



universität
wien

MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Of Holy and Unholy Leagues:

Calculations and Miscalculations in the Renaissance State System 1494-1559“

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2024 / Vienna 2024

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt A 992 940
Postgraduate programme code as
it appears on the student record
sheet:

Universitätslehrgang lt. Internationale Studien / International
Studienblatt Studies
Postgraduate programme as it
appears on the
student record sheet:

Betreut von / Supervisor: Professor Thomas Row



diplomatische
akademie **wien**

Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Abstract

This thesis discusses the Renaissance state and state system with a focus on the alliances during the Italian Wars 1494-1559. The Wars of the League of Cambrai 1508-1515 serve as a case study in an attempt to understand why alliances of the time were constantly shifting. An interdisciplinary approach combining theory of international relations and historiography is implemented. While realism emphasizes that interest-driven behavior makes the modern states predictable to a degree, the dynastic element of the Renaissance state shows that leaders do not necessarily act according to the *raison d'état*. The thesis argues that the modern state and state system were invented during this period and therefore many of their characteristics can already be found but in their raw form. While legitimacy and symbolic politics had been the main sources of power for medieval rulers, the rulers of the Renaissance relied on calculated power and the exploitation of opportunities. The Italian states and their rulers were already attempting to maximize their power and a fragile balance of power established itself as a result. Due to the social, economic, and political composition of the various states, some would be valuable allies, such as Venice, while others, Florence and Milan for example, would not. When Italian leaders for various reasons calculated that it would be in their interest to bring in foreign allies the balance of power was upset. Since the European state system in the modern sense was yet to be established as a consequence of the Italian Wars the Ultramontanes were free to intervene in Italy. These states were powerful due to a process of regional centralization and not because of the competition of a state system. Their rulers could afford to act according to the medieval logics of power. For this reason, they did not act according to the calculations of their Italian allies. Another important reason for the unpredictability of the state system was the revolutionary nature of warfare at the time. The Italian states miscalculated in their alliance politics. While the French policy of hegemonic alliances was at first successful, it would be the Spanish who through various guarantee alliances would come to dominate Italy in the end.

Abstrakt

Diese Arbeit setzt sich mit Staat und Staatensystem der Renaissance auseinander mit einem Fokus auf die Bündnisse in den Italienischen Kriegen 1494-1559. Die Kriege der Liga von Cambrai 1508-1515 dienen dabei als Fallstudie in einem Versuch zu verstehen, weshalb die Bündnisse der Zeit konstant wechselten. Eine interdisziplinäre Herangehensweise, welche die Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen und die Historiographie verbindet, wird angewendet. Während der Realismus unterstreicht, dass interessengeleitetes Verhalten, einen modernen Staat zu einem gewissen Grad berechenbar macht, zeigt das dynastische Element im Renaissancestaat, dass ein Anführer nicht notwendigerweise entsprechend des *raison d'état* handelt. In dieser Arbeit wird argumentiert, dass der moderne Staat und das Staatensystem in dieser Zeit erfunden wurde und dass deshalb einige seiner Eigenschaften hier schon in der Rohform gefunden werden können. Während Legitimität und Symbolpolitik die wichtigsten Quellen der Macht mittelalterlicher Herrscher waren, stützten die Herrscher der Renaissance auf berechnete Macht und die Ausnutzung von Gelegenheiten. Die italienischen Staaten und ihre Herrscher versuchten schon ihre Macht zu maximieren und dadurch etablierte sich ein fragiles Mächtegleichgewicht. Aufgrund ihrer sozialen, ökonomischen und politischen Beschaffenheit waren einige Staaten wertvolle Verbündete, z.B. Venedig, andere wiederum, wie Florenz und Mailand, nicht. Als italienische Anführer aus verschiedenen Gründen berechneten, dass es in ihrem Interesse sei, fremde Verbündete hineinzuziehen, wurde das Mächtegleichgewicht gestört. Weil sich ein europäisches Staatensystem im modernen Sinne im Zug der italienischen Kriege überhaupt noch etablieren musste, waren die Ultramontanen frei in Italien zu intervenieren. Diese Staaten waren mächtig aufgrund eines Prozesses der regionalen Zentralisierung und nicht aufgrund eines Wettkampfs mit anderen Staaten. Ihre Anführer konnten es sich leisten der mittelalterlichen Machtlogik entsprechend zu handeln. Aus diesem Grund handelten sie nicht entsprechend dem Kalkül ihrer italienischen Verbündeten. Ein weiterer Grund für die Unberechenbarkeit im Staatensystem war die revolutionäre Art des Krieges der Zeit. Die italienischen Staaten verrechneten sich in ihrer Allianzpolitik. Während die französische Politik hegemonialer Allianzen zuerst Erfolge zeitigte, waren es letztendlich die Spanier die durch ihre unterschiedlichen Garantieallianzen, Italien dominieren würden.

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Julius II, the “Warrior Pope” and Initiator of the Holy League of 1511 (Raphael, 1511/1512)

1. Introduction

The Wars of the League of Cambrai from 1508 to 1515 tell a story of back-stabbing and betrayal. Rarely in history have alliances been as unstable as during this initial stage of the Italian Wars. Italy became the battleground for a web of European rivalries and alliances involving the Italian states and European monarchies. On this battleground the earliest version of a European state system establishes itself. The following pages present an attempt to understand the alliance politics of the various states involved in order to then give an account of the consequences of these decisions for the European state system. In an interdisciplinary approach, the concepts of alliance as they are developed in theory of international relations is applied to the historiographic research on the era in question. Which calculations led state leaders to prefer one alliance over the other? On what basis did they make their calculations? Were the constantly shifting alliances a consequence of shrewd calculations or simply of miscalculations?

The aim is to contribute, in the scope possible in a master thesis, to the discussion on the paradigm of the Westphalian state and state system by discussing the first wars and alliances in the Early Modern European state system and the precedents it set. The Renaissance state and state system are in many ways very similar to their modern counterparts, but their structures are rawer and more pure. Simultaneously, however, they are still very much in a process of evolution from feudalism. For this reason, states act very differently from modern states in a system that has different rules. This means that a state's behavior can be analyzed either as a product of the calculation of a modern state or as a product of medieval court politics and most often a combination of both. This must be taken into account when trying to understand the alliance politics of the Early Modern State. Understanding the origins of the Modern state and state system in the Renaissance, what stayed the same as well as what has changed since, is important in order to have a more comprehensive idea of the modern state.

First, it is necessary to establish what is meant by the term "alliance" in theory of international relations. Most generally it is understood as an agreement of two states to assist each other militarily. However, alliances have many other functions beyond the cooperation of armed forces. In the theory of international relations, alliances are

considered the most important mechanism for establishing a balance of power in a state system. The question is what determines the alignment, cohesion, dealignment, and realignment of states in various alliance blocks. Most theories on the functioning of alliances are however focused on the alliances of the bipolar system of the Cold War. Those that go further back still assume the existence of states under the paradigm of the Westphalian state system. In such a state system the constant threat to the security of a state is what determines its choice of alliance. For the question at hand, alliances must be understood as part of a European state system yet to be established. Therefore, alternative explanations to the security dilemma must be found to describe why nations enter into certain alliances. The analysis of the alliances in the Renaissance state system is of special interest because the Renaissance state system is defined by a radical multipolarity that borders on anarchy. The wars that spanned six decades are the anarchy that the states are attempting to structure by the means of alliance politics. Again, in the Renaissance the paradigms that dominate modern thought on international politics can be seen at their purest: Anarchy and drive towards a balance of power. How did the Renaissance states attempt to deal with their anarchic environment? And by which means was a systemic structure finally achieved as a result of the Italian Wars?

The sections on the Renaissance state and the Renaissance state system will discuss the greater historical context in which these alliances were forged. The Renaissance states are the elements of the state system and so the relation between the states and the state system is reciprocal: The various states form the state system, but they are always determined to a certain degree by the state system.

If one wants to understand the alliance politics of the states it is important to first have an idea of the states and the statesmen who forged these alliances. The social fabric and political institutions of the states are the most important factors in determining the way states act in the state system. The states of the Early Modern Era were of course very different from the states of modern times, but more importantly, they were very different from each other: They were in different stages of the transition from the medieval to the modern concept of state. The section on the Renaissance state will focus on how states and their leaders understood the national interest, and by which means they tried to realize it. The rational forces of economy and administration were not yet able to fully impose the interest of the state over feudal patterns of

behavior. Analyzing the status of the various states in this transition should give a picture of the predictability of the actions of states which is important to understand why states forged alliances. The leaders of this time understood the varying internal compositions of the states in the state system and tried to predict their actions in a relatively chaotic environment.

The state system, as an abstraction of the myriad state relations, is defined by cooperation as well as by conflict of interest that might lead to war. Warfare is a critical element in the reciprocal relationship between the states and the state systems. It is therefore important to understand the changes in warfare and how these changes affected the state and the state system.

The section on the state system argues that a state system that is formed out of the relations of these states in transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Era is itself transitional. The most important transition is that from various regional state systems, which were mostly self-contained, towards a comprehensive European state system. Specifically, the regions of Western and Central Europe, and Iberia met in a hegemonic struggle over the state system of Italy. Just as the states of Italy had made the most progress towards the state of the Early Modern so did the Italian state system. It was highly competitive and therefore left openings that the Ultramontane states were able to exploit. The struggle for dominance in Italy and the dynamics of post-Medieval dynastic politics led to the creation of a greater European hegemonic struggle between France and the Habsburgs. The dynamics of the structuring of the Renaissance state system by war and alliances is of great interest for the international theory's concepts of alliance: The fragile multipolarity of the Renaissance is in many respects more similar to the multipolarity that is establishing itself in the 21st century than the bipolar system of the Cold War for which most theories on the subject were written.

The last segment will give a narrative of the Italian Wars from 1494 until 1515. This includes the first, second, and third Italian wars which will serve as prelude to the Wars of the League of Cambrai 1508-1515. The first series of wars already included many examples of the changing nature of the alliances of the time. The Wars of the League of Cambrai however saw incredible reversals in entire coalitions: The French allied with the Venetians, but then they attacked them as a part of an international coalition; many members of this coalition however soon made peace with Venice and

turned against France. After this coalition fell apart, the French once again allied with the Venetians. By analyzing this series of betrayals, the following questions will be tried to be answered: What was the reasoning for forming the various alliances in the first place? Why were alliances of the era of such a short duration? Can this be attributed to shrewd calculation or to the unpredictable nature of Renaissance warfare and the over-complex nature of the multipolar system which was still in the process of establishing itself in the Italian Wars? What were the consequences of the shifting alliances for the involved states and for the development of the Renaissance state system?

2. Alliances in International Relations of the Renaissance

Alliances have been a key instrument of foreign policy throughout history. In international relations theory, they play an important role in the realist school of thought. Alliances are a consequence of power politics: The international system is characterized by anarchy which leads to states being in a constant state of fear for their survival. This structural interpretation of the state system understands the main interest of every state to be self-preservation. In order to achieve self-preservation, states struggle for power. This leads to a dynamic whereby the accumulation of power of one state is considered a growing threat to the security of others which leads them to accumulate power themselves leading to a vicious circle of power accumulation. This vicious circle in turn leads to the establishment of a balance of power and alliances play a major role in this. Alliances are thus a direct consequence of the state of anarchy that describes the international system and are one of the main instruments of states for stabilizing the system through the creation of a balance of power.

The main method of increasing power is the efficient exploitation and application of resources within the sphere of influence of a state – often described as “stockpiling”- and the main expression of a state’s power is military force. For this reason, security must be understood in broad terms: States are not in constant fear of the annexation of their entire territory, the abolishment of their autonomous government, or the extermination of their territory. But every decline of its power relative to other states means that it might be less capable of seizing future opportunities to increase its power. Military power is required to maintain a state’s security, but the maintenance of military power requires the accumulation of other forms of power. This means that while coercive power is the ultimate expression of a state’s overall power, the theory of international relations nevertheless describes other forms of power that serve to further the state's main interest: the further accumulation of power.ⁱ

As will be discussed in the chapter on the Renaissance state the above-described realist concept of power which has been made in order to understand the modern state is not applicable to the state of the Early Modern Era. The state was driven by a calculated interest to a much smaller extent, than in the subsequent eras. If

it is applied, nonetheless, one has to be aware that this process of maximization of efficiency of power accumulation within the state is in its earliest stages at this point. This has an effect on the state system and on alliance building. Liska makes it clear that the reasons for forming alliances and the form the alliances take are very dependent on the historical circumstances.ⁱⁱ If the domestic constitution of a state and the resulting international order of states makes expansionist wars very difficult, such as could be argued for feudal Europe, then there is little need for state alliances. If on the other hand, offensive technologies in warfare grow dominant, as is the case for Italian Wars, smaller powers will try to counter-balance the offensive capabilities of the major powers.

There are many factors limiting the exploitation and application of resources as well as the size of a state's sphere of influence among them technological, economic, cultural, political, and administrative variables. When the mustering of resources in the attempt to accumulate power has reached its limit the next step is to pool resources with other entities. According to realist theory, the next best thing to the efficient mustering of autonomous resources is cooperation. When it comes to a state's security interest in the face of a direct threat cooperation takes the form of mutual assistance. This is the objective of military alliances. This conceptualization of alliances in terms of security concerns established by LISKA follows the line of thought of classical realism: The security concern is the most crucial interest of a state, and it dominates any other consideration. The most general convergence of interests between states that decide to cooperate is the security interest.ⁱⁱⁱ This security interest can be understood in very broad terms as the securing of the state's key economic and political interest, but if this generalization goes too far, Cesa argues, then it loses its analytical value.

While most theories concerning alliances consider the state the main operating unit a general theory of alliance can be applied to entities within the state. For instance, political factions can ally amongst each other in order to further their interests. They can also ally with another state or with factions within it in order to achieve a certain goal. These alliances formed below the state level are of special interest to the historical period in question as the process of political centralization of the modern nation-state (which most theories that deal with alliances have in mind) is still in a very early stage. For the development of a general theory of alliances, they will be

analyzed on a state level for now. But it is important to understand that there are various internal factors in a state which determine the choice of allies.

“Only insofar as the central authority does not realize the ideal of foreign policy monopoly, is the domestic system an integral part of the international system. To a like extent, the domestic system is then defined by parties to internal conflicts – domestic factions – and the internally present outside forces capable of influencing local events.”^{iv}

There is a reciprocal relation between factionalism and outside interference: The stronger factionalism is in a state the weaker the central authority. The weaker central authority is the easier it is for outside powers to influence and strengthen certain factions and play internal conflicts of interest against each other. This in turn strengthens factionalism. Once a state has lost this monopoly over foreign policy it is very difficult to regain it. Weaker states are evidently more susceptible to this dynamic. The ruling faction can itself be so weak that it relies on external alliances as a source of power and in so doing undermine the autonomy of the state. In the section on the Renaissance state, those Italian states most vulnerable to the exploitation of internal strife will be analyzed.

Another perspective is that states think of possible gains that can be made by cooperating with other states. If states have convergent interests, then they might decide to pool their resources in order to achieve these interests more efficiently. Apart from the ever-present security interest as a basis for obtaining other interests, states generally act on the international level pursuing more specific interests. These particular interests can always be related back to the security interest as they concern the exploitation and application of resources, so the accumulation of power in some way or form, on the basis of the already accumulated power. Moreover, states negotiate the terms of their alliance by weighing the convergence in certain interests against the opposition regarding other interests. Very often the security interest is a key convergent interest that facilitates the negotiation on the other questions of the alliance. While the distinction between fear for security and the promise of gains can be helpful theoretically, it is however sometimes difficult to distinguish the two as they ultimately are two different perspectives on the accumulation of power. On the other hand, the

application of the profit motive is able to explain alliance in the absence of a threat to the survival of a state.^v

This is important for the period in question as in the European state system the idea of the survival of a state has to be understood in the historical context: Sovereignty was not yet a concept. For example, after the death of Charles the Bold, the Burgundian state would eventually be integrated into the Habsburg domains. This “annexation” by marriage faced very little resistance in the former ducal holdings since the Burgundian nobles and the estates of the Lowlands were more concerned with upholding their traditional liberties than with the autonomy of the former ducal lands. The fact that the Habsburgs were in a weaker position than the French to strip them of their privileges introduces realist geopolitics into the equation again.^{vi} But the survival of the state was not at issue. While there was an aristocratic uprising against the Habsburg accession to the Spanish throne at the beginning, a similar logic holds here too. The logic of feudalism was still very much at work in international relations, meaning that a state's government had at least as much to fear from internal rivalries as from outside threats.

Above all, however, the Early Modern state did not have the military capabilities to seriously threaten the survival of another state. While this is true for the Ultramontane monarchies, the same cannot be said for the Italian principalities. When it comes to the regional power dynamics state interests can be more easily related to the realist theory of anarchy, threat to security, and balance of power. These points will be addressed in their respective chapter. For alliance theory, it is important to note however that the threat to security by external forces was less important in the European state system than it was in the Italian regional state system. A very similar differentiation can be regarding the profit motive: In contrast to the fully developed nation-state the Early Modern hybrid had not yet rationalized its interests: The Burgundian Low Countries were known to be rich and whichever prince controlled them could derive much power from their possession. There will be a more in-depth analysis of the alterity of the Early Modern state and state system in the respective chapters. For now, it is important to note that while state interest, be it negative or positive, as it is described in realist theory was already a driving factor in these states to varying degrees, they are not yet rationalized to the extent they are in the modern nation-state for which alliance theory often is conceptualized.

The Italian Wars were exactly the event that changed the international order in such a way that alliances were necessary to secure the key interests of the Italian and European states.

“In the late 15th century, competitive alliances of the Italian city-states with barely consolidated France and Spain integrated the previously self-contained Italian system into a larger Western European system”^{vii}

This integration of the Italian and European state systems and the consequences for the rationale of alliances of the various states participating in the Italian Wars

In the following, I will discuss Cesa’s adaption of the general theory of alliance to historical circumstances. While Cesa continues to apply this historically adapted theory of alliance to the alliances of the diplomatic revolution of 1756, many of his observations can be applied to the alliance of the Italian Wars as well. The discussion of the types of states and the nature of the state system of the time should then serve to adapt his theory to the era in question.

The discussion of alliances to this point has focused on the reasons for alignment. The anarchic nature of the system and the state’s interest in accumulating power through cooperation leads it to align with other states. This process leads to the creation of alliance blocks, and this theoretically leads to the ultimate establishment of a bipolar order of the international system. Realist theory regarding alliances was trying to explain the great alliances of the bipolar Cold War era. The main concern was alignment as there were very few cases of de-alignment and realignment and these few cases could be explained by domestic developments of the countries in question. Two hegemonic powers were competing and there was little to be gained and much to be lost from switching from one hegemonic alliance to the other and the opportunities for such a realignment were few. However, the European and Italian state system of the 1500s was not ordered around two competing poles, it more closely resembled a multipolar international order. Waltz states that alliances are much more fragile in a multipolar environment. This fragility of alliances in a multipolar order shows that the emphasis when analyzing alliances must not be solely on general structural pressures but on the systemic positions of all of the states involved as well as on the nature of specific relations of all the actors allied, neutral, or hostile. This is where the historical

analysis becomes important. Two conclusions follow from this: Firstly, an analysis of historical alliances must go beyond the parsimony of the realist school. The specific historical conditions of the alliances must be examined more so than in modern times. This means analyzing the means and ends of every state involved as well as the relation of the states with each other. And secondly, alliances cannot be understood as monolithic blocks which align due to structural necessities and cannot realign. The same power dynamics that govern the international order as a whole, are in play within the alliance. The difference is that these power dynamics play out under the condition of a threat of a mutual enemy which brings some structure and predictability to the behavior of the ally.^{viii}

When it comes to the threat to security, proximity and aggressivity of neighbors are an important factor for states when deciding whether to align with other states. If a state is close to a hostile stronger state that poses a threat, it has two options: Ally with the rivals of said state or enter into an asymmetrical alliance with it. Which of these options it takes will be up to several factors: Both alliances will come at a cost and in both possible alliances the bargaining position of the threatened state is rather small. The first option might mean that the state - and more importantly the current ruler who decides which option should be taken - could maintain its independence as a result of victory in a defensive war. The constant threat of a repeated attack from its stronger neighbor would keep the state reliant on its allies. In case of an alliance with the threat, the state would surrender its independence without resistance.

The most general way to put the question of alliance theory is the following: Under which circumstance do states choose to align, de-align, or re-align? What is the relation between the constraints, opportunities, and preferences of a state when choosing to enter an alliance? Snyder emphasizes the fact that alliances are relationships between two or more nations. In his terms, relationships are the “situational context of behavior”^{ix} set between the structure and the action, a form of interaction that combines the structural effects that apply to two or more nations independently but also as a group with the actual behavior of these players. States have expectations of the alignment of other states, meaning that they can assess the threats and opportunities facing other states and can derive their preferred action. States know in which areas their interests converge with those of other states, in which areas they conflict, in which areas they are neutral and in which complementary. And they know

of their relative capacities to fulfill their interests. They also know if another state's capabilities are competing or complementary (e.g. martial vs. commercial, terrestrial vs. maritime). States can also understand the mutual interdependency and whether it is symmetrical or asymmetrical. This knowledge of the playing field and the players reduces the options for all players involved. The general fear for security is limited by the specific structural position of the players and the relation between these structural positions.

According to Snyder, this complex web of relationships of allies with each other as well as with third parties leads to a dichotomy of fears for the parties: When a state decides if and under which circumstances it should enter an alliance and whether it should maintain it a state is driven by the fear of abandonment and the fear of entrapment.

Cesa introduces a third aspect of alliance which has more explanatory value for the era in question: Alliance as a means of mutual control between the allies: Especially in the Early Modern era alliances were one of the very few established forms of international relations that existed between nations. In a world of uncertainty and lack of reliable information, an agreement that would render another player's action more predictable was very valuable. While the security motive leads to the most basic agreement of mutual assistance against a threat and the profit motive expands this by the dimension of long-term power accumulation the aim of achieving another state's conformity through alliance puts the emphasis on the relation between allies: A state wants to ally with another state in order to make its action more predictable. However, a state does not achieve the predictability of the action of the other state by the codification of that state's promises in a treaty but by the creation of interdependence by guaranteeing cooperation. The imposition of limits on the own freedom of action in an alliance treaty leads to the ally constraining its freedom of action so that it can count on the guaranteed limitation.

“In other words, the self-imposed limitations of one state's freedom entails constraints not only for that state but also for its ally, and alliance strategy consists in creation and exploitation of such constraints, whereby an ally is induced into moving in a certain foreseeable manner.”^x

A state can render another state's action more predictable by rendering its own action more predictable to that state and by stating a clear consequence for not acting according to this predictability. The guarantee of a degree of predictability from certain actors in a maximally unpredictable world – such as the state system of the 1500s – is in itself already a worthy prize.

“If power is understood to comprise the overall resources an actor possesses compared with those resources held by others, then the pursuit of conformity among states is the pursuit of power, regardless of whether such power is immediately used in order to obtain final values.”^{xi}

Power is a means to obtain the conformity of other states and conformity is a means to achieve more power. Alliances lead to a form of internal conformity among the allies which is built on cooperation between competitors. This internal conformity can then be used to enforce external conformity by conventional means of coercion or by other forms of treaties. What differentiates obtaining this form of internal conformity from other forms of application of power is open communication: States declare the intent of an alliance – be it defensive or offensive – and thereby mutually obstruct certain options, for instance, an alliance with a third state. There is also a degree of sharing of information: Knowing the specific capacities of your allies renders their actions more predictable which means the costs of breaking the alliance also become more visible.

It is important to note that this idea of conformity does not necessarily require the allies to trust each other. They only need to trust that the ally has an interest in mutual predictability, be it symmetrical or asymmetrical. Beyond that, a state has an interest in maintaining the reputation of being a good ally. But in general, the fear of loss of reputation alone does not hinder a state from betraying an alliance if doing so significantly furthers its interests. This holds all the more in the international system of the Early Modern states and their ever-changing alliances. A bad reputation might limit the choices in alternative alliances a state has but in such a multipolar setting there is always another alliance constellation that will not scorn an additional ally, as unreliable as he might be, if he contributes to the power of the alliance. However, be considered unreliable can in the long term become a liability for a state.

In alliance theory, trust and ideological convergence are often counted among the factors contributing to the cohesion of an alliance. Ideological convergence can be dismissed for the period in question: Even the most important ideological schism of the 16th century, Catholicism versus Protestantism, is not a stable basis for alliance. The French allied with the Muslim Ottomans and supported the German protestants in their rebellions in order to undermine the Catholic Emperor. And Protestant Imperial mercenaries will be responsible for the Sacco di Roma.^{xii} Any notions of Italian patriotism^{xiii} in the defense against the incursions of Ultramontane barbarians and for the liberation of Italy are at best paid lip service by the Italian states.

The concept of enforcing conformity brings with it a new perspective on power: As stated in classical realist theory power is the capacity of a state to muster its resources in order to achieve its interests. One important tool in this endeavor is the cooperation with other states. While this is the basis of power a state will not be able to achieve dominance by overwhelming other states with power based on resource control and application. Control over resources allows for freedom of movement while it allows to obstruct the freedom of movement of less powerful states. Thus, not only does one state bring more power to bear, but it can also prevent the weaker state from utilizing its own capacities to the fullest:

“Power thus lies in the margin of freedom each state enjoys; that is, in the possibility each state has of refusing what the other states ask for. Each ally tries to impose itself on the other as the only possible partner. While trying to reserve some alternative solutions, constrain the other party in order to satisfy its own need, and free itself from the other’s attempted constraints by systematically defending its own margin of freedom.”^{xiv}

This is the main argument of Cesa’s theory of alliances: Alliance is a form of cooperation among rivals. They have convergent interests, complementary interests, and conflicting interests. On the grounds of these common interests, they try to reconcile their conflicting interests. Most often the common interest is mutual assistance in the face of an external threat to security. If this common interest is strong enough it will heighten the readiness of the parties to temporarily forfeit some of their partial interest even when they are conflicting. In a general sense, the benefit of

entering an alliance is the increase in security and power at the cost of a decrease in autonomy. Internally the reciprocal containment of autonomy by the ally however increases the security of both parties.

Also, the states have various capacities to fulfill those interests in regard to third parties as well as within the alliance. These capacities can be symmetrical or asymmetrical and again they can be competitive or complementary. There is a bargaining process over the interests an alliance should try to achieve and what contributions each state has to make in order to achieve them. The transactional nature of alliances leads to interdependence between the parties. Beyond the dilemma described by Snyder which sees a state oscillate between a fear of entrapment and a fear of abandonment an ally faces a second dilemma concerning its ally: Since it depends to a degree on its ally for its security it fears the ally becoming too weak and since it does not want to become too dependent, even to a point where it is threatened by its own ally's strength, it fears the ally growing too strong. While the former dilemma is based on the presence of an external threat the second dilemma does not require it to be in effect.

These two dilemmas are in the background when alliances choose to negotiate an alliance. A third important factor is opportunity: The conditions for these dilemmas are constantly shifting. There are certain more constant factors regarding the strength or weakness of a nation, its desire to enter into an alliance, and the price it is willing to pay in order to ally. But the many unpredictable actions that play out in a multipolar world mean that opportunities to ally with one state open while others close. However, the conclusion of an alliance generally leads to counter-alliances: The enemies of your friend become your enemies (if they weren't already) and will ally with the states that are enemies to one or both of the new allies. This danger of counter-alignment means that the decision to ally and especially to maintain or abandon generally has to be weighed carefully. It is also a strong guarantee for committing to an alliance as there is no guarantee that the counter-alliance will dissolve once a state leaves the original alliance. Thus, abandoning an alliance incurs costs to the state's systemic standing as it has unified its enemies but given up the benefits of the alliance.^{xv}

From these dilemmas, Cesa derives a typology of alliances with two dimensions that define an alliance: Firstly, the power dynamic between the allies is either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Secondly, the interests of the allies are

homogenous or heterogeneous. If the interests are homogenous that means that converging interests are stronger than complementary or conflicting interests in the alliance, while a heterogeneous alliance is defined by a weak common interest. The combination along these two dimensions creates: A homogeneous symmetrical alliance is named the aggregation alliance; a homogeneous asymmetrical alliance is called a guarantee alliance; a heterogeneous symmetrical alliance is a deadlocked alliance; and the heterogeneous asymmetrical alliance is a hegemonic alliance. The logic of spiraling fear of entrapment and abandonment described by Snyder works differently for every alliance. The same holds for the dilemma regarding the strength of an ally.^{xvi}

The Italians of the Renaissance had already developed the concept of balance of power and were the inventors of modern state diplomacy. As will be discussed in later chapters this concept was rather underdeveloped in Northern Europe. Often even the Ultramontane states would employ Italians in their diplomatic service.^{xvii} It was however the Spanish who from the involvement in the Italian Wars derived that a diplomatic corps would be worth having. Political philosophers, historians, and statesmen such as Machiavelli and Guicciardini already discussed international politics and pondered the benefits and costs of forming one alliance and thereby forfeiting another. There was a quasi-scientific effort to understand the events unfolding at the time, to predict future outcomes, and to give sound counsel on foreign policy. This was in stark contrast to Northern Europe where a feudal mindset still counted very much on dynastic connections. The Italian preference for calculation also meant that the Italians did not necessarily blame others for choosing and switching their alliances solely on the grounds of expedience. There were certain formalities to be considered when switching sides, but then it wasn't considered dishonorable to do so.

Conclusion

In an international system where power is necessary to secure a state's survival, it will enter alliances. However, entering into an alliance does not mean that the complex and often problematic relations between two states simply are overridden by an agreement

to cooperate. Cooperation and competition constantly coexist. But this tension has the positive effect that alliances are not simply built on trust and the benefits of cooperation. The cost of betraying an alliance is high. While alliances are most commonly understood as a pooling of military resources, they can be more important in rendering the state system more predictable. An alliance with a state in another region can be instrumentalized to strengthen one's influence in that region. Thus, alliances can legitimize a state's foreign policy. The realist paradigm, which understands power as a necessary means to guarantee survival in the anarchical nature of the international system, only applies to a degree in the setting of the European state system of the Renaissance. Profit rather than security was the main reason for many states to enter alliances. While the two are not mutually exclusive it is telling that most alliances of the Italian Wars had an offensive purpose. The following chapters will attempt to describe how alliances of the time can only be understood in the context of Renaissance warfare and the Renaissance state system.

3. The Renaissance State

3.1 Elements of the State

This chapter and the following link the theories of international relations on the functions of alliance in the state system to the events of the Italian Wars. The theories of state-building and the formation of a state system are analyzed in the historical context of the Renaissance. As the Renaissance state is a broad topic, it is important to limit the analysis of the state to what is relevant to understanding its position in the state system, its strengths and weaknesses, and its interests and foreign policy priorities. The main hypothesis is that the Renaissance state is defined by its transitional nature: Its modern elements lead to an interest-driven foreign policy that assesses the balance or imbalance of means and possible gains and losses. Its medieval elements mean that it leads modern wars with a mindset that is still driven by notions of chivalry and personal glory. By chance, the elements chosen to represent this transitional nature correspond to the theories of international relation on the nature of the state: The section on rationalism corresponds to the liberal notion of state, the section on dynasty to constructivist theories, and the section on war to the structural realist idea that states are mainly formed by the system. These analytical perspectives will then be applied to the various states involved in the Italian Wars.

3.1.1 Rationality

A common theory of the Renaissance state explains it as the product of a process of rationalization that begins with economic modernization and culminates in calculating statecraft. Material developments lead to an increased need for rational decision-making and in time rational decision-making becomes the dominant way of organizing various aspects of society.

Economically, the warm period which started in the 11th century and various technological discoveries led to higher productivity in agriculture and therefore a growth in population. This increase in agricultural output and population made highly urbanized areas possible as many peasants sought a better life and more liberties in the

cities. The process of urbanization meant that a smaller segment of society had to work in subsistence economy which allowed for a higher degree of division of labor.

The two areas most affected by these changes were the Low Countries and Northern Italy. At the turn of the 15th century, they were the wealthiest regions in Europe. One consequence of the production of more complex goods and more complex supply chains was the establishment of a great web of trade routes. The most important trade routes went to the Levant, and they were dominated by the Italian maritime states.^{xviii} Another consequence was the increased monetization and the invention of a banking system. Merchants and bankers thrived when there was stability and peace so the state should serve to facilitate them.¹

The economic modernization brought with it a socio-economic shift which after a while had political consequences. In various cities there was a shift of power resulting from the surge in economic and commercial activity: The merchants who were often richer than the old aristocracy demanded more political influence. Later the artisan guilds also fought for more say in the matters of the city's government. The combination of increased labor division and increased commercial activity is what is considered the beginning of Early Modern capitalism.^{xix} And this new form of economic organization was to a great degree responsible for the centralization of the state.

The changes in the forms of economic activities necessitated new forms of governance and these necessities made those states that adapted their government to the developments in the economy successful. These states would then come to dominate other states and in effect, the states would compete for more efficient government. It also led to a new sense of territoriality among the city-states as one of the main tasks of the Italian Renaissance state would be securing raw materials at a good price and the best price could be had in a controlled territory.

The 14th and 15th centuries saw a revival of various ideas of Greek and Roman antiquity. Especially relevant for the Renaissance state was the rediscovery of Roman legalism and the political ideas of the Greeks. Also, while Humanism was not an intellectual movement in contrast to the church it did establish the possibility for philosophical contemplation of secular matters. One product of the changes in legal

¹ Compare Images E and F

and political thought was the creation of oligarchic republics. In contrast to the obedient Medieval man the Renaissance man was constantly calculating and possessed an entrepreneurial spirit. The increased use of rational thought in the area of statecraft was a consequence of economic rationalization.^{xx}

Connected to the issues of dynasty: As the great ruling houses sought to increase their power through centralization they worked closely with the urban centers in their domain. Through their alliance with the burghers of the cities and the reliance on their taxes in exchange for the upholding of privileges and protection from provincial feudal lords, the monarchs empowered themselves and simultaneously weakened their most important rivals. Social mobility led to competition for the offices of state and meant that the nobles could not solely rely on their class privileges in order to remain influential.^{xxi}

The above analysis is a popular liberal enlightened view of the state as a product of the rebirth from the darkness of the Middle Ages. It is a narrative shared by many historians even though the idea of the Dark Ages has been relativized. It is also the analysis that is most in line with the state as it is understood in the realist school of international theory: An interest-driven entity. From this, a process can be derived where the competing interests of various entities create an environment of competitiveness which in turn sharpens the process of rationalization. In this narrative, the Renaissance state is one of the first steps in the progressing rationalization of the modern state.^{xxii}

Burckhardt tells the same story but from a negative point of view which will become relevant when considering the dynastic aspects both of the Renaissance state and the Renaissance state system. It is also interesting to compare this twist on the usual narrative to the role condottiere played in Renaissance Italy especially. Burckhardt views the question from the perspective of cultural history: The rationality of the Renaissance man was born out of a lack of legitimacy of these new men – guild masters, merchants, bankers, and mercenary leaders - in the eyes of the fading Medieval order. He later argues that the Renaissance philosophy and arts had an important cultural role to play in creating a new form of legitimacy. But for the matter at hand, the relationship between legitimacy and rationality is of importance. Only when in the absence of legitimate rule did the tyrant need to rely on rational calculation. The monopoly of coercive power which is a key element of the modern

state was the result of the increase in tyranny. According to Burckhardt, Frederick II von Hohenstaufen was the first modern man on the throne, not because of his humanist ideals but because he established an efficient tyranny in Sicily. In Northern Italy, the smaller states attempted to emulate this tyranny. The state as an instrument for the powerful to accumulate power could only exist where the existing feudal structure left a vacuum. This is the reason why economic modernization had a very different impact on the Low Countries than in Italy: In Italy, the power struggle between the Emperor and the Pope had weakened both to the point that they could merely prevent the other or any third state within Italy from bringing the region under a hegemony. The Low Countries had a complex relation to the relatively modern feudalism of the Duchy of Burgundy. The lack of legitimacy of rulers in Italy meant that the ruler had little room to infuriate his populace. Therefore, instead of increasing taxes in order to finance the state he had to implement policies that would lead to an overall growth in wealth.^{xxiii}

This idea of the rationality of tyranny is also in line with the fact that none of the Italian states of the High Renaissance were truly republican in any sense of the word: Florence and other Tuscan states were Republics in name but often ruled by lifetime “first-citizens” from the same political dynasty. All of these oligarchies had a high level of secrecy and political intrigue in common and there was no real public debate. The epitome of secrecy is given in the Venetian state. Machiavelli’s idea of the state and power politics was also built on the assumption that a prince who could not rely on the legitimacy of his rule needed to rule more wisely than a ruler whose family had reigned a state for a long time.^{xxiv} Real temporal power “naked and free” was built on the “power to force” which had to be earned and jealously defended and not on a notion of a divinely ordained order of rulers and subjects.^{xxv}

3.1.2 Dynasty

In this segment, the argument is that dynasticism as an element of the Renaissance state worked as an element that in many ways was a counterweight to the increased use of rational thought in statecraft. In the context discussed here, dynasticism means all forms of organization around a greater family. The most prevalent form of dynasties was the noble families which dominated feudal Europe. Since members of the third

estate also became influential politically in the Late Middle Ages it makes sense to include their families under the term “political dynasty”. It describes different forms of authoritarian rule by a single person. If rationalism brought with it structural predictability, then dynasticism made many actions in the Italian War arbitrary and sometimes altogether erratic.

Dynasties were important in every state of the Early Modern Era even if it applied to varying degrees in different states. They were the principal form of government in feudalism. While the use of rationality in governance is what differentiates the Renaissance state from the Medieval state, the significance of dynasties and the specific form they took on around the 1500s is what ties the Renaissance state very closely to the Middle Ages. It shows the transitional nature of the Renaissance state very clearly. Dynasticism would remain dominant until at least the French Revolution, but by that time the court and administration had a much greater power than in the Renaissance state. The reason of the state would come to outweigh the will of the monarch in the centuries following the Renaissance. The important element that dynasticism and monarchy brought to the Renaissance state is personal rule and the arbitrary nature of that rule. The monarch made his will known and the servants of the state would have to make it happen.

Monarchy had undergone its own developments throughout the Middle Ages. One of the most important developments within the dynastic principle throughout the later Middle Ages was the implementation of Primogeniture as the dominant inheritance law. Since dynastic domains no longer fractured upon the death of a ruler they could be consolidated. The royal courts of Northern Europe were still wandering courts but there was also a clear seat of power. However, the actual presence of a monarch was still crucial for many aspects of his exertion of power. The feudal structures of France, England, and Spain had undergone a process of accumulation of the territory by the crown. The most important competitors of the ruling house were no longer other aristocratic houses but bastard branches of their own house especially in France and England.^{xxvi} Two bloody civil wars were fought out in England between rival claimants to the crown. In France, almost all-important duchies were under the rule of a house minor of the Valois. Most importantly the branch of the Duchy of Burgundy, the de Bourgogne, would create their own independent state.^{xxvii}

The positive contribution of monarchy to the functioning of the Early Modern state should not be underestimated. Since there were no political institutions, the monarchy was the fundamental means of maintaining unity. Dynasticism adapted to the modernization of the economy and the rationalization of the state. And this process of the establishment of the new state was closely tied to dynastic rule.^{xxviii} While their rule was near absolute the kings relied on the resources of the new men to build their power and therefore did try to align their actions with the interests of this new social class.^{xxix} On the other hand, some monarchs were not interested in economics and administration or even thought it to be beneath them, such as Charles VIII.^{xxx} Others, most notably Louis XII, were keen on making his kingdom more powerful by increasing its economics and administrative efficiency. In contrast to his predecessor, he was financially very astute. The monarchs relied on the new men as a basis for their power. To a degree, this dependency created limits for his powers while at the same time, it reduced the dependency of the monarch on the high aristocracy.^{xxxi} This process would eventually culminate in 17th century absolutism. The monarchy of the late 15th and 16th century is interesting for the importance of the person of the king and his decision. The conflict of interests of the various social classes, old and new, allowed the king to play them off each other and to demand they prove their merit.^{xxxii} In Medieval feudalism, the king had been highly dependent on the high aristocracy reducing him to the figurehead of an aristocratic council. In absolutism, the king would be omnipotent but at the same time, he would be highly constrained by the rituals of the court and the necessities of the state. This shows in the fact that the chief ministers of the later monarchs were often more important than the monarchs themselves (Olivarez, Mazarin, Richelieu). Monarchs were reduced to symbols of the central power of the state. This central role of a ritualized court was already in the makings in France at the end of the 15th century, but it was the Spanish court where the king was first reduced to a civil servant (Phillip II) and then to a figurehead. This is not to say that the later monarchs had no real political power, but the logic of court and state restrained their actions severely. The monarchs of the Renaissance era reigned in what can be termed a form of absolute feudalism: The will of the monarch was the will of the state - and not the other way around. Because of this, the monarchy can be considered the contrary principle to the principle of rationality. Personal rule was what

gave the state its ultimate direction, not matters of the state. The principles were both complementary and interdependent.

This arbitrary and at times erratic nature of late Medieval and Renaissance monarchy is very important for the history of the Italian Wars. As members of the aristocratic class, monarchs were instilled with a martial ethos as well as notions of personal honor and chivalry. This was combined with the first instance of knightly romanticism: Maximilian I was stylized as “the last knight” and Henri I died in a joust. The idea of the crusade came into fashion again and the struggle against the infidel Turks and the reconquest were often used to legitimize certain foreign policy actions, sometimes in all sincerity and at other times as mere justification in order to screen less pious behavior. Above all the king was the supreme commander of the army and the protector of his people from outside threats. A personal slight to the monarch could have a grave impact on foreign policy and in some cases lead to war. For the monarch of the Renaissance, it was important politically to fulfill this chief function and prove his prowess in war. This was however a task that most monarchs fulfilled gladly as they were driven by the idea of achieving personal glory.^{xxxiii}

This combination of function and cultural preference gives the age of heroic monarchs such as Charles the Bold, Maximilian I, Charles VIII, Francis I, and Cesare Borgia. The chivalric values were especially impressive to monarchs who ruled from a very young age: Both Charles VIII and Francis I started to rule their country as soon as they had reached adulthood. Both had read the chivalric novel of the time and were inspired by the knights of old.^{xxxiv} Maximilian is more difficult to assess in this regard: He had been a frontline commander in his early years and in many of his actions his goals were far beyond his reach. On the other hand, his dynastic politics laid the foundation of the greatest empire of the century, and he made great efforts to make the political and administrative structure of the Holy Roman Empire more efficient.^{xxxv} The consequences of the personal command of these all-powerful warrior princes, and its erratic nature, will be discussed at length in a later chapter.

The Ultramontane states functioned as pure hereditary principalities and thus the rulers were not required to defend the power in the same way the new men in the so-called mixed principalities had to.^{xxxvi} Thus the dynastic principle of the traditional hereditary states allowed for a behavior of the rulers that was less driven by a strict sense of interest and by the necessities of power politics.

Another structurally irrational aspect of the dynastic nature of the Early Modern state was the importance of the death of one person to the state and state system. Charles VIII died in his early 20s after hitting his head against the lintel of a door thereby changing the foreign policy outlook of France radically. The same can be said about the death of Isabella of Spain, Philip of Burgundy, Ferdinand of Aragon and many other rulers.

3.1.3 Warfare

In many regards, warfare had seen the greatest change from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. And again, the Italian Wars would serve as a catalyst to further developments in warfare. Then again it is also important to understand to which degree Renaissance warfare was similar to Medieval warfare. The processes of rationalization within the modern state made international relations easier to calculate while the strength of dynasticism meant that many actions were much more erratic than they would be in later centuries. For warfare the situation is more complex: Some of the developments in warfare made actions and outcomes more predictable and some made them less so. While the economic pressures were positive internal forces that required the creation of the modern state, the necessities of warfare were the negative external pressures which meant that only a strong, centralized state was able to survive in the state system that was establishing itself.

Medieval Europe saw very few major wars and apart from the Hundred Years War, the major wars that did occur were fought against infidels. This does not mean that Europe at that time was peaceful, but the difference between peace and war cannot be drawn as distinctly for that time as it could in the Modern era.^{xxxvii} Feudal warfare mostly consisted of sieges, skirmishes, and raids. Most military actions were part of feuds, and they were fought between two minor knights. Sometimes it was a question of honor, at other times it was a squabble over the taxation rights of a village or monastery. Pitched battles were not as common as they would be in the Italian Wars.^{xxxviii} The major wars that did occur led to a state that was capable of maintaining its fighting capabilities and that fought the war in such a manner as to increase its capabilities and decrease those of the enemies. The Teutonic Order in Prussia built

such a state and so did Spain during the Reconquista, while both France and England were forced to build an ever more efficient state due to the necessities of their war. This war brought about the implementation of the Chevauchee, a raid with the intention of depriving the enemy of his fighting capacity in the long run.

Heavy cavalry was the dominant force on the Medieval battlefield. The main organization structure was feudal levy which was the core responsibility of vassals in the feudal system. But by the fifteenth century, the so-called infantry revolution was taking place. This was a consequence of social, economic, and political factors some of which were touched upon above. The population boom, the increase in productivity, and the subsequent new forms of political organization meant that urban centers could field armies that were able to beat the knights on various occasions.^{xxxix} Early examples are the Battle of Bannockburn and the Battle of the Golden Spurs. The great English victories of the Hundred Years War (Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt) are also part of this development. The most significant event of this infantry revolution was however the Burgundian Wars where Swiss *Gewalthaufen* repeatedly routed the Burgundian ducal army, which was the best post-feudal army of the time.

This development in turn diminished the threat that the aristocracy posed to the burghers. It also meant that the monarchs were less dependent on the aristocracy to muster their armies. They could now deploy armies of much greater size since the manpower pool had grown significantly. These soldiers were however not fighting because it was their feudal duty but for pay. In order to pay the soldiers wages and the equipment of a modern army the state had to create an increasingly efficient administration. Classical feudal armies also relied on the commitment of the vassals for the cohesion of an army which meant that campaigns usually had a short reach and a short duration. The armies of the Early Modern state were less reliant on the goodwill of the most powerful nobles and could be sent on far-reaching expeditions. Mercenary service would remain relevant until the end of the 17th century and already during the Italian Wars, it gave rise to professional soldiery.^{xl} The standing armies that would evolve from this would require an even more centralized state and would in turn make the crown even less dependent on the military service of the nobles.^{xli}

Tactically the changes in the composition of armies as well as the new technologies led to new developments: The battles of the feudal armies were fought predominantly between heavily armored nobles and their retinue. As it was their

martial ethos these knights competed for the honor of being the very first in an all-out charge. The fights between the knights of both sides usually decided a battle and the peasant levies often didn't even see battle. Chivalry and a sense of self-preservation demanded that there be a code of conduct on the battlefield that revolved around the taking of hostages.^{xlii} This means that the casualty rates of many Medieval battles were very low compared with the battles of the Italian Wars. In the occasions where the non-aristocratic armies beat the heavily armored knights, they did not adhere to this code of conduct. Warfare had become much more brutal and destructive.^{xliii}

In broad terms, the evolution in tactics begins with the heavy cavalry and goes towards the pike blocks famously deployed by the Swiss. These two tactical units had one thing in common: Their main tactical mode of operation was the all-out charge. For much of the early Italian Wars, the French would see great success by using these two formations side by side. This tactic, if it can even be called that, still resembled the Medieval art of war except for the reliance on disciplined professional infantry.^{xliv} The Landsknechts, an invention of Maximilian copying much from Swiss successes were predominantly recruited from the urbanized regions of South-Western Germany but were not as effective as the original in breaking the enemy through a mass charge. But in contrast to the Swiss, they did not consider the use of firearms dishonorable. The deployment of Arquebusiers was then subsequently perfected by the Spanish Tercios which would come to dominate the battlefields of Europe in the 16th and early 17th century. The "bad war" between the pike formations on both sides led to extremely high death rates especially when increasingly effective firearms came into use.^{xlv} The combination of cavalry, infantry, and field artillery would later require a very different approach to military tactics than that employed at the beginning of the Italian Wars. In the early stages of the Italian Wars, the tactical battlefield developments favored decisive and aggressive behavior.

The most radical change however came about with the use of siege artillery. All wars prior to the Italian Wars eventually were centered on the siege of fortified positions. These sieges could last for several months and were usually decided by the surrender of the besieged due to impending starvation. Most battles that did occur at the time were fought when an army was mustered to relieve a besieged fortification. This meant that Medieval warfare often dragged out and eventually devolved into raids and counterraids.^{xlvi} It also meant that a noble who held a strong fortified position with

50 men could exert power far beyond his economic capacity. Here too the technological innovations reversed this situation: Only an economically strong actor, such as a state could purchase, maintain, and deploy artillery.^{xlvii} When deployed artillery rendered Medieval fortifications useless. As the Bastion fortress would only be invented in the course of the Italian Wars, artillery was the principal reason why the early stages of the Italian wars were very favorable to the aggressor.^{xlviii}

The consequence of these developments in warfare was that the feudal army was outdated, and the Early Modern army was very expensive. Most states fielded a mixture of the two military systems and the knights and men-at-arms would fight in the modern armies as it was their duty as a vassal. However, fielding an effective army was so costly that most states and princes of the time were not able to maintain a standing army. The increase in the cost of the military rapidly outpaced the increase in wealth creation and efficiency of administration. Of the combatants in the Italian Wars, France and Spain were the only states that could maintain a core standing army.^{xlix}

Mercenaries played a crucial role in this process of modernization of the military. These soldiers of fortune were always driven by interest rather than honor or social obligations in their approach to warfare. They had complemented the feudal armies throughout the Middle Ages fielding professional infantry and archers to states that did not train these types of units. But in the 15th century, the mercenaries grew more and more important because of the necessities of Modern warfare and the expertise they required.¹

After their success against the Habsburgs and the Burgundians in the 14th and 15th centuries the Swiss were the most sought-after mercenaries in Europe. The cantons of the Old Swiss Confederacy made a state-run enterprise out of Swiss mercenaries. This business was important in the creation of a Swiss state out of the various alliances that initially formed the Confederacy. It ultimately led the Confederacy to partake in the Italian Wars as a state actor rather than as a military contractor.

A similar process but on a larger scale happened in Italy: The merchant republics and rich city-states were not keen on maintaining armies in peacetime and so the mercenary business was very profitable there. Feudal structures were the weakest in Italy but there were still knights and men-at-arms. But they often entered into a *Condotta* with the governments of the states. These Condottieri would soon accrue power in Italy beyond their command of a mercenary army by receiving land

in return for their service or by outright conquest. This land grab by mercenaries is the simplest example of the creation of the state by the dynamics of warfare. Condottiere warfare was however very different from the warfare that the Ultramontane mercenaries brought to Italy. For the Condottiere as a businessman, the preservation of manpower was an important consideration. The military strategy of the city-states often revolved around minor gains as they did not want to overstretch their resources and become vulnerable to intervention by a further Italian power.^{li} For this reason, warfare had been generally limited in Renaissance Italy. In the long run, this led to an almost ritualized form of warfare, where the better tactical positioning of one of the Condottiere armies made both sides agree on the victor before much blood had been spilled. The destructive forms of war that the French and Swiss brought with them were a shock to the Italians.^{lii} The martial prowess of the Italians was not held in great esteem by the Ultramontane nations.^{liii}

For all states involved it can be said that the centralization of the state and changes in military technology made a new form of warfare possible. This war favored aggressive behavior and allowed for sweeping campaigns. On the other hand, the military expenses quickly outgrew the capabilities of these states economically and above all administratively. Therefore, glorious conquest was usually followed by failure and often unwillingness to make use of a victory in the long term.^{liv}

Conclusion

The Renaissance state evolved from the medieval principality as the rise of the burgher class and its economic mindset brought with it a rational approach to statecraft. This process was accelerated in regions where the old concepts of feudal legitimacy were weak, and the rulers had to make up for their lack of legitimacy through power politics and clever policy. The fact that the foreign policy of the Renaissance state was driven by interest to a certain degree is what made it modern. Despite all of these developments, the Renaissance state still largely followed the logic of dynasticism which brought with it an element of irrationality: The character, decisions, and biographies of the hereditary leaders made the actions of states highly unpredictable. Warfare changed radically and so the state had to change with it. Besides the

socioeconomic pressures, war was the most important factor in forming the modern state. The aggressive nature of Renaissance warfare made it very difficult to predict outcomes but on the other hand, the immense cost of this new war made the actions of states predictable.

3.2 The Italian States

The major Italian states were all centered around a major city which gave the state its name. Italy had always been highly populated and highly urbanized and the technological developments in agriculture only expedited their growth more. Out of the ten largest cities in Europe, five were in Italy. Particularly Naples, Milan, and Venice, were the metropolises of their time only being outshined by Paris.

Economically the region was the wealthiest in Europe with only the Low Countries as close competitors. The Italian city-states grew wealthy from trade with the Levante. The Genoese and Venetians therefore took a very active role in opening up the markets of the Middle East through the crusades. They built colonies and outposts along the major trading routes leading from the Levante to their capitals. Of the maritime trading empires only Venice survived into the late 15th century. It had defeated its Genoese competitors in a brutal war a century earlier and the Republic of Pisa had come under Florentine rule at the beginning of the century.

Italy had become especially wealthy through the production of wool, the manufacture of textiles, and the trade with these textiles. Florence was the capital of this wool production. In this area, however, the Italian cities were in tight competition with the Flemish and English wool production and manufacture of textiles.

The high level of urbanization meant that feudalism did never take hold as it did on the other side of the Alps. The nobles moved to the cities and became urban patricians. Much earlier than in other regions the merchants and guilds masters wrestled political control from the nobles. This led to the classical age of the Italian commune. The commune was however a Medieval phenomenon as in the Renaissance political dynasties had consolidated power in the hands of the few once again. The political structures had been too weak to prevent constant strife between the various factions. Under these circumstances, the strongest political families took over the rule of the city. Usually, the old communal institutions were kept alive and even adapted to the rediscovered republican ideals of the humanists. But political power shifts first to more secretive institutions and finally officially to the *Signoria*, a council of the most important guilds, dominated by a political dynasty. This dynasty either held the highest office, *Gonfaloniere*, or controlled whoever held it, in order to maintain the republican appearance. In the Florentine state, the transition from the Medieval commune to the

Renaissance state with central authority can be seen at its purest: Politics as a negotiation between the most influential stakeholders in the state rather than a democratic public discourse.^{lv}

In Florence this process can be seen at its purest: The Medici, a family of wool merchants, get into the banking business. They became the Pope's bankers and established the greatest banking network in Europe. Their wealth gave them considerable influence in the city which they used to directly, through political office, or indirectly, through incentives and bribes, steer the fate of the city. In many respects, Medici Florence is considered the birthplace of the Renaissance, and this shows in the political ideals that were important to its citizens. In few other great cities in Italy was factional strife so prevalent and the weaker factions could always abuse the political ideals and decry the ruling house as tyrannical. This republicanism took its most destructive form in the radical social position of the friar Savonarola. The Medici tried to legitimize their de-facto rule of the city in various ways – among them the patronage of philosophy and the arts - but in the end more than in any other of the major states, the fortunes of the family were tied to the shrewdness of its head of family. The Medici as well as Florence flourished under Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici. They were able to reconcile the interests of their main rivals and unite the various factions under their light-handed rule. But factional tensions never went away and so Florence was very fragile in its foreign policy.^{lvi} Machiavelli's most urgent advice for the Florentine state concerned the creation of a citizen militia.^{lvii} The Tuscan nobles had been marginalized to such a degree that they could not contribute to the state's defense. The commercially minded Republic wanted to keep military costs as low as possible and therefore only hired Condottiere when it was absolutely necessary. Florence was not predominantly a trading republic, but its economy flourished in peacetime. For this reason, the Florentines were most inclined to establish an order that maintained peace and stability in the region. Florentine factionalism, the weak institutional position of the ruling house, and a weak military tradition meant that Florence was a minor player during the Italian Wars.^{lviii}

Venice was the dominant maritime merchant republic. It mainly traded in luxury products coming from the Levante. The history of the Most Serene Republic

could be said to run parallel to the history of feudal Europe. The expansion of their maritime empire had always been guided by what was expedient and the logic of landed aristocrats was never important. The politics of the city was dominated by the wealthy merchant families and the state had two functions: Maintain stability in the city of Venice and expand the Venetian trade power in the Eastern Mediterranean. In contrast to most states in Europe, the republic was designed in such a way that it could effectively serve the common interest of the oligarchs. This allowed for the completion of great projects such as the Great Arsenal of Venice and the maintenance of the strongest navy in the Mediterranean. The institutions of the state were rigid and had a complex system of checks and balances. The most power was held by the secretive “Council of Ten” and the Doge was mostly a head of state with symbolic powers.^{lix} While the internal politics of Venice were riddled with brutal factional infighting between the powerful families, the institutions of Venice never allowed for the instrumentalization of this factionalism by outside powers. The political culture and institutions of Venice were very effective in maintaining an equilibrium, which is the reason why individuals never played a great role in the Venetian story of the Italian Wars.^{lx}

Venetian foreign policy was driven by calculated interest more so than that of any other state participating in the Italian Wars and it had been so traditionally: The shrewd calculations of the Venetians went so far that they were able to redirect an entire crusade in their interest. As the Crusaders wanted to buy their ships but had no money they would have to assist the Venetians in their age-old rivalry against the Byzantine Empire. The crusade went on to take several cities inhabited by fellow Christians and would culminate in the sack of Constantinople. As Byzantine Constantinople would never really recover from this ravaging, the Venetians dominated the Eastern Mediterranean alongside the Genoese. This Venetian success would eventually backfire, as the Ottomans would take the place of the Byzantines and be a more formidable foe. Among the major Italian states of the time the Venetians had the strongest martial tradition. They maintained constant *Condotte*, which therefore didn't have the same systemic problems mercenary companies of other city-states had. They were the standing army of the Republic which was supplemented by men-at-arms and other traditional military units from the cities of the Terraferma. The Venetian military already had experience defending their holdings in the Mediterranean against

non-Italian enemies.^{lxi} The social fabric of Venice, its economic strength, and the political stability of its institutions as well as the strategic position of the city of Venice and its maritime dominance allowed for a rational and sovereign foreign policy. The Venetians prided themselves on calculating risks and benefits very accurately, especially when compared with the barbarians from the north.^{lxii}

Milan was the second great Northern Italian metropolis. It dominated the other cities in the fertile Po valley. While in Florence extraordinary developments and the fortunes of one family were responsible to a great degree for the prospering of the city, the economy of Milan is a more classical example of the exponential expansion of wealth in highly urbanized Northern Italy. Lombardy was the industrial heartland of Europe.^{lxiii} Milan had been the leader of the Italian communes in their struggles against the German emperors. For this reason, it was dominated by the Guelph faction for the greater part of its existence as a Medieval commune. Just as in many other Italian city-states, the leading political dynasties centralized the power in the institution of the *Signoria*. In one of the civil wars of the 13th century, the Visconti dynasty was able to seize political control over the city and establish the title of Lord of Milan.^{lxiv} The Visconti were Ghibbelines and would seek imperial protection against their political enemies in Milan as well as in the many communes dominated by Milan which still held Guelph sympathies. Under Gian Galeazzo Visconti they would obtain the title of Duke of Milan. As Milan was a wealthy metropolis, it was crucial for the dukes to gain the support of the wealthy citizens of the town which meant that these citizens were integrated into the political processes of the city. Ultimately it was ruled as a monarchy that owed its legitimacy not to the local aristocracy and local customs but to Imperial patronage. After the death of the last male of the Visconti, the Ambrosian Republic was proclaimed in a bid to restore republican institutions to the commune. In the struggles that ensued due to the fragility of the young republic a *Condottiere* of the Sforza family, seized power and would eventually legitimize his military dictatorship by buying the ducal title from the emperor.^{lxv}

In Milan, the conflict between the social fabric and the political institutions was the most problematic out of all Italian city-states. The Sforza dukes would have to strengthen their power base through expansionism. The fortunes of the Sforza dukes were very closely linked to the fortunes of their town: In peacetime, they could

maintain their power by playing out the various factions against each other. They could accumulate a vast familial fortune from taxation and protection money. And they used this wealth to pay bribes and reward their clients. Sforza rule was mainly based on this money and the control of the fortresses of Milan and other key cities in the duchy. Their internal instability was also a strong factor for the Milanese drive towards military expansionism. Under threat, the socio-economic tensions and factional strife would leave the Sforza in a very weak position. This was even aggravated when the members of the Sforza dynasties turned on each other in an attempt to seize the ducal crown. Of the major Italian states, Milan most clearly represents the problematic combination of the new Renaissance meritocracy and rationality and the old dynastic principle. The Sforza were the embodiment of the idea that might makes right. The weak position of the Sforza meant that they would need to rely on the support from other monarchies, Italian and Ultramontane, to secure their rule. Militarily Milan could rely on the rural and urban lower aristocracy to field men-at-arms. The main body of the Milanese army however was also mercenary. Citizen militias were considered a problematic challenge to ducal rule. The duke was the commander-in-chief, but he delegated command to hired *Condottiere*. Under the rule of the later Sforza, the army fell into disrepair as finances were diverted to a lavish courtly lifestyle.^{lxvi}

The Papal States were the most special case among the Italian states. Firstly, there was a division between the spiritual and the temporal powers of the pope. As the head of the church, the pope held influence throughout Europe and his influence was especially strong in Italy. The strongest foreign policy tool of the pope was the excommunication of a leader or an entire populace. This undermined the authority of any government immensely. After the return from exile in Avignon, the papacy did change in nature and put a stronger emphasis on the powers of state and military. Secondly, the territories of the state were highly diverse.

The glory of the city of Rome had long passed but it was still a major city in terms of Renaissance urban population. Thus, urban factional politics between the patrician houses governed the city just as elsewhere, but of course with the great difference that the head of the Christian faith was the city's overlord. Bishops had been the heads of many of the cities that had grown since the Early Middle Ages. They had been successively given in to share power, first with the patricians and rural nobility,

then with merchants and guild masters. The popes were involved in constant political struggle with the baron of Lazio and the noble families of Rome for control of the city.^{lxvii} Throughout the Middle Ages theocracies had been responsible for economic growth in the regions they governed, often in contrast to the arbitrary nature of aristocratic rule. They fostered learning and maintained high legal standards. The successors of Peter were no different in this respect. The fact that succession was not based on dynastic inheritance but on meritocracy to a certain extent meant that idealiter the holy men understood themselves as first servants of the state they governed. It is important to understand Medieval theocracy as a counterweight to feudal rule. In the monasteries and dioceses, a precursor to the rationality that blossomed in the urban environment in the Late Middle Ages and in the Renaissance already existed.^{lxviii} This should however not be exaggerated either; the church formed an integral part of the feudal system. While Rome still profited from the same types of economic developments that took place in the North, much of the wealth of Rome was based on the presence of the Vatican and the flow of money and pilgrims coming from all over Europe. To the east of Lazio lay the rugged regions in the Apennine mountains where small cities and local aristocracy flourished. And in the Emilia and Romagna lay a patchwork of communes and petty principalities. Papal power in this highly urbanized region varied from pope to pope. The city of Bologna for instance had a similar population size to Rome and had a long history of independence from the pope under the Bentivoglio rule.² Under the protection of nominal papal rule, the fractured state of affairs of Medieval Italy was preserved.^{lxix} The strengthening of the papal control over a temporal state as well as the modernization of that state increased the influence of the pope in Italy. However it also undermined his ecclesiastical authority as he was involved increasingly in matters of state domestically and abroad.^{lxx}

The Kingdom of Naples under Aragonese rule was the classic late-feudal kingdom. The kings ruled from the urban centers in Naples, Capua, and Palermo, and granted counties and duchies to their vassals in return for their service in times of war. Naples was the largest city in all of Italy and a center of trade with the Levante. Urban administration was closely tied to the royal court and was defined by a compromise

² Compare Image I, p. 117

between urban elites and the monarchy on a form of independence of the cities. These cities would be the main source of income for the kings.^{lxxi} Due to the presence of the Byzantines and the Muslims, the rich agriculture, and the central trading location the Southern Italian kingdom had already been wealthy and progressive in many respects in the Middle Ages. These cultural influences meant that the court and administration of the kingdom were more efficient, and power was centralized earlier than in any other Western European monarchy.^{lxxii} This centralization process functioned more similarly to that of the Ultramontane realms than to that of the Italian neighbors. The wealthy urban elites had to compete with a strong aristocracy for political influence at the royal court. The power of the nobility meant that the burghers played a clearly subordinate role in deciding foreign policy and so it functioned more along the line of dynastic logic than pure economic and strategic interests.^{lxxiii} The division between Angevin loyalists and Aragonese partisans among the aristocracy was a factor that weakened the kingdom internally, as outside powers could instrumentalize this factionalism. After a revolt led by nobles loyal to the previously ruling D'Anjou king Ferrante retaliated harshly. Royal power in Naples was enforced through draconic measures but at the same time, Naples was a center of the Renaissance during the reign of the Trastamara. In contrast to Milan, in the case of Naples, it was not internal instability that opened it to conquest but its position in the state system. After a revolt led by nobles loyal to the previously ruling D'Anjou king Ferrante retaliated harshly. Royal power in Naples was enforced through draconic measures but at the same time, Naples was a center of the Renaissance during the reign of the Trastamara. Their rule was brutal but not irrational. During the decades preceding the Italian Wars, the Neapolitan kings were very active in Italian politics.^{lxxiv} Naples was always threatened by the Ottomans on the other side of the Strait of Otranto and was therefore in a state of alertness. The late feudal army of the kings of Naples was most formidable and all the rulers of the Neapolitan Trastamara were considered capable commanders. The Neapolitan military was however no match for the forces of the Kingdom of France. The geography of the kingdom meant that it had little strategic depth against invasions from the north as the cities of Capua and Naples lay open. However, the rugged terrain of the rest of the kingdom required naval dominance as well as the support of the landed aristocracy to be occupied in the long term. Especially the island of Sicily

served as a base of operations for the power with the stronger navy which was at the time clearly in the hands of the Spanish monarchies.^{lxxv}

3.3 The Ultramontane States

The Ultramontane states were monarchies that had undergone a long process of centralization of power in the person of the king. As the late-feudal structures are too complex for the scope of this thesis and the forms of Early Modern statehood too diverse between the various states, the following will focus on these states only insofar they are active in the Italian Wars. The fundamental dynamic of the Ultramontane states is the oscillation between the expansion of royal or imperial authority and its retreat due to overextension.^{lxxvi} Since much of what has been written about the dynastic element of the Early Modern state applies to the Ultramontane states the analysis will limit itself to the rulers and their motives and action in the events leading up to the Leagues and the events of the Leagues themselves.

3.3.1 France – The Warrior Kings

Charles VIII.

The Italian Wars began in 1494 when the young French king Charles VIII launched a campaign to conquer the Kingdom of Naples. He had inherited his claim to the kingdom of Naples from the D'Anjou family alongside the vast holdings this ancient aristocratic family had possessed in France.

With the inheritance of the County of Provence and other D'Anjou titles, the French monarchy made a great step in the process of centralization of power which had begun with Phillip the Fair more than 200 years ago. The French kings had successfully reconquered the English lands in France, and they had extended their personal domain, strengthened the central authority and administration in Paris, weakening the powerful French noble houses in the process. In the early reign of Charles VIII, two issues remained concerning the claims of the French monarchy in France: Bretagne and Burgundy.^{lxxvii} The French monarchy was at the height of its power in the late 15th century.

Bretagne had been a highly autonomous duchy throughout the Middle Ages often acting in complete defiance of the will of the French king. Before Charles could officially take the helm of the state another claimant to the French throne, Louis

d'Orleans (the later Louis XII), and the Duke of Bretagne allied and led a revolt against Charles and his regents. Louis wanted to take the crown for himself, and the duke wanted to preserve his autonomy and help a grateful friend to the throne, who would be very much indebted to him. Charles led his armies into battle and defeated the rebels. This conflict had turned into an international affair as Bretagne had allied with all the major neighbors of France who wanted to preserve its autonomy. But the trepid international support had no effect.^{lxxviii} One important note about this episode is that it left a bitter personal enmity between Charles VIII. and Maximilian of Habsburg. Charles had broken his betrothal in order to marry Anne, the heiress to the Duchy of Brittany, when Maximilian, recently widowed, had married her via proxy marriage instead. When Charles finally held her captive, he had the unconsummated marriage annulled and married her.

The Burgundian state which the de Bourgogne family had created in the last century was now ruled by Habsburgs. While the wars of his predecessors had seen the French crown realize its claim to the Duchy of Burgundy, the County of Flanders which de-jure belonged to the Kingdom of France was still held by the Habsburgs. Beyond that, the Burgundian state was a rich and powerful neighbor that sat directly at the exposed French border and threatened the personal domain of the kings. The north of France and the Lowlands would be a battlefield on several occasions throughout the Italian Wars with the Habsburgs and Valois facing each other in both theatres.

These border issues and other international tensions – with England and the kingdoms of Castille and Aragon - were brought in order by several treaties (among them the Treaty of Senlis of May 8, 1493) which are often considered to have been to the detriment of French interests.^{lxxix}

Charles VIII. proclaimed that he would pursue his legal hereditary claim to the throne of Naples. He also proclaimed that he would use the kingdom of Naples to launch a crusade against the Ottomans. From a strategic point of view, it is important to note that the French monarchy had become a Mediterranean power with the acquisition of the County of Provence. Before that “French” interests in the Mediterranean were represented by the same d'Anjou. The Angevin dynasty had been in a constant struggle with the House of Aragon over the kingdom of Naples. Beyond that Angevin influence stretched throughout Italy and they held various minor titles in

Northern Italy. The French kings had meddled in Italian politics before this invasion most notably oscillating between guarantor and outright controller of the city of Genoa. Genoa and Florence were the traditional allies of the French and had called for French mediation or intervention on several occasions. The process of centralization of the kingdom of France led to the evolution of a state interest unlike that of the medieval monarchy and its feudal squabbles and mostly symbolic politics. Also, there seems to have been a certain drive for expansion through conquest instilled by the martial culture of the French aristocracy.^{lxxx} The Hundred Years War and its military evolutions had given rise to the strongest military class in all of Western Europe. In summary, the French monarchy had inherited d'Anjou claims and influence in Italy, the economic and strategic "state" interest in Italy was growing, and the militarized French state needed a place to conquer. Beyond these structural conditions that contributed to the French invasion, the main factor was however Charles VIII. himself: The process of the strengthening of royal power led to a personal power of the French king, that was arguably unparalleled before or even after. The king minded the mood in his courts and headed the words of his council, but the decision was ultimately his.^{lxxxi} The invasion of Italy was the personal project of Charles, and he would lead his armies personally. The key initiator of the Italian Wars was the French with their invasion of Naples and the personal role of Charles cannot be overstated.^{lxxxii}

Charles was an accomplished military commander, and his Italian campaign was well-planned and executed. He took personal charge of the preparations when he discovered that the marshal in charge had been dragging them on. As the French army reached Tuscany it entered into negotiations by the tip of the spear with the Republics of Lucca and Florence. Several cities and fortresses were stormed in a matter of days and often sacked to give examples of the cost of resistance. The Italian princes had promised each other loose commitments to defend one another. When this aid did not substantialize, they agreed to a separate peace, one after the other. No coordinated defense of Italy was organized neither by the Italic League nor by the bilateral alliances of the major Italian states. The fact that the army was led by the king meant that its aims were clear, and its actions were decisive. There was no doubt in the minds of the Italian diplomats what it meant to offend the French king by not agreeing to his terms. Charles showed himself as a lenient arbitrator in some cases, such as Pisa which he helped to a degree of autonomy under French protection, and Siena, both rivals of

Florence. In other cases, he demanded what surmounted to complete surrender and made a symbolic display of it: He demanded to enter Florence through a demolished city gate and that a symbolic breach be made in the city wall close by.^{lxxxiii} This kind of martial diplomacy was only possible because the king was leading the army in person.

After the successful conquest of Naples, Charles was not keen on remaining in his new possession for too long as he felt increasingly threatened by the coalition forming in Northern Italy. He hastily set up an administration and then left the kingdom with most of his army. He decided against returning to France via sea as this would be seen as a flight. Upon their march back to France the French were attacked by an alliance of Venetians and Milanese. The battle ended in a draw as the French could not be prevented from continuing along their route. However, major fighting did occur and so it was judged that the alliance had challenged the French who had ceded the field and more importantly their baggage train with most of the loot from their Italian campaign; a major blow to the soldier's trust in Charles. If his departure from Naples looked hasty, the fact that the French didn't crush the Italian army and instead pushed on reflected poorly on Charles' majesty.

Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, had been an ally of the French but had felt increasingly threatened and feared that the French would want to take over his duchy. While accompanying the army on its journey towards Tuscany he had misled the French and given bad advice on purpose, trying to delay their progress as much as possible. Then he joined the League of Venice and blocked the French line of supply through Lombardy by re-occupying some of the towns he had surrendered to the French for military purposes. The French king was now in a hurry to reach the safety of his kingdom. He signed a white peace with Ludovico Sforza in order to be able to retreat safely and in so doing pardoned a personal betrayal out of sheer necessity. In an incredibly short period, Ludovico had betrayed both of his allies with very little gain.

In the Battle of Fornovo, Charles was nearly captured on several occasions. In general, his presence compromised the strategical options of his army upon his retreat to a similar degree as it had opened them during the invasion. Charles would never set foot in Italy again and all his gains during the invasion would erode as quickly as they had been gained. His invasion of Naples had been an aggressive act upsetting the

Italian balance of power and calling into action the other major players on the European stage, the Holy Roman Empire and Spain. Though certain conditions in the Italian state system meant it was open to outside interference in the end it was Charles' personal desire for a military campaign in Italy that set in motion nearly 60 years of war. His personal command made the French army work very efficiently. Since most Italian princes were employing a strategy of delay, which by military standards of the day was sound, the swift conquest of Naples and the consequences it had for the Italian and European state system can be attributed to his person. As much as he tried to make it appear otherwise, the French return to France was a retreat and the King of France had to surrender the field of battle at Fornovo and the baggage train in order to get home safely. At least the French retreat under his command can be considered orderly and much of his army returned intact. In many respects, the first French invasion, with all the changes it brought about, can be judged to be one man's project. Charles came, he conquered and then he fled. According to Knecht, this Italian expedition amounted to nothing less than a disaster for the French as the Italians lost their respect for the French king and the French army.^{lxxxiv}

Louis XII.

Charles VIII. died a sudden death after hitting his head on the lintel of a door in 1498, and left no heirs. His cousin Louis d'Orleans, who had rebelled against him together with the Duke of Brittany, succeeded him to the French throne as Louis XII. He had been pardoned by Charles after his rebellion and had accompanied him to Italy where he grew to hate Ludovico Sforza for his betrayal of the French and the subsequent peril that had befallen Louis personally. Louis had been assigned to cover the French return and was starved out by the Milanese troops before being forced to surrender. More important than his personal rivalry with Ludovico however was his claim to the throne of Milan. His grandmother had been Valentina Visconti and after the Visconti went extinct in their male line, the d'Orleans considered the Duchy of Milan to be rightfully theirs. Just as Naples was for Charles, Milan was a very personal matter to Louis. In the case of Milan French interests of state were more closely aligned with the personal ambitions of their king than in the case of Milan. The French monarchy had wielded

considerable influence in Northern Italy and the city of Asti was part of the royal domain with the accession of Louis XII. Genoa had occasionally been under French protection and sometimes direct rule for more than a century.

Beyond that, there was another very personal reason for Louis' involvement in Italy: Pope Alexander VI. had sent his son Cardinal Cesare Borgia to France in order to strike a bargain. The pope was to annul the marriage to his wife Jeanne so that Louis could marry Charles' widow, the duchess of Brittany, and thus retain control over the duchy. In return, Louis promised to help Cesare carve out his own secular state in Italy. Cesare on the other hand would assist in the conquest of Milan and the reconquest of Naples both with the blessing of the pope.

In preparation for the Italian campaign, Louis too concluded several treaties with his neighbors which were not necessarily to France's benefit in order to secure his kingdom while his armies were involved in Italy. Also, he concluded a secret alliance with Venice. This alliance will be discussed at length in another section as it is an important direct precursor to the League of Cambrai. Interesting for this analytical perspective is the question of funding raised during the alliance negotiations: Louis demanded Venice pay for some of the French expenses too which the Venetian replied that such financial demands were surely beneath a King of France. Louis replied that he wanted to tell the French people that the Italians would be paying for the French invasion of Italy.

Louis did not personally take command of the French army in its conquest of the duchy, nor was it necessary: Ludovico Sforza's forces lost some minor skirmishes at which point the Milanese defenses completely dissolved in the wake of the French might. Ludovico's personal involvement serves as an illustration of poor political and military leadership in times of war especially when compared to the command of Charles VIII. For this reason, his various blunders will be treated as a footnote in the story of Louis' reign. After the initial massacring of some cities to make an example, most cities in the duchy surrendered to relatively mild terms. When his professional troops refused to fight the French, the duke called upon the citizens of Milan to form a citizen militia in a patriotic defense of their fatherland. They refused and Ludovico had to flee his duchy for the safety of his new ally, Maximilian of Habsburg. This alliance had cost him a great deal to secure and bore no fruit whatsoever.

Hearing of the eminent French victory, Louis made a voyage to his newly acquired conquest and entered Milan in a ceremonial procession. He left for France one month later having reorganized the duchy radically: The governing structures would be very similar to those of French cities. A parlement would handle the civic administration while a lieutenant would be in charge of the military. The position of lieutenant was handed to Trivulzio the Italian condottiere who had been in charge of the conquest of the duchy. The Italian nobles were involved to a great degree in the governance but the parlement's chancellor was French. The other cities in the domain of the duchy had hoped to achieve autonomy under French rule. This hope was thwarted. As he had promised, Louis made Milan pay for its own conquest raising high taxes in the newly conquered territory.

French nobles were awarded land in Milan for their service, but as was the case in Naples several years before and would be after the subsequent re-conquest of the kingdom, the French nobles did not have a sustained interest in their holdings in Milan. This shows in the fact that Louis had to pass a law forbidding them to sell off their lands for two years after having received them. In the end, French rule was seen as an occupation (p. 57).^{lxxxv} Also, the French were not able to understand the intricacies of the Guelf-Ghibelline conflict that determined much of Milanese internal politics: The appointment of Trivulzio, an influential Guelf, as lieutenant turned the Ghibelline faction into enemies of French rule in Milan. And so, they supported the return of the previously despised Ludovico Sforza.

Ludovico Sforza had amassed a sizeable army of mercenaries while he was in exile in Tirol. His brother Ascanio led the Sforza troops in their successful reconquest of Milan. The French troops were overwhelmed by the size of the Sforza armies, but so was the Sforza treasury. The Sforza presented themselves as liberators from the harsh French occupation and were often welcomed as such. They attempted to reorganize the duchy in such a way as to address previous errors in governance, which had made them so unpopular before their ousting from power.^{lxxxvi} Ludovico led his troops to reconquer the western parts of his kingdom, but the mercenary nature of his army and his lack of leadership qualities left it undisciplined. At the first battle of Novara on April 8, 1500, his Burgundian, Swiss, and German mercenaries refused to fight and the Burgundians and Swiss eventually even fraternized with their compatriots on the French side and negotiated safe conduct for themselves. Ludovico was captured

while he attempted to disguise himself as a Swiss mercenary in order to make use of this safe conduct. He would die in French captivity and the French would quickly reconquer the duchy. The liberation of Milan amounted to a revolt in the eyes of the French. The inhabitants of the duchy would pay dearly for their insolence and the government the French installed the second time was a strict military government. Louis' chief minister Cardinal D'Amboise would be in charge of governing the duchy, which showed the importance it held for the king, but he would rarely visit it.

While Milan was a sensible geopolitical target for an invasion because of its wealth and strategic position the conquest of Naples was not sound from the perspective of power politics. The French had very little experience in maintaining a conquest on such a scale outside of the borders of France proper. The means of control and communication meant that royal orders from France arrived in Naples with so much delay that they were rendered obsolete. The French Mediterranean navy was small and relied on assistance from its Italian allies and the requisition of merchant ships. The maritime routes of supply were easily cut by the more experienced navies of the maritime empires, e.g. the Spanish navy. Beyond that there was no clear strategy for French Naples: While there was a growing French interest in the Mediterranean it had not grown to the extent that the conquest of an entire kingdom, moreover another rural agricultural-based entity, could be integrated into a French Mediterranean strategy. The interests of the French society and economy were not sustained; the French king wanted to be king of Naples and he wanted to personally conquer that kingdom. Beyond that, there was little agreement among the French elite on what the aim of the Neapolitan conquest was. In the end, the cost of maintaining control of Naples would be much higher than the benefits of the kingdom even though at the time it was very wealthy.^{lxxxvii} Neapolitan barons who remained loyal to the Trastamara were stripped of their land. This land was then conferred to French nobles in order to establish an aristocratic French power base. However, many of the French nobles were more interested in converting their lands into money, selling it off as quickly as possible. This lack of sustained French interest shows in the lackluster administration the French left in Naples on both occasions.^{lxxxviii} More than during Charles' campaign, Louis was however pressured by the French nobles who had lost land in Naples. They were however mostly concerned with their short-term personal gain and did not have to take responsibility for the kingdom as a whole.

They did arrange government in such a way that the old Neapolitan barons were incorporated so that French rule was with their consent, but the French administrators mainly were interested in short-term exploitation of their position for personal gain. This was a form of proto-colonial administration. In summary, it is questionable if even the French king trusted the persistence of French rule in Naples.

3.3.2 Maximilian – The Bankrupt Emperor

Maximilian I von Habsburg had been a warrior and commander throughout much of his reign. Especially during the wars of the Burgundian succession, he had distinguished himself as a frontline commander putting himself in harm's way in order to turn the tide of the Battle of Guinegate in 1479. In 1496 he decided it was time for his own Italian adventure.

There was a long tradition of Holy Roman Emperors going on an Italian expedition. Since the beginning of the Salic rule in the 11th century the emperors crossed the Alps mainly for two reasons, both of which had to do with the symbolic politics of medieval feudalism and the need of the emperor to secure his personal authority in the lack of any institutional power. Firstly, the emperors tried to restore the authority of the empire in Northern Italy, holding court and arbitrating between the nobles and the cities; Secondly, after their election as King of the Romans they had to be crowned emperor by the pope in Rome and for this reason they went on the *Italienzug*. These two motives often conflicted with each other. The pope wanted to limit Imperial interference in Italy and therefore attempted to undermine the emperor's authority whenever possible.^{lxxxix}

Imperial expeditions were often half-hazard operations: Failing to accrue enough support from their vassals in Germany the emperors appeared south of the Alps with an underwhelming army and relied on the Italian Ghibbelines in their attempt to restore their authority. Frederick "Barbarossa" von Hohenstaufen failed to reign in the increasingly independent Italian communes and princes. But his grandson, Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily, who was considered more Italian than German (by many Germans at least) through an intelligent Italian policy was able to restore Imperial authority. This however threatened the pope who excommunicated the

von Hohenstaufen and unleashed the d'Anjou invasion of their crown domain leading to the extinction of the von Hohenstaufen dynasty and the so-called interregnum. Since that time imperial authority in Italy had been at a low point and many rulers of the empire had given up on Italy entirely. Maximilian was the first emperor to take an active part in Italian politics in a long time.

Even by the standards set by his predecessors, Maximilian's expedition in 1496 can be described seemed very impotent. He intended to prove imperial authority in Italy by helping his ally Ludovico defend his western border after the Milanese-Venetian alliance had driven out the French. Ludovico had paid Maximilian an enormous amount of money and given him the hand of his daughter Bianca in return for bolstering his legitimacy via imperial investiture of the Duchy of Milan. As mentioned before this payment did Ludovico little good. Another way Maximilian sought to prove imperial authority was to arbitrate in the Pisan War. He intervened by bringing a mere 1000 men to besiege Florentine positions. When this proved insufficient, he fled to Milan from the incoming French reinforcements.^{xc}

3.3.3 The Monarchs during the War of the League of Cambrai 1508-1515

The War of the League of Cambrai shows the importance the monarchs saw in their personal presence in the theatre of war. In this war, Louis did participate personally. When he became ill however he returned to France. Maximilian too led his armies but then left command to his lieutenant and returned home, when the war effort turned for the worse. Since the imperial progress was lackluster and the French felt that the emperor was not holding up his part of the bargain, Louis leveled a threat: If Maximilian would not show imperial commitment to the war by re-joining in person, Louis would enter the stage personally and the French war effort would change radically. When the phony war against the pope erupted Louis returned to Milan and took charge of the situation more closely. He decided against a third personal military intervention but would return on diplomatic missions when the situation was especially important such as when he decided to join in the League against Venice.

Of the Ultramontane kingdoms embroiled in the Italian Wars, Spain was the only one not ruled by monarchs who deemed it necessary to show their presence on the

battlefield. They were represented by competent commanders and their involvement in the war was of such a nature, that the king was not required to enter into the fray. The Spanish didn't go on grand expeditions but supported their allies with small contingents and fought a strategic war of attrition and sieges. Their commanders, above all Gonzalo Fernandes de Cordoba, earned glory by attempting to win a campaign and not by heroic feats on the battlefield.

An honorable mention must be given to Pope Julius II, whose presence in the campaigns in the Romagna clearly furthered the war effort. At some point during the campaign, he personally donned his armor and joined his men on the battlefield. His presence was however most useful strategically because the French still had reservations about attacking Bologna while the pope resided there.

Conclusion

A king's business is war. All three French kings made it their first act as head of state to declare that they would realize their claims. And then many of them rode at the head of their army. This behavior was expected of them and they assumed this role gladly. The aristocratic class from which they hailed was especially at that late stage of feudalism infused by knightly romanticism and crusader ideals.^{xcii} Politically this did mean that peace-time nobility became restless while it could be neutralized internally by directing it against an external foe.^{xciii} Often the dynastic logic and their personal interest and ambitions determined foreign policy in a way that was not necessarily in the interest of the state. A king's personality and character gave the state its direction.^{xciii} Militarily the personal presence of the king also had great consequences: His presence unified the army's purpose and invigorated it, but the king's personal sense of honor led to serious problems in keeping him safe. The French kings Charles VIII and Francis were the first and the clearest examples of this problem.^{xciv} While Maximilian did no longer seek glory on the battlefield his imperial ambitions went far beyond his means and so he constantly went on new underfunded ventures which fell apart after a short while.

The Ultramontane state could afford this erratic behavior of their monarchs as the dynamics European state system did not threaten their state or their rule. They

could afford an incoherent foreign policy because, in the end, it would at the most cost them the gains of their Italian ventures.^{xcv} In this regard the Spanish monarchs were already more modern: They delegated power and were thinking more strategically both militarily and diplomatically.^{xcvi}



Map of Europe 1554 (by Gerardus Mercator)

4. The Renaissance State System Around 1500

4.1 The European State System

The first question to be answered in regard to the systemic level of analysis is whether a state system even existed during this time. Certainly, there were states with varying levels of power and competing interests but it is questionable if this gathering of entities was structured in such a way that a system of states formed. In order to interpret the actions of the players under the framework of alliance politics it seems necessary to assume that there was a systemic order. If there was such a thing as a European state system, it was very loosely ordered. Being at the very beginning of the modern European state system many of the structuring principles of the later stages of this system had yet to be established. Arguably some of these principles were borne as a result of the Italian Wars. The underdeveloped European state system that was based on the transition of the European state from the purely feudal constructs of the Middle Ages to the mix of feudalism and proto-nationalism that marked the Early Modern Era.

According to the realist school of international relations theory, the anarchical nature of the international system makes self-preservation the primary interest of states. Since states can never be sure to have complete security, they strive for power and ultimately for hegemony: The autonomy of one state is always threatened by the autonomy of another, therefore autonomy can only be secured by eliminating the autonomy of all other entities.

There are several problems when trying to apply the realist theorem to 16th-century Europe: Firstly, it is debatable whether states even had the perspective of a hegemonic struggle and whether their aim was to gain hegemony. As mentioned before there was a perception of threat from French aggression at the start of the Italian Wars and at the end of the wars Spanish European dominance was the result. The idea of Spanish hegemony and the idea of resistance to it was certainly widespread after the Italian Wars and it was French foreign policy for the next 100 years to break the Habsburg encirclement. But at the beginning of the 16th century, there had been little precedent of states conquering and annexing a territory that was not de-jure part of a kingdom since the treaties of the Early Middle Ages. Wars of conquest were only

conceived of in religious terms such as during the Reconquista or in the defense against Ottoman incursion. These can be analyzed as strategic conflicts between states that could ultimately lead to the annihilation of a “state”, but most other conflicts followed the logic of feudal conflicts. War was waged mainly to uphold legal claims and customs within a certain legal body and not as a conflict between two nations.^{xcvii} The Holy Roman emperors of the High Middle Ages did not campaign in Italy because it was of strategic interest to the Empire to retain the revenue from this rich region and to deny it to other states; it was an insult to the emperor when an Italian commune disobeyed his commands undermining his status in the symbolic politics of the Medieval court.^{xcviii} There was neither the concept of war to secure strategic interests nor did the state’s military capacities allow for such a war.

Since regional systems had not yet consolidated the parties to a war were generally entities within the state and not two states. This follows the line of argument that has been well-established in political science and international relations: The nation-state did not yet exist in the 16th century although various states were arguably undergoing a process of proto-nationalism such as France and England – and these two nations fought the war that most closely resembled a strategic war for regional hegemony, the Hundred Years War. But even this war can be understood as a purely feudal conflict between two aristocratic blocks within France. The military enforcement of a personal union was the closest that international politics in the Middle Ages came to wars of conquest. The lack of regional consolidation meant that states were still concerned with creating a regional hegemony and were therefore not threatened by other states which were undergoing the same process.^{xcix} The states did however interfere in each other’s efforts of regional consolidation by supporting rebellious factions. French interference in Iberian politics led to an enmity that would spill out in the Italian Wars.^c

A hegemonic conflict is a defining feature of a state system. As will be discussed in the following section, the Italian state system was defined by such a struggle. In the first half of the 16th century, the conflict between the Valois and the Habsburgs in the Holy Roman Empire and then in Spain would establish itself as the defining conflict of the era, and Italy would be the most important theatre of this stage of the conflict. The European state system underwent a clear transformation due to the developments of the Italian Wars and more generally due to the involvement of the

Ultramontanes in the delicate balance of power on the peninsula. Not only did war help the creation of the Early Modern state, it also was crucial in forming a state system: Initially, Italian and then European states attempted to balance against the very aggressive hegemonic ambitions of the Kingdom of France especially on the Italian peninsula. This was foreseeable as France once it was consolidated dwarfed any other European in population and the other kingdoms were still very disorganized in comparison.^{ci} To balance against this an alliance and a marriage between the Habsburgs and the Spanish Trastamara was forged for general strategic reasons. At the end of the Italian Wars, however, the Habsburgs were the strongest European dynasty and dominated Italy. However Spanish dominance over Italy was inconceivable at the time of the first alliance system in question. At one point in the conflict when the French had been driven out by the Holy League after 1512 the Pope and Maximilian dreamt of carving up the entire French state between the members of the coalition but this was wholly unrealistic.^{cii}

The Ottoman imperial conquest threatening the Habsburgs would be a second main conflict that plays into the former conflict. The Habsburg union of the Holy Roman Empire and Spain stands off against the Kingdom of France, which is in a tenuous alliance with the Ottomans. While the Habsburgs are simultaneously forced to defend their Austrian possessions, the main theatre for this conflict is the Mediterranean.^{ciii}

To sum up: There was no concept of hegemony and no concept of a nation-state. Therefore, the realist theory of securitization against anarchy leading to the establishment of a balance of power fails in describing the international politics of the Middle Ages. However, some of the elements required for the concept of a modern state accumulating power to further its self-interest are developing as a consequence of the Italian Wars. A primitive Northern European balance of power met with the delicate balance of power in Italy and both systems were radically changed by this collision.^{civ}

4.2 The Italian State System

This transitional phase of the European state system stands in stark contrast to the rather modern regional state system on the Italian peninsula. In the other European regions hegemony was established as part of a feudal process: An aristocratic block took control of the monarchy and tried to centralize its authority against the resistance of local rulers. Since the decay of the Kingdom of Italy in the Early Middle Ages a legitimate center of power was missing in Italy. The Holy Roman Emperor was nominally King of Italy, but he had no power base in the region. As the Empire even gave up on its nominal claim to an extent, Italy underwent a very different hegemonic struggle than other European regions.

4.2.1 The Empire, the Papacy, and the Kingdom of Italy

Under Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Empire annexed the Kingdom of the Lombards heading the Pope's call for protection. The donations of Peppin created the Papal State. Under the Ottonians, Northern Italy fell to the Holy Roman Empire. In the medieval worldview, Italy was divided between the imperial North and the Papal States in Central Italy. After conquering the region the Normans received the Kingdom of Sicily as a fief from the Pope. In the High Middle Ages, a conflict for the supreme leadership of Christendom between the Pope and the German emperors erupted.

The Guelf and Ghibelline factions initially were parties of either of two German dynasties with a claim to the imperial throne, the Welfs (Guelfs) and the Waiblinger (Ghibbelines), another name for the von Hohenstaufen. The von Hohenstaufen held the imperial throne for slightly less than one hundred years and the pope used the Welfs to undermine their rule in Germany. In Italy, the Ghibbelines were the faction favoring imperial rule, and the Guelfs were the pope's party. The struggle for autonomy by the Northern Italian states assisted by the pope ultimately meant that the Guelf faction dominated most Italian cities. By aiding these communes to resist the feudal system the pope helped create the dynamics of power politics that governed the relations between the cities and thereby helped create the first secular state base on a secular notion of power.^{cv}

Later the Guelfs became the party of the Angevins who took over the rule in Sicily. This conflict further morphed in the following centuries: First, it took on a social dimension, where the aristocratic class based its power on a loose allegiance to the emperor, and the lower classes sided with the Ghibbelines. But even this social dimension fades away and the conflict devolves into pure factionalism where the competition of two factions is more important than what the factions stand for.^{cvi} The factional conflicts produced many exiles who turned to Italian or Ultramontane states and were ready allies to these outside powers. They would remain reliant on this outside support if they were able to seize power with their help and would be considered already by contemporaries as those who had opened Pandora's box.^{cvi}

4.2.2 The Hegemonic Struggle

Italy had seen an unusual era of peace before the outbreak of the Italian Wars which is sometimes called the Pax Italiae. The Treaty of Lodi signed in 1454 had put an end to the 30-year hegemonic struggle of the wars in Lombardy between the major Italian states: Milan, Venice, Florence, The Papal States, and Naples. This series of conflicts saw the various political entities of Italy align and realign in various constellations and ultimately led transformation of the Medieval Italian urban feudalism into the Renaissance state system with its preeminence of these five major states. Masterminded by Lorenzo de Medici of Florence, it stipulated that the signatories should refrain from wars of aggression in Italy. Any breach of the treaty would see the other powers form a coalition to punish the aggressor. The treaty also stipulated that none of the signatories should call allies from outside of Italy into any wars fought on the peninsula. Most ambitiously, these states were to form the Italic League (or Most Holy League) in order to safeguard the Italian peninsula from foreign incursion. Arguably the term "balance of power" as it is used in modern political thought was first coined by a historian of the de Medici family describing the Florentine policy in Italian politics. While there were some minor wars and several instances of internal strife – such as the Pazzi conspiracy in Florence and the baronial conspiracy in Naples – the League and the ever-shifting peacetime alliances of that era were able to uphold the peace by maintaining the balance of power. On the other hand, it is important to

note that several wars between the major powers did break out, but they were not considered breaches of the Treaty for the simple reason that they did not have much consequence and were over rather quickly after one or two failed campaigns.

In the early 15th century Venice and Milan had fought blood wars for the hegemony in Northern Italy which had been devastating for the region. These two states had been the closest contenders for Italian hegemony. Venice, a maritime empire, was always more interested in the protection of its Mediterranean trade routes by dominating both sides of the Adria and several Eastern Mediterranean islands. Starting in 1400 it conquered ever greater parts of northeastern Italy, both to secure the food supply of the city of Venice and to counter Milanese expansionism in the region. There were ongoing debates in the Venetian council regarding this continental commitment: On the one hand there was the argument that it was draining Venetian resources and dragging the Republic into conflicts that were not in its interest. On the other hand, it was argued that Venice had to necessarily play a part in peninsular politics in order to prevent any of the other Italian states from threatening their dominance on the seas. The Duchy of Milan had been an aggressively expansionist power throughout the 14th and 15th centuries which is why the Florentines attempted to counter the Milanese threat by allying with Venice. Especially Gian Galeazzo Visconti had dreamed about the conquest of all of Northern Italy in order to reunite the Kingdom of the Lombards. During his reign, the Duchy of Milan conquered vast territories in the Po Valley. These wars also saw the rise of the Sforza Condottiere who would take power from the Visconti during a succession crisis. The wars in Lombardy began in 1423 and ended in 1454 when Venetian successes in the wars meant that the Florentines considered them a greater threat than the Milanese and switched sides. An Angevin intervention at the head of a French army on the side of Milan brought both main belligerents to negotiate a lasting peace brokered by the Pope and Lorenzo de Medici.^{cviii}

In the years 1482-84, the War of Ferrara saw a minor disturbance to this Italian order when the Papal States as well as Venice encroached on Ferrarese territory. The other major Italian states sided with Ferrara. After agreeing to some territorial concessions, the Duchy of Ferrara was able to maintain its independence, and the general peace endured for another 10 years. The death of one of the main proponents of the Italic League, Lorenzo de Medici in 1492, and the French invasion of 1494 were the main reasons for the decay of the Italic League.

In the struggle between the city-states, allegiances constantly shifted and for the Italians, this shift of allegiance was not considered dishonorable. The same is true for the Condottiere and barons who had sworn allegiance to one of the states: There were certain rules that had to be followed when changing sides; it was however not necessarily considered betrayal but smart calculation.^{cix}

4.2.3 The City-States

The Duchy of Milan and the Republic of Venice were relatively strong territorial states in which an urban center of power dominated lesser cities. The Italian state system of the Pentarchy guaranteed stability to an extent where the major powers were able to enforce their rule over the cities they had conquered in the preceding centuries. It is important to note however that every minor commune still held a certain amount of autonomy and were constantly trying to expand them at the cost of the centers of power. During the Imperial incursions of the High Middle Ages, the German emperors were able to exploit this struggle between minor and major cities to their benefit by tipping the scale in favor of the weaker parties. In the absence of outside intervention in Northern and Central Italy, the major states were able to conquer and integrate their surroundings into a territorial state. While there were still other powers in Northern Italy not yet subsumed under either Milan or Venice their sphere of influence was consolidated to a large degree.^{cx}

The same cannot be said for the Republic of Florence. This city-state had only partially united Tuscany at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Lodi. Florence had conquered Pisa in the year 1405. The Republic of Pisa had been the dominant Tuscan power throughout most of the Middle Ages. However, after its decline due to several defeats against its main maritime enemy, Genoa, it was not able to withstand the pressure from the rising power in Tuscany, Florence. The Republic of Siena and the Republic of Lucca on the other hand were still worthy regional rivals of Florence.

The cities of the Emilia and the Romagna are another case entirely. Officially part of the papal states these regions, apart from the Duchy of Ferrara, were dotted by various city-states and minor principalities, more closely resembling the situation in Italy during the Middle Ages than any other region in Italy. The popes considered them to be part of their sphere of influence and made several attempts to tie them more

closely to the will of the Curia. If any other Italian power tried to gain influence over these cities and principalities the popes would consider this an attack on their legal rights to the region. But their control was nominal at best.

It is important to underline that the basic political unit of the Renaissance city was the individual commune. Smaller communes were dominated by larger ones and this oppression made the Italian states vulnerable to outside interference as will become evident when examining the importance of the Pisan rebellion against Florence. The dominating communes were constantly on guard against their lesser rivals.^{cxix} Due to the constant factional strife and the fragile political institutions the Italian states made the precarious decision to constantly war their neighbors and to try to constantly expand. As long as it was possible this continuous expansion did serve to stabilize the state, but as soon as it came to a halt the problems that were covered by the state of war showed themselves in an even more grievous form.^{cxii}

Of course, every minor city had to take the greater geopolitical situation into consideration to a similar extent as the major states. After their subordination, they entered into an uneasy hegemonic alliance with the stronger state. At times this subordination was enforced directly with garrisons in the conquered towns fortresses, in other instances the internal politics of such a city was simply held on a short leash. But in general, if the hegemonic city governed well and gave the region stability then the hegemony was beneficial to both parties.^{cxiii} The fragility of the Italian city-state domestically and in foreign relations meant that it needed to adapt and grow stronger, which formed the Early Modern Italian state, but it also meant that it was very vulnerable to a revolution of the state system, such as the Ultramontane invasions.

4.3.4 The Dynastic Struggle - Naples

As in the rest of late feudal Europe aristocratic dynasties played a great role in the politics of the Italian peninsula. The two major feudal monarchies of Italy, Milan and Naples, had very fragile lines of succession, a fact that made them susceptible to foreign claims.

The Neapolitan throne was historically a papal fief bestowed onto the Norman rulers in the 11th century³. After the male lineage of the ruling de Hauteville family, the throne went to the von Hohenstaufen, the family that held the Imperial throne at that time. Under the von Hohenstaufen Naples became “the first modern state”. However, the pope felt encircled by nominally Imperial Northern Italy and the household domain in Naples. The conflict was embedded in the older struggle for universal hegemony over Christendom between the popes and the emperors. This Guelf-Ghibelline conflict had an influence on the domestic and foreign policy of every Italian city at the time and as the conflict morphed away from its original causation it remained relevant at the time of the Italian wars. The pope excommunicated the von Hohenstaufen and invested the d’Anjou with the Neapolitan throne, who proceeded to exterminate every last member of the von Hohenstaufen dynasty. For this reason, the House of Aragon deemed themselves the rightful heirs of the von Hohenstaufen claims to the throne, a claim that they partially realized after the Sicilian Vespers. The d’Anjou would continue to rule the peninsular part of the Kingdom until 1442 when the last Angevin ruler Joanna II adopted Alfonso V of Aragon who reunited the entire kingdom once more. At his death, Alfonso bestowed the kingdom to his illegitimate son Ferdinand I. Both the Anjou and the Aragonese Trastámara families had changing relations with their aristocratic and urban subjects. After the death of the last Angevin ruler of Naples, that dynasty’s rule was glorified and contrasted with the rule of the Aragonese. However, Ferrante (Ferdinand I of Naples) and his heir were quickly accepted to be Italian rulers by both the Neapolitans and other Italians. Ferrante’s half-brother and his heirs, the kings of Aragon, retained a claim to the throne of Naples. The death of Ferrante who had ruled Naples for nearly 40 years was the spark that lit the powder keg of the Italian Wars. While the Aragonese dynasty supported its bastard branch for a certain time, it ultimately was interested in integrating the Kingdom of Naples into the Aragonese Western Mediterranean Sea empire.^{cxiv} And as already mentioned the Angevin claim to the throne would later pass on to the French king. This made the Neapolitan throne a prize for two of the strongest

³ Initially it was called the Kingdom of Sicily which incorporated all territories south of the Papal States as well as the island of Sicily. After the Sicilian Vesper, the Aragonese Sicilian possessions were called the Kingdom of Sicily while the Angevin peninsular possessions were called the Kingdom of Naples. As the main focus of this paper is not the history of the kingdom, the name kingdom of Naples will be used throughout the paper for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

European kingdoms, especially after the Iberian Wedding unified Spain. The invasion of Naples by the French in 1494 and the Franco-Spanish war over Naples in 1502-1504 were made possible by the weak legitimacy of the throne and the contesting claims. This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that the popes of the 15th century used investiture with the crown of Naples as a diplomatic bargaining chip, selling the throne to the highest bidder. Pope Alexander had promised to invest Charles VIII with the Neapolitan throne in exchange for political support, but when French troops were marching on Rome threatening the Papacy (for reasons discussed in another section) he granted the kingdom to Alfonso, the son of the recently deceased Ferrante in exchange for protection by the Neapolitan army. Alfonso would only rule the kingdom for a year abdicating in favor of his far more popular and competent son, Ferrandino (Ferdinand II of Naples) In a way, the kingdom of Naples was therefore the soft underbelly of Italy: There had never been an autochthonous Italian ruler in Naples. All of the ruling houses would assimilate to a certain degree but in the end, Naples was always ruled by foreigners.

Ferrandino was reinstated by his Aragonese relatives shortly after the main French army left Naples for Northern Italy. Revolts had already weakened the position of the remaining French troops in the kingdom and so it was lost just as quickly as it was gained by the French. Ferrandino however was degraded to a puppet king and had to make various concessions to his powerful benefactors. Five years later the French and Spanish led a combined invasion of the kingdom, carving it up between the two states as designated by a previously signed treaty. Ferrandino's son abdicated in favor of Louis XII. of France who would lose the crown and kingdom to Ferdinand of Aragon for good in 1504.

The weakness of the Neapolitan throne meant that it would remain a Spanish vice-royalty for the next two centuries serving as the main power base for the Spanish Empire to enforce its hegemony over Italy. It would not see a ruler from local origins until it was incorporated into the Italian state. While this weakness was the first invitation to the French invasion, which opened the Italian Wars, it was also the wound through which the lasting Spanish hegemony could manifest itself in Italy.^{CXV} The French destabilization of Naples meant that Spain strengthened its commitment to Naples and involved itself in Italian politics to an unprecedented degree. This Spanish

involvement was the backbone of Italian resistance against the French in Northern Italy.

Conclusion

The Italian Renaissance state system was, in contrast to the greater European state system, already highly developed. The internal and external pressures on the state made it highly competitive and this in turn made the system even more competitive. States were fighting for their political and economic survival and were using all the means available to achieve this goal. One of these means was the invitation of foreign powers to tip the fragile balance of power in favor of one of the states. The Italians had already developed a keen understanding of the concept of balance of power. In the end it seems that they had however miscalculated their ability to deal with the short-sighted Ultramontane barbarians. Beyond these structural realist elements, there were several feudal claims: The age-old struggle between the Emperor and the Pope and the dynastic claims on Milan and Naples. While the Italian states were modern and strong for their size, their competition meant that they created a state system ripe for exploitation by the consolidating Ultramontane monarchies.

5. Case Study: The League of Cambrai and the Holy League

5.1 Events and Alliances of the Italian Wars prior to the League

The Italian Wars comprised a series of wars. Before the League of Cambrai 1508, there are two main episodes which are important to understand the situation at the time of that conflict. The initial French invasion of Italy had the goal of conquering Naples and was defeated at the hands of the Milanese, Venetians, and Neapolitans at the Battle of Fornovo in July 1495. While the main military actions happened in the years 1494/1495 the last French fortress in Naples surrendered as late as 1498.

The second episode is more complex: The second French invasion was first directed at conquering Milan and then the kingdom of Naples which was to be split between the Kingdom of France and the Kingdom of Spain. The invasion of Milan was a coordinated effort of France and Venice to split up the duchy among them. Their alliance was then also directed at securing the influence of both parties in Northern and Central Italy.

The division of the kingdom of Naples between France and Spain very quickly led to disputes and a war in which the Spanish ultimately forced the French out of Naples.

These two episodes will be narrated in some detail in the following subsections in order to give a structured overview of the events. The emphasis will be on the political disposition of the involved states internally as well as the substantive conditions for the alliances that developed. This will be important to understand the next section in which some elements of these events that led up to the League of Cambrai are discussed more analytically. Military actions will be covered in more detail in another section. This analysis will be structured more thematically than chronologically and therefore it is important to have an understanding of the unfolding of the events beforehand.

5.1.1. The First Italian War 1494-1495

Charles VIII. crossed the Alps in late August of 1494 with the objective of conquering the kingdom of Naples. Ludovico “Il Moro” Sforza, Duke of Milan, had urged him to this expedition and was his only ally among the major Italian states. This Franco-Milanese alliance, or rather the alliance between Ludovico Sforza and France, will be discussed at length further below. For now, suffice it to mention that Ludovico had felt threatened internally and externally by the attempts of the king of Naples, Ferrante, to install Ludovico’s nephew and the legitimate successor of the previous duke, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, as Duke of Milan.^{cxvi}

The Venetians remained neutral stating that they were mostly focused on defending against the Ottomans. They also felt threatened by Emperor Maximilian⁴ with whom they had a long-standing enmity. Also, the Venetians calculated that after all the threats the French invasion would never actually materialize. This attitude was shared among many of the other Italian states, major and minor, and is one of the reasons why a common Italian defense only materialized with significant delay.

Florence had been a historic French ally but under the leadership of Piero de Medici, it aligned with Naples due to his personal allegiance to Alfonso of Naples. Piero’s standing among the Florentine elites was however weaker than that of other “first citizens” of the Medici. Alfonso of Naples counted on Florence to at least deny the French safe passage through their territory.

Pope Alexander’s VI. position was most ambivalent: He had invested Alfonso with the crown of Naples and was personally invested in the success of his reign for this reason. But Alfonso was using his relations with important Roman families, such as the Orsini and Colonna, to garner a significant degree of influence in the Papal States.^{cxvii} Above all, however, the pope’s most avid personal enemy Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere was riding beside the French king and advised him on matters of the church. If Alexander opposed the French king, Charles might take it upon himself to call a General Council of the church with the goal of deposing the pope. If he didn’t

⁴ Maximilian I von Habsburg was King of the Romans from 1486 and Emperor-elect from 1508 and ran a parallel government next to his father Frederick III who was Holy Roman Emperor until 1493. Since the Imperial succession is not the main topic here, Maximilian will be referred to as “emperor” since he was acting head of government of the Holy Roman Empire for the time in question.

oppose him then he might end up at the mercy of the king anyway and would possibly be deposed too. Alexander did however have one important leverage over the French king: The investiture with the crown of Naples. Also, while the Italians were already accustomed to the pope acting as a temporal prince, it was still a sacrilegious act for the Ultramontanes to act directly against the pope. Alexander remained undecided until the French were already before the gates of Rome. He did however expect Alfonso to send him troops to garrison the city, troops Alfonso direly would have needed elsewhere.^{cxviii}

In summary: On the one side was the French alliance with the Sforza. The Milanese should provide a base of operations and should pay for a great share of the costs of the expedition. The French would be left to do most of the fighting. On the other side was the Kingdom of Naples which had ineffective alliances with both Piero de Medici and Pope Alexander both of whom did not have the full support of their elites in their decision. It is important to note that the Holy League or League of Venice formed in 1495 comprised of Venice, Milan, Naples, Spanish, and the Holy Roman Empire. The former allies of Naples did not participate, and France's only ally had swapped sides. Also, the only major Italian power to remain clearly neutral at the beginning of the war, Venice, would be the crucial military player in throwing the French back out of Italy.

Only when it became clear that the French would go through with their invasion of Italy, Alfonso started making preparations for the defense of his kingdom. His strategy was to hold up the French in Northern Italy by inciting a revolt in Genoa and removing it as a base for naval operations. The Neapolitan fleet ferried a contingent of Neapolitan troops and Genoese exiles to Rapallo near Genoa. They were attacked there by Swiss mercenaries and routed. Ferrandino was stationed in the Romagna where he had gathered an army consisting of his unsure allies. After the French brought several of the cities and princes of the Romagna to surrender, the Papal and Florentine contingents returned to their states, leaving him to retreat closer to the Kingdom of Naples.^{cxix}

When the French were about to besiege the Florentine fortress of Sarzana, Piero de Medici went to negotiate with Charles and ended up agreeing to what would amount to little less than the unconditional surrender of the Republic. What is more Piero's action was not approved by the Florentine city council. He hoped that his personal

initiative would restore some of his authority in the city after his previous error of judgment. He agreed to safe passage and the surrender of major Florentine fortresses and cities for the duration of the Neapolitan venture. Most notably he handed Pisa over to the French. Piero de Medici, already politically isolated before these blunders, would ultimately be expelled from the city of Florence together with all the Medici, and Florence would officially return to a more republican political life. Soon after the ousting of the Medici's Florence would however be plunged into Girolamo Savonarola's religious fanaticism. The Florentine rivals Lucca and Siena also sent representatives to the French offering friendship, safe passage, and granting generous loans.

When the French entered Pisa, the Pisans assumed that the French were there to liberate them from Florentine rule. The French did little to dispel this assumption while simultaneously assuring the Florentines that Pisa would be handed over to them as soon as the conquest of Naples was concluded. The Florentine negotiations did not prevent the French from marching through the streets of Florence in triumph. After peacefully continuing through the Republic of Siena the French arrived in the territory of the Papal states.

Papal defenses and internal politics were in the same state of disarray as in Florence. The pope relied militarily on the presence of the Neapolitan army. The influential barons of the papal states either remained neutral or as in the case of the Colonna colluded with the French. The Orsini, close allies of the Neapolitans, gave up their holdings in Lazio and retreated towards Naples with their troops. The surrender of Rome was negotiated soon after the Neapolitan army retreated under an agreed-upon truce. When Charles entered Rome as a triumphant conqueror, Alexander hid himself away in the Castel Sant'Angelo and refused to meet the king. Charles did not depose the pope but demanded the usual concessions: Safe passage as well as the surrender of strategically important fortresses and ports. Eventually, Pope Alexander agreed to these terms. However, the important issue of the Papal investiture with the crown of Naples was not settled. In order to make sure that the pope would not stab him in the back Charles took Cardinal Cesare Borgia, the pope's son, hostage.

At the end of January, the French army moved for its final objective: The city of Naples. The Neapolitan cities and fortresses surrendered in the wake of the French after they made an example of their taste for sacking and massacring. The vassals of

King Alfonso deserted him and soon the king abdicated and fled for Sicily. These surrenders and the speed of movement of the French army meant that the new king Ferrandino had been outmaneuvered and was ultimately occupied more with quelling unrest and maintaining order in Naples and Capua. Both cities soon fell, and Ferrandino was left to hold out in the fortresses on the islands off Naples only succeeding in delaying Charles' personal triumphant entry by a couple of weeks before joining his father in Sicily.^{cxx} Without major resistance, the French had achieved the conquest of the kingdom of Naples in only six months.

In March 1495 Venice, Milan, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire signed a treaty forming the League of Venice⁵. French aggression had led to the formation of a broad coalition which was declared to be a defensive alliance. The French conquest of Italy meant that Maximilian and the Venetians set aside their long-standing rivalry in order to focus on the French threat.^{cxxi} The Spanish had lost their proxy kingdom to the French. They had tried to remain neutral before but now they were moved to action. Ludovico Sforza had regretted advising Charles to enter Italy from the moment the French army set foot in his duchy. He had not anticipated the level of French commitment and was now fearing that the French, instead of helping him to secure his rule in the duchy, would attempt to conquer Milan as well. For this reason, Ludovico had been slowing down French progress wherever possible. It only needed little convincing by the Venetians to enter into the Holy League.

Charles left Naples in May without having obtained Papal investiture with the crown of Naples. The plan was to march the main part of his army all the way back to France via the land route. The situation was slightly different this time. His last attempt at pressuring the pope into handing him the investiture of the Neapolitan kingdom failed as Alexander simply left Rome for a fortified position and avoided the route that Charles would take in his journey northwards. Since he knew that Milan had swapped sides it was now Charles' turn to attempt to overthrow the Milanese government of Genoa. This attempt too would be thwarted by the Genoese just as the Neapolitan attempt had been thwarted one year earlier.

⁵ Many of the leagues which involved the Pope were called Holy League. To distinguish it from other leagues with the same name this alliance of 1495 is often referred to as the "League of Venice" after the place of its signing.

The complex situation in Tuscany was not resolved nor would it be. The Florentines offered friendship and assistance and pleaded for the return of their fortresses and ports as had been agreed. The Pisans on the other hand urged the king to safeguard their independence from Florence and thereby secure a loyal ally in Tuscany. The French would opt in favor of the Pisans in order to fully secure their lines of communication with Naples. The Florentines were told to wait for a final decision from the king once he had reached safety.^{cxxii}

Florentine foreign policy during this stage of the Italian Wars had completely failed: They had been the first line of defense in an alliance that would prove utterly futile. First, they had abandoned their traditional French alliance which cost their merchants and representatives in France dearly. Then they had openly opposed the French only to immediately enter into negotiations for the surrender of their key fortresses. The Medici had been exiled as a result of these failures and then the theocracy of Savonarola completely ostracized Florence in international relations. Even worse, after they had broken their French alliance and after the Neapolitan alliance had broken under pressure the Florentines were left all alone. The internal stability of Florence was severely undermined by the independence of Pisa and the two cities would be embroiled in a classical Italian city-state war for the next four years. Charles left a garrison in Pisa in order to maintain its independence but this protection did not last. The Pisans would then be supported alternately by Milan, Venice, and Maximilian in their struggle against Florence. At least this Pisan alignment with the League meant that France would counter-align and once again support the Florentines. However French support was only conditional, and its main goal was to protect the lines of communication with Naples.

Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua and a highly esteemed condottiere, was waiting for the French at Parma with a predominantly Venetian army accompanied by some Milanese contingents. The Battle of Fornovo was inconclusive: The French lost their baggage train and surrendered the field but were able to move along their intended route. The Italians had suffered higher casualties and lost most of the minor engagements of the battle but managed to stand their ground in an encounter with the seemingly invincible French. The League army continued to shadow the French army, but no further major military actions took place. The League army starved out the French garrison in the last great Milanese city, Novara, but otherwise, the situation

developed into a stalemate. Charles signed the peace of Vercelli on October 9 with Ludovico stipulating that hostilities should end, that France should clear the duchy of all troops, and that it was allowed to use Genoa for communication with and supply of Naples. Since this treaty was bilateral, Ludovico once again betrayed his allies in the League. A move that would completely isolate him from any effective alliances in the future and make him very dependent on the alliance that he was able to enter.^{cxxiii}

Meanwhile, a Spanish army had disembarked in Calabria in order to restore Ferrandino to the Neapolitan throne. Initially, the Spanish-Neapolitan troops were outmatched quantitatively and qualitatively by the French and avoided pitched battles for that reason. Some Neapolitan barons who had previously abandoned their kings now sided with the relief force as many of them had felt wronged by the French. A popular uprising against the French in Naples was the opening for Ferrandino to capture the city. The Venetians joined this front too but mainly to secure some of the Adriatic ports which had been contested between them and Naples for a long time. Later these ports would be held by the Venetians as a deposit until a Venetian loan was repaid by the Neapolitan king. In this way, frictions between the allies were avoided for the time being. The French in Naples held out tenaciously and the last garrison at Taranto surrendered in February 1498 almost two years after the Spanish had set out on their reconquest of Naples even though little assistance came from France proper.^{cxxiv}

In the grand scheme of European politics, the great change was that the French and Spanish who had avoided direct confrontation for a long time had finally clashed in a proxy war of sorts on the Italian peninsula. France had proven to be a highly aggressive and militarily potent power. On the surface, there were no major changes to the European state system: All states returned to their previous owners and no territories had been conquered. Nor had there been any major consequences of the war's outcome for the major European powers. France had conquered and then lost its conquest. Charles' expedition had however caused great damage to the French treasury. The involvement of the other two powers was minimal.

On the other hand, all Italian states except for Venice had been thoroughly destabilized: Pope Alexander had barely survived the royal visits to Rome politically. The allegiance of the signori and princes of the Romagna and Lazio to the pope had

shown to be very fragile. Some had refused his call to arms, others had bluntly sided with the French or Neapolitans. The pope barely had control of his state.

Ferrandino had been driven from his kingdom and was only able to return with the help of his Aragonese relatives. After his death, the king of Aragon would consider his claim to the Neapolitan throne stronger than that of Ferrandino's successor Federigo. Florence had lost control over Pisa and was isolated diplomatically. Also, it was under the rule of Girolamo Savonarola.

Milan had betrayed all of its allies in the course of the war. First the French, then the allies within the Holy League. Ludovico Sforza was now officially duke of Milan (instead of only being the acting regent for his nephew whom he had incarcerated). His alliance with the French was supposed to secure his rule over Milan by counterbalancing the threats from Naples. He had to betray the French in order to save himself from possible French ambitions and then he had to pay Maximilian a hefty price for his imperial investiture as duke. Ludovico's foreign policy can only be judged as highly incompetent and would come to cost Milan its independence in the long run.

5.1.2 The Second Italian War 1499-1500

Louis XII, the successor of Charles VIII, was keen on enforcing his claim on the Duchy of Milan. He concluded an alliance with the papacy of Alexander VI in which he agreed to help further the ambitions of the pope's son Cesare Borgia in exchange for the Papal blessing of his Italian ventures and of his personal matters. Treaties of Non-Aggression were signed with Philip, Duke of Burgundy, the son of Maximilian and ruler in his own right, and with Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. This was done to pave the way for his Italian venture.^{CXXV}

The most important treaty Louis signed was the Treaty of Blois signed with Venice in February 1499. After the separate peace between Charles and Ludovico had been signed the relations between the Venetians and the Duke of Milan were very poor. Various points of contention between the states of France and Venice had to be settled in order to agree on the alliance: The most important question of course was that of the partition of Milan. They agreed on the river Adda as their shared border. The questions

of war subsidies and of military contribution were settled. The allies would however remain on different sides in the Tuscan conflict: France supported Florence and Venice supported Pisa. At least they agreed to not intervene in this matter for the time being.^{cxxvi} In most matters, Venice had to agree to French demands, and so it is difficult to see why they would agree to such an unfavorable alliance in the first place. Their gains would be minimal, and not only would they sanction the second French invasion of Italy, but they would actively support it.

Some of the minor Italian states between France and Milan agreed to ally with France and contribute some troops to its expedition but they had little choice as once again a common Italian defense did not materialize.

As mentioned above, Ludovico had completely isolated himself by betraying his allies. However, out of necessity, they did not completely abandon him. The alliances he was able to achieve were very unfavorable and did not amount to a commitment to defend his reign in the duchy. Maximilian, always short of money, extorted huge sums of money in exchange for imperial recognition of his rule and the promise of defense as an integral part of the Holy Roman Empire. Then Maximilian accepted a generous dowry for the marriage with Bianca, Ludovico's daughter. Maximilian would not even use this opportunity to attack the Venetians, with whom he had a bitter rivalry and whose land he coveted.^{cxxvii}

The King of Naples, Federigo, rightfully feared that a second French invasion of Italy would also entail an attack on Naples. But he was in no position to aid Ludovico, nor did he want to repeat the mistakes his predecessors had made in defending their half-hearted allies and thereby wasting valuable time and resources. Florence was occupied with domestic issues and generally aligned with France and of the minor Italian states only those ruled by other members of the Sforza dynasty sent some aid.

The French preparations for war were swift and efficient. The Milanese efforts at mustering a defense, on the other hand, were weak: Ludovico had not maintained a proper military force and now sought to compensate for this by hiring mercenaries and mustering a citizen militia. Already unpopular before the French invasion, his emergency measures meant he was despised.

The invasion began in July of 1499 and Milan was captured in September. The Venetians had also conquered the territories allotted to them by September. The

invasion was rather uneventful. Ludovico sought to avoid battle and relied on the Milanese fortresses draining French resources and time. But the populations and garrisons often simply surrendered to the French, especially after the news of the harsh treatment that had faced those who did attempt to resist.^{cxxviii} Ludovico fled to Tirol and assembled a mercenary army. He spent huge sums of money in order to bring the Swabian War between Maximilian and the Swiss Confederacy to an end in order to be able to hire Swiss mercenaries and to free up his ally Maximilian for a Sforza restoration to the duchy.^{cxxix} Even after the conclusion of this war, Maximilian did not help his ally.

The reconquest of the duchy by Ludovico and his brother Ascanio was initially successful. The French rule of Milan had become unpopular very quickly, so the Sforza brothers were welcomed back by the cities and nobles. The French were even forced to leave Milan without a fight due to the speed and strength of the Sforza mercenary army. But after some successes, this army started to fall apart. The first Battle of Novara of 1500 was a French victory that led to the capture of Ludovico and opened the duchy to a final French reconquest. The Sforza would only be restored to the duchy 12 years later by Maximilian but by then they had become puppets of the Holy Roman Emperor. Milan was alternately under French and Imperial control during the Italian Wars. The Sforza would ultimately lose their duchy in 1530 when Charles V., Maximilian's grandson, claimed the duchy for himself and Milan would remain under foreign rule until its unification with the Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont in the 19th century.

French rule in Milan and its diplomacy in Italy became much more heavy-handed after this attempt at throwing them out of Italy. They extorted money from the cities of the duchy and introduced a military government. Their alliance with the Venetians continued even after they achieved their primary goal. They divided much of Northern Italy between each other assigning spheres of influence and cities and principalities that could be annexed. These negotiations led to tensions between the allies, but the alliance held for the time being. The Venetians were keen on utilizing their current position to maximize their advantage. They had destroyed their great Northern Italian rival and were allies to the strongest power within Italy. Most importantly both allies were in an expansionist mood.

The French accused the Marquis of Mantua, the Duke of Ferrara, and the republics of Bologna and Lucca as well as other minor Italian states and cities of having betrayed their trust during the Sforza attempt at reconquest. However, on the French side, the threats leveled might have been a pretext to extort tribute from the Italian states rather than a *casus belli* for further annexations (p. 59). Other states would pay more or less willingly to come under French protection.

The alliance with the pope now sprang into action as the French sent a sizeable contingent under the command of his son Cesare Borgia so that he could bring the princes and cities of the Romagna to heel. His ultimate goal was to carve out a “Duchy of Romagna” out of the parts of the Papal states which had been semi-autonomous from Rome for some time. Cesare conquered some territory with French help but later relied on his own troops and those of the Papal army. While he sanctioned these conquests the French king made it clear that Cesare should not attempt to take over Bologna. Louis considered Pope Alexander’s support of his conquest of Naples to be of so much value that he did not interfere in what were still internal affairs of the Papal states. The pope and his son would almost succeed in reordering the internal politics of the Papal states when Alexander died. After the papacy of Pius III who would head the church for only one month, Giuliano della Rovere a bitter rival of the Borgias would take the Papal tiara as Pope Julius II. From a French perspective, the patronage of Cesare Borgia had paid off very well. He had acted as an independent agent but was highly reliant on French aid and therefore didn’t act against French interests and when he did step out of line as in the case of Florence and Bologna the French could come to the rescue of their allies, either accruing more influence or simply payment as their protector.^{CXXX}

The alliance of the Venetians and the Pope with the French was the opening that made the French invasion possible. In order to advance their own interest, they invited the French into Italy. In the case of the Venetians, it was the mistrust and antipathy towards Ludovico Sforza and the greed for more territory, which made them judge the French presence in Italy to be worth it. Pope Alexander was thinking in terms of dynasty and was not necessarily acting in the interest of the Papal states. The French did not require military assistance, but these alliances made their actions more legitimate and made the actions of their allies more predictable. In effect French presence diminished

Venetian and Papal influence in the contested Romagna region immensely as the French were in a much stronger position than the duke of Milan had been to shape the politics of Central and Northern Italy. The change of pope would lead to a radical foreign policy shift in Rome.

5.1.3 The Third Italian War 1503-1504

One of the more intriguing treaties signed throughout the Italian Wars was the treaty between Ferdinand of Aragon and Louis in the last months of 1500. They agreed to divide the kingdom of Naples among each other. It seems the two monarchs saw this as the only way to prevent the outbreak of war at that time while still denying the kingdom in its entirety to the other party. Then again, the nature of the treaty makes it rather obvious that none of the parties intended to uphold it and it has to be assumed that they knew that of one another. In June of 1501, the armies of both monarchs moved against the Kingdom of Naples. The French quickly conquered the territory allotted to them while the Spanish were struggling. Taranto held out until March of 1502.

Only months later the Spanish and French were fighting the first skirmishes. Both monarchs were represented by a viceroy in Naples, Louis XII by Louis d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, and Ferdinand by Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordoba. This led to a delay in communications which meant that the monarchs were not aware of the outbreak of war until it was too late, and the viceroys fought the major battles of the war even though their monarchs had already signed a peace treaty. Since the facts on the ground had changed so drastically by then, the treaty was simply ignored by both sides.

At the beginning of the conflict, the Spanish were in a precarious situation: They had fewer troops than the French and they had lost the sympathy of the conquered territories quicker than the French. But they doggedly held out in the fortresses and avoided direct confrontation while constantly maneuvering. The French suspected Venetian support was helping the Spanish drag out the war but the Venetians claimed to have remained neutral. As the French lost men to attrition the Spanish were able to constantly bring in fresh reinforcements. In the spring of 1503, the Spanish were in a

position to defeat the French decisively at the third Battle of Seminara and the Battle of Cerignola due to revolutionary tactics.

After this reversal of fortunes, the Spanish set out to swiftly conquer most of the Tyrrhenian side of the kingdom. Naples fell in May its fortresses in June. Most French garrisons surrendered as the main body of the French army retreated to the north of Capua. Having received reinforcements, the French tried for one more push towards Naples but they were halted by Gonzalo at the river Garigliano where skirmishes dragged on for several months, but the Spanish were able to maintain the upper hand. They took the last French fortress and allowed the remnants of the French army to leave for Milan. On January 31, 1504, the Treaty of Lyon was signed which stipulated that France was to cede the Kingdom of Naples to Spain and the two states accepted each other's sphere of influence, France in Northern Italy and Spain in the south.^{cxxxix}

While the war in Naples drew to a close the French were threatened on an entirely different front: The old Swiss confederacy was marching over the Alps. The Swiss threat would haunt the French for the remainder of their overlordship over Milan. Even though in this case there was no military conflict the Swiss were able to achieve their goals: They annexed several towns in the valley south of the Gotthard Pass among them the fortress city of Bellinzona in a treaty signed with Louis. The Swiss had not necessarily been allies of the French, but this act of aggression was important for several reasons: Swiss mercenaries formed the main body of French infantry and were a major reason for French success. There had already been issues with this relation, especially regarding French payment for services rendered, and Swiss mercenaries could always be found on either side of most battles. The highly disciplined contingents of Swiss mercenaries which were in so high demand were not the individuals and private groups but the official state-sanctioned mercenaries. Some Swiss cantons seemed keen on making their own attempt at Italian power politics and this would be a problem for the French in the coming years. As was the case with most wars the Confederacy fought, however, the lack of unity especially in foreign policy meant that after initial successes there was never much expansion as the cantons who benefitted most from the war lost the support of their jealous allies.^{cxxxix}

Through the treaty partitioning the kingdom of Naples, France invited the permanent presence of Spain in Italy. In direct confrontations, the strategic persistency of the Spanish beat French Élan, and the French defeat was made clear to all. The French had clearly overextended their military, as they were also threatened by the Swiss in Milan. The cost of war thus even turned into a foreign policy issue: French relations with the Swiss cantons deteriorated because they did not adequately pay the Swiss mercenaries which were a key element of their military success. This was not the last time their elite infantry would turn on them.

5.2. The Wars of the League of Cambrai 1508-1515

5.2.1 The Interwar Years 1504-1508

The death of Isabella of Castille, co-regent and wife of Ferdinand of Aragon, in November 1504, changed the geopolitical situation drastically. She was succeeded by their daughter Juana “the Mad”, whose husband Philip of Burgundy, son of Maximilian, was acclaimed king *de jure uxoris* with the support of the Castilian nobles in July 1506. This could have led to a considerable split between the Iberian kingdoms if Philip hadn’t died little more than a month later. For a short in the aftermath of Isabella’s death, Ferdinand, who had fallen out with his son-in-law, fled Aragon for Naples and entered into an alliance with Louis XII. This alliance and the betrothal of Ferdinand to a daughter of Louis was another attempt at resolving the competing claims on Naples. In the spirit of this treaty, Ferdinand even reinstated the property of several French barons in Naples. With the death of Philip, Ferdinand resumed his position as regent of Castille in the name of his daughter as well as his rivalry with the King of France. While he was in his self-imposed exile in Naples Ferdinand restructured the kingdom: Ferdinand transformed the kingdom from a conquered territory under the military governorship of his viceroy Gonzalo into an integral part of the Spanish empire.^{cxxxiii} Ferdinand's heirs were now his daughter Juana, and her sons Charles and Ferdinand von Habsburg.

The French were dealing with a rebellion in Genoa which had been supported by Pope Julius II. The rebellion was not so much directed against the French as against the Genoese nobles whom they had empowered. Nonetheless, the French suppressed the revolt and made the city pay a hefty sum, and many liberties previously granted were rescinded.

In order to ingratiate himself with the new pope, the French king helped him subdue Bologna once and for all. He did however give refuge to the Bentivoglio family, former rulers of Bologna, in order to use them as leverage against the pope. Should the pope displease him, the king would support a restoration of Bentivoglio rule in Bologna.

Maximilian reentered the Italian stage in February 1508 declaring war against Venice. His goal was once again to reestablish Imperial authority in Italy and to take

some Venetian lands. The French answered the Venetian call to arms, but they did not participate in the actual fighting. The Venetians soundly defeated Maximilian's invasion and were poised to enter his ducal territories instead. The French prevented the Venetians from doing this. While the French did join the Venetians this war showed major cracks in their alliance: The French had been more of a restraining force rather than a supportive one for the Venetians in this war. The Venetians and Maximilian concluded a separate peace with no substantive changes, which Louis was forced to agree to even though he had wanted to use this war to further his various claims against Maximilian, especially in the Duchy of Burgundy and the Burgundian Netherlands.^{cxxxiv}

Dynastic politics and some particular deaths of old age led to radical shifts in the European balance of power: While at first the Iberian Union, as well as the Spanish-Habsburg alliance, seemed to break up after the death of Isabella, the death of Philip meant that Ferdinand and Maximilian were now working on the same dynastic project.⁶ The aggressive purpose of the Franco-Venetian alliance meant that there were few converging interests between the two parties. The French used their position as the dominant and less dependent partner to restrain the Venetians from exploiting their success against Maximilian.

5.2.2 The League of Cambrai

The French king settled the issues he had with the Habsburgs, regarding Burgundy, Milan, and the France-Spanish border for the time being in order to win Maximilian over for an alliance directed against Venice. This League of Cambrai would come to include Pope Julius II and Ferdinand of Aragon.

The Venetians had expanded too successfully while they were allied to the Kingdom of France. This partnership had been mutually beneficial for a long time, but the gains Venice had made were highly dependent on an Italian order where the Ultramontane hegemon was allied to the strongest Italian state by far. As long as these

⁶ Compare Illustration N, p. 120

two states were able to get along nobody could seriously threaten their domination. The Venetians held Imperial territory and therefore were in conflict with Maximilian; they held a part of the Duchy of Milan as per the treaty of Blois; they held several ports on the Adriatic coast of Naples; and they were expanding in the Romagna threatening both the Papal States as well as French influence in the region.^{cxxxv}

The French had mostly needed the Venetian in order to secure their conquest of Milan. If the strongest Italian state was in league with the invader, it was very unlikely that any form of common Italian response would materialize. How important this support was initially, was shown in the fact that various Northern and Central Italian states did provide assistance to Ludovico Sforza when it looked likely that he could push the French out of Italy once more. But now that their rule of the duchy was settled the French were in a powerful situation: After the loss of Naples, they were no longer plagued by overexpansion and were therefore no longer dependent on the support of any Italian state. For the time being, they had no unrealized claims except for the parts of the Duchy of Milan occupied by Venice. They were free to play the arbitrator in many of the minor Italian conflicts and their influence in Italy was at its height. For this reason, Venice once again started looking like a rival rather than an ally more and more. And they had felt wronged by the Venetians on several occasions over the last few years.^{cxxxvi}

Maximilian and Louis were the key members of the League. Their plan was to carve up the entire Venetian Terraferma between each other. Ferdinand of Aragon was mainly interested in retrieving the Venetian ports in Naples. The Pope, the Duke of Mantua, and the Marquis of Ferrara were to take back the land the Venetians had taken from them in the previous decades. Of the allies the Pope was the most reluctant: He mistrusted French intentions. Also, if the League succeeded, another great Italian power would be overrun by the Ultramontanes exposing him to the whims of the great three monarchs. But since Venice seemed doomed anyway it seemed better to join the League rather than try to oppose it.

Louis XII declared war on April 17, 1509, and the French crossed the river into Venetian territory at the beginning of May in full force. Similar to the previous wars their enemy avoided a pitched battle while the French were eager to force it upon him. When the French caught up with the rearguard of the Venetian army it led to the Battle of Agnadello. It resulted in a decisive French victory and while the Venetian

commanders were careful to not commit to the battle fully, the losses on the Venetian side were high. The defeat led to the defection of many cities of the Terraferma to the French which controlled most of the territory within two weeks. The Pope, Ferrara, and Mantua profited from the battle by pushing the Venetians out of the Romagna. Once again Maximilian was having the most trouble and there were several instances where French troops had to support Imperial troops in conquering their allotted cities but he too profited from the French exploit^{cxxxvii}. The Venetians had deserted many of the cities beforehand in order to concentrate on defending Venice from the French. For the Venetians, the defense of the capital was much more important than trying to cling on to cities whose loyalty in the face of a foreign army was questionable:

“Like the citizen elites of the duchy of Milan a decade earlier, many citizens of Venetian subject cities in 1509 deluded themselves with pipe dreams of a foreign monarch being willing to exercise a distant overlordship over self-governing cities which would, crucially, enjoy full control over their own extensive subject territories. It was such dreams that made the civic elites, mindful of the effective independence of the great German Imperial cities, prefer to surrender to Maximilian rather than Louis”^{cxxxviii}

The Venetian already calculated that it would be strategically more sound to at first give up the mainland and then reconquer it under different circumstances.^{cxxxix} The French and German occupation of the cities of the Terraferma soon made the population turn against them again. The rural populace even turned to a form of guerrilla warfare to punish the looting soldiers.

In the aftermath of the complete loss of the Terraferma, the Venetians entered negotiations with the minor partners: They signed treaties with the pope and Ferdinand surrendering the cities that still resisted ratifying their annexation into their respective territories. Both had been surprised at the ease with which the French conquered the Venetian lands and felt threatened by the French and Imperial power grab in Northern Italy. They would not openly oppose them, but neither would they take any part in further military actions. And with their demands fulfilled they even started secretly building a coalition against the French.^{cxl}

The concessions the Venetians made towards Ferdinand and Pope Julius II gave them some breathing space. After the initial shock of the French victory at Agnadello had worn off and the capital seemed to be safe from attack, the Venetians started a cautious counterattack. As the Imperials were having trouble with their conquest Venetian troops were able to retake several of the cities they had occupied. As the war dragged on the French king grew distrustful of his allies. None of them were participating as expected and Maximilian even expected the French to help him conquer his share for him. The two main allies rallied once again for a campaign in 1510 for just this purpose but as the French had to send the majority of their troops back to the duchy, the League troops were soon retreating before the Venetians again. The French returned to the duchy because of another Swiss incursion which had been instigated by Pope Julius II. The Swiss had their own expansionist ambitions but most of all they felt repeatedly wronged by the French king and increasingly threatened by his presence in Milan.^{cxli} The Pope continued with covert action against the French making another three attempts of inciting a rebellion in Genoa. All of these attempts failed. At the end of that year, the Venetian troops had recovered much of their eastern holdings from Imperial control.

The situation between the pope and the French king deteriorated to such a point that the Pope attacked Ferrara which was still in alliance with France. This led to a very awkward war in which both sides sent troops to take fortresses and cities in the Romagna, but they never openly attacked each other. An alliance was formed between the pope and the Swiss confederacy in which the Swiss promised not to enter the service of the enemies of the pope. The Swiss forces the pope had enlisted were asked to link up with papal forces in Romagna, but this soon proved impossible. However, the entrance of around 10'000 Swiss soldiers on the northern borders of the Duchy of Milan meant that the French had to focus on defense. The French reinforcements that were dispatched to the Duke of Ferrara would technically be fighting on the side of the Ferrarese. Both sides were not yet ready to accept that open war would break out. The same was true for Ferdinand: He sent troops to aid the pope in his campaign, but they too would serve under the papal banner and Ferdinand was careful not to become an open enemy of Louis. The French were prevented from taking Bologna because they didn't dare besiege the city in which the pope was currently residing. Later when the papal army wanted to march against the city of Ferrara they were blocked by the

French camp. Maximilian whose main interest was still in conquering Venice did not understand the state of affairs between his allies and tried to arrange a great peace conference but to no avail. During this unofficial war between France on the one side and the pope and Spain on the other side, the reverence the French held for the pope grew weaker and they started driving the papal armies out of the cities of the Romagna more vigorously. Militarily the pope was losing the war when Louis doubled down by calling for a General Council of the church to discuss the deposition of the Julius. This General Council ultimately did not come to be as it lacked support throughout Italy and Europe, but it was a major factor that led to the outbreak of open hostilities.^{cxlii}

Maximilian and Louis were able to temporarily set aside their various conflicts of interest in order to carve up the Venetian state between each other. Ferdinand and the pope joined in order to seize Venetian territories in their vicinity. Once again, this league was not primarily a military cooperation: France was the member to defeat Venice militarily and it did not require assistance. In fact, the French even had to support the lackluster imperial military performance. The main purpose of this alliance was the mutual acceptance of the acquisition of Venetian territory. In the end, Venetian persistence, both diplomatically and militarily, meant that they survived this coalition almost unscathed: They cut their losses in the Romagna and in Puglia thereby neutralizing Spain and the Papal states. After the initial French onslaught, they correctly calculated that neither the French nor Maximilian could sustain their current military operations in a long war of attrition. Another aggressive alliance falls apart due to the fact that the convergent interests soon fall away. And Louis and Maximilian are once again overextended militarily and financially.

5.2.3. The Holy League of 1511-1514

In October 1511 the Papal States, Spain, and Venice formed the Holy League in order to defend Italy against the French aggression. With this treaty, the pope and above all Ferdinand openly declared war against Louis. The alliance was supplemented by another agreement with the Swiss to harm the French in Milan whenever possible. The Swiss actually marched on Milan but decided against beginning a siege of the

metropolis. The French shadowed the Swiss and offered negotiation until at some point the Swiss army simply disbanded.

The French were further delayed by revolts in the duchy of Milan fermented by the Venetians. All the while Maximilian was still engaged in fighting with the Venetians. Finally, they were able to confront the armies of the Holy League in the Romagna. As per usual the French army sought battle and the League army avoided it. By threatening a siege of the highly important Papal city the French were able to force the League army to join the battle of Ravenna on April 11, 1512. This battle was another French victory that allowed the French to take Ravenna. But they were not able to further exploit their victory because once again the Swiss were marching over the Alps. Also, France proper was being invaded by Spanish as well as English armies. Maximilian meanwhile had signed a truce with Venice and remained neutral for the time being.^{cxliii}

The most important contribution to the Holy League would ultimately come from the Swiss Confederacy which had signed another treaty with the pope for the supply of troops. With this treaty, the cantons fully joined the geopolitical arena of the Italian Wars. They would not join the League but contribute troops to the League in exchange for pay. This was their regular mercenary behavior. The treaty however also stipulated that the Swiss should attack the French separately as belligerents in their own right.^{cxliv}

The French were already evacuating the duchy of Milan as the Swiss and Venetians were recovering the Terraferma, and the Papal and Spanish forces retook the Romagna. Without a major battle, the French had lost most of their holdings in Italy with the only major city under their control being Genoa.

With the French ousted from Italy, the Holy League discussed the reordering of Italy. As per usual the cohesion of the alliance was faltering now that the common threat was dispelled.^{cxlv} All of the allies wanted a piece of Milan except for Ferdinand and he too wanted to have his word on the restructuring of the duchy. Some of these claims were conflicting. For this reason, Venice soon focused on retrieving any fortresses in the Terraferma that were still held by French stragglers. Ferdinand fell out with the pope over the Spanish troops which were either to be paid by the pope or to leave Italy. Maximilian and Julius both took some cities. The pope was struggling with a dilemma: He wanted to secure the support of both Ferdinand and Maximilian while

simultaneously reducing their influence on the Italian peninsula.^{cxlvi} In the end, Massimiliano Sforza was installed under the protection of the Swiss who signed a treaty of perpetual alliance with the Milanese. The reason was simple: The Swiss held the city of Milan, and it was ultimately their decision what was to happen with it. This amounted to nothing less than Milan being a puppet state of the Swiss.

The former enemies of Venice join with the republic in an effort to expel the French from Italy. This alliance is mostly ineffective. The Papal-Spanish military cooperation is defeated while the Venetians continue their war of attrition against Louis and Maximilian in the Veneto. It is the Swiss who singlehandedly defeated the French and conquered the Duchy of Milan. As soon as he sees the tides turning Maximilian signs a tentative peace with the Venetians and joins the League in order to reap the benefits. Once again, with the expulsion of the French, the purpose of the alliance is void and the conflicts of interest become evident. It is however maintained in order to keep the French out of Italy.

5.2.4 The Second Franco-Venetian Alliance and the End of the First Phase

In a twist of events the dormant conflict between Maximilian and Venice led to a new round of re-alignments: Venice concluded another treaty of alliance with France while the pope aligned with Maximilian. Venice wanted to recover the cities in the Terraferma that Maximilian had occupied, and France wanted to retake Milan. Another great change was brought about by the death of Julius II and the election of Giovanni de Medici as Pope Leo X. Giovanni had taken part in the successful League effort to reinstall the Medici in Florence. While recent history meant that the Medici were not friends of the French kings neither Florence, now rid of the pro-French faction, nor the new pope was keen on joining in on the outbreak of conflict that was about to come.^{cxlvii}

This left the Swiss and Milan aligned with Maximilian with the former being threatened by a French invasion and the latter by the Venetians. Ferdinand had signed a truce for the Franco-Spanish borderlands but still opposed Louis in Italy. Also, Ferdinand and Maximilian were coordinating their action ever more closely as they

ultimately were thinking of the interest of their mutual grandsons, Charles and Ferdinand. Though allies, the war would be fought on two different fronts: The Spanish decided to stay in Central Italy and left the Swiss and Milanese to defend against Milan alone. At the battle of Novara, the Swiss soundly defeated the French in an open-field battle.^{cxlviii} This was the first defeat in a major encounter the French had suffered in Northern Italy. And in contrast to their defeats in Naples almost ten years prior, they had not been whittled down in a long war of attrition. With the siege of Dijon, in the French heartlands, the Swiss made the French humiliation complete. They ultimately withdrew but they had clearly shown their dominance on the field of battle. With the victory over the French invasion, the Swiss cemented their overlordship over Milan. The Spanish only showed up after the fighting had concluded and overturned the pro-French government in Genoa by force.

The Spanish assistance of the Imperial effort against Venice was more active and even the pope joined in once more against the Venetians. The allied army defeated the Venetians in a defeat that was almost as decisive as the one at Agnadello but the allies were not able to capitalize on their victory due to infighting. After the occupation of a few cities the war devolved into a war of attrition and reciprocal raids, but the Venetians were not able to reverse the tide of the war.

The Holy League was faltering as there were serious disagreements about what was supposed to happen with the conquered Venetian lands: Ferdinand envisioned a great duchy of Milan which would encompass much of the Veneto. This duchy was to be ruled by Ferdinand's favorite grandson, also named Ferdinand. The most obvious problem was that the Swiss held the Duchy of Milan and saw no reason to leave it to either of the monarchs. There was also a disagreement between Maximilian and Ferdinand about the exact division of the Venetian lands. The pope tried to mediate between the two, but he clearly favored Maximilian as Spanish presence in Italy grew increasingly powerful whereas Maximilian had not yet seemed to pose much of a threat.^{cxlix} The foreign policy position Leo's predecessors had left him was very difficult. It grew even more complicated as he effectively was in charge of Florence, being the head of the Medici family, which once again ruled in Florence. For this reason, he finally decided not to take an active role in the upcoming war.

Francis I succeeded Louis XII in January of 1515 and renewed the claim on the Duchy of Milan and the alliance with Venice. The members of the Holy League in turn

vowed to support each other against this Franco-Venetian alliance. But as these promises were half-hearted the Swiss would have to stand against the French alone once again. The divisions among the Swiss cantons regarding their common policy on Italy had grown after the French invasion of 1513 and were growing. The Battle of Marignano on September 13, 1515, would be a decisive Swiss defeat after which the Swiss surrendered the entire duchy to the French king.^{cl}

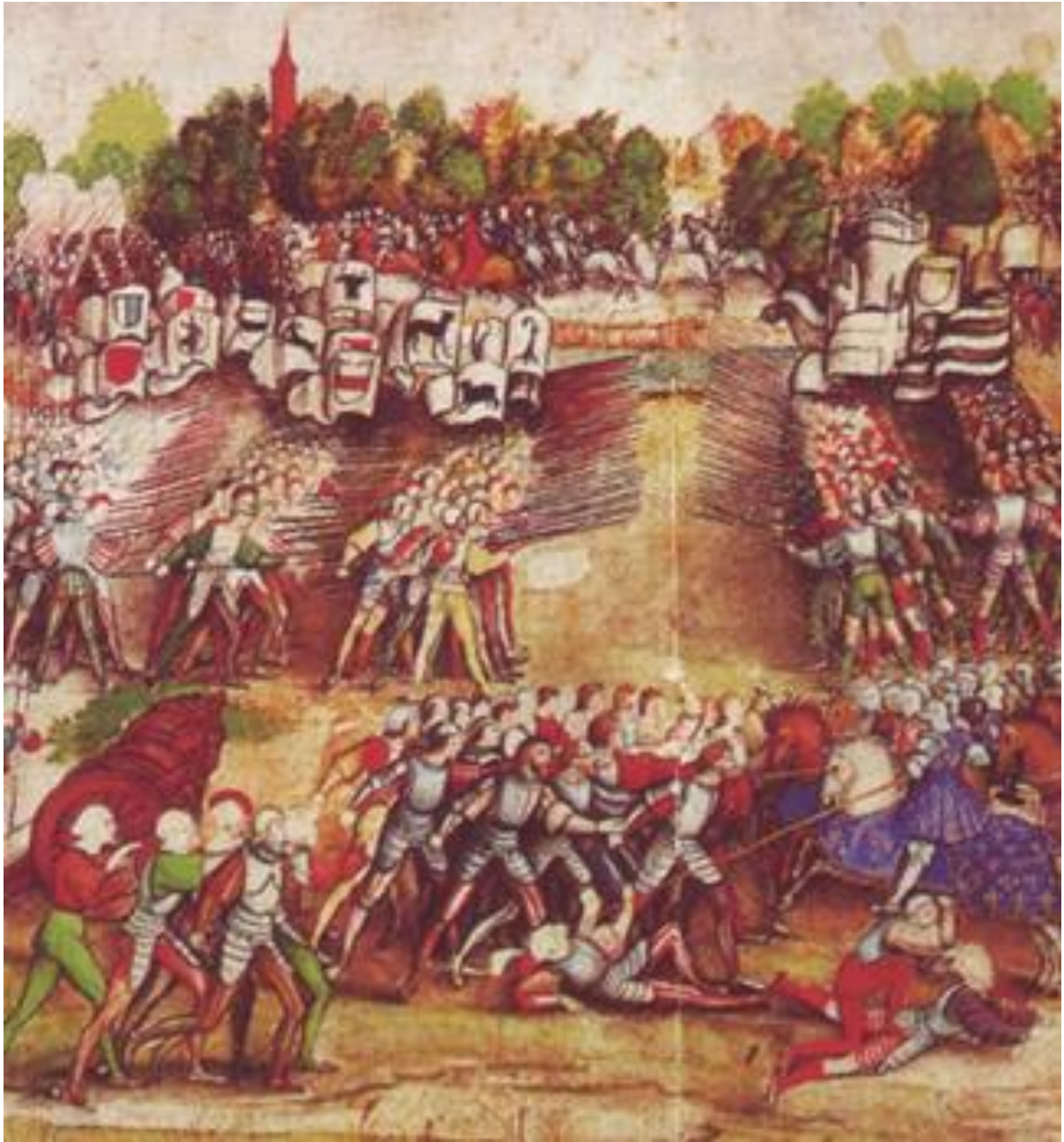
After this defeat the Holy League finally decayed completely: Leo was ready to put himself, the Papal States, Florence, and in effect Italy under the protection of Francis. Ferdinand retreated to Naples. Maximilian was ultimately just as alone in defending the cities he held in the Veneto against the combined armies of France and Venice as the Swiss had been in Milan. In December 1516 the Treaty of Brugges was formalized. In effect, the Venetians recuperated all of the territories in the Terraferma which they had lost since the formation of the League of Cambrai. The French too restored their rule of the Duchy of Milan.^{cli}

The Holy League proved wholly unsuccessful at countering the revanchist alliance of France and Venice. This alliance constellation is the one that come closest to the classical idea of military cooperation: The Venetians and French pool their military resources and so do the Pope and the Spanish. Maximilian's support for the Swiss is once again insufficient and so the Swiss are left to fight the French alone. With the entire might of France and Venice it initially looks like the Swiss might prevail. But ultimately Swiss resistance was broken, and the League signed a peace with France and Venice: France and Venice recover most of their territory, but the Papal states were expanded by Modena and Parma as well as the former Venetian possessions in the Romagna. While militarily ineffective the League had proven to be very beneficial to the Papal states. The other less obvious victor of this first phase was Spain: They had maintained their rule over Naples and had become the indispensable nation in Italy against the constant French aggression.

5.3 Epilogue: Charles V and the Rise of Spanish Hegemony

Ferdinand of Aragon died in 1516 and Maximilian of Habsburg died in 1519. Their grandson was crowned King of Spain and co-regent of his mother Juana in 1516 and then elected Holy Roman Emperor in June of 1519. He unified the rich Burgundian state with the powerful Iberian monarchies under the Imperial crown. In Italy he held Naples, and he had a personal claim on the duchy of Milan as per a treaty Maximilian had signed with Louis. With the accession of Charles V to the Early Modern Habsburg Empire the conflict enters an entirely different stage. While the conflict between the Habsburgs and the Valois in Northern Europe had previously been a side theatre to the Italian Wars, these wars now formed part of a larger hegemonic struggle between the two powers concerning all of Western Europe. While the Italian powers first were players in their own right in the power politics of Italy they had increasingly lost their significance during the various stages of the Italian Wars. Except for Venice, which had fought the Ultramontanes valiantly but had also paid a high price. The conflict had now reduced the Italian states to irrelevance on their own peninsula.

Lombardy would remain one of the main battlefields for the wars still to come. After Milan switched hands several times Charles would ultimately conquer it for the Habsburg Empire after the decisive Battle of Pavia 1525. The League of Cognac formed in 1526 comprised France, Venice, the Papal States, and England. Their combined might was not successful at driving out the Spanish-Imperial hegemony over Italy and the status quo established in 1530 would remain with minor changes until the wars ended in 1559.^{clii}



The Battle of Marignano (1515) in a contemporary depiction (artist unknown)

Conclusion

In order to understand the alliances of the Italian Wars it is necessary to first understand the Renaissance state. In this paper, the Renaissance state was discussed only insofar as it was necessary to understand its foreign policy. The aim was to be able to judge to which degree foreign policy was interest-driven and therefore determined by rationality and to which degree the ongoing transition from the feudal state meant that it was dominated by the decisions of often erratic leaders. The conclusion was that the Italian states were constituted in such a way that they acted more rationally; the Ultramontane states were also in the process of becoming modern states, but the dynastic principles still made them very unpredictable. The size and relative safety of the Ultramontanes in the Italian Wars also meant that they could afford to act more arbitrarily. The double-edged role of legitimacy is also important: On the one hand it necessitated ruling according to rational power politics and thus, in a way, made states stronger. On the other hand, the lack of legitimacy was the reason why the factionalism within several Italian states made them liable to conquest.

The alliances of the Italian Wars were the first agreements of cooperation between states in the modern European state system. The highly competitive Italian Renaissance state system had already known this type of alliance throughout the 15th century and established a balance of power by means of ever-shifting alliances. In the Italian state system, Venice came closest to a hegemonic position and was considered to be a threat by most other Italian states. The rather loose European state system had only made use of inter-state alliances very rarely. In the European state system, there was no hegemonic struggle, but France had a great advantage over all of the other major states and was therefore able to act very aggressively. This makes France the main actor of this stage of the Italian wars around which the actions of other actors are centered. The discussion of the Renaissance state, state system, and warfare led to the conclusion that the environment for making foreign policy decisions was highly unpredictable, much more so than in any era thereafter.

The Italians prided themselves on being able to calculate the actions of other actors. The competitive nature of their regional system and the behavior of states according to the reason of state meant that the Italian states were more predictable. The Italians had already made use of their influence with the Ultramontanes before the

Italian wars in order to gain an advantage over their rivals. They believed that they could instrumentalize the Ultramontanes and then get rid of them again. Milan miscalculated very badly. The pope and Venice, however, were able to instrumentalize the foreign interventions to their benefit, at least in the short term. In the long term, their invitations to the French and Spanish were the opening for the following centuries of foreign domination in Italy. The focus on the intra-Italian balance of power shows in the fact that the pope initially preferred to cut Venice down to size rather than drive the French out of Italy. Then again, he might have just been making the best use of the situation by retaking territory in a moment of Venetian weakness.

Alliances of the age were generally reactive or aggressive. This can be attributed to the specific nature of Renaissance warfare: After an initial successful invasion by the Ultramontanes, the other states reacted by forming a coalition. These Holy Leagues were initiated by the pope in order to restore the Italian balance of power. The French treaties were purely aggressive: The first alliance with Venice to carve up Milan and the League of Cambrai with Maximilian to carve up Venice. While the Italian alliances prior to the French invasion were based on the mutual threat to security, the key element in most theories of alliance, the unpredictable nature of the colliding systems as well the new art of war meant that alliances were mostly motivated by possible profit in both cases, coalitions and aggressive alliances, after the successful fulfillment of the convergent interests, the conflicting interests very quickly took over.

The French alliances with Milan and the pope were hegemonic. With the Milanese alliance, the case is clear. The alliance with the pope was more complex due to the very different capabilities: France was very strong in every material aspect; the pope however had the power to legitimize French conquest by force. The alliance with Venice turned from an aggregation alliance, even though Venice as the weaker party had to make several concessions, into a deadlocked or even hegemonic alliance after the partition of Milan. The Italian powers attempted to make use of French military power. The purpose of these alliances from a French perspective was however not military: The cost of the French army was very high and so the French tried to make the Italians pay for the French invasion of Italy. Moreover, through these alliances, the French rendered the Italian state system and its actors more predictable. The most important outcome was that no common Italian defense could be organized. Through

the Italian invitations, the French invasion was also legitimized to a certain degree, at the very least in the eyes of their allies.

The Spanish alliance policy during the Italian Wars would turn out to be the most far-sighted: Their presence in the Italian Wars was much less heavy-handed than that of the French or Imperials: They consolidated their power base in the kingdom of Sicily and would not attempt to force their interests in Northern Italy. In Cesa's typology, they could be called guarantee alliances. The Spanish mainly aided other states in achieving their goals. This made these states dependent on Spanish aid, while the Spanish had very few interests to defend and could therefore act free from restraints. This meant that the Spanish could achieve a very well-calculated expansion of their influence with the Italian states limiting their costs along the line.

The unpredictable nature of Renaissance warfare is best exemplified in the War of the League of Cambrai: The efforts of two great Ultramontane powers to carve up Venice came to a standstill militarily; the anti-French "Holy League" was defeated by the French; and then the Swiss Confederacy, a minor power, single-handedly expelled the French from Italy and changed the dynamics of the Italian state system. Under these circumstances, it is very difficult to formulate a rational alliance policy. The aggressive purpose of the alliances and the unpredictability explain the flexibility of alliance politics. Opportunities were seized as soon as they presented themselves. At least in the short run, it was wise to switch alliances at the first opportunity, and since all actors acted accordingly there was no benefit in building the reputation of a steadfast ally and no negative consequences for backstabbing. In the long run, this undermined the integrity of the Italian state system to the benefit of the Ultramontane states. In the end, the most decisive alliance of the Italian Wars, finalized at the end of the period discussed here, was not a modern alliance of states but a traditional dynastic alliance: The Habsburg Union between the Holy Roman Empire and the Empire of Spain. Its formation can be attributed to the French threat to both Austria and Spain. While this alliance would then be a more formidable foe for the French in the following episodes of the Italian Wars it was the consistent alliance policy of the Spanish that laid the groundwork for the Spanish-Imperial dominance of Italy.

In the end it was the patience applied in the Spanish alliance politics that would come to be victorious over the Machiavellian scheming of the Italian princes and French brute force. The short-term pacts with an aggressive purpose can be called

unholy alliances as states were often joining with the devil in order to achieve a short-term goal. By contrast the Spanish alliance politics sought to build “Holy Alliances” in which they used their influence in order to serve the general interest of building a stable state system within Italy. Since they were the guarantors of this system this would be in their specific interest in the long run: The system was dependent on the Spanish guarantees and so it is through guarantees that Spain would come to dominate Italy. The Holy League of 1511 was not successful militarily and ultimately relied on Swiss intervention. But it was an example of Spanish investment with no further short-term goal than to expel the French.

The shifting alliances of the Italian Wars show how complex alliance politics is in a multipolar world. The unpredictable nature of the state system as well as the developments of a revolutionary form of war make it difficult for states to formulate long term alliance politics. There are two key structural differences to the modern state system: First a state system in the modern sense had yet to be established. And resulting from this, secondly, a hegemon had yet to be established. The success of the Spanish alliance politics in settling the uncertainty of the state system shows the strength of “guarantee alliances” in contrast to the French hegemonic alliances. It is very similar to the alliance politics NATO applies in relation to its external partners. Importantly, the prerequisite for this form of alliance politics are the resources to pursue a long-term strategy at high costs and little immediate benefits.

Notes

- ⁱ Barnett/Duvall p. 43ff
- ⁱⁱ Liska p. 8
- ⁱⁱⁱ ibid p. 12-41
- ^{iv} ibid p. 20ff
- ^v Schweller p. 927ff
- ^{vi} Anderson p. 71f
- ^{vii} Liska p. 20
- ^{viii} ibid p. 15ff
- ^{ix} Cesa (2010) p. 33
- ^x ibid p. 38
- ^{xi} ibid p. 36
- ^{xii} Liska p. 10
- ^{xiii} Machiavelli p. 86-91
- ^{xiv} Cesa (2010) p. 41
- ^{xv} Snyder p. 462- 479
- ^{xvi} Cesa (2010) p. 53-68
- ^{xvii} Mattingly p. 125-139
- ^{xviii} Strayer, p. 89-111
- ^{xix} Prak, p. 1-18
- ^{xx} Somaini, p. 250-255
- ^{xxi} Tanzini, p. 98
- ^{xxii} Franceschi/ Mola p. 444-466
- ^{xxiii} Burckhardt p. 1-33
- ^{xxiv} Machiavelli p. 14-21
- ^{xxv} Mattingly p. 48ff
- ^{xxvi} Ibid p. 106
- ^{xxvii} Strayer p. 60
- ^{xxviii} Geevers/ Gustafsson p. 11-13
- ^{xxix} Tilly p. 141
- ^{xxx} Strayer, p. 88
- ^{xxxi} Ibid p. 61ff

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- xxxii Ibid p. 93
- xxxiii Anderson p. 3f
- xxxiv Ibid p. 88
- xxxv Wiesflecker p. 463-497
- xxxvi Machiavelli p. 82f
- xxxvii Tilly p. 141
- xxxviii Querengässer p. 1ff
- xxxix Taylor p. 1-9
- xl Mallett& Shaw p. 375-380
- xli Querengässer p. 205-220
- xlii Ibid p. 171ff
- xliii Anderson p. 24ff
- xliv ibid p. 13
- xlv Taylor 39-59
- xlvi Querengässer p. 19-22
- xlvi Anderson p. 20
- xlvi Taylor p. 88-99
- xlix Mallett & Shaw p. 310-332
- l Querengässer p. 187-192
- li Ibid p. 41ff
- lii Mattingly p. 53
- liii Anderson p. 77f
- liv ibid p. 6-11
- lv Tanzini p. 94
- lvi Ibid p. 101ff
- lvii Machiavelli p. 44-52
- lviii Mallett & Shaw p. 44ff
- lix Finlay p. 939
- lx Knapton p. 135-141
- lxi Mallett/ Hale, p. 199-210
- lxii Finlay p.940ff
- lxiii Mainoni p. 118
- lxiv Gamberini (2012) p. 19-28

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- lxv Del Tredici p. 156-174
- lxvi Mallett & Shaw p. 49ff
- lxvii Carocci p. 82-88
- lxviii Strayer p. 15-25
- lxix Carocci, p. 69-81
- lxx Ibid. p. 88f
- lxxi Sakellariou, p. 327-353
- lxxii Burckhardt p. 1-4
- lxxiii Somaini p. 255-259
- lxxiv Senatore p. 31-49
- lxxv Mallett & Shaw p. 62-75
- lxxvi Mattingly p. 105f
- lxxvii Potter p. 251f
- lxxviii Knecht p. 107-118
- lxxix Mallett & Shaw p. 13
- lxxx Abulafia (1997) p. 147
- lxxxi Potter p. 57- 133
- lxxxii Anderson p. 73f
- lxxxiii Mallett & Shaw p. 19-26
- lxxxiv Knecht p. 126
- lxxxv Mallett & Shaw p. 57
- lxxxvi Anderson p. 80f
- lxxxvii Potter p. 260
- lxxxviii Mallett & Shaw p.65
- lxxxix Burckhardt p. 1-12
- xc Mallett & Shaw p.43f
- xcI Abulafia (1997) p. 148
- xcii Mattingly p. 116
- xciii Anderson p. 72f
- xciv Ibid p. 95
- xcv Mattingly p. 115
- xcvi ibid p. 115ff
- xcvii ibid p. 108f

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- ^{xcviii} Anderson p. 3f
- ^{xcix} Mattingly p. 51ff
- ^c Ibid p. 119
- ^{ci} Anderson p. 71ff
- ^{cii} Ibid p. 86f
- ^{ciii} ibid p. 102-248
- ^{civ} ibid p. 67
- ^{cv} Mattingly p. 47ff
- ^{cvi} Gentile p. 310-322
- ^{cvi} Mattingly p.116
- ^{cviii} ibid p. 71-86
- ^{cix} Shaw (2014) p. 198ff
- ^{cx} Somaini, p. 451-450
- ^{cx} Tanzini p. 95f
- ^{cxii} Mattingly p. 49ff
- ^{cxiii} Franceschi/ Mola p. 463ff
- ^{cxiv} Senatore p. 30-33
- ^{cxv} Anderson p. 82
- ^{cxvi} Ilardi p. 135f
- ^{cxvii} Shaw (1995) p. 249-261
- ^{cxviii} Mallett & Shaw p. 23f
- ^{cxix} Clough p. 191-201
- ^{cxx} Abulafia (1997) p. 252ff
- ^{cxix} Kidwell p. 295ff
- ^{cxix} Mallett & Shaw p.29f
- ^{cxix} Santosuosso p. 221-250
- ^{cxix} Mallett & Shaw p. 32-35
- ^{cxix} Potter p. 126ff
- ^{cxix} Mallett & Shaw p. 46-49
- ^{cxix} Gamberini (2015) p. 27ff
- ^{cxix} Chittolino p. 391-394
- ^{cxix} Gagliardi p. 13f
- ^{cxix} Mallett & Shaw p. 54-63

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- cxixi *ibid* p. 66-75
- cxixii Gasser p. 501-505
- cxixiii Abulafia (2006) p. 140-143
- cxixiv Wiesflecker p. 15-26
- cxixv Finlay p. 935ff
- cxixvi Mallett & Shaw p. 96-99
- cxixvii Wiesflecker p. 34f
- cxixviii Mallett & Shaw p. 103
- cxixix Finlay p. 942
- cxli Mallett & Shaw p. 105-109
- cxlii Potter p. 130f
- cxliii Mallett & Shaw p. 109-113
- cxliiii *Ibid* p. 115-119
- cxliv Mommsen p. 125-133
- cxlv Wiesflecker p. 124ff
- cxlvi Shaw (2017) p. 166-168
- cxlvii Mallett & Shaw p. 135-138
- cxlviii Potter p. 131f
- cxlix Mallett & Shaw p. 143f
- cl Knecht p. 133-136
- cli Mallett & Shaw p. 149f
- clii *Ibid* p. 161-203

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8. Appendices

8.1 Timeline

The Italic League 1454/1492: Agreement between the Duchy of Milan, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Florence, the Papal States, and the Republic of Florence leads to 40 years of peace

French Invasion of 1494/1495:

French claim on Naples and Milanese alliance with France

French march through Italy destabilizing all states on their route

Coalition of all Italian states, Spain, and the Holy Roman Emperor against the French

Battle of Fornovo is inconclusive but the French army returns to France

French garrisons in Naples are defeated by 1498, return of the Trastamara

Result: France conquers Naples and loses it again, Medici exiled from Florence, Franco-Milanese alliance breaks

Conflict between Pisa and Florence 1499-1501

Milanese, Genoan, and Venetian support for Pisa in order to check the rising power of Florence

Second Milanese invitation of external power: Maximilian I.

Milan, Genoa, Venice, and HRE VS Florence

Result: Florence finally reconquers Pisa, and remains a destabilized ally of the French

Second French Invasion of 1499

Franceo-Venetian alliance in order to divide Milan

Franco-Papal alliance to strengthen the pope in the Romagna in return for the approval of French claims to Naples

Conquest of Milan by the French

French and Venetian alliance against Milan

Result: French rule over Milan for the next 13 years, Cesare Borgia establishes short-lived “Duchy of Romagna”

Treaty of Granada 1500 and the Neapolitan War 1502-1504

Division of the Kingdom of Naples between France and Spain

Conflict between the two states erupts soon after the conquest

French defeats at Cerignola and Garigliano in 1503 led to their evacuation from Naples

Treaty of Lyon 1504 cedes Naples to Spain, splitting spheres of influence: Spain in the south, France in the north

War of the League of Cambrai of 1508

Coalition initiated by the Pope to counter Venetian power in northern Italy uniting France with Milan, the HRE, Spain with Naples, and the Duchy of Ferrara all with very different interests against Venice

French victories led to the Papal States turning against France which was considered the greater threat and making peace with Venice

Result: Papal state and Spain recovered territories previously lost to Venice, France occupied most of the Papal Romagna

Holy League of 1511

Coalition of the Pope with Venice, England, Spain, and the HRE against France

Collapse of the League after the death of Pope Julius, conflict of interest between allies

Swiss occupation of Milan 1512-1515, recaptured by French after the battle of Marignano

Second Alliance of France and Venice against Spain, the HRE, the Papal States, and England

Ferdinand of Spain dies in 1516

Maximilian I dies in 1519

Accession of Charles V to the throne of the HRE and of the Spanish Empire

8.2 Dramatis Personae

Charles VIII de Valois 6.1470-4.1498 King of France 8.1483-4.1498, King of Naples 2.1495- 7.1495 Son of Louis XI the great unifier of France, starting his reign at a very young age he makes the last steps of consolidating France and invades Italy.

Louis XII de Valois-Orleans 6.1462- 1.1515 Duke of Orleans 1.1465- 4.1483, King of France 4.1483-1.1515, King of Naples 8.1501- 3.1504, Duke of Milan 9.1499- 6.1512 Cousin of Charles VIII, first regent then rebellious pretender, he is pardoned by Charles and accompanies him on his Italian invasion, he remains French king for the greater part of the first phase of the Italian wars.

Francis I de Valois-Angouleme 9.1494-3.1547 Count of Angouleme 1.1496-3.1547, King of France 1.1515-3.1547, Duke of Milan 10.1515-2.1525 With Charles and Louis both dying without a male heir Francis, again at a very young age, takes the French throne. His reign will be dominated by the rivalry with Charles V of Habsburg spanning the rest of the Italian Wars.

Ferdinand II de Trastamara 3.1452-1.1516 King of Aragon 1479- 1.1516, King of Castile and Leon 1.1475- 11.1504 (jure uxoris), King of Naples 1.1504-1.1516 Married to Isabelle of Castille in the Iberian Wedding combining the great Iberian states, he is the main protagonist on the Spanish side during the conflict.

Isabella de Trastamara 4.1451 † 11.1504 Queen of Castile and Leon 12.1474- 11.1504 Wife of Ferdinand and mother of Juana, Queen of Castille

Maximilian I von Habsburg 3.1459-1.1519 Duke of Burgundy 8.1477-1.1482 (jure uxoris), Archduke of Austria 8.1493-1.1519, King of the Romans, 2.1486-1.1519, Holy Roman Emperor 2.1508- 1.1519

Marie de Bourgogne 2.1457-3.1482 Duchess of Burgundy 1.1477- 3.1482 Last heiress of the de Bourgogne family

Philip von Habsburg 7.1478-9.1506 Duke of Burgundy 3.1482- 9.1506, King of Castile and Leon 7.1506-9.1506 (de jure uxoris) First son of Maximilian and Mary, became duke after his mothers death when he was four, married to Juana de Trastamara

Juana de Trastamara 11.1479-4.1555, Queen of Castile and Leon 11.1504-4.1555, Queen of Aragon 1.1516- 4.1555 Only child of Ferdinand and Isabella, would reign in Castile and Aragon alongside her son Charles after the death of her parents

Charles V of Habsburg 2.1500-9.1558, Duke of Burgundy 19.1506-10.1555, King of Spain 3.1516-1.1556, King of the Romans 10.1520- 1.1531, Holy Roman Emperor 6.1519-8.1556 In Charles the de Bourgogne, the Habsburg and the Trastamara lines all combine. He abdicated in 1555 and split the Habsburg empire between the Spanish line and the Austrian line.

Ferdinand of Habsburg 3.1503-7.1564 Archduke of Austria 4.1521-7.1564, King of Bohemia, Hungary and Croatia 8.1526-7.1564, King of the Romans 1.1531-7.1564, Holy Roman Emperor 8.1556-7.1564 Brother of Charles, receives the Imperial half of the Habsburg empire

Gian Galeazzo Visconti 10.1351-9.1402 First Duke of Milan (1395), established Visconti rule over Milan and dreamed of reuniting Northern Italy under a “Kingdom of the Lombards”

Gian Galeazzo Sforza 6.1469-10.1494 Underaged Duke of Milan imprisoned by his regent and uncle Ludovico Sforza, died suspiciously

Ludovico Sforza (Ludovico il Moro) 7.1452-5.1508 regent for his nephew Gian Galeazzo Sforza and duke of Milan from 1494-1499 after his nephew's death. First ally of the French, later dies in French captivity

Massimiliano Sforza 1.1493-5.1530 Duke of Milan installed by the Holy League and under Swiss protection from 1512-1515

Bianca Sforza 4.1472- 12.1510, sister of Gian Galeazzo, wife of Maximilian from 1494 until her death 1510. Childless, but with a huge dowry her marriage was the basis for the alliance of Ludovico and Maximilian

Alexander VI 1.1431-8.1503, Pope 8.1492-8.1503 Rodrigo de Borgia followed in the footsteps of his uncle Pope Callixtus III,

Cesare Borgia 9.1475 – 3.1507 Son of Alexander VI, first Cardinal then self-made Duke of Romagna, after the death of his father he tried himself as independent Condotierro and was eventually imprisoned

Julius II, 12.1443-2.1513, Pope 11.1503-2.1513 Giuliano della Rovere, arch-enemy of Alexander VI he accompanies Charles VIII on his Italian expedition and urges him to depose the pope. Becomes pope soon after the death of Alexander and is known as the warrior-pope for his active part in the reconquest of the Romagna for the Papal states

Leo X 12-1475-12.1521, Pope 3.1513-12.1521 Giovanni de Medici, second son of Lorenzo il magnifico, he would come to rule the papal states and be overlord over Florence

Piero de Medici 2.1472-12.1503, “Lord of Florence” 4.1492-11.1494, first son of Lorenzo il magnifico, called “the Unfortunate” due to his unsuccessful rule of Florence

Ferdinand I of Naples 6.1424-1.1494, King of Naples 7.1458-1.1494, “Ferrante” called the “Judge of Italy” due to his interference in regional politics

Alfonso of Naples 11.1448-12.1498, King of Naples 1.1494-1.1495, Condotierro in his youth, his reign is cut short by the French Invasion

Ferdinand II of Naples 6.1467-9.1496, King of Naples 1.1495-7.1496, “Ferrandino” is an accomplished commander and defender of the kingdom, he dies soon after the French take over most of Naples

Federigo of Naples 4.1452-11.1504, King of Naples 9.1496-8.1501, last king of the Neapolitan branch of the Trastamara, he is a puppet of Ferdinand who at some point decides to divide the kingdom between himself and Louis XII.

Gonzalo Fernandes de Cordoba 9.1453-12.1515, “El Gran Capitan” commander of the Spanish forces in Italy, viceroy after 1501 but soon deposed by Ferdinand, he was one of the greatest commanders of the Italian Wars

Francesco Gonzaga 8.1466-3.1519, Marquis of Mantua 7.1484-3.1519, Italian Condotierro in Venetian service from 1489-1498 he commanded the League army at the battle of Fornovo, he later came into French service

Alfonso d'Este 7.1476-10.1534, Duke of Ferrarac1.1505-10.1534, manage to defend his duchy against the Venetians and Pope Julius, staunch ally of the French

Gaston De Foix 12.1489-4.1512, Duke of Nemours 1507-1512, "The Thunderbolt of Italy" greatest French commander, dies during his great victory over Papal-Spanish troops at Ravenna

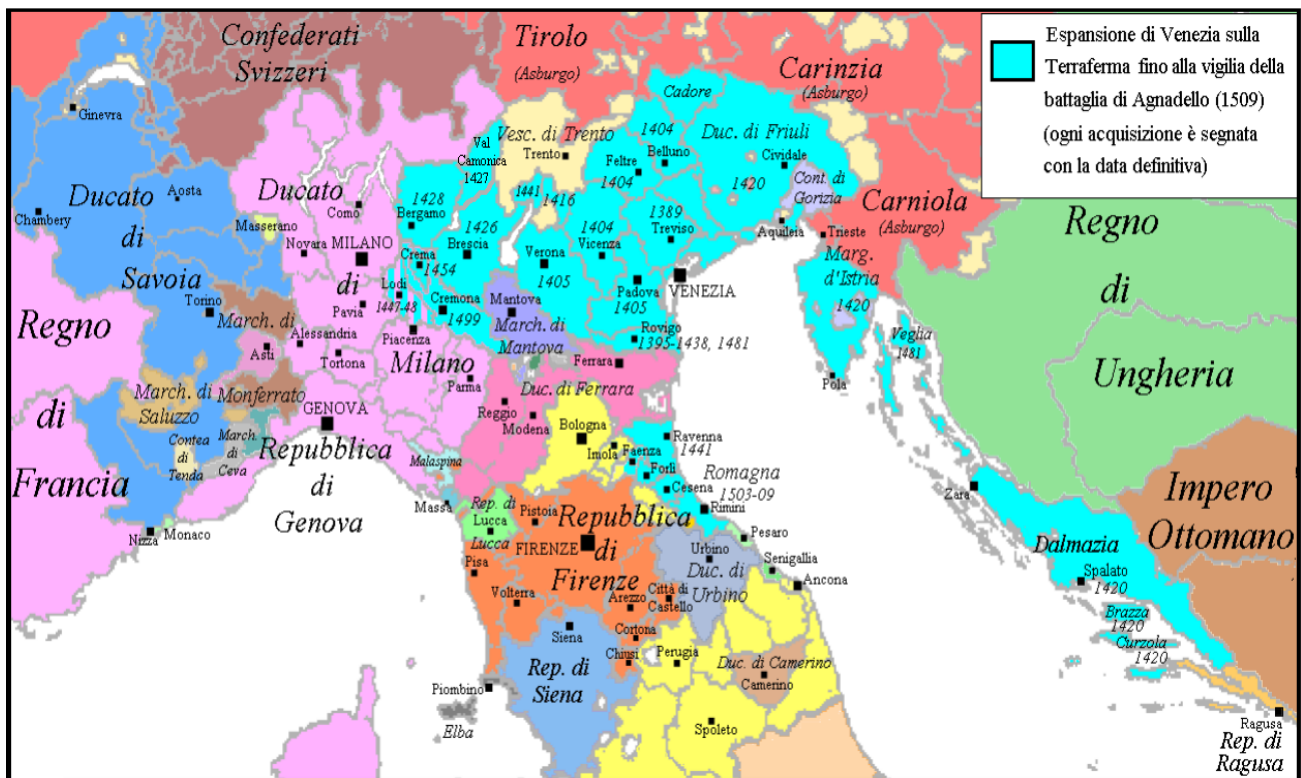
8.3 Maps and Illustrations



A. Northern Italy in 1494



B. Italy in 1499



C. Northern Italy in 1509

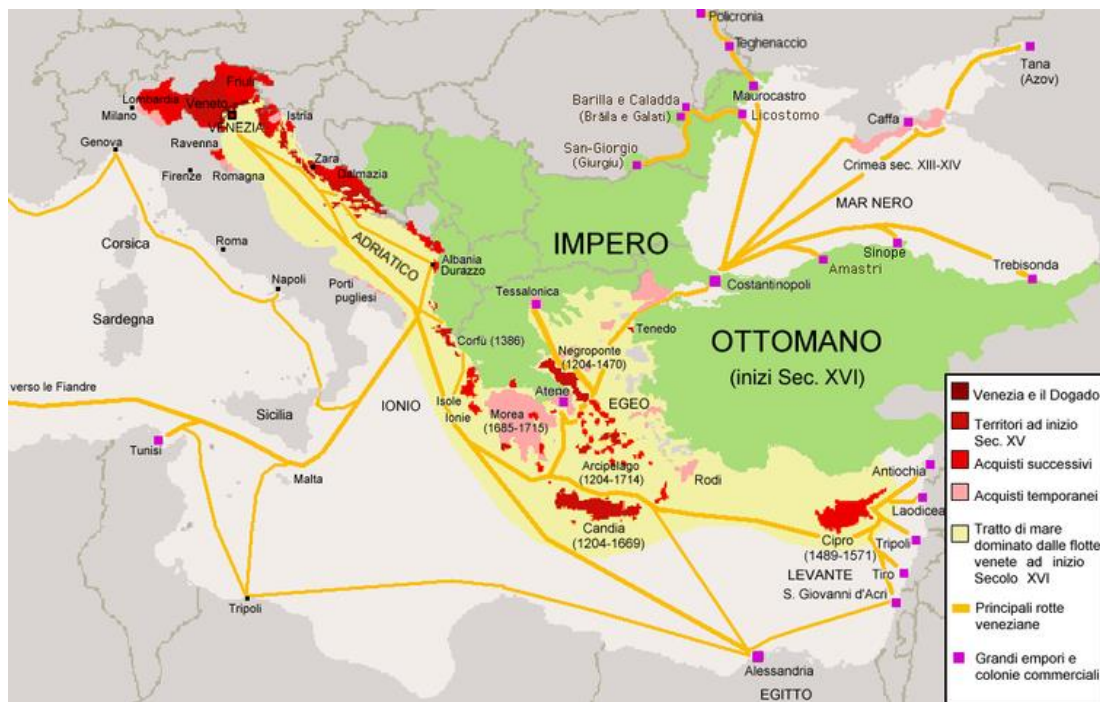
French occupation of Milan and Genoa

Venetian occupation of the eastern parts of the Duchy of Milan

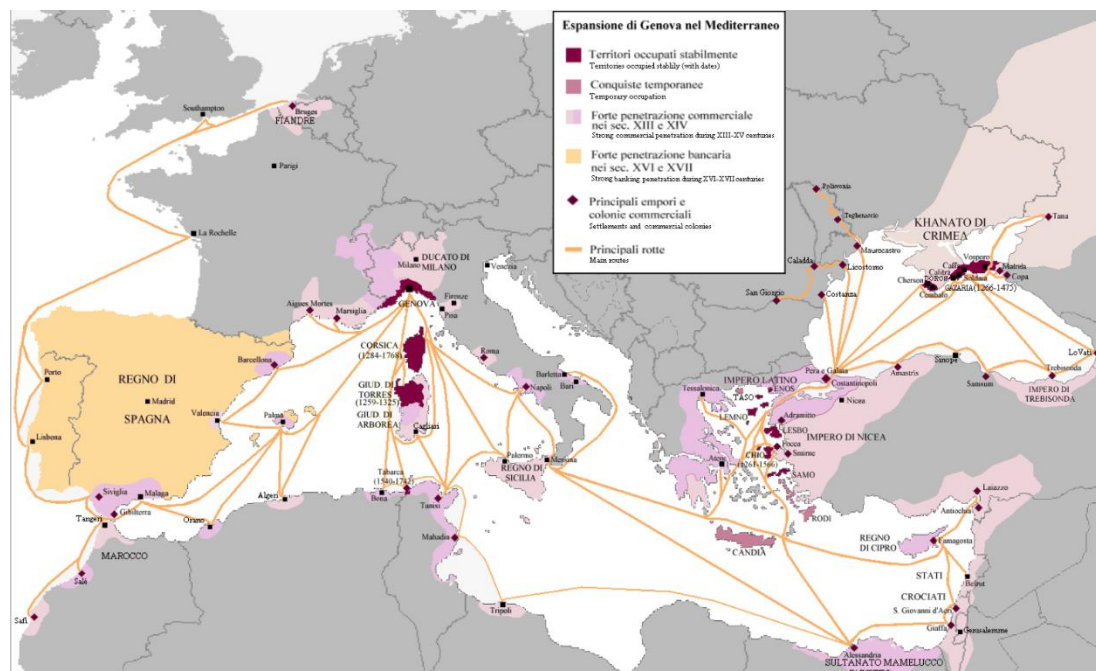
Greatest extent of Venetian territorial expansion in Italy before the battle of Agnadello



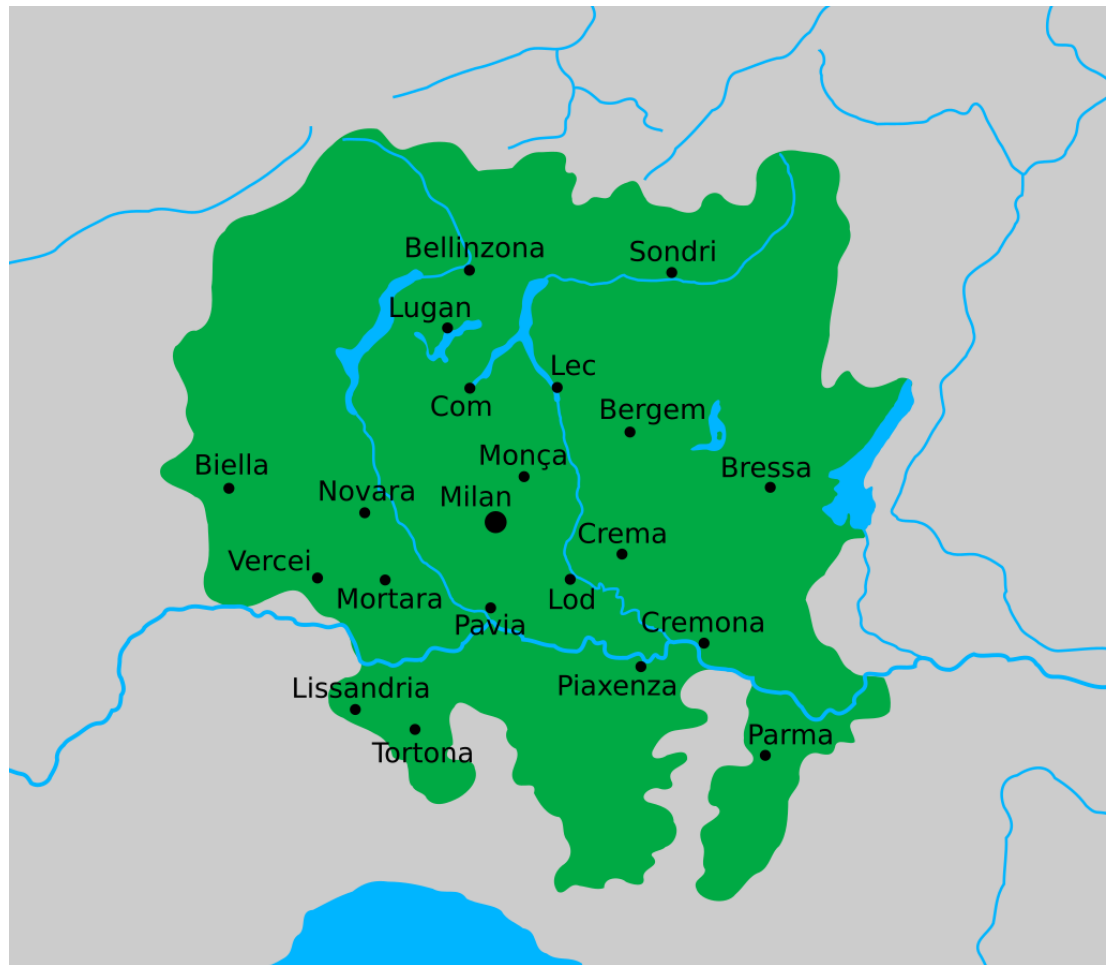
D. Italy at the end of the Italian Wars



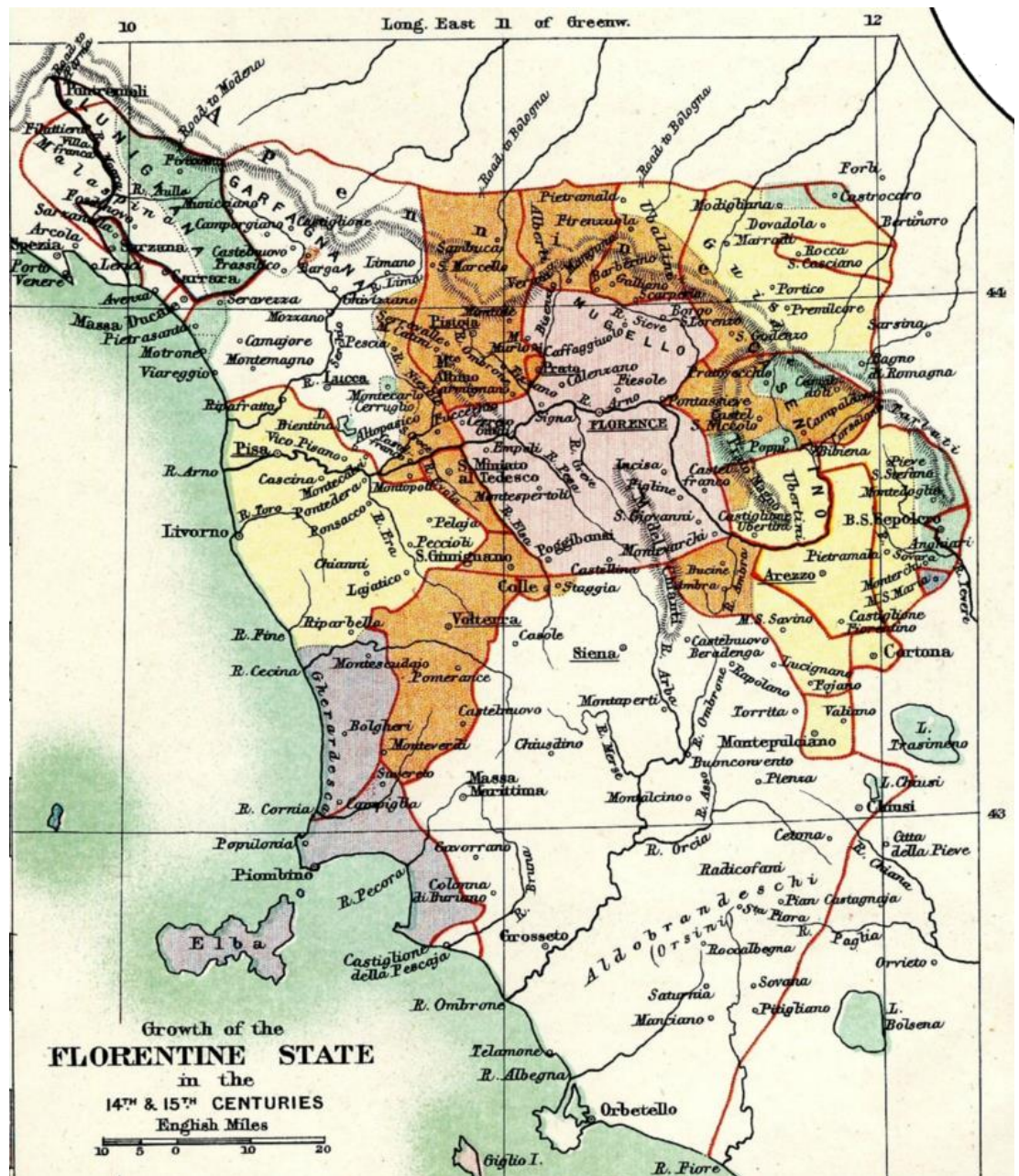
E. Venetian Maritime Empire



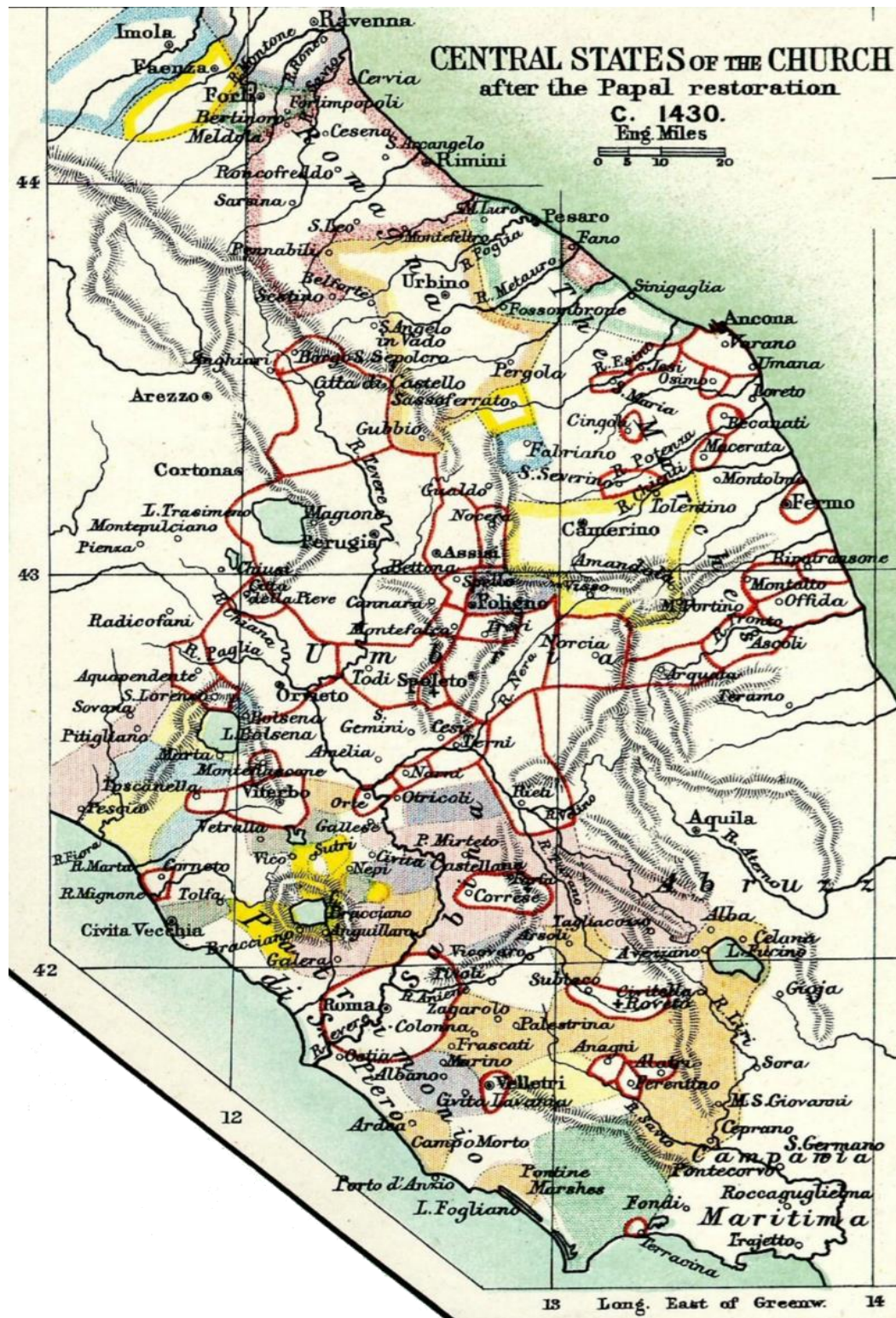
F. Genoese Maritime Empire



G. Major Cities of the Duchy of Milan 1500



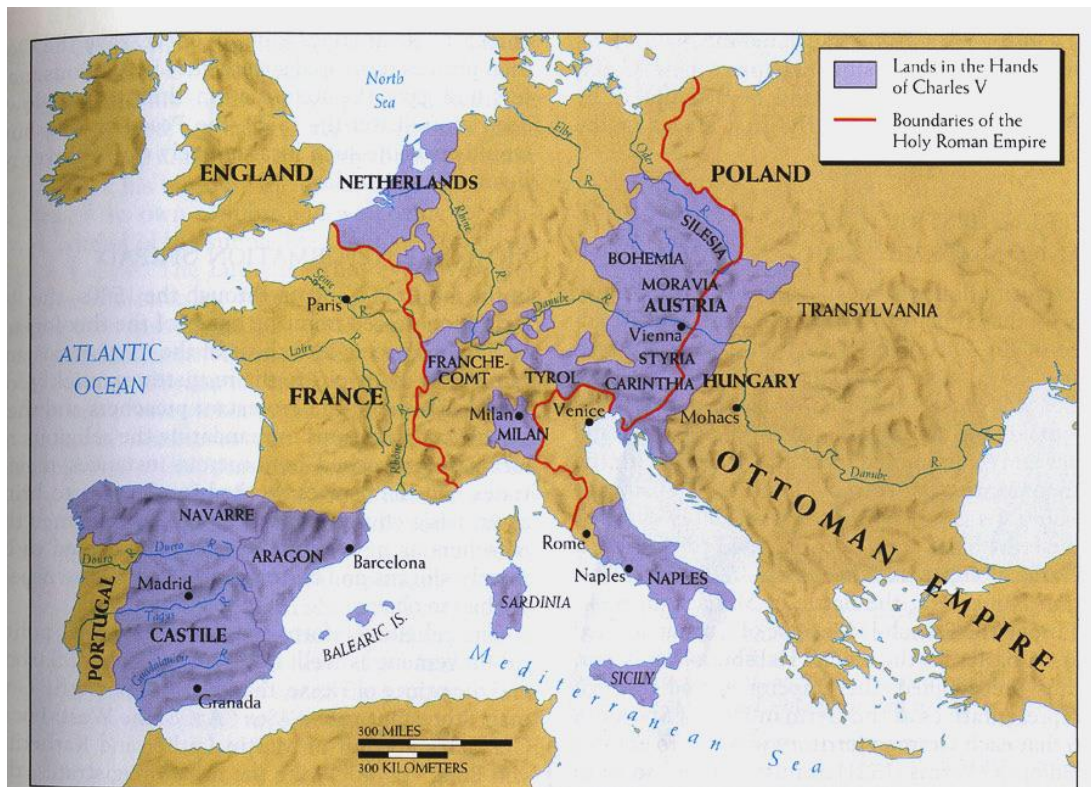
H. The expansion of Florence in the 14th & 15th century



I. The complex political structure of the Papal states in the middle of the 15th century



J. The Habsburg Empire under Charles V. with the Austrian, Burgundian, and Spanish possessions 1525

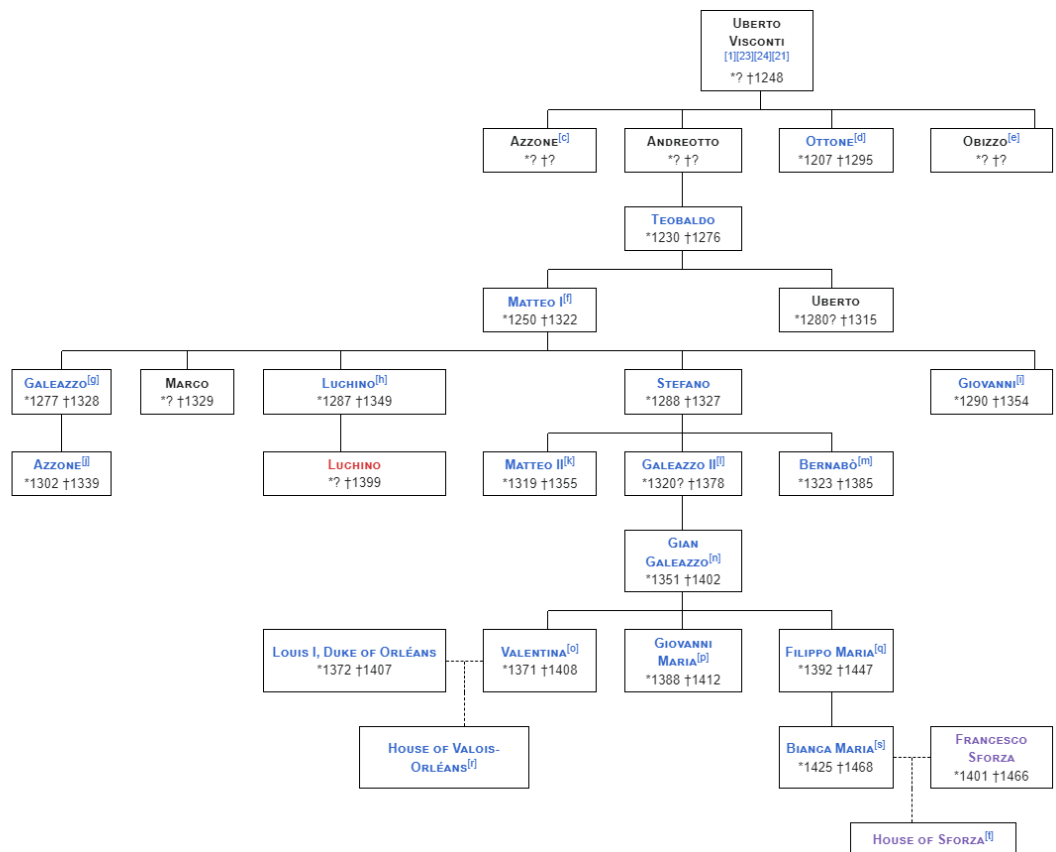


MAP 11-1 THE EMPIRE OF CHARLES V *Dynastic marriages and simple chance concentrated into Charles's hands rule over the lands shown here, plus Spain's overseas possessions. Crowns and titles rained down on him; his election in 1519 as emperor gave him new distractions and responsibilities.*

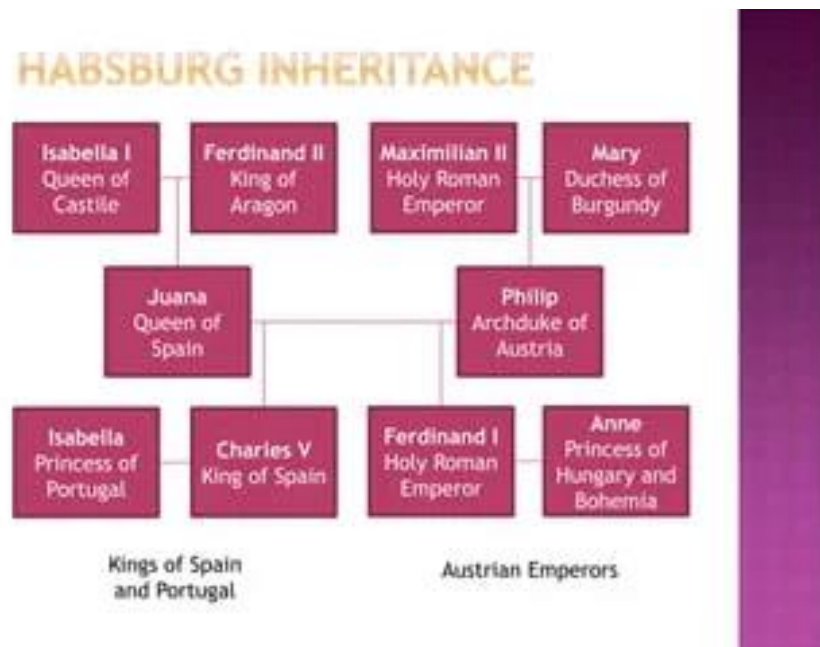
K. The Habsburg Empire under Charles V. 1519



L. The Iberian Union of Castile and Aragon at the turn of the 15th century



M. Competing Valois and Sforza claims to the Duchy of Milan



N. The Habsburg Family line which led to the inheritance of the Duchy of Burgundy and the Spanish Kingdoms

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Vita

Raphael Xavier Hermann Heim was born in Basel, Switzerland, on November 25, 1992. He acquired his US citizenship while living in Rockville, Maryland, in his early childhood. There he developed a keen interest in history and a special fascination for antiquity. His parents read the Ilias and other heroic tales from the Greeks as well as legends from Germanic mythology to him. Upon return to Basel, he was inspired by the city's traditional allegiance to humanism and philosophy and



took up the study of philosophy and German philology. In the course of his studies, he read the great Greek philosophers as well as Nietzsche and Marx. But the focus of his studies would become classical German philosophy from Kant to Hegel with a special interest in Fichte's "Grundlagen der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre" which became the subject of his bachelor thesis. The German tradition combined his philosophical inquiry with his love of history in the discipline called philosophy of history. In German philology he was able to pursue his interests in medieval history and literature. He was lucky that the small town of Gelterkinden which was his home during much of his youth hosted the pioneer of Swiss Kendo, a Japanese form of fencing which simulates combat with a Katana. He dedicated most of his time to learning this martial art, at times to the detriment of his academic studies. When he came to know about its western counterpart, Historical European Martial Arts, he had found his most fervent passion.

Growing up in Basel, a city surrounded by France and Germany, in a multilingual family whose members originated from various European countries, he became enthusiastic about European culture in all its forms and variations. As a firm believer in the European ideals and the necessity for further European integration he was often at odds with the foreign policy of his country. He was studying for his final exams in philosophy and German philology when the Russian army attacked Ukraine. He decided then that he would dedicate his professional life to the implementation of a common European defense. His studies at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and his master thesis on alliance politics were the first steps on this path.

