

## [The Power of the House of Savoy: Regality and Sovereignty in a Composite Monarchy](#)

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Call for Papers

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Italy

Subject Fields:

Early Modern History and Period Studies, European History / Studies, French History / Studies, Italian History / Studies, Political History / Studies

The Power of the House of Savoy: Regality and Sovereignty in a Composite Monarchy  
Venaria Reale (Turin), Italy, 29-30 May 2017

Co-sponsors: Centro studi della Reggia di Venaria / Sabaudian Studies Society

From the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century the House of Savoy exercised dominion over a collection of lands that varied widely in terms of their topographic, linguistic, geographic, cultural, economic and political structures. Over the course of the same period this heterogeneity did not prevent (and perhaps even enhanced) dynastic claims of sovereign and, eventually, regal status. This conference will explore the nature of Sabaudian sovereignty, from territorial, courtly, and social perspectives, between the late fourteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Regality and sovereignty were expressed in the Sabaudian lands in a variety of ways. We invite papers that interrogate these expressions from different angles. Territorially, dynastic rulers interacted with nobles, prelates, towns, regional groupings, institutions, and even members of their own kin group in order to develop and defend their claims of sovereignty. Similar relationships (which could be either cooperative or competitive) existed with nearby rulers and dynasts (Imperial lords, republics, vassals of foreign princes, the French or Spanish kings, etc.) who had their own claims of regality or sovereignty, or whose own juridical positions were ambiguous. Subjects might also become engaged in sovereignty disputes stemming from economic, financial, commercial, or productive practices.

This international dimension of Sabaudian sovereignty raises questions about how other European powers understood and acted with respect to the dynasty's claims and self-representations. What was the relationship between territorial acquisitions and alienations and the dynasty's position as sovereign and regal? What representational strategies were employed by the house of Savoy (or its

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dynastic competitors) to defend or challenge claims, and what forms (architectural, artistic, literary, musical, or other) did they assume? How did 'status interactions' (Giora Sternberg) embody regal and sovereign status at the Sabaudian or other courts? What were the material expressions of this status (regalia, jewels, relics, thrones, etc.) and how were they experienced?

Through what kind of cognitive set did Sabaudian rulers, their subjects, and their competitors understand sovereignty in a composite state? How did political theorists and jurists reflect on these issues? To what extent did political actors at different social levels engage in dialogue with each other and with dynastic agents about the meaning of sovereignty? Did these meanings change from one component Sabaudian state to another? How did the social configurations in which members of the dynasty were involved (marriages, knightly orders, charitable activity) express regal status?

We invite paper proposals on topics related to any of these topics, and encourage participants to be attentive to one or more of the following themes:

- change over time in terms of particular issues addressed
- the characteristic elements of 'regality' and 'sovereignty'
- how the composite nature of the Sabaudian lands conditioned those issues
- Sabaudian strategies to defend sovereign and regal claims, but also how such efforts were received by other European powers

**Send paper proposals** (250-word abstract plus paper title, name, affiliation, and email address) to Andrea Merlotti ([andrea.merlotti@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.merlotti@gmail.com)) and Matthew Vester ([matt.vester@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:matt.vester@mail.wvu.edu)) **by 15 December 2016.**

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