Fabius Maximus in Venice: Doge Andrea Gritti, the War of Cambrai, and the Rise of Habsburg Hegemony, 1509-1530

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*Fabius Maximus in Venice: Doge Andrea Gritti, the War of Cambrai, and the Rise of Habsburg Hegemony, 1509-1530**

by ROBERT FINLAY

As a consequence of its dismal experience in the War of Cambrai (1509-1517), the Venetian Republic adopted a military policy of avoiding battlefield encounters. As a commander in the war and as doge of Venice after 1523, Andrea Gritti was the foremost proponent of this strategy, earning for himself the appellation of "Fabius Maximus," the Roman general who opposed Hannibal by delay and defense in the Second Punic War. In the 1520s, the Republic aspired to play the role of a great power — or at least that of an independent, balancing force between France and the Spanish-Habsburg Empire; but its refusal to commit its troops to battle fatally weakened the political coalitions opposing Charles V and thereby significantly contributed to the rise of Habsburg hegemony in Italy. A major step toward Charles V's triumph was the infamous Sack of Rome in 1527, a calamity for which the Fabian policy of Venice bears some responsibility.

The character of Doge Andrea Gritti (r.1523-1538) of the Venetian Republic is vividly captured in Titian's famous portrait: brow furrowed, mouth grimly set, massive chest swelling beneath a cape, the head of state violently clutches his crimson robe and glares at the viewer.[1] The painting conveys the *terribilità* which was highlighted by Gritti's sixteenth-century biographer: "In giving or receiving compliments, it was impossible to be livelier or wittier in manner; but if provoked by some malevolence or rancor, there was no aspect more terrifying than his."[2] Making a report before Gritti and his ducal council was never a perfunctory exercise. When a fleet commander, in a typically accommodating gesture, gave blanket commendations to all his patrician subordinates, "The Most Serene Prince thanked him coldly, saying, 'You've praised everyone, but we wish to know who has done well and who badly.'"[3]

*The ideas in this paper grew out of a cordial debate with Elisabeth G. Gleason on the role of Venice in the Italian Wars; I am greatly indebted for her encouragement and criticism. The following abbreviations are used in the notes: *CSP-Spain — Calendar of State Papers, England and Spain, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere. CSP-Venice — Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1520-1526.*

[1]On the portrait, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., see Biadene, 252-54; Puppi, 1984, 219-21.

[2]Barbarigo, 97: "Nel dare o rendere il saluto non potea essere più ilare e giocondo il suo aspetto. All'incontro se irrito veniva dalla tristizia e malgavità di alcuno, non v'era aspetto più terrible del suo."

[3]Sanuto, 53:83: "il Serenissimo lo laudò fredamente, dicendo, 'ave laudà tuti, ma volemo saper chi si ha portà ben et chi mal.'"

A dynamic, authoritarian individual, Gritti exercised the prestige and power of his office to the full. He refused to tolerate interference with his authority over the chancellery, and he ordered investigation of patricians who abused their office. He kept important matters in the hands of the governing councils and away from the Senate and Great Council, provoking one patrician to complain that "we are under a republic and not under a lord."[4] The oath taken by the doge upon election spelled out numerous restrictions on his authority, and, in principle, he could do nothing without the consent of his councillors. Gritti, however, bridled at restraints on his power. More than once, the Council of Ten had to readminister the ducal oath to him after he conferred privately (and illicitly) with foreign envoys.[5]

The force of Doge Gritti's personality and convictions was also manifest in his promotion of a wide-ranging agenda of cultural and intellectual *renovatio* designed to elevate the prestige of the Republic, including introducing new musical, literary, and architectural styles.[6] As part of this program, he patronized a number of learned patricians with whom he shared a love of classical antiquity. In 1530, the humanist Pietro Bembo was appointed official historian of Venice with the support of Gritti.[7] Marco Foscari, a leading patrician and a cousin of Gritti, liberally laced his report to the Senate and Signoria on his term as ambassador in Florence in 1527 with quotations from Aristotle and Livy.[8] The doge was also close to Gasparo Contarini, who wrote his *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* in the mid-1520s, when he was serving as the Venetian ambassador to the court of Charles V (1500-1558) of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. *De magistratibus* was the primary work through which the so-called "myth of Venice" reached a European audience. Drawing upon Aristotle and Polybius to analyze the Venetian constitution, Contarini portrayed his city as an ideal commonwealth, enjoying freedom from conquest, monarchical rule, and arbitrary justice. He argued that Venice was superior to ancient Rome, for the latter had plunged into further war and civil strife after the defeat of Hannibal and the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.), while Venice emerged from its travails in the

[4]Ibid., 50:149: "dicendo che semo sotto una repubblica e non sotto un signor . . .." For similar protests, see 48:376; 50:368, 369. On Gritti's exercise of power, see 40:417, 778; 56:775; 57:38. On the office of doge, see Finlay, 1980, 109-62. The governing councils were the Collegio (the steering committee of the Senate), the Council of Ten, and the Signoria (ducal council); the doge sat in all these councils. On Venetian government, see also 37-43.

[5]Sanuto, 46:176; 49:50.

[6]See Tafuri, 1985, 162-69; Foscari and Tafuri, 25, 42.

[7]On Gritti and classical antiquity, see Sanuto, 39:427-28; Perry. On Gritti's patronage of Bembo, see Lagomaggiore, 30.

[8]Segarizzi, 3:3-96.

War of the League of Cambrai (1509-1517) to devote itself to peace and preservation.[9] Perhaps the closest artistic analogue to Contarini's *De magistratibus* is Paris Bordone's *Donation of St. Mark's Ring* (1534-1535) in which Gritti, seated on the ducal throne and framed by idealized classical architecture, appears as a guardian of serenity and prosperity.[10]

In Gritti's eyes, those virtues were best safeguarded by a military policy of avoiding battlefield encounters, which itself was part of a diplomatic strategy of maintaining a balance between the great powers of France and the Empire. That policy, so at odds with the forcefulness and pugnacity depicted in Titian's painting, earned Gritti the appellation of "Fabius Maximus" among his fellow patricians, after the Roman general who was known as "the Delayer" (Cunctator) for his controversial tactic of avoiding battle and relying on defense in opposing Hannibal.[11] The policy also ran counter to Venetian conduct in the first phase of the Italian Wars (1494-1530). From 1494 to 1508, the Republic was aggressive, even adventuresome. It fought Charles VIII of France (r.1483-1498), militarily supported rebellion in Pisa against Florence, invaded the latter's territory, attacked the duchy of Milan, seized papal cities in the Romagna, and defeated Maximilian I (r.1493-1519) of the Holy Roman Empire in battle.[12] Venetian imperialism and maladroit diplomacy, however, alienated most European powers by 1508. The result was the League of Cambrai, in which France, the Empire, Spain, the Papal State, Ferrara, and Mantua banded together to partition the Terraferma, Venice's mainland territory.[13] The ensuing War of Cambrai was a major watershed in Venetian political history, a traumatic event from which the Republic emerged with limited room to maneuver and with a radically altered perspective on the employment of armed force.

Andrea Gritti was the leading Venetian figure to draw significant lessons from the Cambrai conflict and, as doge, to apply them to the Republic's role in international politics. In large part, Venetian conversion to a Fabian strategy emerged from the experience of the future doge in battles from 1509 to 1517. Across eight exhausting years, defeat after defeat eventually persuaded Gritti and his fellow patricians that they should not risk their forces in combat. The problems intrinsic to such a policy became evident in the 1520s,

[9]On Contarini's work, see Gilbert, 1967; Gleason, 110-28, especially 119-20. For discussion and bibliography on the myth of Venice, see Grubb.

[10]See Puppi, 1987, 102-04, and 1984, 226.

[11]On Gritti's identification with Fabius, see Barbarigo, 55.

[12]For an account of these conflicts, as well as bibliography on them, see Simeoni, 2:725-91.

[13]See Chabod; Luzio. On Venice's reputation for imperialism, see Rubinstein.

when Francis I (r.1515-1547) of France and Charles V warred over control of the duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples. Alarmed at Habsburg power, Venice joined with France and the Papal State (under Clement VII, r.1523-1534) in the League of Cognac (1526-1529).[14] The Fabian policy of Venice helped doom the alliance, however. Whereas Fabius Maximus pursued his tactics in the name of Rome alone, with no obligations to inconvenient treaties, Venice, with the largest and most experienced army in Italy, made up a vital part of the Cognac coalition.[15] Any confederation which relied on guarantees made by sovereigns as unreliable as Francis I and Clement VII could hardly be assured of success; but when the third partner in the league surreptitiously dedicated itself to shunning military encounters, then political disaster was virtually assured.

The turning point was the infamous devastation of the city of Rome by the soldiers of Charles V in May of 1527. In the maneuvers leading to the attack and during the Sack of Rome itself, the army of the League of Cognac, comprised mainly of Venetian troops and commanded by Francesco Maria della Rovere, the Duke of Urbino and captain-general of the Republic, did not oppose the Imperialists. No one at the time attributed the stalling of Della Rovere to Venetian policy but instead explained it by citing his military incompetence or cowardly character. After the Sack, Clement VII deserted the League of Cognac and allied (once again) with Charles V. Francis I dispatched an army to Naples in 1528, ostensibly as part of a campaign to free the pope from Habsburg domination, but it was decimated by Imperial forces and disease. Francis I then broke with his Cognac allies and signed the Peace of Cambrai with Charles V in 1529. Isolated and vulnerable, Venice had no choice but to come to terms with him as well, thereby removing the last obstacle to Imperial domination of the peninsula. In Bologna, on 24 February 1530, Clement VII crowned Charles V as emperor.[16]

In the 1520s, the Republic aspired to play the role of a great power — or at least that of an independent, balancing force between France and the Empire — but its refusal to commit its troops to battle significantly contributed to the rise of Habsburg hegemony in Italy. By effectively laying down its sword, the most powerful Italian state helped place the Imperial crown on Charles V in 1530. In short, Venice was not simply overwhelmed by powerful European forces, a republican David that could not defeat monarchical

[14]See Sanuto, 41:442-46, 450-65; Simeoni, 2:849-51.

[15]Ancient Rome's dealings with its Italian allies (*socii*) were entirely different in nature from Venice's military and political obligations to the League of Cognac. See Bernstein, 65-68.

[16]Hook, 1972a, 239-51; Brandi, 268-91; De Cadenas y Vicent, 411-16.

Goliaths. Venetians themselves contributed significantly to their lessened political position on the international scene by consciously making decisions with dire consequences for the Republic. Examination of Andrea Gritti's position as a commander in the War of Cambrai and as doge during the War of Cognac reveals his central role in the relative decline of Venice. Moreover, the same examination also shows that Gritti looked to classical examples as guides to action, both in his advocacy of Fabian tactics in Venice's struggle for survival and in his promotion of Venice as a "New Rome," a polity possessing a political wisdom which could serve as a lesson for all Europe.[17]

* * *

In Paolo Giovio's *Elogia*, a collection of portraits of famous men, Gritti is praised for his commanding presence, exceptional refinement, and civic virtue.[18] The historian devotes more attention, however, to Gritti's activity in the War of Cambrai than to his ducal reign. Giovio declares that no other Venetian patrician served so long in war nor with such courage, constancy, and vigilance. In July 1509, Gritti recovered the city of Padua from the forces of the League of Cambrai, and he defended it against an Imperial army shortly after. He helped recover the Republic's mainland state by 1517, an achievement that won him the ducal crown in 1523. "On the other hand, while victorious in the war, Gritti suffered defeat in many battles."[19] He fled the field when French forces shattered the Venetian army at Agnadello in May 1509; he lost Brescia to the French in 1512; he narrowly escaped capture when the Swiss defeated the French at the battle of Novara in 1513; he served with the Venetian army when the Spanish routed it at the battle of La Motta later that year; and he avoided disaster at Milan by a hairsbreadth in 1516. An admirer of stoicism, Giovio emphasizes that Gritti's virtue and valor were dramatically evident since he consistently had Fortune ranged against him.[20]

In an oration to the doge, a representative of Vicenza stated that before the war, Gritti "in a brief time became more expert than everyone else" in military affairs; thus when "almost all Europe conspired at Cambrai to destroy this holy Republic, he was a modern Scipio, offering his body to his beloved country."[21] Fulsome praise aside, Gritti's military service was indeed

[17]On the theme of Venice as a "New Rome," see Chambers; Tafuri, 1989, 168.

[18]For the following, except for the addition of dates, see Giovio, 1972, 456-57.

[19]Ibid., 1972, 456: "Caeterum Grittus, qui universo bello victor extitit, multis adversis praeliis . . .."

[20]On Giovio's admiration for stoicism, see Zimmermann, 275.

[21]Sanuto, 34:479: "ma esso, stato pur avanti ignaro de la militia terrestre, in pocho tempo sopra ogni altro expertissimo ne divene . . . quasi tutta Europa coniurato in Cambrai a

extraordinary, especially considering that he had spent much of his life as a grain merchant in Istanbul (from 1479 to 1502) and had no military background or training.[22] Elected at the age of fifty-four as a proveditor-general, he was continually in the field from March 1509 until his capture by the French at Brescia in February 1512.[23] Released after a year, he served again as a proveditor in 1513 and 1516. In all, he held military command for over half the war, far longer than any patrician of comparable stature.

In fact, Gritti's military prestige owed as much to his political skill and connections as to his ability on the battlefield. His charm and vigor commended him to professional captains, a notoriously contentious and touchy lot, while his influence within the patriciate meant that he could persuade the Senate to forward money to the army and to heed his views on military affairs. He was prized for his eloquence and resolution in conveying official policy and priorities to commanders, qualities which were displayed on 3 September 1509 as Imperial forces moved to besiege Padua. Gritti addressed all the condottieri in the sacristy of Santa Giustina, exhorting the commanders to defend the Republic and achieve "la liberation de Italia"; he then had them take a solemn oath of fealty to Venice upon a missal left open on the altar. Numerous young patricians volunteered for service in Padua after Gritti's report of this inspiring event reached the Senate.[24]

The governing councils regarded Gritti's presence in the field as indispensable for military order.[25] When captain-general Niccolò Orsini, Count of Pitigliano, fell ill, the Collegio told Gritti that he could take charge of the army, thereby ranking him above professional soldiers. After Pitigliano's death in 1510, Gritti was proposed in the Senate for the post of captain-general.[26] This was an unprecedented honor, for Venetians believed that Julius Caesar's power in the Roman republic was a strong argument against turn-

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la ruina de questa divina Republica, esso quasi un novo Scipione offerse il corpo suo per la cara patria." Before the war, Gritti served with the Venetian army against Maximilian I from February 1507 to June 1508. See Sanuto, 7:281, 555.

[22]On Gritti in Istanbul, see Davis.

[23]Elected by and responsible to the Senate, proveditors co-ordinated the government's military policy with mercenary commanders; they advised the latter, supervised supplies and funds, and sometimes acted as commanders themselves. There were various low-ranking proveditors, such as those in charge of light cavalry, artillery, and fortifications. A proveditor-general, who had a staff and guard of at least twenty men, was the civilian representative to the captain-general of the Venetian army. See Hale; Mallett and Hale, 268.

[24]Sanuto, 9:127-29.

[25]Ibid., 10:222, 336-37, 438, 11:507, 510, 717, 718; Priuli, vol. 5, fols. 278v-279; vol. 6, fol. 480; vol. 7, fol. 222v.

[26]Sanuto, 10:222, 336-37; Mallett and Hale, 269.

ing their own citizens into land warriors.[27] Gritti's nomination to command of the army is therefore powerful testimony to how highly he was valued by the Senate and governing councils.

Still, Gritti seldom enjoyed victory in the War of Cambrai. His first battle was depressingly typical. It took place near Agnadello, a village at the western border of the Terraferma. Just before the encounter, Gritti assured the Signoria that victory against Louis XII (r.1498-1515) of France was certain; but unfortunately for this expectation, Pitigliano's second-in-command was Bartolomeo Alviano, one of the most aggressive and daring condottieri of the day. He argued unsuccessfully that the army should not await a French attack but should cross the frontier of the Adda river and strike toward Milan. He declared to Gritti and his colleagues: "Honored proveditors, if you want this fine army not to go over the river, then give me an order in writing, for otherwise I will cross."[28] On 14 May 1509, the Venetian rearguard, commanded by Alviano, clashed with the main French army, and, after hours of hard fighting, Alviano was defeated and captured. The rest of Pitigliano's troops fled to the lagoon, and Gritti dashed to secure the key fortress and city of Brescia.[29]

The Venetian mainland empire soon fell to the League of Cambrai, however. Louis XII had "veni, vidi, vici" carved on a Brescian gate, while his victory at Agnadello was likened (by Venetians and others) to Hannibal crushing Rome at the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C.[30] Paolo Paruta (d.1598), a Venetian historian and diplomat, later wrote that at Agnadello, France had a Hannibal in Louis XII, but in Alviano, the Republic unfortunately had a general "who was by nature very different from Fabius, who knew how to use the benefits of time."[31] In fact, Venetians could argue that Agnadello was much worse than Cannae. After the latter, Hannibal conquered little additional territory, and he notoriously held back from advancing on Rome; but after Agnadello, everything that Venice had gained on the Terraferma for the

[27] See Sanuto, 20:185; Priuli, vol. 5, fol. 94. Venetian patricians, however, always held the highest posts in the fleet, the foundation of the Republic's maritime empire and commercial prosperity.

[28] Sanuto, 8:173: "Magnifici provedadori, si mi volete comandar che non passi con sì bel exercito, metetilo in scriptura, che vi ubedirò, altramente i'voglio passar." On Gritti's prediction of victory, see 8:233-34; see also 8:156, 159, 161, 164. Alviano was notorious for his fiery temper and insubordination. See Borgia, fol. 124v; Giovio, 1972, 388-89.

[29] On Agnadello, see Guicciardini, 1929, 2:266-72; Pieri, 459-67. Treviso was the only city retained by Venice, and Gritti immediately was appointed to command there. See Sanuto, 8:420, 480, 490, 514; Santalena.

[30] Priuli, 4:117, 124; Pastor, 6:313.

[31] Paruta, 2:265: "era natura molto diversa da quella di Fabio nel sapere usuare il beneficio del tempo . . .."

past hundred years was lost in the course of three weeks, and the enemy ultimately reached the shores of the lagoon.[32] Agnadello was a terrible shock, and, in the long term, Venetians never recovered from it: by the 1520s, as a consequence of further Cannae-like encounters in the War of Cambrai, the prospect of losing the Terraferma as a result of defeat in battle dominated Venetian military and diplomatic thinking.

In the summer of 1509, however, the nature of both the defeat and the loss of territory produced a more complex response which did not preclude a continued Venetian commitment to battle. On the one hand, Venice plunged into panic and despair. Penitential processions and apocalyptic preaching filled the streets and churches; armed guards patrolled the canals and arrested suspect foreigners. The government frantically stockpiled grain and dug new wells in preparation for a siege by the French monarch, who could (Florentine envoys boasted) "take possession [of the mainland] as far as Padua merely with heralds."[33] On the other hand, even amid their fright and misery, many Venetians never lost their basic self-confidence and perspective. They reasoned that most of their army had escaped unscathed, while they dismissed Agnadello itself as an aberration, the unforeseen result of what Gritti denounced as the impetuousity (*fogacità*) of Alviano.[34] Venetians also regarded the loss of the mainland empire as more apparent than real: they did not fight for their Terraferma cities because they calculated that Louis XII could not retain his Lombard territory after he retreated to France and that Maximilian I would be powerless to resist Venetian reconquest of the Veneto. In short, the Republic had been injured but the wound quickly would heal. "While the roots of the Venetian state survive," one patrician asserted, "the tree and the fruit will spring up again."[35]

Venetian reconquest of Padua, about thirty kilometers from the lagoon, shows that this conviction was not a mere rationalization for overwhelming defeat. The episode reveals the singular nature of the collapse of the Terraferma state, for Venice yielded Padua when its opponents there were

[32]Ibid., 265.

[33]Alessandro Nasi and Francesco Pandolfini to the Ten of Florence, Brescia, 22 May 1509, Canestrini and Desjardins, 2:340: "se quella volessi procedere più avanti, con li araldi soli insignorirebbe insino di Padova." See also Sanuto, 8:316, 333-34, 469-72. On the gloomy atmosphere in Venice in June 1509, see Priuli, 4:7-40, 63, 73, 85, 103, 112-13; Cervelli, 26-59.

[34]Sanuto, 8:258, 288, 397; Barbaro, 956.

[35]Priuli, 4:84: "sempre che rimanirà qualche radize del Statto Veneto, potrà renascere lo albero et li fructi . . .." On Venetian reasoning about politic surrender of the mainland, see Priuli, 4:13, 51, 56, 62, 70, 104-05, 113, 119, 161, 185; Guicciardini, 1929, 2:284-85, 290-91; Paruta, 266-67.

impotent and took it back as soon as the enemy starting gaining strength. The Republic withdrew its troops from Padua in early June in order not to anger Maximilian I, who might otherwise ask for French help in securing his Cambrai legacy. When Louis XII disbanded most of his army near Milan in mid-July and when German troops entered Padua at the same time, the Senate decided to retake the city.[36]

Although Venetians later saw the recovery of Padua in the context of the self-congratulatory myth of Venice, that is, as a fiercely-fought battle against a powerful enemy, it in fact resembled a vast, tumultuous pageant more than a strictly military exercise. Since Venice had armed might on its side, it could have regained Padua whenever it wished. With ideological and psychological considerations in mind, Gritti selected 17 July for the venture: that was the feast day of Santa Marina, and Doge Michele Steno, in whose reign Padua first was conquered in 1405, was buried in that saint's parish church. For Gritti and his fellow citizens, if the battle of Agnadello stood for the demise of the mainland state, then reconquering Padua signified its resurrection. The enterprise of 17 July thus represented not only a counterattack against the League of Cambrai but a proclamation of political and spiritual renewal.

Given the symbolic significance of the recovery of Padua, a Venetian necessarily had to be in command, not a foreign hireling. There was never any doubt that it would be Gritti.[37] He moved the army down from Treviso and met a huge force of unruly armed volunteers from Venice. On the morning of 17 July, by a ruse at the gates of Padua, he led light cavalry into the city and won it back against slight resistance.[38] The Senate ordered that the keys of Padua be stored thereafter in Doge Steno's tomb, and it ordained

[36]Nasi to the Ten, Milan, 1-2 July, 20-21 July, 25 August 1509, in Canestrini and Desjardins, 2:385, 395, 414; see also Priuli, 4:59, 111, 113; Sanuto, 8:435. Another consideration was that Paduans began preventing Venetians from collecting their revenues and crops in the nearby countryside. See Priuli, 4:65, 72, 76-77, 79-80, 110, 122; Sanuto, 8:483, 484, 499. Libby, however, greatly overstates this motive: recovering Padua was preeminently a political and diplomatic decision, only secondarily an economic one.

[37]Before the battle of Agnadello, however, two other patricians had superior military reputations. Zorzi Corner, a hero of the 1508 campaign against Maximilian I, was discredited for deserting the army before Agnadello (pleading an attack of kidney stones), and he and his family also were regarded as too sympathetic to the Emperor. See Sanuto, 7:574; 8:427, 429-30, 458; Priuli, 4:106-07. Zorzi Emo, another hero of the 1508 campaign, fell from public favor at the same time because he was seen as a spokesman for the aggressive policies against the Papal State in the Romagna which supposedly brought Venice to defeat at Agnadello. See Sanuto, 8:431; Priuli, 4:93.

[38]Priuli, 4:154, 164-66, 167; Sanuto, 8:518, 519, 520-21, 522, 523, 543; Zanetti, 48-68.

an annual ducal procession for 17 July to the church of Santa Marina to commemorate the 1509 triumph.[39]

Not surprisingly, Gritti particularly favored that civic ritual after becoming doge.[40] His management of the Paduan operation marked the beginning of his identification with the Cambrai war and for the first time made him a contender for the dogeship. When he took Padua, "Everyone said: 'This is the occasion for which he gains the ducal cap.'"[41] In 1531, Titian produced a votive painting for Doge Gritti in which Santa Marina presents him to the Madonna, supposedly saying, "He was elected for having recaptured Padua on my day, 17 July."[42] In the mid-1530s, Bordone painted the *Donation of St. Mark's Ring* in which Doge Gritti, in receiving a miraculous relic, figures as the savior of his country.[43] A later sixteenth-century painting by Jacopo Palma il Giovane, in the Great Council hall of the Ducal Palace, portrays Gritti and his cavalry storming through the gates of Padua. Gritti's feat even became synonymous with victory in the War of Cambrai, as in Palma's allegorical painting in the hall of the Senate: Venezia and the Lion of San Marco attack the bull of Europa, while the city of Padua, representing the Terraferma empire, towers in the distance.[44] Mythic representations and civic ceremonies are not irrelevant in considering the evolution of Venetian policy. Doge Gritti dominated debate about military affairs within the governing councils in part by virtue of his association with celebrations of the most glorious recent episode in the history of the Republic.

Reconquering Padua marked the beginning of Gritti's fame. In terms of Gritti's military views, however, the achievement probably taught him little. The siege of the city by Maximilian I was much more important, for it revealed the central role of fortifications to the future doge, just as Agnadello had taught him the perils of improvident battle. The assault on Padua was

[39] Sanuto, 14:420; Guicciardini, 1929, 2:292.

[40] See Sanuto, 34:300; Muir, 68.

[41] Dalla Santa, 24: "ognun dixe: questa è la volta che se aquista la bareta."

[42] Sanuto, 55:19: "Santa Marina diceva: 'È stà electo per haver recuperà Padoa nel mio zorno a di 17 di luio' . . .." Sanuto was reporting a rumor about what the various saints in the painting were saying. See Finlay, 1978, 116-17. On the painting, which was destroyed by fire, see Wolters, 111-13.

[43] Puppi, 1987, 101-04, suggests that the donation of the ring of San Marco in August 1509 to the Scuola Grande of San Marco (the confraternity for which Bordone produced the painting) was in homage to Gritti's recovery of Padua a month earlier.

[44] Wolters, 114, 201, 203, 307, 315; Sinding-Larsen, 40, 247. The Palma paintings probably replaced earlier versions that had been destroyed by fire. It has been argued that the renowned and enigmatic *Tempest* by Giorgione, which almost certainly was commissioned by relatives of Gritti in 1509, also refers to his conquest of Padua. See Carroll; Kaplan.

the first great siege of an Italian city since 1494, and, for Venice, it was the longest, most hard-fought campaign of the War of Cambrai.[45] Along with the condottieri, Gritti worked out a plan of defense for Padua, including the destruction of churches and houses near the walls which might aid the besiegers. During the siege, he commanded troops at one of the main gates of the city. For most of August and September 1509, the Emperor's army bombarded and attacked Padua, until finally forced to retreat by bad weather and lack of funds.[46] Gritti's role in this triumph was later commemorated (probably at his behest) in a 1536 painting by Ludovico Fiumicelli in the Paduan church of the Eremitani which depicts the doge presenting a model of the city to an enthroned Madonna and Child.[47]

After the recovery and defense of Padua, Venetians believed that the war was all but over. Alone and isolated, the Republic had faced down the united princes of Christendom and "an almost infinite numbers of combatants."[48] Confident, even arrogant, Venetians went on to recover most of the Veneto, as well as the province of Friuli. They expected to regain the all-important city of Verona by the end of 1509 and the towns of Lombardy shortly after. They even sent war galleys and cavalry to ravage the Polesine of Rovigo, territory taken from Venice by Alphonso I d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara.[49] Writing to Florence from Verona in early December, Niccolò Machiavelli, who despised Venice but admired militant action, marvelled to see the Republic gripped by a spirit of battle: "In all those places they reconquer, Venetians have a San Marco painted, holding a sword in hand instead of a book; thus it appears that they have discovered to their cost that studies and books are not enough to retain their state."[50]

[45] See Pieri, 473-74.

[46] Sanuto, 9:103, 128-29, 162, 170; Guicciardini, 1929, 2:307-12; Zanetti, 104-23. On the defenses of Padua, see Lenci.

[47] Humfrey, 124 and note 114.

[48] Sanuto, 34:479: "con quasi infinito numero de combatenti l'assediava, virilmente diffesa [by Gritti]." On Venetian confidence after defending Padua, see Priuli, 4:384. Maximilian I's forces probably numbered about 20,000.

[49] Priuli, vol. 5, fols. 12, 20, 22, 39, 41v; Sanuto, 9:233, 248, 311, 319-21, 325, 328, 329, 355, 381-82, 383. 405. On the strategic significance of Verona, see Sanuto 31:101; Simeoni, 2:796.

[50] Machiavelli, 1964, 2:1202: "intendesi come' Viniziani, in tutte questi luoghi de'quali si rinsignoriscono, fanno dipignere un San Marco, che in scambio di libro ha un spada in mano, d'onde pare che si sieno avveduti ad loro spese che ad tenere li stati non bastono li studij e e'libri." On the military weakness of the League in late 1509, 2:1199. For scathing comments on Venetian loss of courage after Agnadello, see Machiavelli, 1975, 1:550-51.

Gritti believed that Venetian aggression at this time was highly risky, and he criticized other proveditors who did not heed his warnings about enemy action.[51] His fears were realized on 22 December when troops of Ferrara, armed with cannon, destroyed the Venetian galley fleet and infantry at Polesella on the Po river.[52] The battle of Polesella was no Agnadello, but it had something of the same impact on Venice since the rout was followed by substantial territorial losses. It made Venetians consider for the first time that the opening battle of the war was not an aberration. Ferrarese soldiers retook the Polesine, Venetian troops withdrew from Friuli, the Senate abandoned hopes for Verona, and Gritti once more attended to the defenses of Padua. Venetian military momentum was halted abruptly, never to be regained in the war. The Po debacle, however, had the advantage that it impelled Pope Julius II (r.1503-1513), who needed a counterbalance to French power, to break with the League of Cambrai. Venetian defeat thus won what bold tactics could not. Still, at least the Republic no longer fought alone. For most of 1510 and 1511, troops of the Papal State bore the brunt of action, mainly against League forces around Bologna. In the meantime, Venetian soldiers, under Gritti's supervision, learned the value of strategic obstacles as they created defensive outposts some fifty kilometers to the west of Padua, on a line running south from Vicenza to Legnago on the Adige river.[53]

By early 1512, patricians on the governing councils were weary of being on the defense, of a seemingly endless succession of patrols, skirmishes, and retreats.[54] When anti-French nobles in Brescia secretly offered to turn over their city to Venice, the Senate grasped at the opportunity and ordered Gritti to carry through the coup. His misgivings about the exploit put him "in the bad graces of the city, with complaints about his feeble courage."[55] After Gritti took Brescia in early February, Spanish troops under Gaston de Foix, the twenty-two-year old nephew of Louis XII and the new French governor in Italy, rushed from Bologna, destroyed Gritti's forces, and took the proveditor-general prisoner. The French plundered Brescia for three days,

[51]Sanuto, 10:364, 365, 377-81, 439-41.

[52]For what follows on the consequences of Polesella, see Finlay, 1976.

[53]On the 1510-1511 campaigns of Julius II, see Guicciardini, 1929, 3:49-68, 89-99, 155-64; Pieri, 478-83. On Venetian strategy, see Taylor, 20-21.

[54]For details, see Sanuto, 10:400-656, 11:598-623.

[55]Ibid., 13:417: "È da saper, sier Andrea Griti provedor zeneral è al presente in mala disposition di la terra, dicendo per il suo poche cuor et per la pressa de ritornar di apresso la città di Brexa . . .." See also 13:405, 407, 410-11, 412, 413, 416, 421, 422, 431.

killing perhaps 10,000 persons, a slaughter not eclipsed until the Sack of Rome fifteen years later.[56]

As with Agnadello and Polesella, the defeat at Brescia crushed Venetian morale. The army retreated from the new footholds in Lombardy and shored up Paduan defenses yet again. "Everyone is morose, feeling only grief and no satisfaction," a patrician lamented: "It seems like Holy Week now rather than Carnival, for this is the worst news we have had for many years."[57] Popular opinion condemned the government for spurring Gritti into taking the city and then not supporting him. It appeared painfully obvious that his military judgment surpassed that of the senators who commanded him. To some Venetians, his capture seemed the greatest loss at Brescia, for they regarded him as irreplaceable.[58] The fate of the Republic's "gran homo di guerra" (as a patrician called him) evoked a searing denunciation from a Venetian who had escaped de Foix's slaughter: "Now the Senate will grasp that losing the proveditor Gritti is ruinous. Now it will recognize that it is not worthy of such a man. Now it will appreciate his courageous and energetic service."[59]

From the perspective of Gritti, however, his capture by the French had certain advantages. He had served four exhausting, dangerous years in the field, during which he had rankled senators by his relentless demand for funds coupled with steady avoidance of combat with the enemy. Weary of criticism and of battling with the governing councils, he had tried to resign his post several times.[60] Falling into the hands of the French thus released Gritti from many frustrations. More important, it gave him a vital diplomatic role, for Venetian defeat at Brescia and French setbacks in Italy had

[56]Priuli, vol. 7, fol. 296; Sanuto, 13:495-496, 498, 501, 504, 506, 507, 508, 509, 511, 512, 514-18; Passero, 242-44. On de Foix's famous march, see Sanuto, 13:445, 462, 474, 476-77, 480, 483, 489, 491, 494; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:170-71; Giovio, 1972, 384-85. Two months after the sack of Brescia, de Foix was killed at the battle of Ravenna, and Louis XII soon lost all his territory in Italy. See Sanuto, 14:93, 94, 95-96, 102, 108, 110-11, 118, 119-22, 143; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:182-93, 204-08, 214-15.

[57]Sanuto, 13:501: "Tutti di mala voglia erano, et non si sentiva piacer niuno ma cordoglio; non pareva carlevar, ma la setimana sancta, perchè questa è stà di le pessime nove si habi auto zà molti anni . . .." On reaction in Venice, see 13:498, 506, 512, 513, 514, 519; da Porto, 295-96.

[58]Sanuto, 13:495, 498, 506, 517, 518, 520, 523, 528.

[59]Ibid., 13:511: "Hor quel Senato provarà di quanto danno li sarà il perder dil provedor Griti. Hora sarà conosuto che non erano degni di aver uno simel homo. Hor si arà visto il servir suo, e con quanto cuor e quanto animo."

[60]Ibid., 9:459, 510; 11:497, 504, 510, 717-18. On Gritti's demands for money and the criticism they provoked, see Priuli, vol. 5, fols. 278v-279; vol. 6, fols. 109, 111-112; see also Gilbert, 1980, 30-35.

transformed the international scene. Within days of his capture, then, Gritti began negotiations for an alliance. While the French put lesser proveditors seized at Brescia in chains to induce them to pay liberal ransoms, Gritti received the utmost courtesy and departed for the court of Louis XII in Blois "more in the guise of an ambassador than of a prisoner."[61]

Escorted by a nominal guard, Gritti enjoyed the freedom of the French court. It is perhaps from his stay at Blois that he became so devoted to the kingdom that during his reign as doge the Habsburgs would come to regard all Venetians as arch-French (*francesissimi*).[62] He became friends with Charles de Bourbon and with the heir to the throne, Francis, Duke of Angoulême. The latter's mother, Louise of Savoy, also favored Gritti, for she paid him the compliment of commissioning his portrait.[63] Gritti became very close to Florimond Robertet, the chief minister of Louis XII, who invited the prisoner-of-war to live in his Italianate town house.[64] Gritti also won the confidence of Louis XII, who had what Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini called "a French brain," that is, he could not give up his dreams of conquest in Italy.[65] The king instructed his commanders preparing to invade Italy to "make certain that Monsieur Andrea not only is involved in all consultations and discussions but also that matters be decided upon his most experienced advice."[66]

Whatever Gritti's counsels, the French return to Italy was disastrous. On 6 June 1513, Swiss infantry launched a surprise attack on the French army of some 22,000 men near Novara, about forty-five kilometers west of Milan. The outnumbered Swiss overran the French regiments, which were split up by canals and marsh. Having lost their cannon, the French fled the field, "it being in the nature of the French to feel that they have lost their right hand if they are without artillery." Gritti came close to being killed or captured when he encountered a Swiss column at night, but,

[61] Guicciardini, 1929, 3:264: "piú la persona di imbasciadore che di prigione . . .." On Gritti and the proveditors, see Sanuto, 13:521, 532; 14:20, 22, 23, 32, 39, 47, 51, 78, 91, 168, 217, 409.

[62] For the Habsburg accusation, see Gleason, 31.

[63] Sanuto, 14:626, 638; 15:14; 20:111; 34:359; 40:424.

[64] On Robertet's support for Venice and on the French-Venetian Treaty of Blois of March 1513, see ibid., 15:551; 16:119, 121-26, 136, 143, 167-68; Guiciardini, 1929, 3:264-65. On Robertet, see Mayer and Bentley-Cranch.

[65] Machiavelli, 1961, 454, wrote to Guicciardini on 15 March 1526 regarding Francis I: "perché lo spaventacchio di perdere il regno, perduta che sia l'Italia, havendo, come voi dite, il cervello francese."

[66] Sanuto, 16:213: "'Fate che in tutti i consulti e deliberation non solamente missier Andrea ne intravegni, ma anche ne sia el parer e consentimento suo come pratichissimo' . . .."

pursued by shots from crossbows, he made his escape. The French army limped back over the mountains into France. Venetian forces under Bartolomeo Alviano (recently released by Louis XII), which had advanced boldly into Lombardy to support the French, retreated to Padua after the Novara defeat. For his part, after an absence of a year and a half, Gritti returned to Venice.[67]

Venetians greeted him as a hero: "He received the heartiest welcome, for all the palaces, stairs, courtyards, and squares which he passed in going to his quarters in the Procuratia were full of people who made great efforts to shake his hand."[68] The Republic badly needed Gritti's services, since the French rout at Novara meant that Venice once more stood alone against its enemies. When Guicciardini, who was serving as Florentine ambassador to Aragon, heard about the Venetian alliance with Louis XII, he recalled the Castilian proverb which suggested that "the weakest always get it in the neck."[69] After Novara, Venice was indeed defenseless as German and Spanish troops, allies of Pope Leo X (r.1513-1521) plundered the Veneto. They attacked Padua in the summer of 1513, around the same time that the Senate again elected Gritti as proveditor-general. In the darkest days since Agnadello, Venetians watched from the belltowers of their city as Imperial cavalry looted Mestre and burned patrician estates. The enemy even bombarded Venice with cannon from the shore of the lagoon.[70]

To Gritti's despair, however, the faintest signs of success still made Venetian commanders long for victory in battle, as if the dismal war could be ended in one decisive clash.[71] On 7 October 1513, Gritti was with an army of 20,000 men north of Vicenza, shadowing a dispirited, retreating force of 12,000 Spaniards. Determined to prevent escape of the enemy, Alviano forced a battle at La Motta, only to see his men break and run as the Spanish desperately fought back. Thousands of Venetian troops died in the struggle, including a high-ranking proveditor stabbed to death by his Spanish captors. Thrown from his horse in a melée, Gritti remounted and escaped to

[67]Ibid., 16:463: "per esser la natura de' francesi che quando sono senza artelaria, li pare esser privi de la man destra." On the battle of Novara and Venetian retreat, see 16:326, 329-30, 343, 350-52, 373-74, 398-99, 461-63; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:276-78; Fischer.

[68]Sanuto, 16:441: "tutto il palazo, scala, corte e piaza, dove il passava per andar a caxa in procuratia era piena di zente, e ave gran stracho per esserli tochato la man, et a tutti feva grandissime acoglienzie etc."

[69]Guicciardini, 1965a, 77-78.

[70]Sanuto, 16:477; 17:103, 105, 113; Michiel, fol. 88v; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:291.

[71]Sanuto, 17:142, 144, 145, 147, 152, 153, 172-73.

Vicenza, where the terrified citizens hauled the modern Scipio up the city walls in a basket. As with so many times before, remnants of the army sought refuge in Treviso and Padua.[72]

Gritti and others condemned Alviano for leading Venice to defeat once again. One wit suggested that for the captain-general's deeds at Agnadello and La Motta, he merited a statue with the inscription *Destructori patriae!*[73] Gritti complained so much about Alviano's recklessness that when the proveditor-general finished his term of office in November 1513, the Senate refused to let him deliver a verbal report for fear that he tactlessly would denounce the captain-general all over again. In subsequent elections for proveditor-general, Gritti told the Senate that he should not be appointed because it would be impossible for him to collaborate with Alviano, his enemy.[74]

Gritti's absence from the army after La Motta meant that he was not at the battle of Marignano on 13 September 1515, an engagement in which Alviano's boldness brought victory over the Swiss, allies of Spain and the Papal State.[75] The captain-general died a month after his great triumph, however, and Gritti soon accepted another term as proveditor-general. His last important military action in the War of Cambrai shared the deadlocked, anti-climactic nature of the post-Marignano months. In 1516, when Maximilian I led 15,000 Swiss mercenaries in an attempt to seize Milan from the French, Gritti, hearkening back to his experience at Padua in 1509, persuaded French commanders to prepare for a siege by destroying part of a suburb facing the Emperor's camp. Seeing the French determination to defend Milan, the enemy retreated to Germany. In Venice and elsewhere, Gritti won acclaim for ending the crisis without engaging in battle: "It principally was due to him, regarding the Emperor Maximilian and the dreadfully fierce nation of Swiss, that the gates were closed and maintained against them."[76] It was the last important campaign of the War of Cambrai,

[72]Giovio, 1931, 232-33; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:292-96; Barbaro, 999-1009; Pieri, 505-10. The detail about Gritti comes from Giovio. The latter admired Alviano, which may explain why his account of La Motta blames the battle on the murdered proveditor and portrays Alviano as striving to restrain his truculent instincts. See Zimmermann, 11.

[73]Pieri, 509, note 1.

[74]Sanuto, 17:153, 170, 176, 323, 333, 344; 20:496.

[75]On Marignano, see Guicciardini, 1929, 3:365-68; Pieri, 514-24; Usteri.

[76]Sanuto, 34:480: "che per lui principalmente a la persona di Maximiliano imperatore et a la ferocissima natione de sguizari chiuse le porte et contra loro si mantene." See also 22:34, 101, 480; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:387. On Maximilian's 1516 campaign, see Wiesflecker, 4:240-45. On the impact of the campaign on Venice, see Finlay, 1982.

for by the terms of the Treaty of Noyon in November 1516, the conflict ended and Venice regained its mainland possessions.[77]

On 16 March 1517, Gritti delivered a report on his term as proveditor-general to a packed Senate. Speaking for four hours, he provided both a retrospective on the war and a program for the future.[78] He focused above all on the need for fortifying the Terraferma cities and for avoiding battlefield clashes. He said that if the cities had been strong in 1509, they would not have been lost to the League of Cambrai, and Venice would have been spared its prolonged ordeal. Before Agnadello, Venice had only 114 pieces of artillery in its principal mainland centers, slightly less than Maximilian I had in Verona alone during the war. When the Emperor besieged Padua with (Gritti claimed) 120,000 men, Venetian defenses thwarted him, thereby proving that the Republic needed to rely on fortifications and plentiful artillery. "And, God willing, if we do this, the state will not be lost. Once the French take the field, we become their slaves, and it will not do to say that we have captains and proveditors, for the French will do as they please. Rather than not fight at all, then, it clearly is best to fight with sword in sheath and with reputation."[79]

Gritti's speech articulated concerns spawned by the war. The senators listening to him knew how often their forces had been hounded back to Padua or the lagoon during the conflict, and they recognized how close the Republic had come to extinction. If it were not for Venice's position in the midst of salt water — "the impossible in the impossible," as Francesco Sansovino described it — the city would have been taken in 1509 or 1513, its patricians killed or sent into exile.[80] In early 1510, after the defeat at Polesella, Venetians had trembled to hear that Louis XII and Ferdinand of Spain (1452-1516) were outfitting ships for an attack on Venice.[81] The myth of Venice extolled the city as possessing "no walls, no gates, no fortifications"; rather, its piety, laws, institutions, people, or rulers were hailed as Venice's

[77] Sanuto, 22:469; 23:476, 477-78, 480, 488-489, 490, 492-93, 506; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:403-04.

[78] On Gritti's speech, see Sanuto, 24:69-80.

[79] Ibid., 24:75-76: "E Dio volesse si havesse fato cussì, che'l Stado non si perdera, perchè con francesi in campo semo so' schiavi: non val dir ho il mio capitanio o provedador; qual vol essi francesi voleno che'l sia, et è bon combater *de caetero* con la spada in vasina e con reputation, che non far guerra." See Cozzi, 1973, 320.

[80] The quotation is from Brown, 81. On fears for the destruction and dispersal of the Venetian patriciate in 1509, see Priuli, 4:26.

[81] See the fears expressed in 1509 by Priuli, 4:19-26, 76, if Louis XII were to launch a maritime assault on Venice after Agnadello. On fears in 1510, see vol. 5, fols. 59v, 63, 70-71v, 73v; Sanuto, 9:439.

best protection.[82] Such literary conceits would have vanished as quickly as the republican government of Venice if the princes of Cambrai had marshalled a fleet in the lagoon.

In his oration, Gritti effectively proposed a program for giving the Terraferma a measure of the security enjoyed by the city of Venice itself. Northern armies which lost battles, such as the French at Novara and the Swiss at Marignano, could retire to safety beyond the mountains; but Venetian troops did not have that choice. Since the plains of northern Italy, from the foothills of the French Alps to the lagoon, presented no natural defensive barrier, then urban fortifications must be substituted instead.[83] In the War of Cambrai, once France and the Empire held key cities, they possessed sanctuaries for their troops, strongholds from which they could sally forth to despoil the mainland whenever Venice suffered a military reverse.

As Gritti suggested, the most traumatic thing for Venetians to endure in the war was not military defeat per se but rather the sweeping conquest of mainland possessions that invariably followed a rout in battle. It was the succession of retreats from 1509 which eventually made Agnadello the archetype of defeat for Venetians, an experience to be avoided at all cost. The ancient Romans accepted Fabius Maximus's policy of avoiding battle and relying on fortifications because of the superior tactical skill of Hannibal in combat; Venetians adopted Fabian methods because of the strategic loss of cities and territory after battlefield defeat. In Gritti's eyes, the only way to preserve the Terraferma, and perhaps even the Republic, was to secure the mainland cities from capture. Shortly after Gritti's election as doge, Donato Giannotti echoed the 1517 speech: "As our fellow Venetians had seen that a single defeat could put our whole state in Lombardy in jeopardy, they thought of fortifying the towns in such a way that, were an army lost, the enemy would not be left with everything else."[84]

After Gritti finished his report, Doge Leonardo Loredan (r.1501-1521) hailed the proveditor-general in terms which, like Palma's later painting, identified his accomplishments with the Republic's triumph:

> If ever a proveditor in our service deserved to be praised, it is this magnificent proveditor. As a result of his efforts, he has regained many cities, one may even say realms. He deserves the very highest accolades, and nobody should be ungrateful for so much energy devoted to the recovery of the state. Now this state will enjoy a great reputation, for the entire world has seen how we have pre-

[82]King, xvii-xix. The quotation is from King, xviii, citing Bernardo Giustiniani (d.1489).

[83]See Oman, 28.

[84]Quoted in Mallett and Hale, 411.

> vailed with so many leagued against us; this state has achieved greater fame [than before], not only within Italy but outside as well.[85]

Loredan thus began the process of adapting the dismal military record of the Republic in the War of Cambrai to the elevated demands of the myth of Venice. Endorsements drawn from classical antiquity were central to this intention. Francesco Modesti, a friar from Rimini, presented Doge Loredan with his *Venetiada*, a history of the Republic in epic verse.[86] Patricians boasted that Venice had defied all Europe while the republic of Rome had not withstood the threats of Julius Caesar.[87] A contemporary historian of the Italian Wars wrote that Venetian courage in the Cambrai struggle surpassed that of the Romans against the Carthaginians.[88]

In his *Historiarum sui temporis*, Giovio conveyed this perspective to a wide audience. He asserted that Venetians, "defeated in all their battles but nevertheless prevailing as victors in the general war," had proven themselves superior to the patricians of Rome. In the War of Cambrai, Venice faced graver dangers than had Rome against Carthage, and, unlike the Romans, Venetians never despaired of final victory. Hannibal's triumph at Cannae was not as perilous for Rome as Agnadello was for Venice; nor were Roman losses at the battles of the Trebia and Lake Trasimene as devastating as Brescia and La Motta were for the Republic. Above all, history would record that the salvation of Venice in its arduous struggle against a united Europe arose from the heroic leadership of Gritti.[89]

* * *

By the end of the War of Cambrai, Gritti held an unprecedented position within the patriciate. He was universally regarded as the leading expert on military matters, with expertise rivalling that of professional generals. Moreover, he enjoyed an international reputation, eclipsing the standing of the doge and outshining the commercial or intellectual eminence achieved by a

[85]Sanuto, 24:79: "si mai alcun Provedador stato in li servicii nostri meritava esser laudato, questo magnifico Provedador era quello . . . mediante le soe fatige si habbi recuperà tante terre, che si pol dir regni . . . che'l meritava grandissima laude, e niun li dia esser ingrato a tante fatiche portate a recuperation dil Stado . . . adesso questo Stado sarà in reputazion, havendo tuto il mondo visto come si havemo prevalesto da tanti erano collegadi contra de nui; e non *solum* in Italia, ma fuora de Italia questo Stado ha preso più reputation."

[86]Ibid., 24:473, 509, 578.

[87]Giustiniani.

[88]Borgia, fol. 82.

[89]Giovio, 1581, 424: "vinti in tutte le battaglie, rimasero nondimeno vincitori nella universal guerra."

few Venetians. Remarkably, Gritti's prestige even played a role in the opening stages of the conflict between Francis I and Charles V in 1521, two years after the latter won election as Holy Roman Emperor. From October 1520 to March 1521, Odet de Foix, Vicomte de Lautrec, the French marshall in Milan, repeatedly asked for Gritti to be sent to him, citing the desire of Francis I and Robertet for Gritti's counsel in defending Milan.[90] Many senators, however, opposed the mission out of fear that Charles V would regard it as a declaration of hostility against him. If Gritti were sent to Milan, a patrician argued, then the Emperor might invade Italy: "Since Gritti is a man of war, if he goes, everyone will say that we intend to make war." Other senators contended that it was necessary to placate Francis I, who might otherwise league with the Emperor against Venice.[91]

The Senate narrowly voted to send Gritti to Milan, a gesture which was indeed taken as a signal by the Imperialists that Venice would side with France.[92] Not long after his return, Gritti was elected to his last term as proveditor-general.[93] Serving with French-Venetian forces against those of the Empire and Leo X, Gritti had no better fortune than in the Cambrai war. Instead of Alviano, he was yoked with Lautrec, a choleric and imprudent commander.[94] In late 1521, the French army retreated to Milan, where Lautrec, recalling Gritti's advice in 1516, fired the suburbs to deter the enemy. On 19 November, however, Imperial troops under Prospero Colonna suddenly broke into the city, and Lautrec's men ran for their lives. Accompanied by a band of Albanian cavalry, Gritti fled for saftey, leaving behind a table heaped with gold and silver coins which his paymasters were preparing to hand out.[95]

Gritti's last battle took place five months later, on 27 April 1522, at Bicocca, a few kilometers north of Milan. The proveditor-general infuriated Lautrec by insisting that the Venetian troops under the command of Della Rovere be held in reserve so that they could be ready to defend the Republic's territory in case of defeat.[96] This did not discourage Lautrec from battle,

[90]Sanuto, 29:278, 309, 329, 386, 480, 517, 540, 553, 597, 636; 30:15, 21, 23, 41, 42, 43, 45, 52, 67. On Francis I and Robertet, see 29:582.

[91]Ibid., 30:24: "perchè il Griti è homo di guerra. Andando, tutti dirà semo per far guerra etc . . .." On Gritti and a possible Imperial invasion, see 30:41. Lautrec's requests began in the same month that Charles V entered Germany for the first time. See Brandi, 122.

[92]Sanuto, 30:206.

[93]Ibid., 31:252, 278, 353, 417, 431, 434.

[94]On Lautrec's temperament, see Giovio, 1931, 269; Segarizzi, 2:13.

[95]Giovio, 1931, 266-67; Guicciardini, 1929, 4:126-28; Sanuto, 32:158, 160, 162-64, 168-70, 185, 188-90.

[96]Sanuto, 33:170, 181, 183, 185-86, 197, 199.

for he told a comrade that he scorned "to lose time cravenly but rather would fight with fiery courage to regain by every means lost honor and the state [of Milan]."[97] In fact, in the weeks before Bicocca, Colonna had played the role of Fabius Cunctator against the hotheaded Lautrec. According to Guicciardini, Colonna's "cautious methods allowed no opportunity for [his enemy] to crush him; the innate deliberateness of his actions deservedly won him the title of 'Delayer.'"[98] In Fabian fashion, Colonna fought at Bicocca from a heavily fortified position, placing his Spanish and German troops behind earthern ramparts and in ditches. When Lautrec's Swiss pikemen charged, they were mowed down by artillery and arquebus fire. Some 3,000 were killed, and Lautrec retreated in disarray.[99] Gritti's military career thus ended as it had begun, with defeat and flight.

French loss of Milan and the rout at Bicocca prompted Venetians to reconsider their alliance with Francis I, especially when the king went beyond treaty obligations and requested Venetian help recovering the duchy from Charles V. Senate debate over which power to support was at its height when Doge Antonio Grimani (r.1521-1523) died in May 1523. Just as the international prestige of Gritti became a consideration in the opening stages of the struggle between France and the Empire, so the Venetian's bias in that conflict entered into the subsequent contest for the ducal throne. Gritti was well-known for being *tutto francese*, an ardent supporter of France. In his *Storia d'Italia*, Guicciardini constructs an oration set in the Senate just before the election in which Gritti, with "a very distinguished name throughout Italy and among foreign princes," argues for a French alliance.[100] During the election, a pro-Imperial crowd in Milan erected an effigy of Gritti with a fish in one hand and a frog in the other, a caricature signifying that his election would spell Venetian subservience to France.[101] That turned out not to be the case, for two months after Gritti won the dogeship, the Senate voted to ally with Charles V. According to Francesco Vettori, a Florentine historian, the

[97]Giovio, 1931, 289: "perdere vilmente il tempo, ma di combattere con vivo valore per ricovrare in ogni modo l'onor perduto e lo stato . . .."

[98]Guicciardini, 1929, 4:212: "per il suo procedere cautamente non lasciava facile a loro l'occasione di opprimere lui; lentissimo per natura nelle sue azioni . . . dia meritamente il titolo di cun[c]tatore . . .." On Colonna's cautious methods, see Giovio, 1972, 407.

[99]On Bicocca, see Giovio, 1931, 289-94; Guicciardini, 1929, 4:158-60; Sanuto, 33:197; Pieri, 541-46.

[100]Guicciardini, 1929, 4:177: "di nome molto chiaro per tutta Italia e appresso a' principi esterni . . ."; 2:223-27, portrays Gritti arguing for a French alliance in 1507. See Finlay, 1999a.

[101]Sanuto, 34:150.

decision was "because Venetians wished to show that their Prince cannot determine alliances and peace at his pleasure."[102]

While Venice had more substantial reasons than that for leaguing with the Emperor, many senators certainly took pleasure in foiling the aspirations of their new head of state. An unpopular choice as doge, Gritti's victory stemmed from good luck and narrowly based support.[103] He was widely disliked and resented, for his personality ran against the grain of the Venetian political system, which valued accommodation and self-effacement above individual enterprise and personal magnetism. Gritti had spent much of his life as a wealthy merchant in Istanbul and no more than four years (1503 to 1507) serving on the governing councils before he became a proveditor-general. Perhaps for that reason, he never mastered the modes of deference, discretion, and compromise that made for success in Venetian assemblies. His naturally imperious manner was not mellowed by years of delivering commands and hobnobbing with condottieri. At the same time, his military prominence and international renown kindled resentment in Venice. While everyone agreed that no patrician had done more for the Republic than Gritti, his identification with victory in the War of Cambrai neither endeared him to his fellow citizens nor prepared him to be effective in the Ducal Palace.

Gritti tried to impose on the unwieldy assemblies of Venice something of the order and severity which he associated with military organization.[104] His arrogance, charisma, and zeal told against him, however. He failed in most of his favorite projects, such as reforming the legal code, enforcing sumptuary laws, transforming public ceremonies, and eliminating electoral corruption.[105] Yet in military policy, Gritti had his way because, on that single issue, he represented a consensus within the patriciate. It was precisely the representative nature of Gritti's military views which ensured that they became orthodoxy after 1523. While many patricians countered Gritti's proposals for various reforms, none rejected the doge's authority on military matters. All agreed that Gritti embodied and articulated the lessons of the War of Cambrai. Moreover, since no official in the Senate or governing councils had his knowledge of war and the army, his opinions carried definitive weight in the assemblies where decisions were made. Despite his unpopularity, Gritti never lost his standing as a "gran homo di guerra," and

[102]Vettori, 344: "perchè e' Veneziani vollono mostrare che il loro Principe non può determinare della leghe e pace a suo piacere . . .. "

[103]Finlay, 1978.

[104]Gritti did not envision the state as some sort of "machine," as Tafuri, 1984, 23-42, asserts but rather as modelled on the military and therefore characterized by technical expertise, command authority, and hierarchy.

[105]Cozzi, 1:122-52; Muir; Finlay, 1980, 213-15.

in 1527 (when the Imperial army threatened) and 1537 (in war with the Ottoman Turks), senators proposed that Doge Gritti take command of the Republic's forces in person.[106]

Gritti's domination of military policy was essential for the success of a Fabian strategy, for such an approach was invariably controversial and hard to sustain. Avoiding battle on a steady basis takes moral fortitude and a thick skin. Patriots and taxpayers do not like watching their costly army remain passive as their state is humiliated and their property plundered. The Roman populace reviled Fabius Maximus for betrayal, cowardice, and acting as the "lackey" of the enemy. He was able to ignore such criticism because the Senate had given him the exceptional powers of a dictator. Shortly before the battle of Cannae, he urged commanders to restrain themselves in the face of censure and demands for boldness from Roman citizens: "Let them call you timid, instead of cautious; slow, instead of circumspect; unwarlike, instead of experienced soldier."[107] Venetian commanders faced identical accusations if they lacked pugnacity. Patricians and commoners usually put strong pressure on the governing councils to attack the enemy during moments of crisis and furor.[108] In the War of Cambrai, such agitation helped spur attacks on the enemy at Padua, Polesella, Brescia, and La Motta, and Venetian crowds in 1516 clamored for a battle with Maximilian I as he advanced on Milan.[109] Scornful of popular opinion, Doge Gritti provided the long-term discipline and implacability which a Fabian strategy demanded.

As Rome discovered with the battle of Cannae, however, a policy of avoiding battle is effective only so long as a Cunctator controls the army in the field. By selecting a general who would share his views, Gritti enforced his Fabian policy, ensuring that proveditors and lesser condottieri adhered to it, despite their disagreement or incomprehension. Although the collective action of the governing councils obscures individual decisions, it is clear that Della Rovere, who was placed in command of Venetian forces immediately after Gritti's election, was the doge's choice. In fact, in his earlier years, Della Rovere had been notorious for his reckless conduct. He appears in Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* as the young Prefect of Rome who bursts into the refined circle of discourse in the palace of Urbino in 1507,

[106]Alonso Sanchez to Charles V, 28 February 1527, Venice, *CSP-Spain*, 3:79; Sanuto, 44:159; Mallett and Hale, 335.

[107]Livy, 5:333. On complaints about Fabius, see Plutarch, 1:293, 315-16; Polybius, 254, 256-67, 261. On the Roman populace supporting rash enterprises, see Machiavelli, 1975, 1:328-31.

[108]On popular opinion influencing the governing councils, see Finlay, 1980, 44-59.

[109]Sanuto, 8:484; 9:335 13:417, 431; 22:38; 45:410-11; Priuli, vol. 5, fols. 24v, 43v; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:291-92.

accompanied by the flaring torches and tramping feet of his entourage.[110] This hints at his potential for violence, for in the same year, he murdered the lover of his sister at that urbane court, and in 1511 he mortally stabbed Cardinal-Bishop Francesco Alidosi, a papal legate, in retaliation for the loss by Pope Julius II (Urbino's uncle) of Bologna to the French.[111] In 1516, Leo X expelled Della Rovere from the duchy of Urbino (in favor of Lorenzo de' Medici the Younger, the dedicatee of Machiavelli's *Prince*).[112] A year later, Della Rovere recovered the duchy in a bold campaign and only surrendered it when faced with overwhelming odds. After Leo X died, Della Rovere reconquered Urbino and had his men hurl the papal governor from the palace window.[113] In his *Elogia*, Giovio emphasized that Della Rovere's employment by the Republic required that the duke curb his impulsiveness and employ Venetian forces with extreme caution:

> These great setbacks in war [to regain his duchy] schooled him to such an extent that when his reputation for courage had grown and had been confirmed by both the Florentines, who had been his enemies, and later by the Venetians, he earned the supreme honor of military command. Having become leader of the Venetian army, the circumstances and customs of the most prudent Senate demanded that he temper the habitual zeal of his aggressive nature with a healthy measure of judicious and considered restraint, for the powerful, undefeated forces of foreign enemies seemed more suitably opposed by delay than provoked by battles. Inasmuch as they had been instructed by two examples in Livy of boldness and disaster, [Venetian senators] preferred a leader similar to Q. Fabius rather than one like M. Marcellus.[114]

A scenario of Venetian senators employing lessons from Livy in making military policy is not far-fetched, for Renaissance readers habitually looked

[110]Castiglione, 83.

[111]Sanuto, 12:198-99; Guicciardini, 1929, 3:100; Giovio, 1972, 381-82.

[112]Guicciardini, 1929, 5:39; Ridolfi, 1968, 178.

[113]Guicciardini, 1929, 4:2-8, 140-41; Pastor, 7:147-51; 8:155-56, 165-69, 208-11.

[114]Giovio, 1972, 455: "Haec tanta bellorum incommoda eum usque adeo naviter erudierunt, ut aucta et confirmata virtutis opinione, cum ab ipsis Florentinis, qui dudum hostes fuerant, tum demum a Venetis summum militaris imperii decus promeruerit. Veneti autem exercitus factus imperator, uti tempora et prudentissimi Senatus mores flagitabent, veterem suum pugnacis ingenii ardorem salubri iustae et cautae gravitatis temperamento moderatus est, quum ei robustissimae externarum gentium et invictae legiones sustinendae potius cunctando, quam praeliis lacessendae viderentur. Ita enim patres bina Liviani temeritate cladeque edocti, Q. Fabio parem, quam M. Marcello ducem malebant." Marcus Marcellus, who served with Fabius Maximus against Hannibal, was defeated twice by the Carthaginian general when making bold attacks. Plutarch, 1:306, states that Fabius and Marcellus were elected to serve together in order to best combine caution and daring in the same campaign. On Marcellus, see Livy, 6:203, 235, 271-301, 429-63; 7:79-82, 263, 319.

to classical texts not only as guides but as catalysts to action.[115] In his *Discourses on Livy* (1513-1527), perhaps the most famous attempt to see a principle of identity between classical antiquity and contemporary circumstances, Machiavelli asserts that "those who read what I have to say may the more easily draw those practical lessons which one should seek to obtain from the study of history."[116] In the 1430s, Poggio Bracciolini employed an argument about the relative standing of two classical heroes, Scipio Africanus and Julius Caesar, to illuminate and influence Florentine party politics.[117] In the early sixteenth century, discussions by leading politicians and intellectuals (including Machiavelli) in the Rucellai gardens in Florence centered on classical writers, especially Livy, and on the values represented by figures such as Cato and Fabius Maximus in order to explore ways of reforming Florentine politics.[118] In his *Adagia* (1536), Desiderius Erasmus forcefully recommends *Festina lente* ("Make haste slowly"), a truly "royal" maxim, to contemporary rulers. The consummate touchstone for commonwealths and princes, the proverb guided Augustus Caesar and Vespasian, who governed alike by deliberation and well-timed determination. According to Erasmus, the perfect embodiment of the adage was Fabius Maximus, "Old Steady-does-it," the hero who won immortal glory by saving the Roman state. Pietro Bembo even had an emblem representing *Festina lente*, a dolphin coiled around an anchor, reproduced from a Roman coin.[119] It is possible that Bembo had the emblem made in tribute to Doge Gritti, his patron, a devotee of classical literature, and Venice's own Fabius Maximus. When Machiavelli witnessed the Republic recovering its mainland empire at the end of 1509, he mockingly remarked that Venetians "have discovered to their cost that studies and books are not enough to retain their state." But Giovio's anecdote about Livy and Della Rovere, as well as the writing of Contarini's *De magistratibus*, suggest that studies and books remained central amid Venetian troubles and perhaps even took on added significance.

Gritti and Della Rovere were both conscious of precedents from classical antiquity in the making of military policy.[120] Moreover, they had worked well together in commanding the Venetian army in 1522, and they came to share similar ideas thereafter, such as the necessity for a comprehensive pro-

[115]See Jardine and Grafton, 40.

[116]Machiavelli, 1975, 1:206.

[117]Oppel.

[118]Gilbert, "Bernardo," 233-34.

[119]Erasmus, 33:3-5. Bembo gave a copy of the emblem to Aldo Manuzio, who made it the colophon of his Venetian press. See 33:5, 9-15.

[120]See Mallett and Hale, 289-90, 297-99.

gram of fortifying the Terraferma.[121] Urbino also recognized the increasing dominance of gunpowder weapons in the Italian Wars, a development which put a premium on defensive tactics. The battle of Bicocca had vividly conveyed that lesson to both Gritti and Della Rovere.[122] The latter admired Colonna, the Fabius Maximus of Bicocca, and he regarded Alviano's impetuousity as a fatal flaw. In the service of Venice, Della Rovere became dedicated to conserving his forces and moving against the enemy with "leaden feet" ("il piede de plumbo").[123] "Doubtful is the outcome of battle," a Fabian maxim cited by Urbino and Gritti, became the touchstone of the Republic.[124] Della Rovere held the position of captain-general of Venice from 1523 to 1538, throughout Gritti's reign as doge, and he had unprecedented influence in military affairs, because, as a Senate vote of commendation stated, he displayed "an outstandingly valorous practice of the discipline of war joined to the highest prudence and immaculate loyalty to us."[125]

Gritti looked upon Della Rovere as an exemplary partner in shaping military policy because of their accord on the need for prudence and restraint. In the eyes of the doge, the great virtue of the duke was that he could be counted on not to be another Alviano. Like many other Venetians, Gritti's perception of the battlefield was dominated by memories of the disasters which sprang from that general's rashness at Agnadello and La Motta. Whenever the governing councils debated committing the army to battle, Gritti would employ the sort of arguments which impelled his fellow patricians to refer to him as a Fabius Maximus. He repeatedly singled out Alviano as a warrior "not to the purposes of the Republic of Venice, which instead desires a cautious, restrained captain rather than one frantically belligerent."[126] The doge instructed his fellow patricians that Venice needed "seasoned captains not daredevils, those brothers of Bartolomeo Alviano who are too hotheaded in unsheathing the sword."[127]

For Gritti and the governing councils, however, keeping the sword in the sheath had a function that went beyond heading off the possibility of battlefield defeat. Avoiding battle seemed the most expedient means of balancing

[121]Sanuto, 40:715; 47:223; 56:171-76; Tafuri, 1989, 108.

[122]On gunpowder weapons, see Guicciardini, 1929, 4:213-14; Lenzi; Taylor, 52-53, 125-26. On Bicocca and defensive tactics, see Guicciardini, 1965a, 158.

[123]See Sanuto, 35:127; Mallett and Hale, 298.

[124]Sanuto, 43:677: "dubbius est eventus belli." See 17:142; Guicciardini, 1965a, 87.

[125]Quoted in Mallett and Hale, 299.

[126]Giovio, 1972, 389: "sed qui, teste Gritto, Reipublicae Venetae parum esset opportunus, quae cautum potius et cuncatorem ducem expostulet, quam fervidum bellatorem . . .."

[127]Giovio, 1956, 2:72: "capitani vecchi e non scavezzacolli, fratelli di Bartolomeo d'Alviano, troppo focoso nel sfoderare la spada, come diceva messer Andrea Gritti . . .."

between the great powers, as well as the only way of being prepared for a coordinated attack by them. Venetians saw Agnadello as symbolic not only of defeat and territorial loss but as a portent of what European powers would launch against them again. The specter of the League of Cambrai haunted the Republic to the end of the Italian Wars. Before 1509, Venetians refused to believe that their warring enemies could ever unite against them; after 1509, they regarded it as a possibility against which they always had to guard.

This was not a groundless fear, for European princes in 1509 acquired a taste for partitioning Venice as a supposed means of resolving their rivalries in Italy. Secret clauses in the Treaty of Noyon in 1516 gave the eastern Terraferma to the Habsburgs and the western portion to France.[128] In 1523, when Venice angered Francis I by allying with Charles V, the former suggested to the latter that France absorb Venetian Lombardy while the Empire take over the Veneto.[129] Two years later, after Francis I was captured by the Imperialists at the battle of Pavia, the Florentine envoy to Spain told Contarini, the Venetian ambassador: "This King of France (may God damn him!) has offered the Emperor to give him all your territory at his own cost."[130] In 1529, Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands (and Charles V's aunt), suggested to the Emperor that Venice be forced to submit to him by threats of "being treated as they were at Cambrai, in 1508, during the reign of Maximilian."[131] Later in 1529, furious that Venice opposed the demands of his sovereign, a French official told a Venetian envoy: "Watch out that, having one enemy [in Charles V], you don't get two."[132] In fact, the Peace of Cambrai (1529), which ended the conflict between France and the Empire, contained secret stipulations obliging Francis I to assist Charles V in attacking Venetian possessions.[133] It is little wonder that when Venetians heard in 1530 that the French king was to meet the Emperor at the town of Cambrai in the Netherlands, they were alarmed, "fearing lest a league similar to that of 1509 should there be made against them."[134]

[128]Sanuto, 23:571; Pastor, 8:161-62.

[129]Gasparo Contarini to the Council of Ten, Burgos, 15 September 1523, *CSP-Venice*, 3:341; see also Sanuto, 35:22.

[130]Gasparo Contarini to the Council of Ten, Toledo, 8 June 1525, *CSP-Venice*, 3:445.

[131]Margaret of Austria to Charles V, Brussels, 26 May 1529, *CSP-Spain*, 4:40.

[132]Baldassare Carducci to the Dieci of Florence, Saint-Quentin, 5 August 1529, in Canestrini and Desjardins, 2:1103: "ma guardate che, havendo voi un nemico, non ne abbiate due."

[133]Carducci to the Dieci, Paris, 2 September 1529, in Canestrini and Desjardins, 2:1117.

[134]Rodrigo Niño to Charles V, Venice, 12 October 1530, *CSP-Spain*, 4:754.

Covert plans for a European coalition against Venice generally turned out to be no more than wishful thinking or political bullying; but Venetian experience at Agnadello argued that the governing councils should take them seriously. The chronic threat of another Cambrai, however, fostered diplomatic contortions and military paralysis. Venice could not afford to let either France or the Empire dominate the peninsula, for that would restrict the Republic's freedom and perhaps inspire the losing party in the struggle to ally with the winner in carving up the Terraferma. Venetian interest, then, lay in maintaining a balance between the great monarchs, shifting back and forth between them according to the tides of war. Given this perspective, the assumptions of Venice and any northern ally naturally ran at cross-purposes. On the one hand, since Venice had the finest army in Italy, a royal partner reasonably expected it to use its armed might to help conquer the common enemy. On the other hand, Venetians preferred to stand by while their ally carried the fight, keeping their own forces in reserve in case the Terraferma needed to be defended.

The difficulties and dangers of such a temporizing policy were particularly acute in the months leading up to the battle of Pavia, the last great clash of the Italian Wars. Venice had leagued with Charles V soon after Gritti's election as doge; but about a year later, it signed a secret alliance with Francis I in the wake of the latter's recapture of Milan.[135] As the French and Imperialists maneuvered in Lombardy in 1524, Venice found itself caught "between the hammer and the anvil" since each side demanded (on the basis of conflicting treaties) that the Venetian army come to its aid in opposing the enemy.[136] The governing councils decided that it was safest to do nothing, a stance rehearsed by Della Rovere in conversation with a proveditor-general. The duke explained that he would not bring the Venetian army into the fight, for if either the Imperialists or the French triumphed, then the territory of the Republic would be threatened. Moreover, if he engaged in battle, the army would suffer casualties, which would make it powerless to oppose an assault on Venice by the victor in the war.[137]

To the Republic's alarm, these nice calculations were swept away by the defeat and capture of Francis I at the battle of Pavia on 24 February 1525.[138] The Imperialists shipped the French king to prison in Spain, and Charles V appeared to be master of Italy. In Venice, the news evoked memories of the

[135]See Sanuto, 37:418-20; Pastor, 9:267-68; Gilbert, "Venetian."

[136]According to Sanuto, 37:296, in an attack on Gritti for having suppressed debate on foreign policy, a senator said "per mal governo questo stado è tra l'ancadine e il martello."

[137]Ibid., 36:425.

[138]On the battle, see Giono.

Cambrai war, not least because the Republic no longer had a confederate among the great powers.[139] Alonso Sanchez, an Imperial envoy, crowed to Gritti in the Ducal Palace: "You were fainthearted, but we still won!"[140] The doge later responded: "Being a friend of both sovereigns, I can only say, with the Apostle: I rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep."[141] This elegant formulation merely exposed the bankruptcy of the Venetian position while failing to mollify either monarch. Francis I denounced Venice for not having supported him at Pavia, complaining to a Spanish viceroy, "If the Venetians had been willing to do their duty, you would be my prisoner as I am yours."[142] In like fashion, Charles V criticized Venice for not joining its forces with his against France. Contarini replied that Venice had held back because it believed that Imperial agents were negotiating for peace with the French king. The Emperor cooly dismissed this specious excuse: "I believe the Republic's intention to have been good, and were it not so, I choose to suppose it good, and hope that for the future the Signoria will no longer delay thus, but give ample satisfaction."[143]

When Mercurino da Gattinara, the Imperial chancellor, also complained about Venetian procrastination, Contarini was more candid:

> In reply I observed that the Republic had more at stake than the Emperor, and could not risk a battle. That Pavia being well garrisoned and well supplied with provisions, the King of France would have been routed of himself without any necessity for exposing the armies of the Emperor and of Venice to manifest peril. That therefore the Imperial commanders had either done wrong to run the risk, or must have taken a different view with regard to the plan of the campaign. In conclusion, I quoted the example of Fabius Maximus when opposed to Hannibal.[144]

In effect, Contarini's reply revealed to the chief minister of the Empire the Venetian strategy that would help advance, against all Venetian intentions, the victory of the Habsburgs in the forthcoming War of Cognac —refusal to commit to a common cause, dependence on fortifications, condemnation of boldness as inherently self-defeating, and repudiation of the risk of battle. Following its diplomatic policy of restoring a balance of power, Venice helped cobble together the League of Cognac in 1526 (when Francis I was released from Spain); but emulating the strategy of Fabius Maximus, it

[139]Sanuto, 37:648, 649, 650-56, 657-59, 662-65, 671-73, 674; 38:7-16.

[140]Ibid., 37:657: "Vui seti timidi, havemo pur vinto."

[141]Quoted in Norwich, 434. Gritti was referring to Romans 12:15.

[142]Quoted by Setton, 3:232.

[143]Gasparo Contarini to the Signoria, Madrid, 12 March 1525, *CSP-Venice*, 3:413.

[144]Ibid., 3:414.

choose not to battle for that alliance in the campaigns of Milan, Rome, and Naples from 1526 to 1528. The ultimate price paid for such a policy was the establishment of Habsburg dominion in Italy. The bloodiest consequence was the Sack of Rome in 1527.

* * *

In the winter and spring of 1527, Della Rovere led some 20,000 troops of the League of Cognac, mainly Venetian mercenaries, in shadowing an army of the Spanish-Habsburg Empire as it moved from Lombardy through Tuscany to the walls of Rome.[145] On the morning of 6 May, the footsoldiers of Charles V, about 20,000 Landsknechts and Spaniards, stormed into the city, where they slaughtered, pillaged, tortured, and raped for weeks. According to one victim, the Eternal City was transformed into Hell itself. The League army arrived near Rome on 22 May. From their encampment, the troops could see smoke from blazes in the city; they heard cannons being fired from Castel Sant'Angelo, signals that Clement VII still held out there and that he and the city awaited rescue. Messengers from Rome came to the commanders every day pleading for help. Della Rovere did nothing, however, and, over the protests of papal officials and captains, he turned the army back north on 2 June.[146] A French bishop witnessing the retreat expressed a universal reaction: "How shameful it was for the army of the League not at least to attempt to help a pope reduced to such calamity!"[147]

The Sack of Rome shocked even hardened observers who believed that the Italian Wars had taught them all there was to know about mayhem and carnage. Given the infamy and significance of the event, fixing blame for it started even before the killing ceased. Naturally, the commander of the Imperial army, Charles de Bourbon, the Constable of France and a great enemy of Francis I, was condemned on all sides. A shot from an arquebus killed Bourbon as he scaled Rome's walls, and a scholar trapped in Castel Sant'Angelo urged that the corpse "be plucked to pieces by birds and nocturnal dogs."[148] Some invective spilled over onto Charles V, for Bourbon had acted in his service. Francisco Quiñones, the general of the Franciscans,

[145]The entire League army of Venetian and papal troops numbered about 29,000; the bulk of this force, mainly comprised of troops hired by Venice, served under Della Rovere. See Mallett and Hale, 225.

[146]On Rome as Hell, see Sanuto, 45:219. For accounts of the Sack, see the summaries of numerous dispatches from Rome in Sanuto 45:86-189; see also L. Guicciardini; De Cadenas y Vicent, 285-344; Gregorovius, 8:567-98; Hook, 1972a, 156-80; Firpo.

[147]Quoted in Pastor, 8:606, note 1: "Quanta vergogna s'era all'esercito d'la lega, di ni haver almen tentato di ajutar un papa, ridotto in tanta calamità."

[148]Quoted in Gouwens, 46.

boldly told the monarch "that unless his Majesty did his duty by the Pope, he could no longer be styled *Emperor*, but *Luther's Captain*, as the Lutherans, in his name, and under his flag, perpetrated all their atrocities."[149]

Bourbon aside, however, the Duke of Urbino was most condemned, precisely because he commanded the only force capable of stopping the Imperial assault. He had many opportunities to thwart the march on Rome, as well as countless entreaties to do so, including from some of the most astute political observers of the time. In early February, after the Landsknechts and Spaniards had crossed south over the Po river, Guicciardini, as lieutenant-general of papal forces, and Machiavelli, as the envoy of Medicean Florence, met with Della Rovere in Parma and pleaded with him for "prompt and vigorous support."[150] They did not get it, for the duke was content to follow the Imperial infantry at a safe distance. In March, with the Imperial soldiers near Bologna mired in snow and rioting against Bourbon, Guicciardini remarked that, "If we had enough forces here or the kind of leadership which could hem them in, they would not know where to turn."[151] Writing to Vettori, Machiavelli concurred: "This imperial army is strong and large; nevertheless, if it should not encounter men who have given up their courage, it would not capture a bake oven."[152] Vettori later bitterly stated that Della Rovere had a peculiar way of making war on the Imperialists, "coming behind them, one might say accompanying them, as lackeys do with their masters."[153]

Della Rovere did respond to the pleas of Florentine governors after an insurrection against the Medici broke out on 26 April. The duke moved his army to Florence, and the revolt quickly died. Marco Foscari, the Venetian ambassador to Florence, expressed relief that Della Rovere had rescued the

[149]Andrea Navagero to the Signoria, Valladolid, 27 July 1527, *CSP-Venice*, 4:76; see also Francisco de Salazar to Mercurino da Gattinara, Rome, 11 June 1527, *CSP-Spain*, 3:240; Pastor, 9:451. For a defense of the Emperor's position by a polemicist in the Imperial chancellery, see Longhurst.

[150]Quoted in Ridolfi, 1963, 236. In late November of 1526, Giovanni de' Medici, Clement VII's cousin and commander of the famous "Black Bands," died of wounds from a battle in which he was trying to stop the Landsknechts and Spaniards from joining forces near the Po. His death was a severe blow to those who argued for aggressive action against the Imperialists. See Guicciardini, 1929, 5:92; 1857, 4:159, 600. In any event, papal troops were greatly outnumbered by the Imperialists and represented only a small proportion of the League army.

[151]Quoted in Ridolfi, 1968, 170.

[152]Machiavelli, 1965, 2:1008.

[153]Vettori, 375: "ma venivono loro drieto, e si poteva dire che li accompagnassino, come fanno i servitori e' patroni."

Medici without his army being endangered by the Imperialists.[154] Machiavelli, however, wondered precisely how the League could stop the enemy "without fighting a battle." The Florentine declared that since Bourbon could not be bribed to control his men and enforce a truce, it was the obligation of the Venetian army to face danger: "With this north wind we too must sail and, if we decide on war, we must cut off all the affairs of peace, and in such a way that the allies come on without hesitation, because now we cannot hobble any more but must go like mad; often desperation finds remedies that choice has been unable to find."[155]

Desperation emboldened only the enemy, however. Abandoning hope of sacking Florence, and throwing away their cannon and baggage carts, the Landsknechts and Spaniards raced toward Rome. They gorged on unripe almonds for food and crossed swollen streams by forming human chains.[156] In response, Della Rovere's men, along with Machiavelli and Guicciardini, set off after them "with all the order and leisure with which soldiers proceed when they go to help those who must wait."[157] The Imperialists assaulted the walls of Rome around the same time that Della Rovere reached Cortona, about a week's march away. A message from Rome informed him that Bourbon had been killed and that thousands of the Imperialists had fallen: "Your Excellencies must make haste, since the enemy are in the greatet confusion. Quick! quick! without loss of time."[158] But it took the duke two more weeks to reach the hills northwest of Rome, some thirteen kilometers from the city. He drove Guicciardini to distraction by his refusals to relieve Rome, where the enemy troops, occupied with looting and lechery, would have been in little position to fight back.[159] According to a man who lost his whole family in the Sack, "Those wretched, indigent soldiers were so engrossed in pillage

[154]Sanuto, 44:580-82; see also Foscari's report in Segarizzi, 3:52-53. On the crisis in Florence, see Guicciardini, 1929, 3:131-34; Ridolfi, 1968, 172-73. After the Sack of Rome, rebels in Florence finally succeeded in expelling the Medici and establishing a republic.

[155]Machiavelli, 1965, 2:1010-11.

[156]Gregorovius, 8:555-56. Hook, 1972b, argues that Charles V urged Bourbon toward taking Rome, despite contrary orders to another Imperial commander.

[157]Vettori, 378: "Il duca d'Urbino e marchese di Saluzzo [commander of a small French contingent] pensavono bene di andare a soccorrere il Papa; ma con tutti quelli ordini e comodità, con le quali vanno e' soldati, quando vanno a soccorrere chi può aspettare." Returning to Florence before Della Rovere reached Rome, Machiavelli died on 21 June. See Ridolfi, 1963, 245, 250.

[158]Quoted in Pastor, 8:599.

[159]Giovio, 1581, 536; Guicciardini, 1929, 5:142-46. On Della Rovere's progress toward Rome, see Sanuto, 45:121, 132, 163-64, 177, 179-80, 180-81, 184-85, 201-02; Gregorovius, 8:598-604.

that while robbing us they themselves could have been the casualties of others — if only the Duke of Urbino had been more solicitous about his own honor than complacent about our horrifying plight."[160]

Benvenuto Cellini claims that he was in charge of lighting three beacons and firing triple cannonades every night from the roof of Castel Sant'Angelo as a signal to the Venetian army that the pope anticipated liberation. "But no help ever arrived from the Duke; and I shall not go into the reason, as that is not my affair."[161] Paying no heed to Guicciardini or Cellini, Della Rovere broke camp and turned back toward Venetian territory. Five years later, Ludovico Ariosto epitomized the moment in *Orlando Furioso*: "See the butchery and plunder which plague every part of Rome, the flames and rapes which strike both sacred and secular. The army of the League watches the devastation from close at hand, hears the cries and shrieks; but it retreats instead of attacking, abandoning Peter's successor to be seized."[162] Appalled at the horrors in Rome and in despair about failing to stop them, Guicciardini wrote to his fellow citizens in Florence: "If they knew all, they would pity me, for every day I die a hundred deaths."[163]

Some ten years later, Guicciardini took his revenge in the *Storia d'Italia*, where he pillories Della Rovere as an impotent, procrastinating commander, even a coward. In one of the most famous passages in the work, Guicciardini remarks that when the duke retreated from Milan in July 1526, he rewrote the boast of Julius Caesar: "I came, I saw, I fled."[164] Guicciardini's accounts of the Milanese and Roman campaigns follow an identical pattern: in the face of certain victory over inferior forces, Della Rovere, motivated by dread of combat, repeatedly rejects the lieutenant-general's sensible appeals for an attack, mendaciously claims that he is obeying Venetian directives, and runs

[160]From an account of the Sack by Marcello Alberino in De Cadenas y Vicent, 315: "Erano quei poveri et ignudi soldati cosi sommersi nella rapina, che mentre rubbavano noi sarebbeno anche essi stati preda de altrui, se quel ducha de Urbino fosse stato più geloso dell'honor suo che contento dell'horrible spettaculo nostro . . .."

[161]Cellini, 73.

[162]Ariosto, 696 (Canto 33, stanza 55): "Vedete gli omicidii e le rapine / In orgni parte far Roma dolente; / E con incendi e stupri le divine / E le profane cose ire ugualmente. / Il campo di la Lega le ruine / Mira d'appresso, e'l pianto e'l grido sente, / E dov ir dovria inanzi, torna in dietro, / E prender lascia il successor di Pietro."

[163]Quoted in Ridolfi, 1968, 175. On Della Rovere's retreat, see Sanuto, 45:276, 282, 284, 309-10, 393-94.

[164]Guicciardini, 1929, 5:38: "In modo che l'uno e l'altro esercito, assai disonoratamente e con grandissimi gridi di tutti i soldati, potendo usare, ma per contrario, le parole di Cesare: — *Veni, vidi, fugi,* — si condusse [from Milan] ad alloggiare a Marignano . . .." For complaints about Della Rovere during the Milanese campaign, see Guicciardini 1857, 4:73-146.

from the enemy.[165] After detailing the duke's arguments for not assailing the Imperialists in Rome, Guicciardini comments: "Thus the pope languished in captivity, without a single lance being broken to deliver from prison he who, in order to assist others, had enrolled so many soldiers, spent infinite sums of money, and plunged almost the whole world into war."[166] The historian also suggests that Della Rovere's stalling was a consequence of his hatred of the Medici, since Clement VII's cousin, Leo X, had expelled him from the duchy of Urbino in 1516.[167]

In his narration of events leading to the Sack of Rome, Guicciardini makes it clear that Della Rovere bore the heaviest responsibility for delivering the city to conquest and abandoning it to ruin. In large part because of Guicciardini's classic account, Bourbon has gone down in history as a brave man who died fighting for an atrocious cause, while Della Rovere is remembered as the cowardly condottiere who betrayed the pope, his Venetian employers, the League of Cognac, and the cause of Italian liberty. Both lethargic and craven, the Duke of Urbino thus played a key role in the tragedy of Italy, the loss of independence to Habsburg domination.[168]

Guicciardini's brilliant narrative of the Italian Wars has never been surpassed. Acclaimed for its dispassionate, Olympian style and its relentless dissection of complex events, it has stood for generations as a model for historians who believed that their labors could transcend contemporary perspectives and partiality. Guicciardini describes his own involvement in events in the third person, with the same cool tone he employs throughout the mammoth volumes.[169] In the tradition of classical and humanist historians, however, he focused on the influence of personal character, the inborn passions and prejudices that propelled historical action, and he neglected the reasoned policies, long-term designs, and institutional contexts that also shaped events.[170] This particularly misled Guicciardini in portraying Della Rovere, who most aroused what Machia-

[165]Ibid., 1929, 5:32-40, 142-46.

[166]Ibid., 5:145-46: "Cosi restava in preda il pontefice, non si rompendo pure solamente una lancia per cavare di carcere colui che per soccorrere altri aveva soldato tanta gente e speso somma infinita di denari e commosso alla guerra quasi tutto il mondo."

[167]Ibid., 5:39; Ridolfi, 1968, 178; L. Guicciardini, 105.

[168]On the *Storia d'Italia* as portraying a tragedy, see Ramat.

[169]On the *Storia d'Italia*, see Gilbert, 1965, 271-301; Phillips, 120-73. On Guicciardini's influence, see Luciani; Cochrane, 303-05. On Guicciardini's tone, see Phillips, 174-79; Finlay, 1999a.

[170]See Cochrane, 299.

velli described as his friend's "blessed wrath."[171] The duke had driven Guicciardini to fury and desperation in the midst of the greatest crisis he had ever known, hence the historian had all the more reason not to look beyond the captain-general's character for an explanation of his apparently ignominious behavior.

In defending his decisions to Guicciardini, Della Rovere maintained that he was being guided by prudence and by loyalty to his Venetian masters. The historian, however, dismissed these statements as lies, nothing more than excuses for cowardice.[172] After describing his protest against the 1526 retreat from Milan, and just before his witticism about the captain-general's supposed Caesarian boast, Guicciardini reports Della Rovere's stinging reply: "While he holds in his hand the standard of the Venetians, he will not allow others to employ his authority."[173] When Guicciardini and others urged the duke to oppose the Imperialists in Tuscany, Della Rovere retorted: "We will do everything we can to protect the territories of the pope and the Florentine governors, but above all with the preservation of the Venetian state in mind, which depends upon the conservation of our army."[174] Those were precisely the priorities which Gritti and his governing councils imposed on their captain-general, and it is notable that amid all the denigration heaped on Della Rovere in the War of Cognac, only the rulers of the Republic had no complaints about him.[175] On the other hand, the diplomats of the Republic could hardly spell out their intention not to permit their army to engage in combat.

A Fabian strategy suited the Republic's political needs, foremost of which was preservation of its mainland empire. When thousands of Landsknechts descended into Italy in October 1526, the governing councils feared that they would attack Venice, as some Imperial commanders wanted them to do. A month later, Charles V urged Ferdinand I of Austria

[171]Machiavelli, 1965, 2:1002, used the phrase in a letter to Guicciardini of 5 November 1526 in referring to the latter's frustration when dealing with commanders of the League's army.

[172]Guicciardini, 1929, 5:37-38, 144-45. In his letters, however, Guicciardini, 1857, 4:119, 597, at times did consider that Della Rovere might be following Venetian orders.

[173]Ibid., 5:38: "rispose, con parole concitate, non volere, mentre che aveva in mano il bastone de' viniziani, lasciare usare ad altri l'autoritá sua . . .." See Guicciardini 1857, 5:343.

[174]Sanuto, 44:536: "Al che el Capitanio zeneral rispose eramo per far ogni cossa per conservation di le terre del Pontifice et di signore fiorentini, tuttavia con conservation del stado di la Illustrissima Signoria, la qual conservation era mantenir questo exercito . . .."

[175]See Setton, 3:276, note 26. Della Rovere's wife and son were put under guard in Venice after the Sack, but that was to protect them against possible violence by those angry at the conduct of the duke, not because the governing councils were upset with him. See Sanuto, 45:410-11.

(r.1519-1564), his younger brother, to attack Venice as soon as possible.[176] From the Venetian point of view, it would have been folly to have Della Rovere try to stop the Imperialists from moving south (as Machiavelli and Guicciardini implored) when the army might soon be needed to face a greater threat from the north. When ordering Della Rovere to advance toward Rome, the governing councils remained anxious that he not squander the army's strength, especially after receiving reports in early 1527 that Ferdinand I was about to lead 20,000 men in an invasion of Venetian territory.[177] Furthermore, the Republic wanted to conserve its forces because it feared that Charles V intended to have Bourbon attack Venice after compelling Clement VII's submission. Indeed, in the weeks before the assault on Rome, the pope apparently tried to halt and divert the Imperialists by suggesting to a Habsburg envoy that the cities of his Venetian ally be attacked instead![178] In light of these considerations, Della Rovere's inaction near the walls of Rome made excellent military sense, however much it seemed to lack courage and compassion.

The conduct of the army of the League in 1527, then, did not represent "the total and overwhelming failure of Italian strategy" but rather the successful exercise of Venetian policy.[179] Wary and restrained, fundamentally committed to protecting their own territory, the governors of Venice declined the gamble of battle. In criticizing Venetian maneuvers in the Milanese campaign, Machiavelli said that "it is not a wise plan to risk all one's Fortune and not all one's forces."[180] For Venetians, however, the wisdom of a Fabian strategy lay in conserving one's forces so that one's fortunes need never be placed in hazard.

There is a certain irony in the consideration that Machiavelli, the foremost political thinker who drew lessons from Livy, apparently did not recognize a Fabius Maximus when he encountered one. Just as Guicciardini in 1527 did not look beyond his wrath at Della Rovere to consider the military strategy of the Republic, so too Machiavelli did not realize that the Venetians, whom he regarded as contemptible and "effeminate," were being guided by the Roman historian whom he revered. Machiavelli's analytical detachment, however, sometimes was overwhelmed by what Guicciardini

[176]Alonso Sanchez to Charles V, Venice, 31 October 1526; the Abbot of Najera [Fernando Marin] to Charles V, Milan, 19 November 1526; Charles V to Ferdinand I, Granada, 30 November 1526, *CSP-Spain* 3:989, 1014, 1027.

[177]See Sanuto 45:111, 212; Hook, 1972a, 196-98.

[178]Secretary Perez to Charles V, Rome, 7-8 April 1527; Marino Caracciolo to Charles V, Milan, 28 April 1527, *CSP-Spain*, 3:136-37, 164; Pastor, 8:574, note 2.

[179]The quotation is from Chastel, 30; see also Gregorovius, 8:604-05.

[180]Machiavelli, 1965, 2:1003-04; 1975, 1:268.

described as his friend's fondness for "extraordinary and violent methods."[181] In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli asserts that the caution and procrastination of Fabius perfectly fitted circumstances, since he thereby held Hannibal at bay and saved Rome.[182] Yet in *The Art of War* (1521), when considering Venetian conduct, Machiavelli maintains that a Fabian strategy cannot work and that there is little to choose between the methods of the Roman and Carthaginian generals:

> In our times, if the Venetians were unwilling to come to battle with the King of France [at Agnadello], they should not have waited until the French army had crossed the Adda, but should have removed far from it, like Vercingetorix [when Caesar forded a river to attack him]. . .. At any rate, battle cannot be avoided when your enemy in whatever case intends to fight. Nor should anybody bring up Fabius because however much he avoided battle, Hannibal avoided it just as much.[183]

In general, a Fabian policy is "nonsensical and dangerous," the recourse of "idle princes or effeminate republics." If the army retreats into a city, then the enemy will besiege it, and before long the Cunctator and his forces will be "reduced by the pangs of hunger to surrender." And if the commander simply puts distance between his army and the enemy, then he leaves his territory to be ravaged, something no "valiant prince" would countenance.[184] In his book on the *Discourses*, Guicciardini criticizes Machiavelli for contradicting himself, justifying a strategy of temporizing but arguing that bellicose action always is preferable.[185] In fact, it appears that Machiavelli yearns for battle in his books as much as he did when Della Rovere marched leaden-footed after the Imperialists in 1527.

One of Machiavelli's speculations related to Fabius Maximus may be usefully applied to Venice and Doge Gritti. For Machiavelli, the relationship between a person's character and circumstances has a significant implication for political leadership. Given the limitations of an individual's nature, a prince can respond only in one way to his times, thereby locking himself and his polity into a single mode of action even though events outpace the particular virtue of his character. In contrast, republics enjoy better fortune for a longer duration because they can call upon the diverse talents of their cit-

[181]For the quotation, see Guicciardini, 1965b, 92.

[182]Machiavelli, 1975, 1:496-97; see also 1965, 2:658-59.

[183]Ibid., 1965, 2:659.

[184]Ibid., 1975, 1:500.

[185]Guicciardini, 1965b, 114.

izens to match changing times. Fabius wears down Hannibal in Italy, Scipio battles him in Africa.[186]

In this perspective, Machiavelli probably would have regarded the Venetian Republic in the 1520s as having perverted a cardinal strength of its political structure. With Doge Gritti guiding military action, the Republic had a Cunctator in charge for life, a dictator who never left office. Indeed, it is hard to imagine the overbearing doge welcoming an argument on the merits of Fabius Maximus and Scipio Africanus, for Agnadello and subsequent defeats had foreclosed that debate. The trauma of the War of Cambrai extended long past that conflict by virtue of the imperious and implacable character of Doge Gritti, rendering Venice incapable of responding to pleas of allies at Milan in 1526, horrors in Rome in 1527, or threat of submission to the Habsburgs in 1529.

In his speech before the siege of Padua in 1509, Gritti exhorted Venetian condottieri to defend the Republic and "la liberation de Italia." In the 1520s, as a consequence of their experience in the War of Cambrai, Venetians effectively decided that these ambitions could not both be realized. As Gritti and the governing councils saw it, Italian liberty had to be sacrificed to Venetian security. Although they may have regretted this, Venetians were not sentimental about it. The survival of Venice depended on conservation of the army, hence it would not be used to fight for anything else. As a nineteenth-century descendant of Guicciardini put it, the Sack of Rome was the fault of the Venetians, who "didn't care if all the springs of the earth went dry as long as water continued to flow through their mill."[187] Although Venice continued after 1530 to be hailed by Giovio and others as still bearing the standard of Italian liberty, that was more a testimony to the pull of nostalgia and the skill of Venetian propaganda than to any political reality.[188] As an envoy of Charles V in Venice gloated in 1533: "Your Majesty upon the whole may be sure that this Signoria generally and privately is more attached to Your Imperial person than to any other prince in the world. They are nowadays all converted and good Imperialists."[189]

While Italian powers owed no gratitude to the Republic, Venetians should have felt indebted to Doge Gritti. The relative independence of the Republic in Italy after it passed under Habsburg hegemony resulted largely from the program of defense that Gritti laid out in 1517 and promoted from 1523. In the summer of 1529, when Charles V landed in Italy and pro-

[186]Machiavelli, 1975, 1:496-98.

[187]Quoted in Cochrane, 302.

[188]See Giovio, 1956, 1:331; see also Seneca; Bouwsma, 103; Finlay, 1999b, 943.

[189]Lope de Soria to Charles V, Venice, 5 December 1533, *CSP-Spain*, 4:870.

ceeded to Bologna, his troops came within a short distance of Venetian territory, but the Emperor did not attack it, despite the entreaties of many Imperial envoys and allies.[190] The cities of the Terraferma were now regarded as almost impregnable, and Venice was determined to defend itself within fortifications and to avoid the battlefield. A political realist, Charles V recognized that if he did not come to terms with Venice, he faced "unending war" in Italy.[191] As Machiavelli wrote about the failure of the League of Cognac to defeat the Imperialists in Lombardy in 1526: "I know with what difficulty cities are taken when there is somebody inside who means to defend them, and that a province is taken in a day, but a city requires months and years to take . . .."[192] In 1530, Guicciardini unwittingly summed up the lesson which Venice had learned in the War of Cambrai: when "the loss of a campaign meant the loss of a state," then "knowing well the art of defense" is more prudent than engaging the enemy in battle.[193] Under the leadership of Gritti, the Republic safely turned the last dangerous corner in the Italian Wars by adhering to that Fabian precept.

Venetians, however, were not grateful to Doge Gritti. Given his severe and domineering manner, he was probably less popular after fifteen years in the Ducal Palace than at his election. When he died on Christmas Eve in 1538, allegedly from eating too generous a helping of grilled eel and beans, celebration broke out on the streets of Venice.[194] Striking a note in keeping with official decorum, however, Francesco Sansovino records that everyone in Venice mourned Andrea Gritti, for "the Most Serene Prince had grown old and suffered from the troubles of war, in which he always was most vigilant."[195]

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[190]Doge Andrea Gritti and the Senate to Alvise Gritti, 9 September 1529, *CSP-Venice*, 4:229-30; Ferdinand I to Leonard, Count of Noguerol, Linz, 18 August 1529, *CSP-Spain*, 3:169; Alonso Sanchez to Charles V, Mirandola, 21 September 1529; Lope de Soria to Charles V, Mirandola, 25 September 1528, *CSP-Spain*, 4:793, 800.

[191]Lanz, 1:368: "une guerre jmmortelle." On Imperial evaluations of Venetian fortifications in 1529, see Lope de Soria to Charles V, Piacenza, 22 April 1529, *CSP-Spain*, 3:987; Louis Praët and Miguel Mai to Charles V, Rome, 7 September 1529; Margaret of Austria to Charles V, Brussels, 2 October 1529, *CSP-Spain*, 4:200, 261.

[192]Machiavelli, 1965, 2:1005; 1975, 1:454.

[193]Guicciardini, 1965a, 57-58; see also 135.

[194]On Gritti's death, see Giovio, 1972, 457; Da Mosto, 242-43; Finlay, 1980, 135.

[195]Sansovino, 594: "il Principe fatto vecchio et aggravato dalle molestie della guerra, nella quale fù sempre vigilantissimo . . .."

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