, 1992), 135 ff., has reaffirmed that Richelieu contributed to the development of absolutism in seventeenth-century France; while J. A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV 1667–1719* (London, 1999), 17–19, asserts the continued validity of the term 'absolutism' to describe that monarch's style of government. For W. Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1980), 53, 'The king of France was an absolute monarch. This meant there was no institution in the state with the right to prevent him from doing whatever he chose to do, in contrast to a state like Great Britain.'

³⁹ C. Rahn Phillips, *Six Galleons for the King of Spain* (Baltimore, 1986), and D. Goodman, *Spanish Naval Power 1589–1665. Reconstruction and defeat* (Cambridge, 1997), 181 ff., both to some degree question I. A. A. Thompson's thesis (see below), that the absolutism of the Spanish Habsburgs in the seventeenth century was little more than a shell. Goodman reveals that the Habsburgs sometimes found regional privilege a weak barrier against a determined executive. ⁴⁰ Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, passim.

⁴¹ See R. Bonney, *Society and Government in France under Richelieu and Mazarin 1624–61* (London, 1988), xiii.

⁴² D. Parker, *The Making of French Absolutism* (London, 1983).

⁴³ See W. Beik, 'Celebrating Andrew Lossky: the reign of Louis XIV revisited', *French Historical Studies*, 17, 2, 1991, and (for Sweden) A. Karlsson, *Den jamlike undersaten: Karl XII's formogenhetsbeskattning 1713* (Uppsala, 1994) – as reviewed in *EHR*, 92, 447,

Explaining the process (or processes) of state formation identified above is also a matter of debate, in part simply reflecting changes in historical fashion.⁴⁴ On the one hand, there are those for whom state building was a deliberate policy, one in which would-be absolute monarchs were following a blueprint (often the model supposedly offered by Louis XIV). On the other hand, however, the rejection of 'absolutism' has been accompanied by increasing scepticism about deliberate state formation of this sort.⁴⁵ Some of those who take the latter view prefer to emphasise the influence of external pressures, and above all of war. For Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol, state-formation was largely an unintended result of the efforts of state-builders to create and fund armies, to fight wars (and to suppress disorder).⁴⁶ However, this interpretation has recently been criticised as offering a point of departure for, rather than constituting itself, a full explanation, ignoring the fact that the same pressures can work against state formation.⁴⁷ It is hoped that the present study will provide food for thought on many of these issues. It takes the view that, without necessarily having a blueprint, Victor Amadeus

165–6 – for revisionist studies of specific areas. These revisionist approaches have recently been articulated, not altogether satisfactorily, by Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: change and continuity in early modern European monarchy* (London, 1992), which focuses narrowly on England and France (and makes, p. 169, only passing reference to Victor Amadeus II). More satisfying broad surveys reflecting or surveying the last generation's work are J. Miller, 'Introduction', in Miller, ed., *Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London, 1990), and H. M. Scott, 'Introduction: the problem of enlightened absolutism', in Scott, *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and reformers in later-eighteenth century Europe* (London, 1990). M. Mann, 'The autonomous power of the state', in J. S. Hall, ed., *States in History* (Oxford, 1986), offers a useful social science perspective.

⁴⁴ See, recently, S. Hanley, 'Engendering the state: family formation and state building in early modern France', *French Historical Studies*, 16, 1989.

⁴⁵ O. Ruggio, *Faide e parentele: lo stato genovese visto dalla Fontanabuona* (Turin, 1990), ix ff., is very critical of the nineteenth-century model of the emerging modern state, one preoccupied with identifying and charting the development of centralised and centralising institutions.

⁴⁶ C. Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), passim; T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolution: a comparative analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge, 1979).

⁴⁷ Brown, *War, Revolution and the Bureaucratic State*, 3. For I. A. A. Thompson, the demands of war (often seen as the motor of absolutist state creation) could in fact undermine the reality (though not necessarily the shell) of absolutism: see Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain 1560–1620* (London, 1976), passim and "'Money, money and yet more money!'" Finance, the fiscal-state and the military revolution: Spain 1500–1650', in C. J. Rogers, ed., *Military Revolution Debate: readings on the military transformation of early modern Europe* (Boulder, CO and Oxford, 1995). This view is shared by many historians of the second half of Louis XIV's reign: see G. Symcox, *The Crisis of French Sea Power 1688–1697: from the Guerre d'Escadre to the Guerre de Course* (Hague, 1974).

understandably sought greater power at home, and sometimes imitated Louis XIV (and other examples of effective government). But his main concerns were, necessarily, diplomacy and war. The latter inevitably impacted upon the domestic development of the Savoyard state.

III

Without ignoring the good work done on this subject regarding states other than France, it is immediately apparent that the great bulk of studies of both absolutism and state formation (indeed of any major theme in early modern Europe) focus on France or one of the other larger states, or Great Powers, in process of formation. There are many good reasons for this, of course, but the majority of states in early modern Europe, including the Savoyard state, were much smaller than these traditional foci, suggesting the need for alternative models.⁴⁸ One of the arguments of the present study is that there was a Savoyard special way, or *Sonderweg*, to 'absolutism' and statehood, which was founded above all upon its ability to insert itself into the states system at this crucial time of change, exploiting the rivalries of its more powerful neighbours, whom it managed to lever into channelling crucial resources (above all, armed forces and money) which were otherwise unavailable to it, although enormous efforts were also made to raise as many men and revenues from its own territories. The Savoyard state's ability to manoeuvre between the Great Powers is reasonably familiar at least to historians of international relations in this period, for whom Victor Amadeus seems often to be little more than an habitual turncoat. In fact, the duke's supposed 'treachery' was intimately related to his limited options as ruler of a small and weak state. The experience and conduct of both Victor Amadeus and his state should repay further study, not least because most studies of absolutism and state formation focus on the givers of resources, whose route to statehood was fundamentally different. This was not least because Victor Amadeus (and his subjects) might have to pay a price for those additional resources, in the form of a privileged regime within the absolute state for the Protestant Vaudois, which the latter could not have secured for themselves.

Despite its importance in this period, and its potential contribution to our understanding of crucial aspects of early modern Europe, the Savoyard state remains relatively unknown, at least by comparison with the

⁴⁸ It would be unfair not to acknowledge the work done on a number of lesser states. See J. A. Vann, *The Making of a State. Württemberg 1593–1793* (Ithaca, 1984), and P. H. Wilson, *War, State and Society in Württemberg, 1677–1793* (Cambridge, 1995) for one German state. For the Italian states, see E. Fasano Guarini, 'Etat moderne'.

great interest shown in some of the other Italian states.⁴⁹ But the Savoyard state in these decades is not completely terra incognita. Indeed, above all because of a Risorgimento-inspired belief that it was the only independent state in Italy between the late sixteenth and eighteenth centuries with any vigour or future, the history of the early modern Savoyard state was – as least until relatively recently, when there has been a new interest in the other states of early modern Italy (which were absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy from 1861) – somewhat privileged. The fine old nineteenth-century histories of the reign, and of specific aspects of the military and diplomatic history of the Savoyard state, produced by a group of men (above all Domenico Carutti) who successfully combined government, history and politics,⁵⁰ and the impressive published collection of Savoyard state papers and introductory essays in the splendid *Campagne di Guerra* in Piemont series, focusing on the first years of the War of the Spanish Succession, are testimony to the contrary.⁵¹

However, the older works suffer from three very different defects. Firstly, those Italian historians influenced by nineteenth-century Risorgimento attitudes towards the Savoyard state, such as Carutti, for whom Victor Amadeus was taking the first steps towards the creation of the unified Italian kingdom proclaimed in 1861, have sometimes in consequence distorted ducal policy and its concerns⁵² – not least because Victor

⁴⁹ See Tilly, *Formation of National States*, and M. Greengrass, ed., *Conquest and Coalescence: the shaping of the state in early modern Europe* (London, 1991). The latter (which usefully identifies three distinct means of state formation (conquest, integration, coalescence) acknowledges the need to look at Savoyard state formation but largely ignores it. There are no references to Savoy in J. Shennan, *The Origins of the Modern European State 1450–1725* (London, 1974). The Savoyard state is also largely absent from both Kirshner, *Origins of the State in Italy* and Fasano Guarini, 'Etat moderne'. Recently, however, an attempt has been made to draw on the Savoyard experience in an attempt at a broad theory of early modern state development: S. Clark, *State and Status: the rise of the state and aristocratic power in Western Europe* (Cardiff, 1995).

⁵⁰ For Carutti, see *DBI*, *sub voce*. Others included Bianchi, Cibrario, Ricotti, Sclopis, to name just a view: see M. Fubini Leuzzi, 'Gli studi storici in Piemonte dal 1766 al 1846: politica culturale e coscienza nazionale', *BSBS*, 81, 1983. See also S. J. Woolf's review of Quazza, *Le riforme*, in *BSBS*, 1958, 473 ff., commenting on the harmful impact on Piedmontese historiography of the Risorgimento and the tradition, associated with Claretta, of 'cronistoria'; and G.-P. Romagnani, 'Il "Rimpatrio" nella storiografia italiana fra Sette e Ottocento', in de Lange, *Dall'Europa alle Valli Valdesi*, 487 ff.

⁵¹ C. Contessa, et al., eds., *Le campagne di guerra in Piemonte (1703–08) e l'assedio di Torino (1706)*, 10 vols. (Turin, 1907–33).

⁵² Carutti, *Diplomazia*, III, 551–2 gives Victor Amadeus' forced exchange of Sicily for Sardinia a Risorgimento-inspired gloss, claiming that in this way a territory which had become hispanised was restored to 'Italy' and that this was the most important and enduring aspect of the exchange. This was completely at odds with Victor Amadeus' understanding of this traumatic episode. For a critical evaluation of this Risorgimento-

Amadeus was not pursuing an 'Italian' policy of the Risorgimento type (see Chapter 3). Secondly, however, non-Italian histories are too ready to dismiss Victor Amadeus as little more than a habitual turncoat, without attempting to account in any very meaningful way for his conduct. Thirdly, there is the tradition, in part related to the first strand above, which identifies Victor Amadeus' reign, and above all the era after 1713, with the creation of a rather traditionally conceived 'absolutist' state, as a result of the reforms which were the subject more than a generation ago of a seminal study by Guido Quazza.⁵³ This perception of the Savoyard state as an absolutist archetype is, inevitably, reflected in Geoffrey Symcox' impressive synthesis study of Victor Amadeus II's reign – the first major study of its subject in English (and the first in any language since Carutti's biographical study, published over a century ago⁵⁴) – which more than any other work has drawn attention (particularly outside Italy) to the Savoyard state. For Symcox, 'the way in which Victor Amadeus formulated and then implemented his policies provides a definitive illustration of the methods and objectives of absolutism at work'; and – anticipating what has been said above about the need to pay attention to the experience of the smaller states of early modern Europe – 'The small size of the state he ruled makes it a purer "laboratory" specimen of absolutism than larger states like France'.⁵⁵

Symcox' study of Victor Amadeus must be the starting point for any subsequent attempt to understand the reign. However, as Symcox himself acknowledges, his view of the duke as absolute prince *par excellence* is increasingly difficult to sustain in its entirety, in the face of further research. Sandra Cavallo's work on charitable giving in early modern Turin, for example, exposes the claim that Victor Amadeus launched an 'absolutist' transformation of the Savoyard welfare system after 1713, and instead sees what was attempted as little more than a paean to his new royal status.⁵⁶ Other historians, too – notably Giovanni Levi, Simona Cerutti, Claudio Rosso, Angelo Torre, Sandro Lombardini, Daniela Frigo and Walter Barberis – have thrown valuable new light on the early

inspired approach, see D. Frigo, 'L'Affermazione della sovranità. Famiglia e Corte dei Savoia tra Cinque e Settecento', in C. Mozzarelli, ed., *"Familia" del principe e famiglia aristocratica*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1988), I, 279.

⁵³ Quazza, *Le riforme*.

⁵⁴ D. Carutti, *Storia del regno di Vittorio Amedeo II* (Turin, 1863).

⁵⁵ Symcox, *Victor Amadeus*, passim; Symcox, 'L'Età di Vittorio Amedeo II', in Merlin *et al.*, *Il Piemonte sabauda*, 271 ff., passim.

⁵⁶ Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: benefactors and their motives in Turin 1541–1789* (Cambridge, 1995), 195–6. Significantly, the word 'absolutism' occurs only three times in Cavallo's index.

modern Savoyard state, questioning some of the old 'absolutist' certainties.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the reign of Victor Amadeus II, once regarded as one of the two defining reigns (the other being that of Emanuel Filibert in the second half of the sixteenth century) has been 'squeezed' recently between, on the one hand, an interest in the early seventeenth century, associated above all with Enrico Stumpo and, on the other hand, a new concern, particularly on the part of Giuseppe Ricuperati, with the reforming reign of Charles Emanuel III and the creation of a 'well-ordered police state' of the sort identified by Marc Raeff (and much like the regimes of the classic 'enlightened despotism') and its breakdown in the reign of Victor Amadeus III.⁵⁸ However, it is important not to lose sight of the earlier, 1690–1720, phase of state formation on which (as will become clear) subsequent reform ultimately built, not least because there are significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the Savoyard state in this earlier period. This is particularly true of the Nine Years War, the second half of the War of the Spanish Succession and the war for Sicily (1718–20).

The present study, which makes no claim to be exhaustive – it does not, for example, consider the cultural and intellectual 'renewal' (embodied in the reform of the University of Turin, reopened in 1720) or Victor Amadeus' quarrel with the Papacy of which that renewal was an offshoot⁵⁹ – essentially seeks to assess the multiple and varied impact of war on the Savoyard state between 1690 and 1720. Chapter 1 considers the Savoyard army, the relative military contributions of Victor Amadeus' own states and of those who were not his subjects and the extent to which the state imposed new obligations of military service on its subjects (and developed an appropriate administrative structure) as a result of the pressures of war. Chapter 2 looks at Savoyard finances, the contribution of foreign subsidies. Chapter 3 considers Savoyard diplo-

⁵⁷ See G. Levi, *L'eredità immateriale: carriera di un esorcista nel Piemonte del Seicento* (Turin, 1985); published in English as *Inheriting Power: the story of an exorcist* (Chicago, 1988); S. Cerutti, *Mestieri e privilegi: nascita delle corporazioni a Torino secoli XVII–XVIII* (Turin, 1992); C. Rosso, *Una burocrazia di Antico Regime: i Segretari di Stato dei Duchi di Savoia, I (1559–1637)* (Turin, 1992); A. Torre, 'Politics cloaked in worship: state, church and local power in Piedmont 1550–1770', *Past and Present*, 134, 1992; S. Lombardini, 'La costruzione dell'ordine: governatori e governati a Mondovì (1682–1687)', in G. Lombardi, ed., *La Guerra del Sale (1680–1699)* (Milan, 1986); D. Frigo, *Principe, ambasciatori e 'Jus Gentium': l'amministrazione della politica estera nel Piemonte del Settecento* (Rome, 1991); W. Barberis, *Le anni del principe: la tradizione militare sabauda* (Turin, 1989).

⁵⁸ G. Ricuperati, 'Gli strumenti dell'assolutismo sabauda: Segreterie di Stato e Consiglio delle Finanze nel XVIII secolo', *RSI*, 103, 1991. But, *ibid.* 'L'Avvenimento', p. 350, describes a long (1696–1775) phase of 'modernisation'.

⁵⁹ Symcox, *Victor Amadeus*, 217–21.

macy, both as a sphere of operation of the ducal state and for its role in mobilising the resources of Victor Amadeus' allies (thus helping to bridge the gap between a lesser and the greater powers) and in providing a sphere for the assertion of Savoyard independence and dignity. Chapter 4 considers the degree of administrative change which accompanied the process of state formation, above all the developing system of intendants, but also the persistence of older sources of state cohesion, the degree of domestic opposition to the duke's wars and the demands they made, the methods used by Victor Amadeus to counter the latter, and the way new bonds of cohesion were generated during the wars, helping to generate a new sense of Savoyard state identity and cohesion. Chapter 5 considers the experience of the Savoyard nobility in these years and its relationship with and contribution to the emerging state, arguing that that nobility collaborated with Victor Amadeus, and found its own interest in co-operating in his 'state project' rather than merely being the victims, as in more traditional accounts of the 'absolutist' state. Chapter 6 considers the different processes of integration into the Savoyard state in these decades experienced by the province of Mondovì, a trouble spot before 1690, the Duchy of Aosta and the Protestant Vaudois communities, the reinsertion of the latter being clearly related to the duke's foreign alliances.

IV

One final point needs clarification, by way of introduction: the proper designation of the Savoyard state. This causes many problems to those unfamiliar with the state, who seek to identify it with a variety of labels which it is felt reflect power realities. Thus, it is often called Piedmont-Savoy to indicate the fact that, although Victor Amadeus was duke of Savoy, the most important part of his territories (in terms of extent, population and revenues yielded) was the principality of Piedmont. These efforts to give the Savoyard state an adequate name reflect the degree to which this typically composite early modern state fitted (and continued to fit after 1713, with the added complication of the acquisition of the Kingdom of Sicily and later of Sardinia) ill into our 'modern' notions of statehood. For the most part, it will be referred to in this book as the Savoyard state, unless otherwise appropriate⁶⁰

⁶⁰ See the remarks of R. Oresko, 'The House of Savoy in search for a royal crown in the seventeenth century', in R. Oresko, G. C. Gibbs and H. M. Scott, eds., *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), 272. For Victor Amadeus' various territories and the differing titles he enjoyed in each, see *CGP*, VII, 42.