In his *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners* (1634), André Duchesne, royal geographer, went to some lengths to explain that he had not compiled this genealogical history of the Chasteigner family alone. In the preface, he pointed out that the depredations of the Hundred Years' War and Wars of Religion in Poitou had destroyed many valuable sources; thus, he owed the majority of the surviving documents to the efforts of Jean Besly, former king's attorney at Fontenay-le-Comte and erudite historian of Guyenne and Poitou. Besly had helped to clarify many difficult questions, and he had traveled throughout Poitou and the surrounding regions to examine documents and to make extracts at various abbeys and seigneurial seats of the family. Duchesne trusted Besly's work implicitly as it came "from the hand of a person full of merit and recognized probity . . . who has favored me with his friendship for many years."\(^1\)

By 1634, Duchesne had established himself as one of the foremost genealogical scholars of an age impassioned with genealogy. Although genealogical descent had provided an important "perceptual grid" for history writing since the twelfth century, by Duchesne's time, such histories were becoming a recognized historical genre of importance both to erudite

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\(^1\) André Duchesne, *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners, Seigneurs de la Chasteigneraye, de la Rochepozay, de Saint Georges de Rexe, de Lindoys, de la Rochefaton, & autres lieux. Isnﬁée par Chartes de Diverses Eglises, Arrests de la Cour de Parlement, Tiltres domestiques, & autres bonnes Preuues . . .* (Paris, 1634), civ r.
scholars and to the nobles whose ancestry received such detailed illustration.² Later in the century, historical theorists such as Dom Jean Mabillon and Charles du Fresne du Cange would greatly add to genealogical practices by developing systematic methodologies for verifying and dating medieval charters and documents.³ Yet earlier practitioners, including Duchesne, took advantage of the growth of erudite, antiquarian approaches to French history by applying them to genealogical subjects and, in doing so, established the form and rules of the genre as a whole.⁴

Indeed, Duchesne owed at least part of the success of his genealogical works to the practice he had developed of consistently acknowledging contributions from colleagues and friends of documents and interpretations. In the seventeenth-century Republic of Letters, scholars built up social and intellectual currency through these kinds of exchanges of documents, opinions, and encouragement.⁵ Duchesne's generous

recognition of Besly's role was thus consistent with his previous practice, except in one way: *It was a lie*. Not a lie of commission, since Jean Besly really had undertaken all of the research and offered the advice that Duchesne claimed. But a lie of omission, since just as important as any of Besly's input was the role played by Henri-Louis Chasteigner de La Rochepozay, bishop of Poitiers, in the conception, research, writing, and publication of the work. If one compares the published text of the *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners* with the extensive notes, genealogical charts, letters, and documents preserved in the Collection Duchesne and the Manuscrits français at the Bibliothèque Nationale, one thing becomes extremely clear: the erudite, opinionated, and at times controversial bishop of Poitiers played just as active a part in the planning and execution of the history of his family as the scholars he enlisted to establish its many alliances and to clarify the noble deeds of his ancestors.\(^6\) He was in essence a ghost-writer of the work, albeit in the opposite relation to the declared author than is usually the case.

Genealogical histories generally had important points to make about the length, illustriousness, or special character of the noble lineage under study. When erudite scholars presented these arguments, it was likely that they were responding to the desires of the patrons they served, especially when their assertions were based on fraudulent connections.\(^7\) It was not unusual, therefore, for genealogical writers to consult with the descendants of noble

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\(^6\) The main manuscript materials relating to the research and writing of this text are located in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, Manuscrits [hereafter BNM], Collection Duchesne 8, 33, 46, 52; Ms. fr. 2812; and NAF 6208.

houses, nor for nobles to take interest in and provide documentation for these genealogical productions. La Rochepozay, however, was unusual in the level of his participation—indeed, authorship—that he bestowed on the history of his house and for the central role he played in directing the research of both Duchesne and Besly. His example therefore allows us to inquire in a way not usually possible into the methods and motivations of erudite scholars such as André Duchesne and Jean Besly as they undertook extensive genealogical projects and into the concerns of the representatives of noble houses who commissioned them. We will also find that La Rochepozay's controversial stance during the minority of Louis XIII and his rejection of the instabilities of the Wars of Religion played a strong role in shaping the narrative of his family history, although mention of the bishop himself in the published text is limited to a rudimentary account of his life. The genealogy firmly established the Chasteigners' assertions to be one of the oldest and best-established noble families of Poitou, but it also laid out a political agenda important to its noble contributor.

The *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners* came into being thanks to the close working relationship that developed over several years between André Duchesne, his friend Jean Besly, and the bishop of Poitiers. La Rochepozay had first written to Duchesne shortly after the historian's *Histoire de la Maison de Chastillon sur Marne* was published in 1621, and he probably commissioned Duchesne to write the genealogical history of his house in 1626 on the recommendation of Jean Besly. La Rochepozay had been acquainted with Besly's

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8 BNM Duchesne 46, fol. 146r, Henri-Louis Chasteigner de La Rochepozay to André Duchesne, 20 June 1621, [n.p.]. In 1631, La Rochepozay explained to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe that he had been engaged to send his complete history to Duchesne for the last five years. See BNM NAF 6208, fol. 124r, La Rochepozay to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe, 25 May 1631, Dissay. Besly was also clearly responding to Duchesne's thanks for recommending him
scholarly activities since at least 1616, and he had helped to prevent Besly's only son from taking vows at the Augustinian convent in Poitiers in 1620.\textsuperscript{9} La Rochepozay's role in this working partnership was certainly an active one. As early as 1606, the young scion of the Chasteigner family had been concerned to establish the genealogy of his house. In a prolonged correspondence with Scévole II and Louis II de Sainte-Marthe, fellow natives of Poitou and eventual authors of the \textit{Gallia Christiana} (1656), La Rochepozay had exchanged the latest gossip from Rome for information that would shed light on his genealogical concerns.\textsuperscript{10} His letters also show that the future bishop had clearly conducted his own research at Lindoys in 1610, as well as at the family properties of Touffou, Abain, and La Rochepozay at other times.\textsuperscript{11} Although La Rochepozay, Duchesne, and Besly were already exchanging letters concerning the Chasteigner genealogy by 1627–1628, the project seems to have gotten underway in earnest when La Rochepozay sent his full genealogy as it then stood and the documentary extracts demonstrating the connections to Duchesne in May 1631.\textsuperscript{12} Afterwards, La Rochepozay continued to take an active interest in the work. He remained in as close to daily correspondence with Duchesne as the messengers between Poitiers and Paris made possible, answering the historian's questions, advising on the format of the genealogical tables, unearthing new documents and letters, recommending further research, and reviewing the

to La Rochepozay in a letter of February 1632. See BNM Duchesne 46, fols. 147r-v, Jean Besly to Duchesne, 17 February 1632, Fontenay-le-Comte.

\textsuperscript{9} Apollin Briquet, ed., \textit{Lettres de Jean Besly (1612–1647)}, \textit{Archives Historiques du Poitou} 9 (1880), Besly to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe, 28 November 1616, Fontenay-le-Comte, 49-50; Besly to Pierre Dupuy, 20 March 1620, Fontenay, 85-90.

\textsuperscript{10} Their correspondence, spanning the years 1605–1609 and 1622–1647, is located in BNM NAF 6208, fols. 100r-162r.

\textsuperscript{11} BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 120r; BNM NAF 6208, fol. 120r, La Rochepozay to Louis II de Sainte-Marthe, 11 February 1631, Dissay.

\textsuperscript{12} BNM NAF 6208, fol. 124r, La Rochepozay to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe, 25 May 1631, Dissay.
He was certainly underwriting publication by paying both the publisher and Duchesne. For La Rochepozay, Duchesne proved an excellent genealogical collaborator. Where La Rochepozay urged that the published genealogical charts include at least six or seven generations, Duchesne obliged with many more; where the bishop was eager to demonstrate the contributions of female ancestors and marriage alliances to his house, Duchesne supported the view that the female lines of noble descent could be just as important as the male.

Like La Rochepozay, Besly contributed considerable time and effort to the project. He was the one to do much of the basic legwork of visiting the treasuries of the seigneuries of La Meilleraye, St. Georges de Rexe, and Réamur and the abbeys of St. Michau le Cloux and Absie en Gâtine in order to unearth relevant documents and make extracts. He also devised many of the genealogies of families allied to the Chasteigners. Further, his expertise in Poitevin inheritance practices and dialect proved helpful, and he served as a first resort for La Rochepozay when he was either preparing documents to send to Duchesne or wanted a second opinion on Duchesne’s conclusions. For his part, Duchesne collected all of this information and acceded to La Rochepozay’s preferences and

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13 La Rochepozay’s role is evident from the notes, letters, and genealogies preserved in BNM Duchesne 33, 46, and 52. See particularly Duchesne 33, fols. 31r, 37r (recommending research), and 90v (genealogical tables).

14 BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 171r-v, La Rochepozay to Duchesne, 2 May 1633, Poitiers.

15 BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 90r. Duchesne pronounced explicitly on the importance of the female line for nobility, and thus genealogy, in his Histoire Genealogique de la Maison de Bethyve. Justifiee par Chartes de Diverses Eglises & Abbayes, Arrests du Parlement, Titires particuliers, Epitaphes, Chroniques, & autres bonnes Preuues . . . (Paris, 1639), aiii v-aiii r.

16 BNM Duchesne 33, fols. 6v (Réamur), 7v (St. Michau le Cloux), 173v (Absie en Gâtine) and NAF 6208, fols. 115r, 117r (St. Georges and La Melleraye).

17 For example, BNM Duchesne 33, fols. 8r, 12r, 124r.

18 On the Poitevin dialect, BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 173r; on inheritance practices, BNM Duchesne 52, fol. 14r.
opinions whenever he could. Yet, as the author of the work, his reputation as an historian and genealogist was on the line. He thus carefully reviewed all evidence, came to his own conclusions on many occasions, and wove the entire collection of genealogies, documents, and theories into a well-ordered text with extensive proofs.\textsuperscript{19}

We can see how this relationship worked by examining the numerous consultations between Duchesne, La Rochepozay, and Besly concerning the early history of the house. The earliest mention of a Chasteigner, a Gislebertus Castanei, dated back to a document of 1060. Besly had found the document in the cartulary of the abbey of Bourgueil and had speculated that it could very well be referring to a Gislebert Chasteigner.\textsuperscript{20} In line with Besly’s opinion, the published text duly mentioned this early ancestor while also holding that, since the work should not be based on conjectures, it was better to start with people whose membership in the house was beyond question.\textsuperscript{21} By not including this eleventh-century individual definitively in the Chasteigner genealogy, Duchesne simultaneously supported his own historical reputation and the ancient status of the Chasteigner family dear to La Rochepozay. Only information based on solid evidence would be included in the work. Moreover, the Chasteigner history in the twelfth century was so well-founded, Duchesne implied, that it was unnecessary to resort to guesswork or to the kinds of noble mythologies that proposed the fabled Mélusine—a favorite target of Besly's—as the foundress of the house of Lusignan.\textsuperscript{22}

Still, the descent of the seigneurs de La Chasteigneraye in the twelfth century had been the subject of considerable disagreement between the authors. In a letter of December 1627,

\textsuperscript{19} His role is evident from his numerous comments on the materials sent him by both La Rochepozay and Besly and from the final form of the published text.
\textsuperscript{20} BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 3r.
\textsuperscript{21} Duchesne, Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners, 6.
\textsuperscript{22} Jean Besly, "Discours sur la fable de Melusine de Lezignem," BNM Collection Dupuy 805, fols. 34r-35v.
La Rochepozay had sent Duchesne a possible genealogy of the second and third generations of the seigneurs de La Chasteigneraye, which was based on documents that Duchesne had identified and that Besly had found at Réamur (Figure 1; all figures located at end of article). In La Rochepozay's eyes, the only problem was that the genealogy assumed that two brothers had both named their children Jean and Gilbert—unlikely, but not impossible. Yet sometime before February 1632, Besly traveled to the abbey of Absie en Gâtine and found a document relating to these same generations, which he dated to 1187 and which clearly named Thibaut II, Guillaume, Jehan, Gislebert, and Pierre as the sons of Thibaut I (Figure 2). Based on this new information, Besly revised the early genealogy of the Chasteigner family, but several problems still nagged at him. First, although Guillaume was named before Jean in the 1187 charter, the patterns of the passage of the title of seigneur de La Chasteigneraye required Jean to be older than Guillaume. Second, there was an oral tradition in the Chasteigner family that Jean, seigneur de La Chasteigneraye, had died without male issue. Third, the mentions of the members of the Chasteigner family in documents from 1187 to 1244 required that family members be unusually long-lived, since Guillaume had lived until at least 1244—even though he was already old enough to confirm a charter in 1187! Confronted with the same documents, Duchesne disposed the generations quite differently and thus solved the problems that Besly had identified (Figure 3). First, by adding a generation in which Jean was older than Guillaume, he explained how the order of the sons listed in the

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23 BNM Duchesne 52, fol. 9r, La Rochepozay to Duchesne, 14 December 1627, Dissay.
24 At this time, the seigneurie of La Chasteigneraye was subject to the inheritance practice known as "retour," common in Poitou before the reform of the customary law in 1514. According to this practice, a major seigneurie would pass at the death of the eldest brother to all of his living younger brothers in turn before "returning" to the eldest son of the eldest brother. See BNM Duchesne 52, fol. 14r.
25 BNM Duchesne 52, fols. 15r-16r, 17v-18r; Collection Dupuy 820, fols. 182r-183r.
document of 1187 could be accurate even though Jean had been seigneur de La Chasteigneraye before his nephew, Thibault III. Second, he preserved the oral tradition that Jean had had no sons, even though Jean, seigneur de La Chasteigneraye, was also the seigneur de Réamur and the origin of the lines of La Melleraye, La Rochepozay, and Abain.26 Finally, with an extra generation, there was no need to theorize that the early Chasteigners had been long-lived. Although this solution of Duchesne's seems convincing, Besly was not initially willing to accept it. In a letter of 17 February 1632, he held that it was a mistake to list Jean as the older brother of Guillaume and that the general rule of thirty years between generations should not be held inviolable.27 Still, Besly deferred to Duchesne's "eagle eye" over his own "troubled spectacles," and he elsewhere worked hard to allay any of La Rochepozay's hesitations concerning Duchesne's judgment by insisting on his caution and pronouncing his genealogies the best in the field.28

For erudite scholars such as Duchesne and Besly, piecing together the medieval origins of important noble families and ascertaining what early charters could reveal about historical practices of succession, noble relations with the Church, and the developing disposition of provinces and seigneuries provided the main intellectual interest of a work such as the Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners. In unearthing the alliances of noble families, they were clarifying the history of France. La Rochepozay shared some of the same enthusiasm. He repeatedly dreamed that if seven or eight other established noble families of Poitou would undertake their own genealogies, the (noble) relations of the whole of the province would be clarified. He represented his passion for his own family genealogy as a

26 For these attributions, see Duchesne, Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners, 9-10.
27 BNM Duchesne 46, fol. 147r-v, Besly to Duchesne, 17 February 1632, Fontenay-le-Comte.
28 Ibid.; BNM Duchesne 52, fol. 8v, Besly to [La Rochepozay], 1 April 1632, Fontenay-le-Comte.
service to his *patrie.* Yet the bishop of Poitiers had other agendas to pursue in publishing his family history. By providing extremely detailed biographies of his recent forbears, including his grandfather, father, uncles, and older brothers, La Rochepozay was concerned to represent his relatives as both educated men and ideal warriors who had supported the king's cause without fail from the reigns of François I to Henri IV. Such loyalty was especially significant, of course, during the era of the Catholic League when the bishop's father, Louis Chasteigner, seigneur d'Abain, had continued his established record of close service to Henri III and, after the king's assassination, had been an important support for Henri IV in Poitou, Limousin, and La Marche. Such a family history was important to exhibit because the bishop of Poitiers had himself been involved in considerable controversy when he opposed the actions of Henri, prince de Condé in 1614. By implication, this background confirmed the purity of his own motives and that, despite his involvement in intense factional rivalries, his actions should in no way be associated with the kind of disobedience that had simmered in Poitiers since the later Wars of Religion.

From the *Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners,* interested readers could learn of both the impressive record of military service and the learned cultivation of the Chasteigners over the last several generations. The bishop's grandfather, Jean III Chasteigner, seigneur de la Rochepozay, had been injured at Pavia, as a long description by Martin du Bellay attested. On his death, Jean III had been honored with an epitaph by his friend, Joseph Scaliger. Likewise, the bishop's uncle, Roch Chasteigner, seigneur de Touffou, had been an active combatant throughout the later Italian Wars, showing his mettle at Boulogne, Mirandola, and

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29 BNM NAF 6208, fol. 130v, La Rochepozay to Scévole II de Sainte-Marthe, 22 February 1633, Poitiers; BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 90v, La Rochepozay to Duchesne, 9 August 1633, [n.p.].

Piedmont.\textsuperscript{31} After Henri II sent him to Italy to protect the Pope, he fought bravely to defend the city of Ascoli, but was taken prisoner by the duke of Alba in 1557. Although his friends immediately set out to secure his release, this proved difficult because the Spanish supposedly held him in as high esteem as if he were a prince of France.\textsuperscript{32} Before managing to escape from his three-year imprisonment in Milan, he passed the time by writing verses in French and Spanish. Ronsard honored his exploits and life in an epitaph, but the Pléiade poet drastically underreported the ransom that the Spanish insisted on receiving. Instead of two thousand écus, it was most likely ten thousand.\textsuperscript{33} Louis Chasteigner, seigneur d'Abain, followed in the footsteps of his father and older brother, even surpassing them in honor. "Up until this point," noted Duchesne just in case readers had missed the message:

[W]e have seen many seigneurs of the house of La Rochepozay of the surname of Chasteigner, who by their virtues and generous actions have no less distinguished their memory than the nobility and antiquity of their blood have rendered them illustrious. But there were none who raised this family glory to a higher point or who achieved higher notable honors than Louis Chasteigner, subject of the present chapter.\textsuperscript{34}

Louis Chasteigner was the bishop's father. He had studied in Paris under Turnèbe and Daurat and been tutored by Scaliger back in Poitou.\textsuperscript{35} After fighting in the battles of the religious wars from St. Denis to La Rochelle, he was named \textit{gentilhomme de la chambre du roi}, and he accompanied the duc d'Anjou to Poland as an important member of his household.\textsuperscript{36} After

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 266-67.  
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 269-76.  
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 277, 280, 286-89.  
\textsuperscript{34} Duchesne, \textit{Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners}, 305.  
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 316-18; Nicolas Le Roux, \textit{La faveur du roi: Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois} (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2000), 144-45, 147 n. 3.
returning to France, the seigneur d'Abain later served as French ambassador in Rome from 1576 to 1581, where he also swore his oath as a chevalier du Saint Esprit in 1583. After declaring his allegiance to Henri IV early, Abain became a defender of the crown in western France during the hostilities of the Catholic League. Henri IV appointed him governor of La Marche and then of Limousin, as well as lieutenant-général in Poitou. Among his signal victories was his taking La Guerche, the seat of Georges de Villequier, vicomte de La Guerche and governor for the League in Poitiers. He also aided in the successful blockade of Poitiers in 1593, and he acted to put down the revolt of the Croquants in 1594. A man of action, Abain had nevertheless enjoyed the friendship of cultivated men such as Muret, Ronsard, Cujas, De Thou, Scaliger, and Scévole I de Sainte-Marthe, and he was praised in print by both Scaliger and Sainte-Marthe, as well as the latter's son, Abel.

We can be sure that the point of view expressed in these extensive narratives closely reflected La Rochepozay’s concerns. The biographies were based on texts that the bishop of Poitiers originally sent to Duchesne, and for two years before the publication of the work, the two men corresponded continually over which details needed to be clarified and what documents should be added either in the text or the proofs. Much of the basis of the life of Jean III Chasteigner, for example, derived from the short biography that his grandson had first sent Duchesne. Later, the bishop also advised that Martin du Bellay's entire discourse on his grandfather's injury at Pavia should be included in the text—a view that Duchesne duly

39 Ibid., 363-67.
40 Ibid., 373-74, 376-78.
41 Ibid., 381-83.
42 The original biographies of Jean III, Roch, and Louis Chasteigner are included in BNM Duchesne 52, fols. 119r-128r.
followed.\textsuperscript{43} For Roch, La Rochepozay was particularly concerned to explain why Ronsard should have misreported the ransom that the Spanish had demanded for his uncle's release. He also encouraged Duchesne to incorporate as many laudatory letters about his uncle as possible and asked that the whole text of Ronsard's epitaph be included.\textsuperscript{44}

La Rochepozay's attention to his father's biography was even more focused than for his other family members, because aspects of the record needed to be set straight in his father's case. As with his uncle, the bishop advised which letters should be included and where to find them, but he also elaborated considerably on the original narrative of his father's life that he had probably provided to Duchesne in 1631. Most likely in response to Duchesne's questions, La Rochepozay repeatedly expanded on his father's relief of the town of Bellac and his actions against the Croquants,\textsuperscript{45} but he also returned several times to the fateful battle at La Guerche in which the vicomte, Georges de Villequier, had been killed and his father, Claude de Villequier, taken prisoner. The defeat of the vicomte de La Guerche, La Rochepozay informed Duchesne on 22 February 1633, had been "poorly written by the historians, and lately by Monsieur Dupleix, who desired to give the honor to the sieur de Salern, because he is Gascon and from his pays." However, since Salern only commanded twenty-five to thirty horse and was not the governor of a province, how could he have held command when Abain was present? Furthermore, when La Rochepozay's father wanted to join combat against La Guerche, the sieur de Salern opposed his opinion vigorously.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, the victory should be credited to his father, as Henri IV acknowledged,

\textsuperscript{43} BNM Duchesne 33, fol. 56r-v.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., fol. 5v; BNM Duchesne 52, fol. 121v.
\textsuperscript{45} BNM Duchesne 33, fols. 5r, 33v-34r.
\textsuperscript{46} BNM Duchesne 33, fols. 36r-37v, La Rochepozay to Duchesne, 22 February 1633, n.p.
rather than to the sieur de Salern, who had managed to take the vicomte's father hostage in the fight.\textsuperscript{47}

In insisting on his father's role in the victory at La Guerche—and the published text reproduced all of La Rochepozay's concerns in slightly less argumentative fashion—the bishop was putting a strong emphasis on Abain's loyalty to the crown and distancing his family from any association with the Catholic League. The vicomte de La Guerche had been the governor for the League in Poitiers, after all, and the rout of his troops had also meant a profound defeat for League supporters in the capital of Poitou.\textsuperscript{48} In addition, for anyone who knew the recent history of the Chasteigner and de Villequier families, Abain's defeat of La Guerche would have had great significance. The de Villequier family had been influential intimates of Henri III's household since before his departure for Poland just as Abain had joined the household in 1572.\textsuperscript{49} That Abain had held fast to his original loyalties while the de Villequier clan had been seduced by the League strongly underlined the Chasteigner family's tradition of intense royalism, which by implication devolved on La Rochepozay himself.

The loyalties of the Chasteigner family during the Wars of Religion mattered a great deal to the bishop because he had his own behavior in a difficult political situation to explain. Although La Rochepozay owed his episcopal nomination to Sully's belief that he would calm the rising tensions in the still militantly Catholic capital of Poitou, his presence in Poitiers from 1612 on only exacerbated the factional divisions within the


\textsuperscript{49} Le Roux, \textit{La faveur du roi}, 57, 95, 101, 107-09, 144.
Alliances in Poitiers early in the seventeenth century did not exactly duplicate the divisions of the religious wars, but La Rochepozay nevertheless threw his authority behind a group of elites who were strongly associated with the Catholic League. In doing so, he helped to oppose their rivals, who were led by members of the Sainte-Marthe family and who, if they had not all taken an unequivocal *politique* position during the later religious wars, had all since become associated with the policies of Henri IV. As tensions rose between Henri, prince de Condé, and Marie de' Medici, they were now accused of being Condéens. They were also, it should be noted, closely related to La Rochepozay's intimate friends, Scévole II and Louis II de Sainte-Marthe, while Scévole I de Sainte-Marthe, the patriarch of the group, claimed a decades-long friendship with Scaliger, La Rochepozay's own tutor. These amicable associations, however, did not sway the actions of the bishop of Poitiers.

Thus, in June 1614, after Condé had come to terms with the Queen Regent at the Peace of Sainte-Ménéhould, La Rochepozay was instrumental in refusing the prince entry to Poitiers. To defend the city, La Rochepozay had even donned battle armor and could be seen carrying a pike around Poitiers. The incident achieved great notoriety since, as Jeffrey Sawyer has most recently pointed out, a flurry of pamphlets from both sides sought to exonerate either Condé or La Rochepozay and to

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50 Henri Ouvré, *Essai sur l'histoire de Poitiers depuis la fin de la Ligue jusqu'à la prise de La Rochelle (1595–1628)* (Poitiers, 1856), 59.  
claim that the prince or the bishop had been acting in the king's name. The bishop was also instrumental in assuring that the mayoral election of that year went to a militant Catholic, and when the duc de Roannes, the royal governor in Poitiers, was seized and held against his will, the episcopal palace served as his prison.\textsuperscript{53} Throughout, La Rochepozay insisted that he was acting on the instructions of the Queen Regent and her ministers, and his supporters referred to a royal commission he had received to keep civic order.\textsuperscript{54} For many, though, the bishop had far overstepped his authority and had placed his own desire for power over the crown's interests and civic peace.

By the early 1630s, when the \textit{Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigner} was being planned and published, the intensity of this controversy had subsided, of course, but La Rochepozay had only renewed his formerly close relations with the erudite Sainte-Marthe family years after the conflict.\textsuperscript{55} In fact, this reconciliation may explain why the bishop was so eager to include texts by Scévole I and Abel de Sainte-Marthe in praise of his relatives and to highlight their close relationship with Scaliger, his early mentor. Yet his concern to illustrate his family's tradition of martial valor, bravery, and intense devotion to the king also demonstrates that he was still interested in justifying his own stance as deriving from these same habits and motivations even though he had chosen an ecclesiastical life. And what better way to assert his belonging to such an ancient, virtuous, and loyal house than by being a ghost-writer, which enabled him to embed this viewpoint in the respected documentary research and even-handed narrative of such erudite

\textsuperscript{53} On these events and La Rochepozay's role in them, Ouvré's \textit{Essai sur l'histoire de Poitiers} still provides the most complete narrative. Andrault, \textit{Poitiers à l'âge baroque} provides further judicious assessments of the remaining manuscript sources (542-52), while Sawyer focuses chiefly on the resulting pamphlet wars. Jeffrey K. Sawyer, \textit{Printed Poison: Pamphlet Propaganda, Faction Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Seventeenth-Century France} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 73-83.

\textsuperscript{54} Ouvré, \textit{Essai sur l'histoire de Poitiers}, 86-87.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 161.
scholars as Jean Besly and André Duchesne? Genealogical histories may often appear tiresome to contemporary readers, but they could serve as important points of contact between savants and the French nobility and thus simultaneously reflect the concerns of erudite scholarship and of noble engagement in the shifting politics and social pathways of the Old Regime.
Figure 1: Seigneurs de La Chasteigneraye, by Henri-Louis Chasteigner, sgr de La Rochepeozay (1627)
Source: BNM Collection Duchesne 52, fol. 9r
Figure 2: Seigneurs de La Chasteigneraye, by Jean Besly (1632)
Source: BNM Collection Duchesne 52, fol. 17v-18r
Figure 3: Seigneurs de La Chasteigneraye, by André Duchesne (1634)
Source: Histoire Genealogique de la Maison des Chasteigners (Paris, 1634), 4