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Stéphane Gal avec Les Amis de Bayard, eds., *Bayard. Histoires croisées du Chevalier*. Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2007. 206 pp. €25 (pb). ISBN 978-2-7061-1420-5.

Review by Matthew Vester, West Virginia University.

Pierre Terrail, *seigneur* de Bayard (1473/1476-1524) was the second son of a well-connected family of the lesser nobility in Dauphiné. Thanks to the patronage of his uncle, Laurent I Allemand, bishop of Grenoble, he served as a page at the court of Savoy and was later taken on by Louis de Luxembourg, count of Ligny. According to a tradition constructed largely by his two earliest biographers, Symphorien Champier and Jacques de Mailles, whose texts date from 1525 and 1527, respectively, Bayard accompanied Ligny's company of heavy cavalry during Charles VIII's invasion of Italy, and participated in campaigns throughout Italy. During Louis XII's war in the kingdom of Naples, Bayard won fame for himself thanks to three exploits in 1503: killing a Spanish captain named Sotomayor in a duel; "le combat des treize" in which Bayard and one companion fended off thirteen Spanish knights for four hours until the sides retired; and defending the bridge of Garigliano, alone against two hundred Spaniards, until French forces had time to regroup. These were the events that began to be reported by other chroniclers. Later he participated in the French repression of the revolt of Genoa (1507), the battle of Agnadello and other fighting in the Veneto (1509), the French victory at Ravenna (1512), and in forces sent to Guyenne and Navarre as well as to Picardy and Hainaut (1512-1513). Named lieutenant general of Dauphiné by Francis I in 1515, Bayard contributed to French success at Marignano by capturing Prospero Colonna. After several years as an administrator in Grenoble, Bayard returned to the battlefield in 1521, when his brilliant defense of Mézières was rewarded by the king with the order of St Michel and command of a hundred knights. Bayard was mortally wounded by gunshot in combat at Rovasenda, near Vercelli, in April 1524.

Stéphane Gal has gathered together sixteen essays relating to Bayard and his memory, constituting a collection of histories that are "croisées" in several respects. As Gal points out, several of the pieces (four by my count) were contributed by non-professional historians, and some are explicitly dedicated to documenting public history efforts surrounding Bayard rather than to the historical figure himself. But the essays also differ in other ways. Their lengths vary (from four to fifteen pages), as do the size and quality of their accompanying documentation. Some of the contributions are new, while others are several years old, having been published or read at conferences. Gal has grouped the essays into six different sections, though for the purposes of this review I have organized them somewhat differently. The volume contains a useful chronology, and a brief bibliographic overview.

Gal's introduction raises some interesting questions about the role of heroes in history and in public life, wondering whether a history populated by heroes continues to play a unifying role for France or for Europe. He laments the loss of memory about Bayard, since "en ayant perdu cette proximité avec notre passé – je parle de celui d'avant la Révolution française ... – nous nous sommes fabriqué une mémoire courte, lisse et tronquée," and Gal qualifies this short memory as "pernicieuse" (p. 6). One mechanism for repairing this memory loss is precisely the sort of exchange between professional historians, amateur historians, and the broader public that this volume exemplifies.

Thus, some of the essays focus on the history society, Les Amis de Bayard, which promotes historical research on Bayard, organizes visits and conferences, and promotes the Musée de Bayard, which opened in 1975 in the old tower of the Terrail family residence in Pontcharra (in the valley of the Grésivaudan, between Grenoble and Chambéry, on the border between Dauphiné and Savoie). The pieces by Guy de Masson and Jean Baccard focus on the society's activities, including its publication of an historical newsletter, *La Lettre des Amis de Bayard*. The society seeks, in Baccard's words, to bring together "partenaires, historiens, ou admirateurs du Chevalier"; to "prolonger et d'enrichir encore le myth de Bayard"; and to keep in mind "la grande 'Histoire de France', notre passé" (p. 197). But Masson adds that the society aims to spread Bayard's memory "tant en France qu'à l'étranger" (p. 171).

The book opens with essays that synthesize existing scholarship by sketching out the social and cultural context in which Bayard lived. Anne Lemonde and Frédéric Meyer describe, respectively, Dauphiné and Savoie in around 1500, with attention to demography; the areas' agricultural economies; the development of administrative structures, print culture, and art; and above all, the process of state-building that affected each region. Meyer refers to "la Savoie" as "un État en construction aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles" (p. 25)—an historiographically problematic formulation, to be sure—and Lemonde examines the process by which Dauphiné transformed itself from a territory with a special status for the French crown into a province resembling others in the kingdom. Yves Soulingeas outlines the institutional organization of Dauphinois politics a bit more specifically, concluding likewise that during this period "la royauté a progressivement aligné Grenoble et le Dauphiné sur le reste du royaume, que ce soit dans les domaines judiciaire, administrative ou militaire" (p. 94). But one should also note that as late as 1525 Champier referred to the *dauphin* as the "souverain seigneur" of Dauphiné! (see Le Fur's essay, p. 120). Pierrette Paravy's piece on the religious culture in which Bayard operated describes early reform efforts carried out by the bishops of Grenoble, the local importance of the cult of the Holy Shroud, and the presence of heresy in the Alpine region at the moment when Reformed preaching began to occur in Grenoble. Maria Ludovica Lenzi situates Bayard with respect to the military revolution spurred by the incorporation of artillery and other firearms into early sixteenth-century warfare. The fact that these changes increased the financial stakes of military conflict is the occasion of an encomiastic observation that Bayard displayed his heroism by refusing to be corrupted when he was a commander in the field.

Other essays are more empirically, even archivally, focused. René Verdier looks at castellany accounts and notarial records from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in order to investigate the early history of the Terrail family. These documents establish written indications of the family's nobility only after 1375 or so, and help explain the social and economic ascendance of the Terrail over the course of the fifteenth century thanks to the establishment of Pierre "le Vieux" Terrail, Bayard's great-grandfather, as a notary in Grenoble in around 1400. Pierre's brother Antoine was somehow appointed abbot of the large Benedictine monastery of Ainay, near Lyon, and Pierre's son Pierre "le Jeune" served the French king militarily against the Burgundians. Thus the documented military tradition in the family only stretched back two generations from Bayard, and at the moment's of the knight's birth, "les Terrail ne sont nobles que depuis un petit siècle, et leur presence à toutes les grandes batailles de la fin du Moyen Age est plus qu'hypothétique" (p. 52). An empirical essay of a different sort is offered by André Baccard, who inventoried all of the existing depictions of Bayard in order to identify his "véritable portrait" (p. 179). This was found to be a sixteenth-century painting uncovered at the castle of Uriage in the nineteenth century, now hanging in the old bishop's palace in Grenoble.

Two authors document different stages of Bayard's career. Jean Jacquart relies on Champier and De Mailles to piece together his activities before 1515, and Georges Salamand describes Bayard the lieutenant-general of Dauphiné from 1515 to 1524, with particular attention to his oversight of public assistance and his response to the crises posed by plague, floods, and famine. Salamand, like some other contributors, seems to display both local and national patriotism, suggesting that had *le Chevalier* not died relatively early, he would have been "l'un des plus grands organisateurs de la belle province

dauphinoise, au cœur de l'État qui venait de naître" (p. 103).

Five articles examine the various ways in which particular memories of Bayard have been employed. Frédérique Dubard de Gaillarbois contrasts the traditional *esprit chevaleresque*, of which Bayard appears to be an exemplar, with an Italian kind of "military humanism" defined as "une adaptation des valeurs, des références et des genres rhétoriques humanistes à la chose militaire" (p. 81). The author seems to see the construction of Bayard's image by contemporary observers as part of a transition from a notion of chivalry based on physicality (but also morality), transparency, and genealogy, to a different kind of nobility that was more rational, comfortable with finances, deceptive when necessary, and meritocratic. For Didier Le Fur and Denis Crouzet, Bayard's story as told by his earliest biographers was important for French royal policy. Le Fur argues that depictions by these authors of Francis I requesting that Bayard dub him as a knight prior to the battle of Marignano (a scene that was probably fabricated) was an important response to what might be called Francis' honor crisis of the mid-1520s following the defection of Charles de Bourbon to the Imperial cause and the king's capture at Pavia. The dubbing by Bayard shifted attention away from Francis' military defeat and focused it on the king's honorable and chivalric character, since "en 1525-1527, avoir fréquenté Bayard était avoir fréquenté l'excellence et faire partie du cercle vertueux" (p. 121). Commemorating the ties of knighthood between these two men also served to tie Dauphiné closer to France, a theme echoed in Denis Crouzet's article. Crouzet points to De Mailles' depiction of the young Bayard at the Savoyard court as a political message for the duke of Savoy, who by 1527 was gravitating toward Charles V. The theme was that the glory of the Savoyard court—"le mythe Savoyard" constructed by De Mailles—was to be found in re-constituting the alliance with France that had existed during Bayard's youth.

Gal and Clairisse Coulomb comment on how local actors manipulated the memory of Bayard. Like Dubard de Gaillarbois, Gal observes a difference between the chivalric ideal presented by Bayard and the image projected by the dominant figure in Dauphiné politics a century later, François de Bonne, *connétable* de Lesdiguières. Bayard's virtues as described by two of his biographers who were also Lesdiguières' clients (writing in the early seventeenth century) praised him for "un discipline du stoïcisme et un modèle de dévouement à la couronne et à la raison d'État" (p. 153). This more closely mirrored the calculating prudence of the Huguenot Lesdiguières than it resembled the Bayard of Champier and De Mailles. Coulomb notes how the commemoration of Bayard by royal officials in Dauphiné tended to legitimize the monarchy during the seventeenth century, but then legitimized opposition to the Crown in the 1780s. The *parlementaires* thus reaffirmed for themselves a double identity as both "hommes de la province" and as reformers of the French state (p. 167).

Though the quality of the essays varies, some of them would be useful either as introductions to the history of Dauphiné during this period or for scholars working on a topic such as history and memory during the Renaissance. The collection as a whole also raises a number of interesting historical and historiographic questions. Beginning with the latter, several essays depict how historians instrumentalize historical topics in order to serve their own disciplinary interests. For example, several essays point to Bayard's importance as a model for the French nobility at time when "la chevalerie n'était plus reine des batailles" (Gal, p. 8). Lenzi alludes to this topic, as does Jacquart, who portrays Bayard as an exemplar for the lesser nobility in particular: despite his valor and hard-won military glory, he was never given a great command but distinguished himself nonetheless by his courage and obedience. Further, he was eventually named lieutenant-governor in Dauphiné and awarded the order of St Michel. Curiously, little is written in any of the volume's articles about the relationship between Bayard's image and the public's fascination with chivalry novels during the Renaissance. Thus, certain lines of inquiry about Bayard are useful to historians because they serve to elucidate categories of historical analysis, such as the lesser nobility versus the *grandees*, shifting social constructions of what it meant to be noble, how the renaissance nobility negotiated with growing state power, etc., in which scholars have invested themselves. Because an undercurrent of awareness of the relationship between the memory of an historical subject and the interest of various groups—the state, the public, local

actors, etc.—flows behind all of these essays, the volume provides a welcome opportunity for the historian to take stock of the relationship between his own interests and the kind of historical memory that he seeks to construct.

For example, as I read this volume, my own interests in sixteenth-century politics in the Western Alps construct in my own imagination a *montagnard* Bayard who moved easily between France and Italy, Savoie and Dauphiné, and whose museum at Pontcharra, his place of origin, might be moved across the valley to Fort-Barraux, a former Savoyard fortress. This Bayard served lords, not states: the king of France, but also the duke of Savoy, whose descendant during the time of Lesdiguières was not deterred by “national” preoccupations as sought to obtain Bayard’s sword for display in his gallery in Turin. Mountaineer Bayard was a hero not only for France or for Dauphiné, but in the context of an Alpine military tradition that included, in addition to Lesdiguières, various members of the house of Savoy, like Emanuel Filibert, Jacques de Savoie-Nemours, Charles Emanuel I, and Prince Eugene, the baron des Adrets, François de Beaumont, the “king of the Swiss”, Ludwig Pfyffer, and even groups such as the Swiss pikemen of the Renaissance, latter-day *Alpini* and *chasseurs alpins*, like Paul Escarfail, founder of the Musée Bayard, had been an officer, and perhaps even the Turinese engineers and factory workers described by Walter Barberis.<sup>[1]</sup> This Alpine Bayard belongs to a larger, regional memory that is today international and multilingual, but only just beginning to refashion the image of its shared heroes in order to satisfy common interests. The international *Rencontres* of the Amis de Bayard in Piedmont, Lombardy, Chambéry, Grenoble, Valais, and elsewhere are a step in this direction.

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#### NOTES

[1] Walter Barberis, *Le armi del Principe. La tradizione militare sabauda* (Turin: Einaudi, 1988)

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