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## French Diplomacy in Italy, 1450-1463

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FRENCH DIPLOMACY IN ITALY

1450-1463

by

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B.A. June 1961, Radford College

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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HISTORY

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# ABSTRACT

## FRENCH DIPLOMACY IN ITALY 1450-1463

Mary Jane Callahan  
Old Dominion University, 1978  
Director: Dr. Joseph M. Tyrrell

This thesis examines the intricacies of the diplomatic policies of the French in the Italian states of Naples, Milan and Genoa in the middle of the fifteenth century. The particular emphasis concerns French activity with regard to claims in Naples and Milan and control of Genoa during the latter years of the reign of Charles VII and the first two years of his son, Louis XI. The Kingdom of Naples was claimed by René of Anjou, brother-in-law of Charles VII, as the named successor of the Neapolitan queen, Joanna II. Charles of Orleans, another brother-in-law, claimed the Duchy of Milan through the marriage contract of his mother, Valentina Visconti, daughter of the Duke of Milan. The Republic of Genoa placed itself under French suzerainty three times between 1396 and 1461 because of internal and external struggles for control. This study concludes with the cession of Genoa to the Duke of Milan by King Louis XI in 1463 and his decision to stop supporting the claims of the Dukes of Anjou and Orleans in Naples and Milan respectively, in the same year.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The end of the Hundred Years' War found France still suffering from the effects of devastation and depopulation. The monarchy, however, was becoming greatly strengthened and, more importantly, in possession of a royal army that freed it from dependence on the military service of vassals. For the first time in nearly four hundred years, France was virtually free from foreign intervention. The great feudatory branches of the Capetian and Valois lines had exploited the prevailing anarchy of prolonged warfare by making themselves more powerful and, in some instances, virtually autonomous. The French monarchy, however, would consolidate its kingdom during the latter years of the reign of Charles VII and that of his son, Louis XI.

Meanwhile, Charles VII found it to his advantage not only to back Angevin and Orleanist claims in Italy, but also to make alliances there to serve his causes. In apposition with and so often counter to official French policy were the machinations of the Dauphin Louis in Italy off and on from the late 1440's until he became Louis XI in 1461. In the years that he was an almost independent monarch in the Dauphiné, Louis formed alliances on his own, encouraged his

father's enemies and laid plots to frustrate his father's policies, especially in Italy and in Burgundy. His secret negotiations not only involved the Duke of Savoy, his father-in-law, but Venice, Florence and Francesco Sforza of Milan, who served him as a model in the art of diplomacy.

By 1450, five powers of considerable size embraced within their limits nearly the whole of the Italian peninsula. In the South the Kingdom of Naples, together with Sicily, had become the domain of Alfonso of Aragon. In Central Italy the Papal States had been consolidated into a principality including most of the territory between Rome and Ravenna. Florence had united the greater part of Tuscany within the rule of the Republic under the domination of the Medici. In the North Francesco Sforza, a successful condottiere who had married the natural daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, had made himself master of that state comprising most of Lombardy. Finally, the Republic of Venice in the Northeast having extended its dominion far into the West, had become a contender for Lombardy, as well as an aspirant for the dominant position in Italy. Although not considered a power in the fifteenth century, the Republic of Genoa was still in control of the Ligurian coast and a source of contention among the major powers.

A series of wars in the late 1440's and early 1450's effected a reversal of long-standing alliances among these states. These moves helped bring about the Peace of Lodi in 1454-55 and to establish the resultant Italian League. The

League was designed to prevent any one Italian state from gaining hegemony in Italy. The appearance of solidarity was certainly a deterrent to strong French ambitions. The avowed purpose of presenting a solid front in the face of reassertions of French imperial policy in Italy made its aim of establishing political equilibrium in Italy more successful.

The creation of the Italian League in 1455 was then in part the attempt of the five great powers--Milan, Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice--to withstand the continuing interests, direct and oblique, of the French in Italy. The intra- and inter-power struggles in, between and among these various powers deterred the success of the League against French claims and ambitions. However, the League was successful in its purpose to the extent that there was no major Italian war until 1494 when Charles VIII of France invaded Italy--a period of forty years.

French claims and ambitions in Italy were involved, extensive and of long standing. The ramifications have been neglected generally in histories of the Late Middle Ages in English. A collection of heretofore unavailable dispatches has brought to light the extensiveness and, consequently, has emphasized the importance of French relations in Italy.<sup>1</sup> By 1453, France had regained all territory lost to England during

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<sup>1</sup>Dispatches with Related Documents of Milanese Ambassadors in France and Burgundy, 1450-1461, ed. Paul M. Kendall and Vincent Ilardi, 2 vols. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1970).

their Hundred Years' struggle and was ready to maneuver claims and counter-claims in Italy. This was one of the reasons that the Italian powers formed a league hitherto unheard of.

There were two major French claims in Italy in 1450: the Orleanist claim to Milan and the Angevin claim to Naples. The French kings were ever ready to support their cousins' claims in Italy. The Angevin claim reverted to the French crown with the extinction of the family line in 1481. Interest then became more direct, culminating in the invasion of Charles VIII in 1494.

The Angevin claim to Naples originated with Charles of Anjou, who accepted the Kingdom of Sicily as a papal fief in 1266. Prior to her death in 1435, Queen Joanna II of Naples, who was childless, had named as her successor both René of Anjou, brother-in-law of Charles VII, and Alfonso V of Aragon. Although René acceded to the throne with the help of Neapolitan barons, a bitter war ensued. By 1442, Alfonso was installed securely as King of Naples. The frustrated claims of the Angevins, René and his son, the Duke of Calabria, and their continuing struggle to regain the throne of Naples constitute a large portion of French diplomatic and military involvement in Italy from the 1440's to the 1460's.

French involvement diplomatically and personally with Francesco Sforza constitutes a major portion of this thesis. The Milanese crisis really began in 1447 when Filippo Maria Visconti died intestate without a direct and legitimate heir. There were six claimants of varying degrees of legitimacy and



intent to the Duchy of Milan. The French claim was the most direct and legitimate: that of Charles, Duke of Orleans, according to the marriage contract of his mother, Valentina Visconti, which included the County of Asti as well.

In addition, there were five other aspirants. The Emperor, Frederick III, claimed Milan as a fief, but did little more than proclaim his rights. Alfonso of Naples and Aragon based his right on a fake codicil to Filippo Maria's will. Francesco Sforza, the famous condottiere, used as his pretext his marriage to Bianca Maria, the illegitimate but favorite daughter of Filippo Maria. Venice simply asserted its perennial expansionist tendencies. Louis, Duke of Savoy, wanted to press his pretensions with the influence of his sister, the widow of Filippo Maria. Louis had even made a pact with the Dauphin and a party of Milanese in 1446 to this effect against the distinct warning of Charles VII not to interfere with the right of the Duke of Orleans.

Although there was never a serious threat to Francesco Sforza's Duchy of Milan after 1450, his control of that powerful Duchy made him a prime ally, and at the same time adversary, of Charles VII of France. His intervention time and again in French affairs in Italy constitutes a major portion of this thesis.

Troubles in Genoa, internal and external, had been a problem in Italy for quite some time by 1450. All the Italian powers, and especially France, wanted control of (or at least a hand in) Genoese affairs in the 1440's and the 1450's.

Genoa became virtually a pawn at the mercy of these powers. Her Doges were easily manipulated and duped. Genoa, once a great Mediterranean power, was at a low ebb in the 1450's. She had been excluded from participation in the Italian League by Sforza and Alfonso. Menaced on land and sea, for the second time in less than twelve years, Genoa attempted to preserve her independence by surrendering to French suzerainty in 1458.

Charles VII had hoped that, with his domination over Genoa, his conquests would include the reestablishment of the Angevins in Naples and the substitution of the Duke of Orleans for Sforza in Milan. The failure of this scheme was due in large part to the adherence of the chief Italian powers to the principles of the League. French efforts to retain suzerainty over Genoa constitute a portion of this thesis.

This study will collate the span of French influence in Italy from approximately the accession of Francesco Sforza in Milan in 1450 to the reversion of Genoa to Milan in a treaty between Louis XI of France and Sforza in December, 1463. Concentration will be placed on French policy involving Naples, Milan and Genoa in a topical study of these three states. The study will be limited to these states because they are the ones over which French claims were sought and/or from which French intervention was requested. The topical approach will be subdivided chronologically.

The interests and interventions of Florence and Venice and their own involvements with France are of great importance. Of lesser importance, but necessary to an extent, are

the actions of the Popes, especially Aeneas Silvius - Pius II, and the Duke of Savoy in his relations to the Dauphin Louis of France. The most valuable sources used were diplomatic correspondence and negotiations as found in English, Latin, Modern French and Middle French.

The following questions will be analyzed with regard to the Kingdom of Naples. On what basis did both the Angevins and the Aragonese lay claim to the Kingdom? How did these claims affect Naples itself, Italy as a whole, and official French policy (as opposed to that of René specifically)?

Two major questions will be considered concerning the Duchy of Milan. What claims were there to the Duchy of Milan and what attempts to gain control of it? Who and what were involved in changing French relations with Sforza?

Finally, the situation in Genoa will be analyzed in the following manner. On what was France's interest based? Why and to what extent were Milan, Naples, Florence and Venice involved?

French Diplomacy in Italy, 1450-1463 will conclude with a summary of French policy in the Italian peninsula throughout the entire period covered, to what extent it was successful, and why it changed quite drastically in 1463.

## CHAPTER II

### The Kingdom of Naples

The long-standing struggle between the Aragonese and the Angevins over the Kingdom of Naples was renewed in the late 1450's with the death of Alfonso V of Aragon. René of Anjou had never given up hopes of regaining the throne of the Kingdom of Naples after he was bested and overthrown by Alfonso in 1442. The lack of unity within the Kingdom of Naples and the vicissitudes of intra-Italian politics allowed René to continue to aspire to the throne. The relations of Charles VII, King of France, with the various Italian states and his wish to attain hegemony in Italy likewise led René to seek his impossible dream. Not least in the matter was the French king's attitude with regard to René as his brother-in-law and as head of one of France's most powerful and most influential families. Whence the Aragonese and the Angevin claims to the Kingdom of Naples?

The Aragonese kings acceded to the throne of Sicily in the late thirteenth century. Pope Clement IV had established a French dynasty in both Naples and Sicily in 1266 when he called in Charles of Anjou, younger brother of Saint

Louis IX, King of France. The Sicilians transferred their allegiance from Charles of Anjou to Peter III of Aragon in 1282. Thus Sicily was ruled by an Aragonese dynasty and Naples by the French Angevins.<sup>1</sup>

Alfonso V of Aragon inherited the Mediterranean possessions of his dynasty--Sicily, Majorca and Sardinia. In 1420 Queen Joanna II of Naples, who was childless, adopted Alfonso as her heir. Joanna made a new will in 1423 in favor of Louis of Anjou, René's father. The Aragonese later insisted that she had changed the will again in 1433.<sup>2</sup> Thus the claim of Alfonso V to the Kingdom of Naples came about through the capriciousness of its last queen.

The claim of René of Anjou to the throne of Naples was more complicated than that of Alfonso. Charles, Count of Anjou and Provence, invested by the Pope with the title to Naples, was succeeded by his son, called Charles II by the Neapolitans. His grandson, Robert, ruled effectively. He had the resources of Provence, which he controlled, backing him in addition to those of the French monarch. He was influential throughout Italy. When Robert died in 1343

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<sup>1</sup>Wallace K. Ferguson, Europe in Transition: 1300-1520 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Dépêches des Ambassadeurs Milanais en France sous Louis XI et Francesco Sforza, ed. Bernard de Mandrot, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1916-1923), 1:13. "Les Aragonais prétendront qu'en 1433 Jeanne avait annulé l'adoption du duc d'Anjou et renouvelé celle d'Alphonse."

without any male heirs, the throne of Naples passed to his granddaughter, Joanna I.<sup>3</sup>

Joanna's rule was tempestuous, marked by four marriages and no children and by the constant wars brought about in part by the two lines of Popes.<sup>4</sup> In 1379 Clement VII, the Avignon pope, attempted to regain papal estates in Italy by creating the Kingdom of Adria there under Louis, Duke of Anjou, brother of Charles V of France. This plan was never executed, but Clement persuaded Joanna to name Louis as her heir.<sup>5</sup>

Joanna took his advice, writing letters of adoption, which were confirmed by Clement at Avignon on July 21, 1380. French claims to Naples for over 100 years rested upon this adoption ratified by an antipope. Victory in Naples under Louis would be a major victory for the schismatic pope over the Italian pope as well as counteract Joanna's extreme

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<sup>3</sup> Francesco Guicciardini, History of Italy and of Florence, trans. Cecil Grayson (First printed in 1561; reprint ed., London: The New English Library, 1966), p. 101; E. M. Jamison et al., Italy Medieval and Modern: A History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> The Great Western Schism began in 1378 when a second Pope, Clement VII, was elected and established himself at Avignon after Urban VI was duly elected in Rome. Its end was effected by the Council of Constance called by the Emperor Sigismund. Martin V became the only Pope in 1417.

<sup>5</sup> David Jayne Hill, A History in the International Development of Europe, 3 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1906; reprint ed., New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1967), 2:86.

danger.<sup>6</sup>

This danger presented itself in the person of Charles of Durazzo. Charles was a prince of the first House of Anjou, raised at Naples and married to one of Joanna's nieces.<sup>7</sup> Invested by Urban VI, the Italian pope, he entered Naples and took over the throne as Charles III. When the French Angevins under the adopted Louis prepared to interfere, Joanna met with a violent death at the hands of Charles in 1382, after nearly forty years of misgovernment. Louis entered Italy to conquer his kingdom, but died of a fever in 1384.<sup>8</sup>

Louis' son, Louis II, continued the struggle for Naples and now controlled Provence as well. Louis fought for control of the throne of Naples for seventeen years, but was ousted by Ladislas, son of Charles of Durazzo. When Ladislas died in 1414, the throne again passed to a childless queen, his sister Joanna II, who would misgovern for twenty-one years.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>A. M. F. Robinson, "The French in Italy and their Imperial Project," Quarterly Review 170 (1890): 448-49. Clement even granted Louis of Anjou the Peter's pence in all countries holding allegiance to Avignon.

<sup>7</sup>The first House of Anjou, descended from Charles II of Anjou, King of Naples, possessed no lands in France. Durazza itself was in Albania.

<sup>8</sup>A. Coville, Les premiers Valois et la Guerre de cent ans (1328-1422), vol. 4(1), in Ernest Lavisse, Histoire de France, 9 vols. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1902), p. 290; Ernst Breisach, Renaissance Europe 1300-1517 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1973), p. 228.

<sup>9</sup>Coville, Les premiers Valois, p. 290.

Joanna II proved to be even more feckless and capricious with regard to heirs than the first Joanna. As mentioned above, Joanna adopted Alfonso of Aragon in 1420, and changed her will in 1423, adopting Louis III of Anjou. Louis died in 1434, leaving his possessions to his brother, "le bon roi" René, Duke of Lorraine and Bar. Joanna died in 1435, having chosen Rene as her heir.<sup>10</sup> René and his son, John of Calabria, would spend their lives in unsuccessful endeavors to gain the throne of Naples.

René was languishing in prison when he heard of his brother's death in 1434 and then that of Queen Joanna in the next year.<sup>11</sup> In 1431, Philip of Burgundy had sent a small force to aid the Count of Vaudemont in his struggle with Rene for the Duchy of Lorraine. The Burgundians won the battle at Bulgneville, not only scattering the French, but also capturing René. He was taken to Talant as Philip's prisoner of war.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Dépêches, 1:xiii; Marie Louyse Des Garets, Le Roi René 1409-1480 (Paris: Editions de la Table Ronde, 1946), p. 86. Des Garets refers to Joanna as Jeanne de Duras, reine de Sicilie; Mandrot refers to her as la reine Jeanne II d'Anjou-Durazzo.

<sup>11</sup>Ch. Petie-Dutaillis, Charles VII, Louis XI et les premières années de Charles VIII (1422-1492), vol. 4(2), in Ernest Lavisse, Histoire de France, 9 vols. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1903), p. 310.

<sup>12</sup>Richard Vaughan, Philip the Good (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1970), p. 26. Vaughan calls René titular king of Naples. His brother, the named successor of Joanna, did not die until 1434.



Through pressure from Charles VII of France for his brother-in-law, René was finally released by Philip in 1437. Charles was determined that not only would René not be excluded from the Treaty of Arras,<sup>13</sup> but also that he would be released from the ransom and the cession of lands demanded by Philip. Menaced by Charles and in order to avert a war, Philip finally released René from his obligations in 1445.<sup>14</sup>

Because René could not personally pursue his rights in Naples, he sent his wife, Isabelle, Duchess of Lorraine, in his place. Isabelle found herself in a difficult position, contending not only with feudal Neapolitan barons, but also with an Alfonso determined to retain his right of "adoption". René joined Isabelle in 1438 after his release from prison. Pope Eugenius IV conferred the Kingdom of Naples upon him. In spite of his popularity and that of the name of Anjou among the Neapolitans, and even though he was backed financially for a time by Charles VII, René was not able to maintain himself against Alfonso.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, three of René's allies in Italy had abandoned him--Venice, the Pope and Filippo Maria Visconti,

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<sup>13</sup>The Treaty of Arras was signed in 1435 by Charles VII of France primarily to deflect Philip the Good from his English alliance.

<sup>14</sup>Vaughan, Philip the Good, pp. 115 and 118.

<sup>15</sup>Petit-Dutaillis, Charles VII, pp. 310-11; Des Garets, Le Roi René, p. 87. Des Garets is almost a carbon copy of Petit-Dutaillis.

Duke of Milan. Filippo Maria, allied by treaty to René, broke faith with him in 1435 after Alfonso had been captured by the Genoese and handed over to him (Visconti). Alfonso had managed to persuade Filippo Maria to back his interests. René gave up the struggle in 1442, fled to Florence, and then returned to Provence. Alfonso was now in full control, and so Pope Eugenius transferred the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples to him in 1443.<sup>16</sup>

Alfonso set up a strong and stable government and established Naples as a center of the Renaissance. Pope Eugenius had granted investiture to him, partly as an alternative to Alfonso's backing of the antipope Felix V (Amadeus of Savoy), and partly to gain an adherent against Francesco Sforza. At the same time, Eugenius invested Alfonso's natural son, Ferrante, as heir to the Kingdom of Naples, thereby legitimizing him.<sup>17</sup>

Naples under Alfonso and later Ferrante was the perennial enemy of the doges of Genoa in power at the time. Alfonso's antagonism toward Genoa dated from his defeat and capture by their fleet in 1435. In 1446, Alfonso backed the Adorni, now out of power, in their struggle against the

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<sup>16</sup>Dépêches, 1:XIII-XIV; Jamison, Italy, pp. 198-99.

<sup>17</sup>Edward Armstrong, "The Papacy and Naples in the Fifteenth Century," in The Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 8: The Close of the Middle Ages, C. W. Previté-Orton and Z. N. Brooke, eds. (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), p. 178.

Campofregosi. It was his help, and the lack of it, from Fillippo Maria which compelled Genoa to place herself under the protection of the King of France.<sup>18</sup>

In 1447, the Campofregosi triumphed in Genoa and drove out their French protectors, thus forcing Alfonso to back away. In that same year, Filippo Maria died and set off a mad scramble for his duchy. Not the least of these contenders was Alfonso, who insisted that Filippo Maria had made him (Alfonso) his heir by a codicil to his will.<sup>19</sup> Alfonso lost out on both of these expansionist ventures, remaining, however, an enemy of the French. The death of Filippo Maria Visconti drew France once again into the Italian fray.

Because the Republic of Florence backed Francesco Sforza to succeed in Milan instead of him, Alfonso attacked Florentine territory in November, 1447. Florence and Venice were allied at that time, as were Naples and Milan.<sup>20</sup> Venice had for some time been involved in the aggrandizement of her influence and territory at the expense of the Duchy of Milan. As Alfonso was an arch-enemy of France, so

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 178-79; Émile Vincens, Histoire de la République de Gênes, 2 vols. (Paris: Chez Fermin Didat Frères, 1842), 1:233-34.

<sup>19</sup>Generally considered a fake, as the original was never found. Hill, Diplomacy, 2:87-88.

<sup>20</sup>By 1451 this alignment will have reversed itself.

Florence had long been francophile, deeply involved in trade and banking.<sup>21</sup>

At the insistence of Cosimo de' Medici, Florence sent an ambassador to King René, requesting his aid against Alfonso and offering him a chance to regain Naples.<sup>22</sup> Early in 1448, Venice, after declaring itself against the pretensions of Alfonso to the Duchy of Milan, declared for Charles, Duke of Orleans and against Sforza. The Duke of Burgundy also backed Orleans. Sforza asked Florence to intervene in reconciling Venice to him. Florence complied by requesting the senate of Venice to aid them against Alfonso and to recognize the rights of Sforza in Milan and of René in Naples.<sup>23</sup>

Even at this early date, Sforza was opposed to the advancement of the French in Italy. However, in 1448, he felt that he had no choice in view of the opposition of the Emperor Frederick III to him. He required the Emperor's recognition in view of the fact that the Duchy of Milan was a nominal fief of the Emperor.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Curt S. Gutkind, Cosimo de' Medici, Pater Patriae 1389-1464 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), pp. 154-55.

<sup>22</sup>"... pour l'engager à faire revivre ses prétensions sur la royaume de Naples." Summary of a letter in Négociations Diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, ed. Giuseppe Canestrini and Abel Desjardins, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1958), 1:61.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62. From summaries of letters in French.

<sup>24</sup>Vincent Ilardi, "The Italian League, Francesco Sforza and Charles VII (1454-1461)," Studies in the Renaissance 6 (1959): 133.

Cosimo de' Medici considered it vital to the interests of the Republic of Florence that Venice break with Alfonso and come to terms with Sforza over accession to the Duchy of Milan.<sup>25</sup> This was precisely the reason that Florence made overtures to René, dangling the reconquest of Naples as bait.

Charles VII informed Rene by letter in January, 1448, that he could not undertake the cause of René or Cosimo because of a new threat from the English. This information was relayed to Florence through the ambassador who had been sent to René.<sup>26</sup> The decision of the King of France not to send forces into Milan or Naples influenced the Venetians to make peace with the Kingdom of Naples and Alfonso in October, 1450. This, in turn, brought about the alliance of Florence and Milan (now under Sforza) in July, 1451, according to a ten-year defensive and offensive contract.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Twice a categorical statement that Visconti nominated Alfonso his heir is found in Gutkind, Cosimo, pp. 155 and 157. This same allusion is made in Ferdinand Gregorovius, History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages, 8 vols. trans. Annie Hamilton (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 7/1:112. According to most research this is not so. In addition Gutkind refers to Charles, Duke of Orleans, as the brother of René on p. 155. This also is false.

<sup>26</sup>Gaston du Fresne de Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6 vols. (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard, 1881-1890), 5:147.

<sup>27</sup>Négociations, 1:62; Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 131. Thus the reversal of alliances referred to in footnote 20.

It was Alfonso's hegemonic dreams for Italy that enabled the King of France and his brother-in-law, René of Anjou, to expand their own interests in Italy in the 1450's. Florence and Milan in the persons of their rulers, Cosimo de' Medici and Francesco Sforza, cautiously played into the hands of the French, and vice versa. Alfonso's ambitions included not only Milan but Genoa, Florence, and lesser states as well. His control of the combined Aragonese and Neapolitan fleets, the strongest in the western Mediterranean, made him all the more formidable. Therefore, the alliance of Florence and Milan made overtures to Charles VII and René with the intent to preserve the balance of power in Italy.<sup>28</sup>

The alliance between Venice and Naples<sup>29</sup> led directly to an appeal to Charles VII for help.<sup>30</sup> In September, 1451, the Dieci di Balia of Florence sent one of its own members, Angelo Acciajuoli, as its ambassador to the court of Charles VII of France for help against the imminent peril presented by the formation of this league.<sup>31</sup> Acciajuoli made three missions to France during this time.

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<sup>28</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 132.

<sup>29</sup>This league included the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat.

<sup>30</sup>The negotiations leading to, and the results of, French intervention in Italy from 1451 to 1454 will also be studied in detail in Chapter III, pp. 59-70.

<sup>31</sup>Négociations, 1:56.

Among its instructions involving the entire Italian situation, the Dieci di Balìa made several references to Alfonso of Aragon and Naples:

1. That, after the King of Aragon had conquered the realm of Naples, he continually manifested the greatest hate and hostile attitude toward the republic.

2. That the republic had given up territory after the invasion of 1447.

3. That Alfonso hated the republic for its devotion to France.

4. That Alfonso exiled citizens and merchants of Florence from Naples contrary to his word.<sup>32</sup>

The following references indicate how Acciajuoli should carry out his mission:

1. That, if Charles VII mentioned the reconquest of Naples, he must say that he had no instructions, but would affirm that the republic would help insofar as possible.

2. That, even though Pope Nicholas was attempting to negotiate peace with the ambassadors of the Italian powers, he must say that the republic would not consent to such articles that would prevent it from following the banners of France with its own arms and flags.

3. That he might induce Charles to make trouble for the King of Aragon (Alfonso) in Navarre and other places.

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<sup>32</sup>Dispatches, ed. Kendall and Ilardi, 1:2-10 passim.

4. That he make known that the Duke of Milan, having interests in the Kingdom of Naples which Alfonso confiscated, had the concern and military power to attain a conquest.

5. That, in his conference with Sforza, he would explain that aid to France in Italy would be a great expense to the republic.<sup>33</sup>

A treaty between the King of France, the Duke of Milan, and the Republic of Florence was signed at Montils-Tours on February 21, 1452, which would remain in effect until the feast of St. John the Baptist, 1453. There is no specific reference to the Kingdom of Naples nor to Alfonso in this treaty.<sup>34</sup>

In May and June of 1452, the Venetians attacked the Duke of Milan, while a Neapolitan army under Ferrante, the now legitimate successor to his father, Alfonso, invaded Florentine territory. Under the guidance of Count Federigo Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, Ferrante moved with an army of ten or twelve thousand.<sup>35</sup> The Count had been engaged by Alfonso for one year, renewed for a second year, his company

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-20 passim.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 373-77. This treaty is quoted verbatim in Latin. Reference to correspondence between Acciajuoli and the Duke of Milan, and between him and the Dieci di Balìa prior to the signing of the treaty in Chapter III, pp. 60-61.

<sup>35</sup>François T. Perrens, The History of Florence under the Domination of the de' Medicis 1434-1492, trans. Hannah Lynch (London: Methuen and Company, 1892), p. 110.



to consist of 4200 cavalry and 600 infantry.<sup>36</sup>

This war accomplished nothing for Alfonso, who wanted a base for attack on Genoa and Corsica. The major result was Acciajuoli's second mission to Charles VII in September, 1452, accompanied by Francesco Ventura, but against Sforza's wishes.<sup>37</sup> With reference to the Kingdom of Naples, Acciajuoli and Ventura received the following instructions:

1. All possible aid to undertake the reconquest of Naples should be offered only if Charles VII would not send 15,000 troops to Italy any other way.

2. If all else failed, then a specific offer of 4,000 horse and 1,000 foot for the enterprise against Naples should be made.<sup>38</sup>

The gist of the negotiations may be summarized as follows. Charles VII was not at all interested in embarking to Italy because of imminent English attacks on Guyenne and Bordeaux. However, Charles did agree to intervene concerning the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat. He was successful with regard to Savoy only.<sup>39</sup>

The Florence-Milan alliance sent Acciajuoli on a third mission to France to appeal for help directly from

<sup>36</sup>Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino, 1440-1630, 3 vols., ed. Edward Hutton and trans. James Denistoun (London: John Lane, 1909), 1:104-6.

<sup>37</sup>Perrens, History of Florence, pp. 110-11.

<sup>38</sup>Dispatches, 1:72-76.

<sup>39</sup>Gutkind, Cosimo, pp. 163-64.

René in February, 1453, if the king would not comply. Rene agreed to an expedition into Lombardy primarily because he fully expected to carry on into the Kingdom of Naples.

In his instructions from the Dieci di Balia, dated January 26, 1453, Acciajuoli was requested to say:

1. That, in the event the King of France would refuse them, Rene would come with at least 3,000 cavalry.

2. That, if the king were unwilling to subsidize him, he could expect eight to nine thousand florins per month, or 10,000 at most. This subsidy would begin when his troops reached Lombardy.

3. That, if René were unwilling or unable, he would send his son John, Duke of Calabria, with at least 2,000 cavalry and receive at least 6,000 florins per month.

4. That, if peace were made meanwhile, René (or John) and his troops would receive pay or provisions for two months.<sup>40</sup>

Early in March, 1453, the Duke of Milan wrote to Acciajuoli that the King of Castile wished to make alliances in Italy and enter the league against the King of Aragon. Charles VII should be informed of this development.<sup>41</sup>

Acciajuoli informed the Dieci di Balia in three letters in March, 1453:

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<sup>40</sup>Dispatches, 1:86-96 passim.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-101.

1. That the ambassador of Alfonso to the court of France, Pietro di Campussano, was spreading the word that the republic was begging for peace and that both it and the Duke of Milan had offered Alfonso money.

2. That the King of France had been approached by this same ambassador with an offer to be on good terms with Rene, in which he (the king) put no faith.

3. That, after a visit to King René, the business of Florence, Milan, and France would be concluded.

4. That King René would be given a free hand to aid the alliance of Florence and Milan, because Charles VII was too busily engaged with the English.<sup>42</sup>

Acciajuoli made a speech addressed to the King of France entitled "Hec sunt ea que regi Francorum dominus Angelo de Acciaiolis ex parte ducis Mediolani et communitatis Florentie exposuit."<sup>43</sup> In this speech he discoursed at length on the problems caused by Savoy and Montferrat and the fact that no satisfactory agreement had been settled concerning these powers. Acciajuoli made it clear that the King of France could have easily persuaded the Duke of Savoy to live up to obligations and promises made to the Duke of Milan.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 104-06.

<sup>43</sup>This speech is the only one in French archives attributed to Acciajuoli. An analysis by Perret determined that it was made during his third mission in March-April, 1453. P. M. Perret, "Le Discours d'Angelo Acciajuoli au Roi de France," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 53 (1892): 429-33.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 437.

A treaty between King René and the Republic of Florence was signed at Tours on April 11, 1453. The terms are summarized as follows:

1. René will come with at least 2,400 cavalry on or by June 15, 1453, in order to wage war where it would be advantageous against the enemies of Milan and Florence, the Pope and Charles VII of France excluded.

2. René will receive a compensation of 10,000 gold florins per month free and clear to begin one month before his arrival in Italy.

3. René would lead all troops of the Republic of Florence.

4. If René could not fulfill his obligations, his son, John of Calabria, would come in his place.<sup>45</sup>

René finally arrived in Lombardy in September, 1453, hoping to use this campaign as a stepping-stone to Naples. There will be an account of his aborted adventures in the service of the Republic of Florence and the Duke of Milan in Chapter III.

The wars of 1452-1454 had resulted from the realignment of powers, the Republic of Florence and the Duchy of Milan on the one side, the Republic of Venice and the Kingdom of Naples on the other. The invasion of Lombardy and Tuscany by Venice and Naples respectively had brought the French under René of Anjou on his life-long quest.

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<sup>45</sup>Dispatches, 1:378-81.

In 1453, there occurred one of the most important events in the history of Christendom--the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. By 1454, the impact of the conquest was realized, especially in Italy and most particularly by the maritime states. In addition, Pope Nicholas V worked to secure peace with the hope of taking measures to confront the danger emanating from Constantinople.<sup>46</sup>

René had left Italy in January, 1454 and returned to Provence. His withdrawal provided a severe setback, but not a defeat, to French pretensions in Italy. Furthermore, the war was not going well for any of the belligerents. "It was this negative realization, perhaps more than any positive desire for a general peace, that led all belligerents to accept with more or less reluctance the peace treaty of Lodi (April 9, 1454) . . ."<sup>47</sup>

One of the most important accomplishments in the history of Italy in the Quattrocento was the Peace of Lodi and the resultant Italian League. How did this come about?

The Peace of Lodi was at first between Venice and Milan, Venice gaining only the town of Crema, Sforza being formally recognized as Duke of Milan. This peace was made without Alfonso's knowledge. Consequently he refused his

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<sup>46</sup>Pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius) called the Congress of Mantua in 1458 on this account. His predecessor, Pope Calixtus III, also preached a crusade.

<sup>47</sup>Vincent Ilardi, "Quattrocento Politics in the Trecanni Storia di Milano," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 26 (1964): 176.

consent, even after Florence signed the treaty on August 30. Alfonso was finally persuaded by the other three powers, along with the papal legate, to accept the peace on January 26, 1455. Alfonso forced the exclusion of his hated enemies, Genoa and Malatesta of Rimini, from the conditions of the treaty.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the terms of the treaty, a marriage contract was effected between Alfonso and Sforza, uniting the two houses by a double marriage. Sforza's daughter, Ippolita would marry Alfonso, son of Ferrante; Ferrante's daughter, Leonora would marry Sforza's son, Sforza-Maria.<sup>49</sup>

The five major powers--the Pope, Alfonso, Florence, Venice, Milan--and other lesser states concluded the League of Lodi in early 1455 just before the death of Pope Nicholas V.<sup>50</sup> The purpose of the League was to cement an alliance of twenty-five years duration against all foreign powers which might attack Italy. The ostensible reason for the formation of the first national league of the Italians was fear of the Turks. However, French ambitions in Milan and in Naples must be considered a prime factor in the desire to make Italian affairs the exclusive concern of the Italian powers.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Gregorovius, History of Rome, 7/1:143-44.

<sup>49</sup>Dépêches, 1:XXIII. ". . . sa (Sforza) fille Hippyoyte épousera Alphonse, fils du roi Ferrand, et Ferrand donnera sa fille Eleonore à l'un des fils du duc de Milan, Sforza-Marie."

<sup>50</sup>He was succeeded by Calixtus III, a Spanish Borgia.

<sup>51</sup>Ilardi, "Quattrocento Politics," p. 176.

A league such as that of Lodi was only as strong as its individual members. One of its objectives was to maintain the status quo ante as agreed to by all signatories. The most reluctant of these signatories, Alfonso of Naples, became its weakest link. He was upset over diplomatic setbacks prior to 1455 and still determined to attain hegemony in Italy.

Within its first three years, i.e., prior to 1458, the League was confronted with its first casus belli, initiated by Jacopo Piccinino and backed by Alfonso, in the Papal States and in the Republic of Siena. This aggression was repelled only by those states most directly interested.<sup>52</sup> Alfonso then employed his condottiere, Piccinino, against his long-time enemy, Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini.

While John of Calabria, René's son, was still in Florence, in 1455, he attempted to prevent Sforza from including Alfonso in the Italian League. Sforza did not accept any of his proposals, so Duke John decided to return to Provence. In turn, Sforza assured Alfonso that he preferred to deal with him rather than with the French. He advised Alfonso not to make any aggressive move in Italy for fear of French intervention.<sup>53</sup>

Alfonso had long wished to complement his Mediterranean possession, Sardinia, with the acquisition of Corsica,

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 177; Idem, "The Italian League," p. 145.

<sup>53</sup> Dispatches, 1:184-85 and 216.

which had been under the control of Genoa. This and the fact that Genoa could, and probably would, be a launching point for a French invasion of Naples caused Alfonso to attack the Republic of Genoa in 1456.<sup>54</sup> The Neapolitan attack forced the Doge of Genoa to appeal to the King of France. The Genoese asked John of Calabria, who had stopped there on his return in 1456, to request the protection of Charles VII for them. On May 11, 1458, the Duke of Calabria arrived in Genoa to occupy the city in the name of the King of France.<sup>55</sup> Genoa, as mentioned before, had not been allowed to join the Italian League.

Meanwhile both Alfonso, King of Aragon and Naples, and Pope Calixtus III died. Calixtus had originally been an official of Alfonso, named Alfonso Borja (Borgia).<sup>56</sup> Alfonso's aggressive activity in Italy made Calixtus his enemy. The Pope's crusading zeal and his efforts to secure domains for his nephews made Alfonso his enemy. It was reputed that he wanted the Kingdom of Naples for his nephew, Pier Luigi Borgia. To this effect Calixtus refused to recognize Ferrante, Alfonso's son (already recognized by Pope

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<sup>54</sup>Georges Peyronnet, "Les Relations entre la France et l'Italie," Le Moyen Age 56 (1950): 104. The consequences of this move will be discussed in Chapter IV, pp. 107-110.

<sup>55</sup>Petit-Dutaillis, Charles VII, p. 313.

<sup>56</sup>A nephew of Calixtus, Rodrigo Borgia, who would become the infamous Pope Alexander VI.



Nicholas V), as heir to Naples when Alfonso died.<sup>57</sup>

The Kingdom of Naples was held in suzerainty by the Pope. As Alfonso had no direct legitimate heir, Calixtus declared the Kingdom remanded to the Holy See. The death of Calixtus, only six weeks after that of Alfonso, prevented a major conflict arising from the rights of Ferrante to succeed Alfonso.<sup>58</sup>

Ferrante was in a precarious position. There were now two pretenders to the throne of Naples, René's son, John of Calabria, present French governor of Genoa, and Charles of Viana, nephew of Alfonso and son of his brother, John of Navarre.<sup>59</sup> The local barons were divided, some for Charles of Viana, some for John of Navarre, some for John of Calabria, and others backing Ferrante himself. John of Navarre threw what support he gave behind Ferrante. Florence, being so strongly francophile, threw her weight behind the Angevin claimant, advising Sforza to do likewise. Sforza "dedicated all his powers and talents" to Ferrante.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Ilardi, "Quattrocento Politics," p. 177; Idem, *The Italian League*, pp. 145-46. Ilardi stresses the fact that the death of these two prevented what could have been Spanish domination in Italy one century earlier.

<sup>58</sup>Peyronnet, "La France et l'Italie," p. 108; Gregorovius, *History of Rome*, 7/1:155. Calixtus declared that Ferrante was not even Alfonso's natural son, but a substitute.

<sup>59</sup>John of Navarre ascended the throne of Aragon as heir to his brother, Alfonso, at sixty-two.

<sup>60</sup>Dispatches, 1:xxxviii.

The Duke of Urbino, who had helped Ferrante lead an invasion of Tuscany in 1451, wrote the following concerning baronial dissidence in Naples:

The popularity gained by the noble character of Alfonso of Naples, and confirmed by his residence in Italy, descended not to his successor. Ferdinand was already unfavourably known, from his sombre and revengeful temper, his falsehood and avarice . . .<sup>61</sup>

A tense situation was alleviated temporarily by the successor of Calixtus III. In a conclave ten days after Calixtus' death, the cardinals elected Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, the Cardinal of Siena, who took the title of Pope Pius II.<sup>62</sup> The pressure was on Pius II to recognize Ferrante's rights and thereby retain Naples within the confines of the Italian League. Almost every major and minor Italian head-of-state was delighted by Pius' election. "Only the Venetians and Florentines among the Italians were sorry to hear the news . . . nevertheless (they) concealed their sentiments and . . . sent to Rome very distinguished ambassadors . . . ."<sup>63</sup>

The Pope made specified demands upon Ferrante,

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<sup>61</sup>Memoirs, ed. Edward Hutton, 1:123.

<sup>62</sup>Aeneas Silvius, an outstanding writer and humanist, formerly secretary to the antipope Felix V, was and would remain a friend of the Duke of Milan and an enemy of the French. His choice of papal title came from Vergil's most well-known epithet, "pius Aeneas."

<sup>63</sup>Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II, ed. Leona Gabel and trans. Florence Gragg, (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1959), p. 90.

refusing to lessen them upon repeated requests. These included orders effecting the withdrawal of Piccinino from the Papal States, peace with Malatesta, restoration of specified lands, etc. All cardinals assented except the French who, finally submitting to expediency, were granted the right not to sign the decree. Ferrante was formally invested with the Kingdom of Naples in November, 1458.<sup>64</sup>

Meanwhile, at best ignoring Pius' investiture of Ferrante, Charles VII attempted to win over the Duke of Milan and the Republic of Florence to support the claim of René and John. Sforza and Cosimo remained on opposite sides of the fence in their attitudes toward the French.

In early October, 1458, Charles VII sent Milon de Liers to inform the Dieci di Balia that he would back another Angevin attempt to regain the Kingdom of Naples, and to enjoin them not to furnish any aid to Ferrante.<sup>65</sup>

The answer given by the gonfalonier of justice requested the King of France to understand the good will that the Republic had always held toward his house and not to expect the Republic to break its sworn word to the house of Aragon in the form of a treaty.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>65</sup>Négociations, 1:82-84.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 1:82. Summary of reply in French. Also Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6:242-43.

This official policy of the Republic of Florence was subverted by Cosimo de' Medici's secret desires to re-establish the Angevins in Naples. To this effect he used his influence on Francesco Sforza to change his policy. Not only Cosimo but Charles VII made constant attempts in the next three years to persuade Sforza to back René and John. Sforza constantly and consistently maintained a friendly attitude toward France, using the precepts of the Italian League as his foremost excuse to remain neutral.<sup>67</sup>

There were also attempts by both Cosimo and Charles VII during these three years to obtain backing for John of Calabria from the Republic of Venice. Florence urged upon Venice the recent grudge which both owed Alfonso and now Ferrante. In spite of the entreaties of Charles VII, Venice refused aid to the house of Anjou. Venice too was glad to see her Neapolitan enemy engaged in serious difficulties (their rivalry having been revived in 1456). Contrary to all blandishments Venice maintained a strict neutrality.<sup>68</sup>

Early in 1459, the Duke of Calabria, now governor of Genoa, received ambassadors from the Neapolitan barons. They had first requested aid against Ferrante from John of Navarre and Aragon in vain and now offered to the Duke

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 6:243; Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 151; Hill, Diplomacy, 2:94-95. A study of Charles' problems with Sforza appears in Chapters III and IV.

<sup>68</sup> Peyronnet, "La France et l'Italie," pp. 110-11.

possession of the Kingdom of Naples. At the same time, John of Calabria asked the help of Sforza through his ambassadors, the Bishop of Marseilles and Jean Cossa. In order to effect an alliance, these ambassadors stressed the offer of the Duke to marry Sforza's daughter, Ippolita, who was betrothed at the time to Ferrante's son. Sforza refused all offerings, steadfastly holding to the tenets of the Italian League.<sup>69</sup>

Charles VII launched another diplomatic offensive in Italy in the fall of 1459, focusing on Venice. Adhering still to its earlier pronouncements, the Republic of Venice reiterated to the French ambassador, Jean de Chambes, that it was primarily concerned with Turkish advances and with the Congress of Mantua. Neither Charles VII wanting help for Duke John nor Sforza now backing Ferrante could sway Venice to an interest in present Italian affairs.<sup>70</sup>

While pro-French and anti-French forces were lining up in Italy, Pope Pius II called the Congress of Mantua in 1459. His avowed purpose, as it was of his immediate predecessors, Nicholas V and Calixtus III, was to inspire all the powers of Christendom to a crusade against the Turks. One of the first arrivals was that of Francesco Sforza, his wife and five children, in Mantua in September, 1459.<sup>71</sup> The Pope

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<sup>69</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6:244-46.

<sup>70</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 152; P. M. Perret, "l'Ambassade de Jean de Chambes à Venise," Bibliothèque de L'Ecole des Chartes 50 (1889): 563.

<sup>71</sup>Gregorovius, History of Rome, 7/1:182.

and the Duke of Milan, both now blatantly anti-French, formed a mutual alliance designed to withstand the imminent Angevin invasion of Naples.

The Congress of Mantua, with Pope Pius II presiding, opened on September 26, 1459. It closed in January, 1460, with a bull announcing a three years' war against the Turks, for which tithes would be levied upon Jews and Christians alike.<sup>72</sup>

Among the more important and certainly the most fractious was the French delegation. They were joined by the ambassadors who had been sent to Venice and represented the King of France and other French princes. Immediately, it became clear that, to Pius, the French were the enemy, who had, among other things, produced the Pragmatic Sanction.<sup>73</sup>

Pius deals at length with his conferences with the French. The "clear and present danger" posed by the French lay in their claim to Naples. The French had no intention of embarking on a crusade against the Turks.<sup>74</sup> The

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>73</sup>John Gordon Rowe, "The Tragedy of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II): An Interpretation," Church History 30 (September, 1961): 293-94. The Pragmatic Sanction was issued by Charles VII in 1438, declaring adherence of the Church of France to the decrees of the Council of Basel and more importantly, generally abrogating ultramontaniam and establishing what would become Gallicanism in France. Louis as Dauphin promised to revoke the Pragmatic Sanction when he became king.

<sup>74</sup>The most severe problem confronting Charles VII at this time was the Yorkist claim to the throne of England. The Queen, Margaret of Anjou, was René's daughter and Charles' niece.

spokesman of the French delegation requested the Pope to rescind his investiture of Ferrante, which he had carried out so unfairly, "to revoke in wisdom what he had done in folly." Only in this way would the French be compensated for insults and participate in the crusade.<sup>75</sup>

Some time later (after an illness), Pope Pius replied to the delegation that measures taken with regard to Naples were neither unjust nor unreasonable. The French demands however were unjust, as their rights had not been interfered with. In addition, the Pragmatic Sanction would lead many to damnation. The French in turn declared their king insulted and demanded the right to defend his honor. Pius assented but added: "I shall have the last word . . . This See does not yield to any, even the mightiest king."<sup>76</sup>

The end result of all this verbal sparring was the increased determination of the Pope and all Italian rulers to withstand French intervention. This was shown clearly when John of Calabria invaded the Kingdom of Naples in October, 1459, while the Congress of Mantua was in session. The Italian princes responded now to the Papal denunciation of France. Now the exclusion of the French from Italy

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<sup>75</sup>Rowe, "Aeneas Silvius," p. 294; Memoirs, ed. Leona Gabel, pp. 140-41.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., pp. 142-43. Pius' aversion to the French seems to be exceeded only by his hatred of Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini, pp. 110-11. "Of all men who have ever lived or ever will live he was the worst scoundrel, the disgrace of Italy and the infamy of our times."

became as major an objective as the crusade.<sup>77</sup>

John of Calabria embarked from Genoa on October 4, 1459 for Naples, "abandonnant sa brillante situation pour une entreprise pleine de perils, et dont l'insucces pouvait être doublement fatal à la France."<sup>78</sup> He was still backed by Cosimo and most Florentines, partly because of their still present hatred of the Aragonese. Cosimo had promised him an annual subsidy of 80,000 florins to finance his struggle against Ferrante. Indeed, when John stopped at Porto Pisano on his way to Naples, he received envoys from the Republic, who wished him well and presented him with gifts.<sup>79</sup> At the urging of Sforza and of Pius II to Cosimo, the Republic of Florence withdrew its vote of subsidy to John of Calabria.<sup>80</sup>

The landing of the Duke of Calabria at Naples provoked an almost universal uprising of the barons of the kingdom. Ferrante, however, could count the assumption of a neutral position by Florence and Venice a success. Ferrante summoned Piccinino, who at once took up correspondence with John of Calabria. Ferrante, Sforza, and the Duke of Urbino attempted to retain him with promises of territory, but

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<sup>77</sup>Rowe, "Aeneas Silvius," pp. 294-95.

<sup>78</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6:248.

<sup>79</sup>Perrens, History of Florence, pp. 154 and 204.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 155.



without success.<sup>81</sup> The Pope and the Duke of Milan did render support to their ally.

The war took the following course. Duke John's growing power was strengthened by the aggressive activity of Malatesta and Piccinino in the spring and summer of 1460. Malatesta had made peace with the Pope and Ferrante, but broke faith, keeping troops promised to Ferrante occupied in Papal territory. Piccinino invaded the Kingdom of Naples in April, 1460, and dealt a severe check to a combined army under Alessandro Sforza (the Duke's brother) and the Duke of Urbino in July. John of Calabria advanced into the heart of Naples where some of the more hesitant barons rallied to him because of the military prestige of Piccinino. Ferrante was defeated disastrously at Sarno in July, 1460, barely escaping capture. Sforza immediately sent a contingent of troops under his son-in-law, Robert Sanseverino, to relieve Ferrante.<sup>82</sup>

In late 1460 and in 1461, Ferrante began to benefit from his allies. He received reinforcements also from George Scanderbeg of Albania, allowing him to go on the offensive and win several battles. Severe problems and mutinies in Genoa caused the Duke of Calabria's initial success to decline. The war continued until he finally was expelled from

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<sup>81</sup>Memoirs of Urbino, ed. Edward Hutton, 1:124.

<sup>82</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," pp. 155-57; Peyronnet, "La France et l'Italie," pp. 111-12; Gregorovius, History of Rome, 7/1:186.

the kingdom of Naples in 1464.<sup>83</sup>

The diplomatic activities of the King of France and the Duke of Milan, and also of the Republic of Florence were especially extensive with relation to the war in the Kingdom of Naples during 1460. Early in March, 1460, the Dieci di Balia of Florence received an unnamed ambassador from Charles VII, requesting a declaration favoring the Angevin claims to Naples. If such a declaration were not forthcoming, then the anger of the king might be expected.<sup>84</sup>

The reply of the gonfalonier, Jacopo Mazzinghi, was evasive, stressing the regard of Florence for France, but reiterating the impossibility of breaking sworn treaties.<sup>85</sup> The ambassador insisted that the Florentines understand that the king would not omit anything in support of René's cause.<sup>86</sup> The Florentines persisted in their adherence to the precepts of the Italian League.

The correspondence at this time between Charles VII and Francesco Sforza reveals the Duke's ability to hoodwink the king into believing whatever Sforza wished. Slowly the letters reveal Charles' disbelief in Sforza in spite of continuing protests to the contrary. A good many of the

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<sup>83</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," pp. 163-64.

<sup>84</sup>Négociations, 1:96-98.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

letters and embassies pertain directly to the war in the Kingdom of Naples.

On March 23, 1460, Charles sent a threatening letter to Sforza insisting that he counter his anti-French behavior in Genoa and Naples:

. . . because our intention is to bear aid to and sustain our good brother of Sicily and our nephew of Calabria in the recovery of the Kingdom of Naples and we neither could nor would be willing to consider as friends and well-wishers those who would go contrary to the House of Anjou.<sup>87</sup>

To add force to this strong objection Charles sent an envoy to Sforza, Regnault de Dresnay, the bailiff of Sens and the governor of Asti. Dresnay reported by letter his audience with Sforza in detail, maintaining that Sforza's "assurances represent great protestations rather than deeds, and they indicate: that he seeks only to dissimulate in order the better to arrange his affairs; . . ."<sup>88</sup>

On May 24, 1460, the Duke of Milan sent a special envoy to the King of France, Emanuele de Jacopo, with a copy of the precepts of the Italian League to justify his own policy with regard to the war in Naples and lengthy instructions to justify his (Sforza's) conduct. He discussed the events involving Milan, Naples, Genoa, and France over a several-year period, stressing that the Duke of Milan had

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<sup>87</sup>Dispatches, 1:270-73. Also in Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6:298-99 and 490-01.

<sup>88</sup>Dispatches, 1:284-85.

acted only in conformity with the treaties and the decisions of the Pope.<sup>89</sup> Between May 27 and July 22, 1460, there was considerable correspondence between Charles VII and Sforza through Dresnay and de Jacopo, their respective ambassadors. Charles' irritation with Sforza's evasiveness and outright deceit concerned the situation in Naples and his part in it.<sup>90</sup>

It should be noted that, while Sforza was repeating these deceitful protests to Charles VII, he was involved in relations with both the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy and was preparing to conclude a treaty with the Dauphin. This alliance, signed at Genappe in late 1460, did not involve the situation in the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>91</sup> Sforza's envoy to the Dauphin Louis through most of 1460-61 was Prospero da Camogli. Some small amount of the correspondence between them refers to the Neapolitan situation.

In October, 1460, Prospero wrote to the Duke that Louis hoped that Sforza would favor him as much as Ferrante; also that Louis spoke kindly of Ferrante and the opposite of Duke John. Prospero told the Dauphin that if the Duke supported King Ferrante, it was because the King was a member

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 294-315 passim; Beaucourt, Histoire, 6:300. Sforza even insisted to the King, that, although he had received letters and embassies from the Dauphin, his only intention was to reconcile him to his father.

<sup>90</sup> Dispatches, 1:320-67, passim.

<sup>91</sup> These negotiations and other between Louis and Sforza are discussed in Chapter III, pp. 78-83.

of the League and the Pope as its head had commanded it.<sup>92</sup>

The Duke asked Prospero in January, 1461, to bring to the Dauphin's notice that Ferrante was faring quite well and that many of the recalcitrant barons had abandoned the Duke of Calabria since the Battle of Sarno in July, 1460.<sup>93</sup> Duke John had failed to exploit his victory at Sarno.

In letters dated March 9 and 11, 1461, Prospero explained to Sforza the conditions of a projected pact between the Dauphin Louis and his father, Charles VII of France. The grant of territory would include Genoa and Asti in hopes that the Dauphin would restrain the Duke of Milan from siding with Ferrante and would favor the Duke of Calabria instead.<sup>94</sup>

Prospero wrote to the Duke of Milan again in March concerning the marriage contract that Sforza had entered into in 1455 with Alfonso:

It is true that he (Louis) is related both to the Duke of Orelans and to Duke John of Lorraine; but he loves Duke John the more and not because the Duke is a relative. Therefore he thinks it better for you to enter into a marriage contract with Duke John than with King Ferrante because he comes of a nobler and more ancient House; and in the Dauphin's opinion, such a marriage would do more to ensure the safety of your state both now and in the future and would give you greater prestige in the eyes of the Venetians and throughout Italy, for you would thus be able easily to reconcile yourself with the King of France . . .<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Dispatches, 2:10-11.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 60-63.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 148-49 and 170-71.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 178-81.

Charles VII, King of France, died in July, 1461, and the Dauphin ascended the throne as Louis XI. His attitude towards French intervention in Naples gave credence to the realization that he was determined to extend control in the name of Anjou. He too had dreams of hegemony over Italy. His correspondence and negotiations with the Duke of Milan through their respective ambassadors continued. Thomas Basin accused him of taking Sforza and Ferrante as models. The Milanese ambassador to France wrote that "il semble qu'il ait toujours vécu en Italie et qu'il y ait été élevé."<sup>96</sup> He had the versatility and cunning of the Italian rulers and their ambassadors and was, in consequence, more than a match for them.

During the first year or so of his reign, Louis XI backed the failing Angevin endeavor in the Kingdom of Naples. He sent word to Sforza that, if a satisfactory agreement could not be reached concerning Genoa and Naples, he might declare war to force the removal of Milanese troops from Naples. A report of the Florentine ambassadors returning from the court of Louis in March, 1462, stated that Louis once again strongly suggested to Sforza a marriage alliance of his daughter to Duke John of Calabria, instead of to Ferrante's son. Louis indicated to them at this time that he wished to gain control of Genoa for himself and of Naples

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<sup>96</sup>Petit-Dutaillis, Charles VII, pp. 327-28.

for the House of Anjou.<sup>97</sup>

Louis XI wrote a letter to the Republic of Florence thanking it for its pro-Angevin attitude with regard to events in Naples.<sup>98</sup> John of Calabria's major defeat in the struggle for Naples took place at Troja in August, 1462. At this point, the cause of Anjou in Naples became practically hopeless.<sup>99</sup>

Another letter to the Florentines dated May 30, 1463, requested that no help be given to the adversaries of John of Calabria.<sup>100</sup> However, the situation was critical, the Angevin cause having gone steadily downhill since the defeat of René in Genoa in 1461, and later that of John at Troja in 1462. The interest and concern of Louis XI for his cousin of Calabria in Naples had lapsed considerably by 1463. All Louis' diplomatic wiles were tied up in planning the conquest of Roussillon and Cerdagne from Aragon and gaining control of Savoy.

The year 1464 saw the termination of the Angevin struggle for the Kingdom of Naples. Defeated both on land

<sup>97</sup>Négociations, 1:127.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 133-35; Lettres de Louis XI, Roi de France, ed. Joseph Vaesen and Etienne Charavay, 11 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1883-1891), 2:49-51.

<sup>99</sup>Cecilia M. Ady, History of Milan under the Sforza, (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1907), p. 75.

<sup>100</sup>Lettres de Louis XI, 2:128; Négociations, 1:104-5. This letter in Négociations was mistakenly dated 1461.

and on sea, John of Calabria took refuge at Istria and then withdrew to Provence. "John's failure was attributable to negligence; for victory was often within his grasp, but he did not take proper means to secure it."<sup>101</sup> John of Calabria died in 1470 and his father, René of Anjou, "le bon Roi," in 1480. All their land and rights would revert to the King, Louis XI.

Ferrante was thus left in undisputed possession of the Kingdom of Naples. Ferrante expressed his debt of gratitude to the Duke of Milan by investing his son, Sforza-Maria, with the Duchy of Bari. It is interesting to note that this fief remained in the hands of the House of Sforza longer than any of their dominions in Lombardy.<sup>102</sup> Ferrante would still be ruling as King of Naples when Charles VIII of France invaded in 1494.

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<sup>101</sup>Niccolo Machiavelli, History of Florence from the Earliest Times to the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent (Reprint ed., New York and London: The Colonial Press, 1901), p. 336.

<sup>102</sup>Ady, History of Milan, p. 76.



### CHAPTER III

#### The Duchy of Milan

Filippo Maria, the last Visconti Duke of Milan, died intestate with no legitimate heirs on August 13, 1447. His death brought no less than six claimants of varying degrees of pretensions into an Italy already burdened with complicated claims and counter-claims and fated to undergo still more. France would not be an idle observer. The Duchy almost immediately proclaimed itself the Ambrosian Republic.

The German Emperor, Frederick III, claimed the duchy as a lapsed fief. Louis, Duke of Savoy, intended to press his pretension based on the influence of his sister, the widow of Filippo Maria and, for a time, also involved the Dauphin of France. Alfonso, the Aragonese King of Naples, sent troops to Milan armed with a document claimed to be a codicil to Filippo Maria's will.<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Venice, determined to extend its influence and territory farther into Lombardy, hoped to establish a claim to Milan bolstered by an alliance with the Republic of Florence.

The two major claims to the Duchy of Milan were

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<sup>1</sup>The claim of Alfonso to the Duchy of Milan is discussed in Chapter II, p. 15.

those of Charles, Duke of Orleans through his mother, Valentina Visconti, and of Francesco Sforza, husband of Bianca Maria, natural daughter and only living child of Filippo Maria. The far-reaching consequences of these two claims is the subject of this chapter.

The Orleanist claim was one of two major reasons for the French to push once again their perennial territorial ambitions in Italy. Charles, Duke of Orleans, who would press his claim at the death of Filippo Maria Visconti, was not only the brother-in-law of Charles VII, King of France, as was "le bon roi" René, but also the heir to the throne after Charles' two sons. The origins of the Orleanist claim in Italy were enmeshed in complications dating back into the last two decades of the fourteenth century.

In the latter half of the 1300's, the Visconti gained ascendancy over a large part of Lombardy by intrigue, by marriage, by voluntary submission and by conquest. The territory fell to the three nephews of Archbishop Giovanni Visconti, Matteo, Bernabò, and Galeazzo in 1354. When Matteo died, the two brothers shared power until Galeazzo died in 1378. In 1385, Bernabò was murdered by his nephew, Giangaleazzo, who ruled an undivided territory. Giangaleazzo purchased a title from the Emperor Wenzel in 1395, thereby becoming the first Duke of Milan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Denys Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1966), p. 168.

Giangaleazzo Visconti's first wife was Isabelle of France, who brought as her dowry the County of Vertus in Champagne. Giangaleazzo was known throughout France and Italy as the Count of Vertus. He secured a marriage alliance from the French which he hoped would affirm his position in Italy and avert a French invasion.<sup>3</sup> Through the influence of the Avignon Pope, Clement VII, Giangaleazzo betrothed his daughter and only child, Valentina, to Louis of Orleans, brother of the mad King of France, Charles VI.

A rough draft of the marriage contract was drawn up in August, 1386, and revised in January, 1387. The first document endowed Valentina with the County of Asti with its revenue of 30,000 gold florins in addition to a dowry of 450,000 florins. Her revenue was about eight times that of her husband-to-be. She was also furnished with personal treasure and jewels valued at over 70,000 florins, as well as the prospective inheritance of the County of Vertus, her mother's dowry.<sup>4</sup>

When the new contract was drawn up in January, 1387, by Clement VII, it contained all earlier provisions, but added a new clause of prime importance. If Giangaleazzo, her father, died without a son, or if a son be born and his line become extinct, the Valentina or her children should

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<sup>3</sup>The Queen of France wanted to avenge the death of Bernabò. Robinson, "The French in Italy," p. 459.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 458-59; Dépêches, l:xvii.

succeed in all dominions.<sup>5</sup> The marriage contract was at one time a dispensation (Louis and Valentina were cousins), a deed of transfer and a declaration of the right of succession through a female line.

Louis of Orleans and Valentina Visconti were married by proxy on August 17, 1389, after the contract was agreed upon and then ratified by Pope Clement. Within a very short time, Giangaleazzo's second wife gave birth to a son, Filippo Maria, who would succeed to the Duchy of Milan in 1402.<sup>6</sup>

Louis was assassinated in 1407 and Valentina died in 1408, leaving three children of whom Charles was the oldest. Charles' inheritance as Duke of Orleans included the County of Vertus in France and the County of Asti in Lombardy from his mother, as well as the ill-fated right to succeed to Milan.<sup>7</sup>

Charles of Orleans was captured by the English in the battle of Agincourt in 1415 at the age of twenty-four and remained a captive in the Tower of London for twenty-

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<sup>5</sup>A. M. F. Robinson, "The Claim of the House of Orleans to Milan," English Historical Review 3 (1888): 36-37. ". . . dominus Johannes Galeas vicecomes, comes Virtutem, dominus Mediolanensis, decedat sine filiis masculinis de suo proprio corpore ex legitimo matrimonio procreatis, dicta domina Valentina, nata sua, succedat et succedere debeat in solidum in toto dominio suo presente et futuro quocumque. . . ."

<sup>6</sup>Idem, "The French in Italy," p. 459; Dépêches, 1:xvii.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., xix.

five years. No one intervened in his behalf (or that of the other captured princes) or offered to pay the ransom of 240,000 crowns. His release was affected finally in 1440, at the age of fifty, by the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, who needed allies in France. Charles then swore allegiance to the Treaty of Arras. From this time until his death, the Duke of Orleans was the principal ally of the Duke of Burgundy in France.<sup>8</sup>

Charles of Orleans never enjoyed the good graces of Charles VII, as did René of Anjou, in spite of Charles' close relationship and proximity to the throne. Charles was closely connected with Philip of Burgundy who had negotiated his release from captivity. In addition, he had married a Burgundian wife of Philip's choice and had been inducted into the exclusive Order of the Golden Fleece. He was also on good terms with Alfonso of Naples. Philip was not only a former ally of England and the richest prince in Western Europe, but also a major enemy of the House of Anjou and increasingly hostile to the throne of France.<sup>9</sup> None of these circumstances though prevented Charles VII from backing the Orleanist claim to the Duchy of Milan when Filippo Maria Visconti died in 1447.

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<sup>8</sup>Vaughan, Philip the Good, pp. 123-25. The King of France did not intervene, nor did he contribute to the ransom of his brother-in-law. Reference to the Treaty of Arras in Chapter II, footnote 13.

<sup>9</sup>Dispatches, 1:xxxix-xxxii.

Indeed, as soon as the news of Filippo Maria's death came to France, Charles VII prepared to assert the rights of Orleans. He wrote to the Duke of Savoy on September 3, 1447, stressing the claim of Orleans over and above any that Savoy might be still contemplating.<sup>10</sup> Charles would back away from this policy after October.

At the same time that Francesco Sforza was plodding a slow but sure path towards control of Milan, Orleans made his unsuccessful attempt to do likewise. On September 22, Regnault du Dresnay, the bailiff of Sens, who had been sent by Charles VII to occupy Asti, marched at the head of a force of 1500 troops "to plant the royal lilies of Orleans upon the soil of Milan." Towns and fortresses yielded as Dresnay and his force advanced the banners of the King of France farther day by day into Lombardy. These victorious troops were defeated on October 17 by a force led by the condottiere, Bartolomeo Colleone. Dresnay was captured and his leaderless troops fled back to Asti.<sup>11</sup>

Twelve days later, on October 26, Charles of Orleans arrived in Asti, an "amiable and sanguine" man of fifty-eight, who had never led troops and who would remain there

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<sup>10</sup>Robinson, "Claim of Orleans," p. 51. "Nostre très-cher et très-amé frere, le Duc d'Orleans, à present Duc de Milan par le décès du feu Duc son oncle, . . . nous a bien exprès faict dire et remonstré le bon droict qu'il ha au dict Duché de Milan."

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-53; Dépêches, 1:xix.

inactive and powerless until August of 1448. Except for his loyal citizens of Asti, no one in Italy wished to welcome or support this prince. He was disregarded as if he had never seemed the most dangerous pretender to Milan. He re-crossed the mountains into France having obtained neither territory nor an alliance.<sup>12</sup>

During the latter months of 1448, while the Milanese were begging aid from all sides against Sforza, the Duke of Orleans requested the King of France to grant him an army to assert his rights in Lombardy. After receiving promises of troops from several princes of France, Charles went to Lyons where the combined French and Breton armies would meet. However, because of a threat from England, Charles VII called back the troops. "Les espérances du duc d'Orleans s'évanouirent d'un seul coup."<sup>13</sup> Thus ended the attempt of Charles, Duke of Orleans, to lay claim to the Duchy of Milan.

The only political result of Charles of Orleans' sortie into Italy, in late 1447, was the reaffirmation of French domination of the County of Asti. Dresnay would remain governor there in the name of the King of France and the Duke of Orleans until 1474. Asti would revert to Milan in the Treaty of Cambrai in 1529.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 1:xx; Petit-Dutaillis, Charles VII, p. 312.

<sup>13</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 5:149-50.

<sup>14</sup>Dépêches, 1:xx; Robinson, "Claim of Orleans," p. 56.

The Dauphin Louis of France and Duke Louis of Savoy developed a project in 1446 whereby Louis of France would gain control of Genoa, and both would share spoils in Lombardy. It was rumored but never corroborated that Filippo Maria had suggested that the Dauphin might become his successor in exchange for much needed help in his war against a coalition of Venice, Florence, Genoa and Bologna.<sup>15</sup>

The projected partitioning of the Ambrosian Republic would take place when Filippo Maria Visconti died. Charles VII warned both Louis of France and Louis of Savoy not to interfere with the claim of the Duke of Orleans, which he recognized at the time.<sup>16</sup> Savoy's father would support him for a time, but lack of money left him without sufficient military force to carry out his plans. No combination of forces would be strong enough to counterbalance the movements of Francesco Sforza.<sup>17</sup>

The project for partition of the Milanese may be summarized in the following manner:

1. After passage through the Piedmont was assured, the territories of Genoa and of Lucca as far as the eastern

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<sup>15</sup>Paul M. Kendall, Louis XI (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1971), p. 60: Perrens, History of Florence, p. 81.

<sup>16</sup>Letter quoted in footnote 10, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup>Hill, Diplomacy, 2:88. Louis of Savoy was a weak ruler controlled by his Cyprian wife, Anne. His father, Amadeus VIII, the titular duke, was at this time the anti-pope, Felix V. The Dauphin would marry their daughter, Charlotte, over the objections of his father, Charles VII.



boundary of Liguria would become the exclusive property of the King of France, the Dauphin and their successors.

2. In the Milanese, the Dauphin would receive all cities and territories south of the Po and east of the territory of Montferrat.

3. The Duke of Savoy would obtain in the north all territory between the Alps and the Adda, Po and Cerno Rivers, including the city of Milan.

4. Their allies, the Marquises of Montferrat and of Mantua, would receive specified territory.

5. All territory conquered east of the Adda and north of the Po would be divided at a proportion of two-thirds to the Dauphin and one-third to the Duke of Savoy.<sup>18</sup>

All clauses of this treaty had to be ratified by the King of France. The treaty was never ratified nor executed. Louis XI, in a letter in 1463, placed the blame for failure on the disgrace, condemnation, and death of the Savoyard Vice-Chancellor, Guillaume Bolomier.<sup>19</sup>

The most dangerous threat to the independence of the Ambrosian Republic, outside that of Sforza, was in the form of the well-known ambitions of the Republic of Venice for territorial aggrandizement northwest into Lombardy. Neither

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<sup>18</sup> Bernard de Mandrot, "Un project de partage du Milanais en 1446," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 44 (1883): 182-83; Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 4:228-29.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4:229; Mandrot, "Un project," p. 184.

the Emperor nor the Dukes of Orleans and Savoy had the financial backing necessary to make good their pretensions. Alfonso of Naples' real ambitions were directed toward Tuscany, which his armies had invaded in 1447, rather than succession to the Duchy of Milan.<sup>20</sup>

Even though the Republic of Florence had been apprehensive for nearly two decades over the Venetian predilection to advance into eastern Lombardy, this did not affect their friendly relations until after 1447. When Venice refused to aid Florence against Alfonso, the Florentines began to back Sforza, which Cosimo de' Medici had been doing secretly. Sforza dashed Venetian hopes by defeating them soundly at Caravaggio on September 15, 1448.<sup>21</sup> A reversal of alliances was effected by 1451.

The most serious threat to the Ambrosian Republic was the pretension to the Duchy by Francesco Sforza. Along with the Piccininos, Sforza was the most famous condottiere of the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Sforza was married to Bianca Maria Visconti, the illegitimate and only living child of Filippo Maria. Even though there had been a great deal of

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<sup>20</sup>Ilardi, "Quattrocento Politics," p. 174.

<sup>21</sup>J. R. Hale, ed., Renaissance Venice (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), pp. 200-202.

<sup>22</sup>These mercenaries of Italian wars, the condottiere, were so called because they signed a contract or condotta with the prince or duke for whom they fought. Hay, Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, p. 184.

animosity between Visconti and Sforza, the condottiere had been hired to repel the enemies of Milan in the war of 1446. Because of his successes, especially against the Venetians, the Ambrosian Republic was constrained to request Sforza's services against its will.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of their defeat at Caravaggio, the Venetians quickly came to terms with him and the Republic, giving up acquisitions in return for a small territorial compensation. Meanwhile, Sforza's ambassador in Florence, Nicodemo Tranchedini da Pontremoli, in conjunction with the friendship and financial backing of Cosimo, effected an alliance with the Republic of Florence. As previously mentioned, Florence had been invaded by Alfonso of Naples.<sup>24</sup>

Venice, for its part, could not be counted on to maintain promises and alliances. In early 1448, Florence (up to then its long-time ally and sister republic) received a letter from the Senate of Venice to the effect that it intended to back the pretensions of Orleans in order to oppose those of Sforza.<sup>25</sup> Later in the year, the Venetians made a truce with him. Within a few months in 1449, doubting his

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<sup>23</sup>Gregorovius, History of Rome, 7/1:113; Hill, Diplomacy, 2:88-89.

<sup>24</sup>Perrens, History of Florence, pp. 84-87; Hale, Renaissance Venice, pp. 204-5; Gutkind, Cosimo de' Medici, pp. 154-55.

<sup>25</sup>Négociations, 1:61.

success and ignoring their ally, Florence, the Venetians signed a treaty with the Ambrosian Republic. To the amazement and chagrin of Venice, Sforza soon entered Milan in triumph.<sup>26</sup>

When Sforza defeated the Venetians at Caravaggio in 1448, he turned all his attention toward his prize, the acquisition of Milan for himself. The Republic desperately sought help from all sides. It was at this point that the Duke of Orleans initiated a second attempt with the help of the King of France. As discussed previously, Charles withdrew troops at the last minute and thereby blocked Orleans' hopes forever.<sup>27</sup>

Francesco Sforza, meanwhile, gained town after town and, on February 26, 1450, the Ambrosian Republic came to terms with this son-in-law of Filippo Maria. On March 25 Sforza made his triumphal entry into the city of Milan, nearly three years after Filippo Maria Visconti died.<sup>28</sup>

Sforza owed his position to popular consent. He wished to be regarded as Filippo Maria's heir, basing his claim on a deed drawn up by the Duke in 1446. It was said either not to have existed or, if so, not to have been authentic. It was the exclusive right of the Emperor to

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<sup>26</sup>Hill, Diplomacy, 2:89; Perrens, History of Florence, pp. 85-87.

<sup>27</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 5:149-50.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 150-51.

bestow the title of Duke on Sforza. He was finally recognized as Duke of Milan in the Peace of Lodi of 1454, ratified by all major Italian powers by 1455.<sup>29</sup>

The accession of Francesco Sforza to the Duchy of Milan marked a turning point in the history of Italy. When the Italian powers did give their consent to his possession of the Duchy in the Peace of Lodi, they determined the course of mutual relations for a forty-year period. Most importantly, due to the power and prestige of Sforza as Duke of Milan, France would be the loser in every attempt to gain a foothold in Italy prior to the invasion of Charles VIII.<sup>30</sup>

At the age of forty-nine, Francesco Sforza attained the highest position ever reached by a condottiere. From this time, he was looked upon as the ideal prince and warrior, not only by Italian statesmen but also by the Dauphin Louis. He owed his success not only to military skill, but also to tact and diplomatic skill and to his wife, Bianca Maria. There was genuine admiration and respect for him among the great leaders of the time, Cosimo de' Medici, the Duke of Urbino and Aeneas Silvius, who as Pope Pius II, made the following observation:

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<sup>29</sup>Lacy Collison-Morely, The Story of the Sforzas (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1934), pp. 66-67; Ady, A History of Milan under the Sforzas, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

A man skilled in governing, whom nothing could tire, wise and acute in seizing opportunity, cunning and clever in deceiving, cautious and far-seeing in avoiding traps and in divining the purpose of his enemy.<sup>31</sup>

Sforza was indeed all this and more as he played his diplomatic cat-and-mouse game with Charles VII of France from the time he acceded in 1450 until Charles' death in 1461.

The accession of Sforza to the Duchy of Milan triggered an alliance by two of the protagonists--the Republic of Venice and the King of Naples, Alfonso. The Emperor Frederick, a third protagonist, refused investiture to Sforza, suggesting that he might invest Alfonso instead. This news led to an offensive alliance between Venice and Naples in July, 1450. The league formed in October of that year also included the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Montferrat. This league was tantamount to a declaration of war, which would break out in 1452, and the goal of which would be the partitioning of Italy between signatories.<sup>32</sup>

The long-standing friendship of fifteen years of Cosimo de' Medici for Sforza and his financial backing of him during his struggle for supremacy was a major factor leading to Venice's alliance with Naples. Alfonso had always been an enemy of Florence and had invaded Tuscany

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<sup>31</sup>Collison-Morely, The Sforzas, pp. 66-67. The description by the Pope was not in his memoirs, but quoted from a book entitled Asiae Europaeque Elegantissima Descriptio.

<sup>32</sup>Gutkind, Cosimo de' Medici, p. 158; Petit-Dutaillis, Charles VII, p. 312.

in 1447, as discussed in Chapter I. These factors and the outstanding diplomatic maneuvers of Sforza's personal ambassador, da Pontremoli, led the Republic of Florence to sign a ten-year offensive and defensive alliance with the Duchy of Milan in July, 1451.<sup>33</sup> This alliance would prevent Venice from taking parts of Lombardy and Alfonso from furthering his aims in Tuscany and Genoa. Thus was effected a major reversal of alliances because, for many decades, Venice and Florence had been allied, as Milan and Naples had been. "Henceforth the Florentine-Milanese alliance became the mainstay of Francesco Sforza's power and the most characteristic feature of his foreign policy."<sup>34</sup>

The imminent peril afforded by the Venice-Naples alliance caused Cosimo and the Dieci di Balia of Florence to persuade Sforza to request aid from the King of France. It had come to Cosimo's attention that Charles was considering furthering his ambitions in Italy and it was he who insisted upon this alliance using Naples as bait. Sforza thought this policy unwise. For if the French should retake the Kingdom of Naples, their next step would be the recovery of Genoa and most likely Milan itself. However, Sforza was encouraged by expressions of friendship from Charles VII and so Cosimo prevailed. The decision was made

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<sup>33</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 131; Ady, History of Milan, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

in August, 1451, to send Angelo Acciajuoli to the King's court at Tours to bring about a treaty.<sup>35</sup>

Acciajuoli arrived at Tours in November, 1451, and accomplished his purpose with outstanding diplomatic skill. Neither Cosimo or Sforza wanted French intervention or French troops in Italy. However, they realized that Charles, now largely free from his long wars with England, was eager to embark upon an aggressive policy in Italy. The intent was to ensure France's goodwill with very vague promises concerning Naples and to use this as a threat to Venice and Naples.<sup>36</sup> Charles VII eventually played directly into Acciajuoli's skillful hands through the powerful influence of René of Anjou.

Acciajuoli corresponded several times with the Duke of Milan between his first audience with the King in November, 1451, and the signing of the treaty in February, 1452. In the first letter, he enclosed a copy of a message to the Dieci di Balia:

1. That Charles VII was well informed that Alfonso was the enemy of Florence because of its friendship with France.

2. That he approved of the league with Sforza as a wise move.

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<sup>35</sup> Dispatches, 1:xxx-xxxi; Petit-Dutaillis, p. 312; Gutkind, Cosimo, p. 162.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.; Ady, History of Milan, p. 68.



3. That he believed that the Venetians wanted more than belonged to them.

4. That, although it was unlikely that Venice and Naples could be trusted, matters should be set forth in honorable terms.<sup>37</sup>

Sforza was informed in four letters before the treaty was signed of the following:

1. That the King wanted to know the number of troops of all four Italian powers.

2. That he was willing to make a defensive league with Milan and Florence against any party except the Church.

3. That he wanted no mention of Montferrat and Savoy in the treaty because he could remedy the problem himself.

4. That he would send aid in spite of the strongest objections of Orleans in the person of the Count of Dunois.<sup>38</sup>

Acciajuoli went to France knowing that, on November 4, 1451, Florence and Milan had concluded with Genoa a mutual defense pact with a secret clause specifying protection against Charles, the Dauphin, and the Duke of Savoy.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>The instructions of the Dieci di Balìa to Acciajuoli were stated in Chapter II, pp. 19-20. Kendall and Ilardi, Dispatches, 1:28-34.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 36-50.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 58. A considerable amount of these four letters deals with Genoa and Charles' preoccupation with the English.

The treaty between the King of France, the Duke of Milan, and the Republic of Florence was signed February 21, 1451, at Montils-les-Tours. In exchange for a free hand in Naples, Charles would defend Milan and Florence against attack. The treaty, in effect until June 24, 1453, may be summarized as follows:

1. That Florence and Milan would defend the interests of Charles VII and his family in Italy.
2. That neither state would make a treaty without the King's consent.
3. That the Pope and the Emperor were excluded from the provisions of the treaty.
4. That Charles or a prince of the blood would defend Florence and Milan from attack.<sup>40</sup>

In letters patent also dated February 21, Charles VII reiterated his promises undertaken by the treaty.<sup>41</sup> However, he avoided the title Duke for Sforza and made it clear that he had sacrificed the rights of the Duke of Orleans, but expected to extend control to Genoa.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 373-77; Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 5:161-62. Sforza is referred to as Duke no less than fifteen times, although Charles VII addressed him as Conte Francisque in letters.

<sup>41</sup> Négociations, 1:72-73. ". . . sperantes quod . . . aliqua media inveniri poterunt ad concordandum et pacificandum aliquas differentias, tangentes quosdam de sanguine nostro et alias in par tibus Italiae."

Venice and Naples responded to the treaty of Montil-les-Tours with an immediate declaration of war. Venice declared war on Sforza on May 16, 1452. Alfonso of Naples immediately did likewise against Florence on June 4, sending his son, Ferrante, to invade Tuscany.<sup>42</sup>

Before the end of June, the Marquis of Montferrat had joined the league against Sforza. Both the French King and Acciajuoli attempted unsuccessfully to persuade him to join the alliance with the King. Dresnay was immediately ordered to give military support against Montferrat from Asti.<sup>43</sup>

The King forced Venice's other ally, the Duke of Savoy, to give up his plan to invade Lombardy. He did so by warning Savoy through the Dauphin that he would be accountable to Charles if he persisted in his machinations against Sforza. Charles strengthened this threat by moving 1,000 troupes to Lyons. Finally he sent an envoy to Venice declaring that a sortie against Sforza would be against the King of France also, and that he was ready to send 10,000 troops to Italy, if need be.<sup>44</sup>

Although a revival of the military situation in Guyenne against the English prevented Charles from sending

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<sup>42</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:166; Gutkind, Cosimo, p. 163.

<sup>43</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 138; Perret, "Le Discours de Angelo Acciajuoli," p. 248; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:167.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. It was during this time that the Dauphin began surreptitious correspondence with Sforza.

troops to Italy, nevertheless, he wrote to the Republic of Florence and to the Duke of Milan on July 17, 1452, informing them of his resolve to send an army to Italy. The letter to the Florentines contains the following points:

1. That he was aware that the Duke of Savoy was among those beyond the borders of Italy waging war on Milan and Sforza.

2. That, because he wished to aid Sforza, he was sending Regnault du Dresnay with troops from Asti immediately to offer help.<sup>45</sup>

Both the Duke of Milan and the Republic of Florence were in desperate need of military aid and consequently sent Acciajuoli on his second mission to the King in September, 1452, accompanied by Francesco Ventura. This mission stressed the need for help in Lombardy and Tuscany which would be countered with aid in the reconquest of the Kingdom of Naples.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout 1452, there was a great deal of diplomatic activity relating to hostilities between Milan and both Montferrat and Savoy. Sforza's ambassador, Guilio del Maino, had not accompanied Acciajuoli and Ventura to Tours

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<sup>45</sup>Négociations, 1:73-74. Letter in Middle French.

<sup>46</sup>The second embassy of Acciajuoli was discussed in Chapter II, p. 21.

because the Duke of Savoy had refused him safe conduct. Savoy signed a treaty with the King in October, 1452, binding him to Charles VII and renouncing all other leagues and alliances except those with the Pope and the Emperor.<sup>47</sup> Sforza was partly responsible for the lack of success during this second mission because he decided that he would not adhere to all negotiations concluded before the Treaty of Montils-les-Tours.<sup>48</sup> Acciajuoli and Ventura left France in November, 1452.

Acciajuoli made a third journey to France in February, 1453. This time, he was successful in negotiating a treaty whereby René of Anjou would bring troops into Lombardy.<sup>49</sup> René, of course, believed that this move would be a stepping-stone toward his reconquest of Naples. However, he was duped from the start. Not only did the name of the King not figure in the treaty between Rene and Florence, but there was no written promise relative to Naples. In reality, René went to Italy as a condottiere to be outvoted by his allies and finally dismissed.

There was a great deal of diplomatic and military

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<sup>47</sup>Dispatches, 1:76-77, 80-81, 85. Acciajuoli's speech of complaint concerning Savoy's conduct was mentioned in Chapter II, p. 23.

<sup>48</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:293-94; Perret, "Le Discours," p. 429.

<sup>49</sup>These negotiations are discussed in Chapter II, pp. 22-23.

activity from the time that the treaty was signed on April 11, 1453, until René arrived in Lombardy in September. In a letter to the Dieci di Balìa on April 10, Acciajuoli made the following points:

1. That the ambassador of Alfonso to the French court had said that his King and the Venetians wished to be good friends with the French and that Florence was the sole cause of every war and evil in France.

2. That if the treaty with René was signed before June, then the treaty with the King need not be renewed.<sup>50</sup>

On April 21, Acciajuoli wrote to Sforza informing him of the successful conclusion of the treaty with René. He also expressed the hope that René would arrive in Italy on the date agreed upon and that he would bring enough troops so that Sforza would not have to furnish so many of his own.<sup>51</sup> Because of the machinations of both the Dauphin and the Duke of Savoy, René's arrival in Italy was delayed beyond the expected date in May, 1453.

The Florentines wrote to René in early May asking him to be on his way without delay. René arrived in Provence in June with the intention of crossing the Alps at the "Pas de Suse" into the Piedmont. He could have reached Italy more swiftly by sea but might have been stopped by

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<sup>50</sup>Dispatches, 1:118-22.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 124-27.

Catalan ships controlling the area. The Duke of Savoy refused to allow René and his army to cross his territory because he said that René was supporting his (Savoy's) enemies and fighting his allies.<sup>52</sup>

Charles VII contacted Savoy twice insisting that he grant René authorization to pass through his Duchy. Both times Savoy refused, using this tactic to offer complaints against the King.<sup>53</sup> It was at this point that the Dauphin determined to take advantage of the stalemate.

The Dauphin, who read and spoke Italian, who knew Sforza's campaigns by heart, and who, though hitherto a stranger to Italy, understood more of Italian statecraft than his father and Rene of Anjou put together, had been directly concerned with the affairs of the peninsula since the age of twenty-one, when, in 1444, Pope Eugenius IV, for reasons of his own, had made him Gonfalonier of the Church and Filippo Maria had sought, perhaps dangling the promise of appointing Louis his heir, to employ him, in effect, as a Milanese condottiere. Since then, and particularly after his self-exile [sic] in Dauphiné, Louis had engaged in all manner of intrigues with the Italian powers.<sup>54</sup>

Louis offered his services to his uncle, René, and with Charles' approval, forced permission from the Duke of Savoy, his father-in-law, to allow him to lead René's troops across the Alps along with a small force of his own. "Breathing the heady air of Italian politics, he was meanwhile revolving

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<sup>52</sup> P. M. Perret, Histoire des Relations de la France avec Venise du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle à l'Avènement de Charles VIII, 2 vols. (Paris: H. Welter, 1896), 1:251.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:298-99.

<sup>54</sup> Dispatches, 1:xxxiii.

plans of his own."<sup>55</sup> It seemed that, at this time, Louis saw it as his destiny to reestablish French influence in Genoa.

Meanwhile, the Genoese, who had decided to back Sforza, offered their services to René in the form of two armed galleys and a number of other ships. With these and several vessels of his own, René sailed from Marseilles and landed at Ventimille on August 3. After bringing the troops through the mountains, the Dauphin met him at Villanova near Asti on August 9, 1453.<sup>56</sup>

Louis announced to René that he had contacted a party of Genoese and wished to take over Genoa in their behalf. René refused to abandon his allies in Genoa, the Campofregosi, who were in power at the time. Furthermore, he feared that such an intention on the part of the Dauphin would prevent the execution of his project for Naples. No less than the Duke of Milan, the Republic of Florence and King René requested Charles VII to call off his son from this enterprise. René asked Louis to retreat, and he yielded, "la rage dans le coeur."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Kendall, Louis XI, p. 77. In a footnote in "The Italian League," p. 140, Ilardi states that an article in Italian by Peyronnet, "La politica italiana di Luigi Delfino di Francia," is the only extensive study of the Italian ambitions of the Dauphin, and that his biographers have little to say on the subject.

<sup>56</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:300-301.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 301-2. "La retraite du Dauphin fut accueillie à Gênes par un soupir de soulagement."



Bitter and not to be outdone, the Dauphin now made secret offers of aid to the Venetians against the Duke of Milan. He made the offer of marching against Sforza with 4,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry, backed by Montferrat and other lords. He asked a subsidy of 6,000 gold crowns (écus). This offer was well received by the Senate of Venice. However, it declined in a letter of August 31, 1453, because of the lateness of the season, but left the way open for future discussions.<sup>58</sup>

Angered at the rebuff, the Dauphin turned to Sforza to offer his services against Venice. Through Acciajuoli, he requested help in acquiring Genoa and/or Savona in return for all his support. Acciajuoli was at a loss to give him an answer. The Duke of Milan himself declined the Dauphin's services on the pretext that he was bound by a treaty to the Republic of Genoa. Louis then had no choice but to leave Italy and return to the Dauphiné at the end of September, 1453.<sup>59</sup>

After attempting to negotiate between Venice and Milan, René declared war on Venice on October 10, 1453, finally joining troops with Sforza. René was immediately

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<sup>58</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:258; Lettres de Louis XI, 1:243-44. ". . . que a modo sunt ad hiemem, nec videmus quod pro nunc aliquid fieri posset, quod esset momenti contra comitem Frnaciscum. Sed cum prompti et optimamente dispositi repperiemur ad ea omnia peragenda que votis suis, . . ."

<sup>59</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:258-59.

faced with the realization that both Florence and Milan could get along without him. It was getting late in the season and Venice, faced with loss of territory and the seriousness of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, had already begun to put out feelers for a truce.<sup>60</sup>

With Florence refusing the promised subsidies and with Sforza's attitude toward him tantamount to contempt, René gave up and decided to return to Provence. Even though both states backed down, René refused to alter his decision. Before he left in early 1454, however, he reiterated his promise in the treaty to send his son, Duke John of Calabria, in his place.<sup>61</sup>

On January 8, 1454, the Duke of Milan sent Tommaso da Rieti to Charles VII with the following instructions concerning René's precipitate departure from Italy:

1. That their progress and success was due to the arrival of René's troops.
2. That, because of this, their states, persons, property and sons, would always be at the command of His Majesty, the King.
3. That the decision of King René to return to France was his own.

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<sup>60</sup>Ady, History of Milan, pp. 69-70; Perrens, History of Florence, pp. 117-18. All sources made note of the brutality of the French troops in Lombardy.

<sup>61</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 142; Dispatches, 1:xxxiv.

4. That Florence and Milan were dealt a blow by this choice and pressed him to stay.

5. That René had always been treated with respect and honor despite rumors to the contrary.<sup>62</sup>

In December, 1453, and January, 1454, while preliminary secret negotiations leading to the Peace of Lodi were going on, Venice made overtures to the Dauphin through its ambassador to Savoy, Francesco Veniero. Venice could not have been thinking seriously of bringing another French prince to Italy, but these letters made a proposal of dividing the Duchy of Milan.

In the first letter of instructions to Veniero, Venice made the following propositions to the Dauphin:

1. That, if he would come into Lombardy with eight to ten thousand cavalry, Venice would subsidize him and allow him to keep any territory conquered south of the Po, Tessin and Adda rivers.

2. That Venice would solicit the King's consent, if the Dauphin so desired.

3. That, if either the King or the Dauphin wished this proposal made to the Duke of Orleans instead, all conditions would be applicable to him as well.<sup>63</sup>

The ambassador of the King of Naples wanted the

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 132-37.

<sup>63</sup>Lettres de Louis XI, 1:244-48.

proposal made directly to the Duke of Orleans, as he had always been favored. But the Senate of Venice considered it better and more reasonable to make use of the Dauphin, who was closer and could supply more troops, than Orleans who was more distant and much weaker with regard to troop strength. It was therefore more urgent to the Senate to continue negotiations with the Dauphin.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, in a letter of January 14, 1454, the Senate added a supplement to their instructions:

1. That, if the Dauphin brought at least 4,000 cavalry into Lombardy he would receive 60,000 ducats, 45,000 of which would be paid before his departure.
2. That 15,000 ducats would be given to Montferrat if he served under the Dauphin with 2,000 cavalry.
3. That the Duke of Savoy would furnish the same number of cavalry.
4. That specified territory would go to each of these if they were victorious.
5. That the Dauphin could keep 30,000 ducats, if Venice and Sforza attained peace before the Dauphin's arrival in Lombardy.<sup>65</sup>

These proposals were never really given serious thought by Venice. On April 9, 1454, Milan and Venice

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<sup>64</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:269.

<sup>65</sup>Lettres de Louis XI, 1:248-51.

signed the Peace of Lodi from which the Italian League would develop. Venice informed the Dauphin of the conclusion of this treaty through its ambassador, Veniero, on April 26, 1454.<sup>66</sup>

On March 12, 1454, da Rieti sent a dispatch to the Duke of Milan, indicating that he had had an audience with Charles VII concerning complaints about René's troops. Charles put the entire blame for René's abrupt departure from Italy on René, notwithstanding René's attempts to shift the blame to Florence and Milan. More importantly, a letter of March 28 informed Sforza that da Rieti found Francesco Veniero, Venice's ambassador, at the court of King René in Aix-en-Provence. He also gave Sforza a resume of the business between the Dauphin and Venice.<sup>67</sup>

It was early in 1455 before all five major Italian powers had accepted the Peace of Lodi, thereby promising adherence to the precepts of the Italian League. This League delivered a severe blow to French ambitions, as it recognized Francesco Sforza's hold on Milan to the exclusion of the Duke of Orleans, and Alfonso's on Naples to the exclusion of René and John of Calabria.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:275.

<sup>67</sup>Dispatches, 1:144-53. It is interesting to note that the amount of ducats that da Rieti quoted to the Duke of Milan is not the same as that which Veniero was instructed to offer to the Dauphin.

<sup>68</sup>There is a more detailed analysis of the Italian League in Chapter II, pp. 25-27.

The Duke of Milan was anxious that the formation of the League would not involve an open breach between Milan and Charles VII. Thereupon, there began a series of correspondence and embassies by which Sforza displayed the extent of the cunning and shrewdness necessary for diplomatic achievement. Charles gradually began to "see through" Sforza, but France would remain on diplomatic terms with Milan. Before the end of 1454, Sforza had written to the King praising René and expressing gratitude for his services. He also took pains to explain to the King that an alliance with Naples was for the express purpose of preservation of his dominions.<sup>69</sup>

In March, 1455, Charles VII sent an ambassador, Guillaume Toreau, to Sforza with instructions. The message was clear: Charles had supported him against Savoy and Venice; therefore, he wanted a strict "hands-off" policy with regard to his problems with the Dauphin. Sforza's answer in April expressed amazement that the King would even suggest an alliance against him with the Dauphin.<sup>70</sup>

The Duke of Milan dispatched an able ambassador, Emanuele de Jacopo, to the court of Charles VII in November, 1455. It was de Jacopo's job to justify not only Sforza's membership in the League, but also the double marriage

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<sup>69</sup>Ady, History of Milan, p. 72.

<sup>70</sup>Dispatches, 1:166-75.

alliance recently contracted with Alfonso of Naples.<sup>71</sup>

It was also at this time, the end of 1455, that Duke John of Calabria decided to return to Provence. He had gone to Florence at the departure of his father in accordance with the terms of the treaty of February, 1453. Duke John had tried unsuccessfully to induce Sforza to betroth his daughter to him instead of to Alfonso's son.<sup>72</sup>

The political situation throughout 1456 revolved around two major problems. One concerned the friction at the point-of-no-return between the King and the Dauphin. The other involved both France and Italy--the attacks on Genoa and the projected invasion of that republic by Alfonso of Naples. When Duke John stopped there in 1456 on his journey from Florence back to France, he was asked to sound out the King for future aid.<sup>73</sup> A preliminary agreement would lead to a treaty placing Genoa officially under French suzerainty in 1458.

During the years 1456-1458, the Duke of Milan made it his business to do everything he could to keep the French from Italy, all the while protesting to the King of his admiration and devotion. His logic was that, if the French

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 183-91. The embassy of de Jacopo was of short duration, but he returned to the French court in 1460. The double marriage alliance is referred to in Chapter II, p. 26, text and footnote 49.

<sup>72</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:282-83.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 286-87.

were installed in Genoa, the next step would be Angevin attempts in Naples and, in consequence, the equilibrium established by the League would be destroyed.<sup>74</sup>

Sforza would eventually back Ferrante in the Neapolitan war against John of Calabria, all the while insisting to the King of France that he was neutral. All the correspondence in 1456-1457 between the Duke of Milan and his ambassador to the King, Tommaso Tebaldi da Bologna, and his ambassador to the Duke of Burgundy, Raimondo de Marliano, pertain either to the Genoese-Neapolitan situation or to the Dauphin, and to keeping Sforza informed of French plans for Italy.<sup>75</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1456, Charles VII insisted that the Dauphin abide by his decisions. Louis balked and when French troops under the Count of Dammartin were poised to invade the Dauphine, he fled on August 30, 1456, to Burgundy to seek protection from Phillip the Good. Louis would remain in Burgundy until his father died in July, 1461, having been provided by the Duke with 36,000 livres a year and the castle of Genappe in Brabant.<sup>76</sup>

One dispatch from Tebaldi, dated February 14, 1457, made two observations of interest:

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<sup>74</sup>Peyronnet, "La France et L'Italie," p. 105.

<sup>75</sup>All material pertinent to the Neapolitan war is analyzed in Chapter II, pp. 36-37; all pertinent to Genoa in Chapter IV, pp. 106-110.

<sup>76</sup>Dispatches, 1:xxxv, 208, 256.



1. That many Princes were due at the King's court to mediate the quarrel with the Dauphin, including King Rene, the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Calabria and Charles of Burgundy.

2. That all obligations of the Duke of Savoy to the King had been cancelled, allowing him to realign with Berne.<sup>77</sup>

The activities of the Duke of Milan between 1458 and 1461 can only be described as anti-French. As stated time and again, he never lost an opportunity to apprise the King of France of his "filial devotion." The major bone of contention at this time was the Angevin bid for Naples and the resulting war. A second source of dissatisfaction was the intrigue between Sforza and the Dauphin. The final rupture between the Duke of Milan and the King of France took place in July, 1460, when Emanuele de Jacopo was dismissed by the king.

. . . since the lords of the royal council had me discreetly informed that they did not want me to remain there, saying that Your Lordship is believed to keep me in these parts to pry into their affairs, etc., I had to disobey Your Excellency in not remaining at the court, . . .<sup>78</sup>

The resentment felt by Charles VII and René of Anjou against Francesco Sforza for non-support of their respective causes in Genoa and Naples was ultimately

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 258-65.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 368. From a dispatch to the Duke of Milan dated August 4, 1460.

advantageous for the Duke. It strengthened his friendship with the Dauphin, soon to be Louis XI. When the French took over Genoa in 1458, Sforza determined to undermine their authority there. When it seemed that Charles VII might back the Angevins, he allied with the self-exiled Dauphin to demonstrate his opposition to the King's intention. To further this intrigue, he sent Prospero da Camogli as his ambassador to the court of the Dauphin at Genappe in 1460.<sup>79</sup>

To understand the extent of the intrigue by the Dauphin, the Duke of Milan, and the Duke of Burgundy against French policy, it is necessary to mention their English connections at this time. In 1458, to counter the King's support of Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrians, the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy had entered into secret negotiations with the Earl of Warwick, who had an outpost at Calais for the Yorkists. The Lancastrians were successful in their endeavors in 1459. Pope Pius II had sent a legate, Francesco Coppini, to negotiate an end to war, so that the English would support his crusade.<sup>80</sup>

Coppini was rebuffed by Queen Margaret and was dispatched by the Dauphin at once to Warwick. Coppini also had secret instructions from Sforza to attempt to promote

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<sup>79</sup>Garrett Mattingly, "The First Resident Embassies: Medieval Italian Origins of Modern Diplomacy," Speculum 12 (October, 1937): 437.

<sup>80</sup>Reference in Chapter II, p. 28.

an English attack on France in order to divert attention from Angevin victories in Naples.<sup>81</sup>

In early 1460, the Dauphin launched diplomatic missions to Sforza pertinent to a treaty. Sforza hesitated at first but, when King Ferrante was defeated by Duke John of Calabria in a major battle in July, he did enter into negotiations with the Dauphin.

The first overture to Sforza was made when the Dauphin sent as his ambassador, Gaston du Lyon, under the guise of his participation in a joust.<sup>82</sup> Due to the exceptional work of du Lyon and Prospero da Camogli, a schema for a treaty of alliance between the Dauphin and the Duke of Milan was drawn up in August, 1460. The treaty was not acceptable to the Dauphin because of the omission of the situation involving Giacomo di Valperga, to whose interests he would remain loyal for many years.

Giacomo di Valperga had become Chancellor of the Duchy of Savoy in 1452. He was forced to flee in 1456 and sought refuge with the Dauphin at Genappe. He was tried and condemned in absentia in 1459 and his lands confiscated. Louis wanted a clause in the treaty germane to restoration

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<sup>81</sup>Kendall, Louis XI, pp. 98-99. The Yorkists did invade England successfully in June, 1460.

<sup>82</sup>Dispatches, 2:6. A footnote refers to du Lyon as "the Dauphin's councilor, chamberlain, chief equerry and carver."

of Valperga's possessions. The situation was high level; even Charles VII admonished Sforza in a letter of September, 1460, not to aid Valperga.<sup>83</sup>

Correspondence between the Dauphin and the Duke, and their respective ambassadors from August to October, 1460 reveals several pertinent points:

1. That the Dauphin had sent an embassy to the Pope to protest against the Duke of Savoy's confiscation of Valperga's property and his failure to pay arrears of the dowry owed to Louis.

2. That both Louis and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, opposed the Angevin cause in Naples.

3. That Sforza should have control of both Asti and Genoa.

4. That a Yorkist invasion of France should take place in the early months of 1461.<sup>84</sup>

The Treaty of Genappe between the Dauphin and the Duke of Milan was concluded on October 6, 1460, confirmed and ratified on July 24, 1461. The major provisions are as follows:

1. The Dauphin would uphold the rights of Sforza in the Duchy of Milan.

2. A mutual assistance pact against any aggressor.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 18; Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 6:493.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 305-6; Dispatches, 2:2-18 passim.

3. Assistance to the Duke in the form of 4,000 cavalry and 2,000 infantry for one year at the Dauphin's expense.

4. The precepts of the Italian League would remain intact and inviolate.

5. The Duke would guarantee the possessions of Valperga against the Duke of Savoy.<sup>85</sup>

All the negotiations during 1460-1461 involving this alliance were conducted in utmost secrecy. Most of the problems concerned the situation of di Valperga. Sforza was not at all constrained to include him in the treaty. He did not want to upset relations with Savoy, and above all did not wish to act contrary to the precepts of the Italian League, of which he was the chief proponent. The Dauphin was more adamant on Valperga's behalf than on any other point of diplomacy in which he had been involved with an Italian power. Of the voluminous dispatches of the Duke of Milan and his ambassadors to the Dauphin between October, 1460, and July, 1461, extracts from three of them impart the difficulties involved in concluding negotiations and render an insight into the intrigue being used.

The first is dated February 17, 1461, to the Duke from da Camogli with reference to di Valperga:

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 462-66; Lettres de Louis XI, 1:326-30.

. . . since it is likely that if he is thus repulsed he will be reduced to coming to terms with the Duke of Lorraine, the Duke of Brittany, and the Duke of Orleans, and leaguings with them against Your Lordship, that you should not deny him this small reciprocal favor. I replied that it was true that these three dukes represent great and honorable names, but that if the Dauphin thought the matter through, he would perceive that what these dukes could accomplish against Your Lordship is precisely nothing. Therefore it seemed to me that the Dauphin should consider that joining forces with Your Lordship . . . would do him more good than any harm the aforesaid dukes could do him . . .<sup>86</sup>

The second dispatch, dated March 9, 1461, concerned proposed negotiations between the Dauphin and the King, posing a veiled threat to Sforza. This threat was the possibility of the Dauphin's backing of French enterprises in Italy, if Sforza did not come forth with the proposed aid to di Valperga.<sup>87</sup>

A letter of March 11 gives da Camogli's assessment of the hard line held by the Dauphin:

. . . if one leaves aside those familiar ways of the Dauphin, which in Italy would be regarded as frivolities but which are the natural manners of the French, there is none superior to him in perspicuity, intelligence, efficiency and in true magnanimity, in my opinion, which I indeed remit as always to any better judgment. I assure you that in rebuffing the blows aimed at Giacomo di Valperga, the Dauphin gives me blows on all sides

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<sup>86</sup>Dispatches, 2:90. It is evident from this letter that da Camogli was nearly a match for the Dauphin in retaliatory diplomatic skills.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., pp. 146-50. Da Camogli also states, "The news received here from England grows wilder day by day and hour by hour."

Nevertheless, he seems, personally, to be very well disposed but by the replies I reported in the letter devoted to my crude opinions, you may see that there is danger in delay; . . .<sup>88</sup>

The sum total of all the correspondence and negotiations between October, 1460, and July, 1461, was that Louis would accept a money payment of 18,000 florins, in return for absolving Sforza from execution of the di Valperga clause.<sup>89</sup> The major conclusion to be drawn from all this is that, when Louis became king, he would recognize Sforza as the Duke of Milan, which his father never did. Sforza ratified the treaty on July 24, 1461, as stated above. He received notification on August 4 that Charles VII had died on July 22, 1461.<sup>90</sup>

Charles VII died in the middle of a general decline in French fortunes in Italy. The French were driven from Genoa at this very time and Duke John of Calabria was losing ground steadily in Naples. Francesco Sforza had been offended by both these French projects to the extent that he had maneuvered the disaster in Genoa and had backed Ferrante in Naples strongly. He had also become increasingly involved with the Dauphin Louis to the detriment of French policy, not the least of which actions was their joint

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>89</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 161; Dépêches, l:xxviii.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

backing of the Yorkists who took over the throne of England in July, 1461. The only real pro-French Italian power at this time was the Republic of Florence who now found it increasingly difficult to maintain their traditional good relations with the Duchy of Milan.<sup>91</sup>

The following observations are pertinent to Louis XI's reversal of his Italian policy as Dauphin:

Already accomplished in statecraft through his intimate contact with Italian politics, wholly devoid of conscientious scruples, and naturally endowed with the spirit of intrigue, this disciple of Francesco Sforza, though lacking in his military qualities, was to apply all the lessons of Italy to the problems of France. Aiming at absolute control in France, he hoped to attain also unlimited preponderance in Italy. With Genoa as a military and naval base, the Orleans family established at Milan, the House of Anjou in possession of Naples and the Pope friendly to his ambitions, he might become greater than any other sovereign of his time.<sup>92</sup>

He had an accurate knowledge of relations in Italy. He had learnt diplomacy from the Italians, and they found in him an opponent who could meet them on equal terms, using their own methods--vague promises, half-admissions, ruthless opportunism, and dealings behind their backs--and who moreover easily surpassed them in cynical suavity, conscienceless meanness, treachery, whole-hearted lying, and dangerous cunning.<sup>93</sup>

It was certainly to Sforza's surprise and chagrin that Louis XI, as king, overtly attempted to attain hegemony

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<sup>91</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 164.

<sup>92</sup>Hill, A History of Diplomacy, 2:98-99.

<sup>93</sup>Gutkind, Cosimo de' Medici, pp. 168-69.



in Italy as had his predecessors. Several reasons may be cited for Louis XI's continuance of French policy in Italy. Each Italian power in turn sent embassies to his court to secure his favor. He intrigued with all of them attempting to play each against the other. He declared to the Milanese ambassador that his inheritance imposed new duties upon him and that now he would assist his cousin, the Duke of Calabria, in Naples. It may be supposed that he was influenced to do this because his mother was an Angevin and because his councillors were as hostile to the Duke of Milan as they had been under Charles VII. Finally there was the situation with regard to Genoa.<sup>94</sup>

To abide by his treaty with Milan, Louis XI would have had to alienate the Houses of Anjou and Orleans and to forego the prospect of recovering Genoa. He was not prepared to make these concessions and demanded that the Duke of Milan recognize French claims in Italy. Sforza must compensate the Duke of Orleans with either territory or money, must renounce his alliance with Ferrante, and must aid in the French recovery of Genoa. Through careful contrivance Sforza did none of these things. Louis XI tried to shake Sforza's resolve by dangling an alliance between Milan and Anjou. This would be in the form of a marriage between the

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<sup>94</sup>Dépêches, 1:xxix. The entire Genoese situation is discussed in Chapter IV.

Duke of Calabria and Sforza's daughter, then betrothed to Ferrante's son. In return for the armed assistance of the Duke of Milan in Genoa and Naples, the king would grant him an annual subsidy of 40,000 écus. Louis even offered an alliance with France, promising support against any threats from Orleans. Sforza saw immediately through the deceitfulness and realized that he could be in danger of being isolated in Italy. However, he rejected an agreement with Louis on the basis of treaty obligations and adherence to the precepts of the Italian League.<sup>95</sup>

After two years of correspondence and negotiations, Louis XI realized that it would better suit his purpose to ally with the Duke of Milan and to drop his aggressive ambitions in Italy.<sup>96</sup> In December, 1463, Louis agreed by treaty to enfief Genoa and Savona to the Duke of Milan, with the consent of his Italian allies. On the same day, December 22, that he formally ceded Genoa to the Duke of Milan, Louis XI confirmed the treaty previously made with him in October, 1460 as dauphin.<sup>97</sup> On the next day, December 23, Louis wrote to Sforza concerning the impossibility of ceding Asti to him because of the rights of the

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<sup>95</sup>Ady, History of Milan, pp. 74-76; Mandrot, Dépêches, 1:159-63.

<sup>96</sup>Reference to reasons for abandonment of Louis' Italian policy in Chapter II, p. 43 and Summary and Conclusions, pp. 132-33.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., pp. 440-43. Details of the cession of Genoa in Chapter IV, pp. 123-24.

Duke of Orleans. However, he left the way open for the possible purchase of the County of Asti from the House of Orleans.<sup>98</sup>

The addition of Genoa to his domain was the only aggressive act of Francesco Sforza as Duke of Milan. Until his death in 1465, Sforza worked consistently with Cosimo de' Medici to maintain a balance of power in Italy under the provisions of the Italian League.<sup>99</sup>

Galeazzo Maria Sforza succeeded his father as Duke of Milan. Due to Louis XI's maneuvering, he had married Bona of Savoy, Louis' sister-in-law. Galeazzo Maria was assassinated in 1478 and succeeded by his young son, Gian-galeazzo, who was eventually imprisoned by his uncle, Ludovico Il Moro. Ludovico was still ruling the Duchy of Milan when Charles VIII invaded Italy in 1494.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Vaesen et Charavay, Lettres de Louis XI, 2:170-1.

<sup>99</sup>Ferguson, Europe in Transition, p. 447.

<sup>100</sup>Ady, History of Milan, pp. 80-84.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Republic of Genoa

The Republic of Genoa, once a mighty Mediterranean power, had reduced itself to a near shambles by the end of the fourteenth century because of factionally induced struggles for power. During a four year period, 1390-94, Genoa was the scene of ten revolutions while ten Doges successively supplanted one another.<sup>1</sup> Between 1395 and 1461, a period of sixty-six years, Genoa requested and received the protection of the King of France on three separate occasions. The causes and results of each of these periods of overlordship is the subject of Chapter IV.

In 1392, and again in 1393, the aristocratic party of Genoa, seeking to throw off the popular government, turned to Charles VI, the demented King of France, offering him the sovereignty of their city. These nobles under the leadership of Lomellini and Flisco were so opposed to the anarchic rule of the plebeian commercial families of the Adorni and the Campofregosi that they were willing to subject their

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<sup>1</sup>J. C. L. Sismondi, History of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages, trans. William Boulting (London: George Rutledge and Sons, Ltd., 1906), p. 550.

freedom to French suzerainty. The king showed no interest in this suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

At this time, the Duke of Orleans was already master of Asti and deeply involved in the plan of Pope Clement VII to establish the Kingdom of Adria in Italy. In addition, it seemed that he would be heir to the Duchy of Milan, as Giangaleazzo Visconti was his father-in-law.<sup>3</sup> Consequently Duke Louis was easily induced to accept the proposition of the Genoese nobles when they approached him.

The Duke of Orleans was persuaded to occupy Savona, in suzerainty to Genoa at the time, as a step toward its own independence. On November 17, 1394, his troops entered Savona under Enguerran de Couci, then Captain-General in Asti. Couci concluded a treaty with Savona which allowed the duke to place a garrison in the castle and his flag beside that of the Empire. The treaty also promised Savona full independence from Genoa.<sup>4</sup>

The Republic of Genoa was offered to France again, this time by the Doge, Antoniotto Adorno, who evidently saw this expedient as the only way to retain his ducal power. At the same time, in March 1395, a coalition of the Queen of

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<sup>2</sup>Robinson, "The French in Italy," p. 467.

<sup>3</sup>References to Louis of Orleans and Giangaleazzo Visconti in Chapter III, pp. 46-48.

<sup>4</sup>Coville, Les Premiers Valois, p. 313; Robinson, "The French in Italy," p. 467.

France, the Duke of Burgundy and the Republic of Florence, determined to check the advance of the Duke of Orleans and Giangaleazzo Visconti in Italy, influenced Charles VI to withdraw support from his brother. The king purchased the rights of his brother to Savona and Genoa in December, 1395. It was announced in March, 1396, that the king had accepted the proposal of the Doge to control the city of Genoa.<sup>5</sup>

French occupation of Genoa began on November 27, 1396. Adorno was at first left as governor, but was replaced by the Count of St. Pol, a protege of the Duke of Burgundy. It was arranged that the French governor have a Council with equal representation of nobles and plebeians, Guelphs and Ghibellines.<sup>6</sup> The governor had two votes, and ten castles under his command to ensure his safety. This attempt at co-government failed and, two years later, the governor fled to Savoy. Strife persisted until destruction amounted to more than one million florins.<sup>7</sup>

French domination was not securely established until Boucicaut (Jehan Le Meingre), the Marshall of France, arrived in Genoa as governor on October 31, 1401. His good administration brought several years of calm to the troubled city.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Italian parties of imperial or papal persuasion with origins in twelfth-century Germany. In the Quattrocento these terms would mean only vague loyalties, especially as alliances reversed.

<sup>7</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 550.

However, as a friend of Florence and an avowed enemy of Milan, Boucicaut attempted to obtain two of Milan's cities for Florence. Moreover, it was his plan also to bring all the states of northern Italy under French suzerainty. By 1409, he actually acquired for the King of France the island of Elba, Monaco, and Savona, in addition to waging war at sea with Venice.<sup>8</sup>

However, Boucicaut's designs for Italy gave Genoa the opportunity to cast aside the French yoke. In the summer of 1409, Boucicaut left Genoa and entered Milan with troops at the request of the Duke, who was at war with several nobles. He set up a new government with the Duke after a large area of northern Italy acknowledged the suzerainty of the King of France. The faction in Genoa opposing the Duke of Milan took their revenge on September 5, 1409, by bringing in the Marquis of Montferrat. Most of the French in Genoa were massacred, the rest plundered and thrown out. This uprising put an end to French domination of Genoa, which had lasted nearly thirteen years.<sup>9</sup>

When word of the loss of Genoa reached Boucicaut, he left Milan before anyone else found out. When this news was made public, Milan immediately revolted from French allegiance, massacring the few Frenchmen who had dared to stay behind.

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<sup>8</sup>Coville, *Les Premiers Valois*, p. 313; Robinson, "The French in Italy," pp. 468-69.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 472-73.

Finally, in 1410, Boucicaut and his troops returned to France. France had lost not only Liguria and Lombardy, but Genoese ports in Asia as well. "Both as a means for extending their commerce, as a source of revenue, and as a guarantee for the security of other French possessions south of the Alps, the French possessed no city equivalent to Genoa."<sup>10</sup>

In effect, the Genoese had been abandoned by the French governor who had his sights set higher, albeit for the King of France.<sup>11</sup> The Genoese made the Marquis of Montferrat governor for one year with the same salary formerly paid to the Doge. In 1413, however, the Marquis was driven out and threatened reprisals averted by a payment of 24,000 crowns.<sup>12</sup>

A republic was reestablished in Genoa, but political life remained an unceasing coil. The factions were so divided that it was no longer a strife between parties but near anarchy. One doge in particular stood out, Tommaso Campo-fregoso, who paid the debt of 60,000 florins himself. However, Milan, Aragon, and France did everything in their power to promote the condition of anarchy.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, resistance wore thin and the Council of Ancients of Genoa gave their sovereignty to the Duke of Milan under the same terms as those

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 474.

<sup>11</sup>Boucicaut was captured at Agincourt in 1415 and died in captivity in London.

<sup>12</sup>Robert W. Carden, The City of Genoa (London: Methuen and Company, 1908), p. 38.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 39.



previously granted to the King of France.<sup>14</sup>

This acquisition gave Filippo Maria Visconti the preponderance in northern Italy. Genoa had been forced to sell the port of Leghorn to Florence, who had thought this maneuver would beat Filippo Maria "at his own game." However, the diplomatic skill of the Duke of Milan brought Genoa with all her dependencies, except Leghorn, to the Visconti state.<sup>15</sup>

Through their allegiance to Milan, the Genoese were drawn into the war for succession in Naples. In this war, the Duke of Milan and the Pope supported the claims of Queen Joanna and her adopted son, Louis of Anjou,<sup>16</sup> against Alfonso of Aragon. Genoa was drawn into this war partly by the request of Gaeta in 1435 that a force be sent to protect the city against attacks by Alfonso's fleet. The Genoese fleet met the navy of Aragon off Gaeta. The victory of the Genoese was so complete that only one Aragonese ship escaped.<sup>17</sup>

The Duke of Milan, most likely jealous of the Genoese victory, required that the captives not be sent to Genoa, but taken to Savona and then directly to Milan. Because of his

<sup>14</sup> Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 551.

<sup>15</sup> Hans Baron, "A Struggle for Liberty in the Renaissance: Florence, Venice and Milan in the Early Quattrocento," American Historical Review 58 (October 1952 - July, 1953): 551-52.

<sup>16</sup> René of Anjou succeeded to all the Angevin claims when his brother, Louis, died in 1434.

<sup>17</sup> J. Theodore Bent, Genoa: How the Republic Rose and Fell (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), pp. 183-84.

inherent dread of the French in Italy, Filippo Maria allowed himself to be drawn back into the war of Neapolitan succession on the side of Aragon by Alfonso.<sup>18</sup> Galled by the actions of the Duke of Milan against them, the Genoese took advantage of a change of commander to revolt against him. The stronger towns followed the example of the chief city and the Republic was reestablished in 1435.<sup>19</sup>

In 1438, René of Anjou made his way to Genoa after being released from captivity by the Duke of Burgundy. He sailed south from there with a Genoese fleet to obtain his legacy, the Kingdom of Naples. The Genoese fleet avoided Gaeta, which was being defended at that time by the Aragonese, and arrived at Naples on May 19, 1438.<sup>20</sup> The ruling faction of the Campofregosi had embraced René's cause, opposed by Filippo Maria and by Alfonso, both of whom they had ample reason to hate.

On April 26, 1441, Pope Eugenius concluded an offensive alliance with the Genoese and the Venetians to drive the Aragonese out of Naples. The Genoese were to send a large fleet without delay. In addition, 4,000 cavalry were sent to Naples. The fleet never left Genoa because of a dispute over the new admiral. René, seemingly abandoned by the Genoese

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<sup>18</sup>Carden, Genoa, p. 41; Bent, Genoa, p. 185.

<sup>19</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 552.

<sup>20</sup>Des Garets, Le Roi René, pp. 99-100; Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 554.

and deserted by his Neapolitan allies, gave up the siege of Naples in 1442. He escaped with the aid of a Genoese fleet which took him to Pisa. From there "le bon roi" returned to Provence.<sup>21</sup>

The lost cause of René turned the public against the Campofregosi. Through the machinations of Alfonso and of Filippo Maria, Fieschi surprised the city one night and captured the Doge. The attempt to set up a commission of eight Doges lasted only one month. Finally, Raffaello Adorno was successfully nominated Doge. Consequently, the Fieschi recommenced civil war and the Campofregosi, having fled to Milan, opened hostilities from there. Because the Adorni family had been in exile in Naples for a long while, the new Doge came to terms with Alfonso in 1444.<sup>22</sup>

In 1444, after he had signed the Treaty of Tours with the King of England, Charles VII issued letters of general pardon for all the Genoese who recognized French authority. In these letters he took the title of Lord of Genoa (Januae dominus). He declared that he had received letters from several faithful Genoese attesting to their regrets for all deeds committed against the House of France. The king consented to forget the past and granted pardon for the crime of lese majesty to all who held themselves guilty. It is considered that this pardon may be an appendix to a treaty with

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 230-32.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 233; Sismondi, Italian Republics, pp. 554-55.

the ousted Campofregosi faction who bargained in 1446 to bring the French once again to Genoa.<sup>23</sup>

In the same year, 1444, that Adorno made Genoa a tributary of King Alfonso, the Dauphin of France was being plied with honors for coming to terms with the Swiss. The Pope named Louis Gonfalonier of the Church and the rumor surfaced that Filippo Maria was appointing Louis his heir. Meanwhile, an ambassador of a group of Genoese nobles came to the Dauphin with the proposal of making him the overlord of Genoa.<sup>24</sup> Taking this offer into account, the Dauphin negotiated with the Duke of Savoy in February, 1446, to secure possession of Genoa and, at the same time, conquer the Milanese.<sup>25</sup> This treaty never went into effect.

In October, 1446, Filippo Maria sent his ambassador, Tommaso Tibaldo di Bologna, to the King and the Dauphin to secure aid against the Venetians. Charles VII promised that he and Louis would help to recover all that Venice had taken, if the cities of Genoa and Asti were restored to the French crown. Filippo Maria refused to execute this treaty in its final form and Tibaldo returned to Milan in January, 1447. It was during the course of these negotiations that Charles VII

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<sup>23</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 4:222-23; Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, p. 236.

<sup>24</sup>Beaucourt, Histoire de Charles VII, 4:223.

<sup>25</sup>Reference to these negotiations in Chapter III, pp. 52-53.

determined to effect a reconquest of Genoa.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, early in 1447, another change in government took place in Genoa, but this time within the Adorni family. The Adorni believed that Raffaello had not given them sufficient power and position, even though he was ruling with exceptional wisdom and moderation. He was induced to resign in favor of his cousin, Bernabò Adorno, who proclaimed himself Doge, backed by 600 soldiers sent to him by King Alfonso. Bernabò lasted only a short while before being driven out by the Campofregosi.<sup>27</sup>

The second attempt of the French to occupy Genoa, a failure from the start, took the following course. Charles VII sent credentials naming Antonio Lamelun, a Genoese noble, to Raffaello and Bernabò Adorno, Gian Antonio dei Fieschi and others in August, 1446. Lamelun was charged with probing the principal citizens of the republic with regard to occupation and succeeded particularly with dei Fieschi, the Admiral of Genoa.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, negotiations were being discussed with Janus Campofregoso and other Genoese who were exiles at Nice from the time of the revolution which made Raffaello

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<sup>26</sup>Dépêches, 1:xi; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 4:231-37 passim.

<sup>27</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 555; Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, pp. 234-35. Vincens states that Bernabò was Doge only three days, Sismondi, scarcely one month.

<sup>28</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 4:237.

Adorno the Doge in 1444. In October, after a truce was effected between the Campofregosi in Nice and Spinola in Genoa, five warships arrived at Marseilles commanded by Janus and Benedetto Doria. They sent a message to the King informing him that it was their intention to make him Lord of Genoa. The King was pleased and named Doria Captain of the fleet headed to Genoa.<sup>29</sup>

Charles VII sent an embassy to Marseilles to achieve his plan of reconquest. This embassy, including Guillaume de Poitiers, Jacques Coeur, and Jean de Chambes, had orders to come to a definitive understanding with the Genoese nobles and to see to the equipping of a fleet. In early January, 1447, they were transported to Nice to make final arrangements with Janus Campofregoso and the other Genoese. Jacques Coeur had the principal role in these negotiations and in preparations for the expedition.<sup>30</sup>

It was at this point, in January, 1447, that the aforementioned coup took place which ousted Raffaello Adorno and brought in Bernabò Adorno. The occupation of Genoa seemed an accomplished fact everywhere, even in Florence and Milan. It was at this point also that Janus Campofregoso took matters into his own hands.

On January 30, 1447, sailing in the company of Guillaume de Poitiers, chamberlain of the Dauphin and representative of the king, Janus entered the harbor of Genoa on a

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 237-38.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-39.

galley of 300 men. Disembarking without resistance, he took the banner of France and advanced through the city to the palace with a large escort of armed friends. He was immediately proclaimed Doge by his partisans. Bernabò offered no resistance and fled. Janus then drove out Poitiers and the rest of the French who had accompanied him.<sup>31</sup>

The ambassadors returned to Marseilles believing their cause lost. Guillaume de Poitiers, however, strove to convince the Dauphin that the Genoese wanted him: "Gênes est et sera votre. . .". In a letter of February 17, 1447, Jacques Coeur expressed the necessity of the King coming with troops promptly, the Genoese waiting to give him the overlordship. Both Doria and his kinsman, Andrea Squarza, pleaded with the King not to lose any time taking the initiative away from Janus.<sup>32</sup>

The French ambassadors set sail for Genoa from Villefranche, near Nice, early in March. They immediately requested Janus to hand over the government of Genoa to the King. He responded that what he had gained he would keep at all cost. Because the envoys did not have a force sufficient to undertake an armed struggle, they returned to Provence.<sup>33</sup>

The prestige of France suffered a severe blow in Italy. Moreover, the Dauphin would direct his plans against

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 241-43.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 243-44. Beaucourt is the only source containing an account of this aborted attempt.

those of his father, after having been ordered by him to go to the Dauphiné. In 1453, these plans would include conquest of Genoa. Janus Campofregoso died in 1449, succeeded by each of two brothers, Ludovico and Pietro. A fourth brother, Paolo, became Archbishop of Genoa.<sup>34</sup>

Early in 1448, King Alfonso of Naples concluded an offensive and defensive league with Genoa. He was at that time allied to Venice and had invaded Tuscany in 1447, while Venice was moving westward into Lombardy against Filippo Maria. Meanwhile, Charles VII had not lost hope of retaking Genoa. In spite of Genoa's alliance with Alfonso, René of Anjou succeeded, in August 1448, in concluding a treaty with the Republic by which commercial relations between Provence and Genoa were guaranteed.<sup>35</sup>

During the Italian wars, the alliance of Milan and Florence sent Angelo Acciajuoli on missions to France to obtain aid against Venice and Naples.<sup>36</sup> During his first mission in 1451-51, Acciajuoli concluded a treaty effective from May, 1452 to June, 1453. Meanwhile, in November, 1451, Milan and Florence signed a five-year mutual defense pact with Genoa containing a secret clause binding them to come to Genoa's

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<sup>34</sup>Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, pp. 237-39.

<sup>35</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:148-49.

<sup>36</sup>The embassies of Acciajuoli to the King of France during 1451-53 have been discussed in detail in Chapter II, pp. 18-23 and Chapter III, pp. 60-65.



aid if attacked by the French.<sup>37</sup> In other words, it was directed against the King of France while he was still negotiating to send aid to Lombardy and Tuscany.

The King had already agreed to the general lines of the treaty when, in December, he was informed from Genoa of this triple alliance and its secret clause. It took Acciajuoli several anxious meetings with the king to convince him that the real intent of Florence and Milan regarding Genoa was to place and keep the pro-French party in power. This is evident in a letter to Sforza of January 22, 1452, in which he expressed amazement that even secret matters had come by letter from Genoa to the king. He determined to make the King realize that the advantage had now been taken from his enemies. The King wished to know if the Campofregosi would remain in power. Acciajuoli answered neither that question nor one concerning the length of time of the treaty with Genoa.<sup>38</sup>

The treaty was successfully concluded on February 21, 1452, and contained nothing contrary to the articles of the Genoese treaty. Acciajuoli assured the Duke of Milan on February 27, however, that he was not obligated to act against the Genoese because his treaty with them was public. This would be in spite of the fact that the treaty with the King specifically stated that, if he undertook an enterprise in

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<sup>37</sup>Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 135.

<sup>38</sup>Dispatches, 1:52-58.

Italy, both Florence and Milan would aid him with all means possible.<sup>39</sup>

On his third mission to France, during which he actually obtained the forces of King René in a treaty of April 21, 1453, Acciajuoli was not able to secure the exclusion of Genoa as a possible target of French aggression. The Dieci di Balia of Florence had already determined this when, in their instructions of January 26, 1453, Acciajuoli was told to discuss with the Genoese ambassadors whatever he and the Duke deemed appropriate.<sup>40</sup> The treaty was a major diplomatic triumph for Florence and Milan, however, because they obtained French aid without specifically granting money or troops for French pursuits in Italy.

For a while, the aspirations of René involved those of the Dauphin. When the Duke of Savoy refused him passage through his territory into Lombardy, the Dauphin offered René the aid of his own forces, as well as leading René's troops with him. Louis had been approached by exiled Genoese partisans and he hoped that he might profit by René's expedition to occupy Genoa. René accepted his offer and went to Italy by sea, accompanied by a Genoese fleet.<sup>41</sup>

The Dauphin and King René were to rendezvous at

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 94; Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> Reference in Chapter III, pp. 67-68.

Villanova in Asti on August 19, 1453. René received a letter on his way there advising him of Louis's plans: that he had been approached by Genoese exiles and the Marquis of Finale; that his enterprise for Genoa could not fail to succeed; and that he would support René in his own Italian undertaking.<sup>42</sup>

René was very upset upon receipt of this letter. He was most concerned that such a venture would cause a rupture in his alliance with Florence and strike a fatal blow to his future project. Therefore, he decided to do anything to hinder the plans of the Dauphin. When the Dauphin entered Italy, after conferring with the Marquis of Montferrat, he sent a message to Genoa announcing that he was coming to them as their defender.<sup>43</sup>

The Genoese were disturbed at this news and began to organize a resistance. René and Louis met at Villanova concerning the situation in Genoa, with René obtaining the desired result. René informed the Dauphin that the Republic of Genoa had facilitated his coming to Italy and that he would not permit any type of coup directed against them. He demanded that the Dauphin leave Italy. Louis yielded, but not before swearing to avenge this affront by his uncle.<sup>44</sup>

The Dauphin would offer his services first to Venice,

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<sup>42</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:252-52; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:300-301.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.; Perret, Histoire, p. 253.

<sup>44</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 5:301-02; Ilardi, "The Italian League," p. 140.

then to the Duke of Milan. Sforza declined the Dauphin's proposals on the pretext of his treaty with Genoa. René left Italy for Provence in February, 1454, his plans for Naples unrealized. His son John, Duke of Calabria, came to Florence in his place, as specified in the treaty.

The Peace of Lodi brought an end to the wars in Italy on April 9, 1454. The three powers which concluded the provisions of the Italian League on August 30--Florence, Milan, and Venice--invited the other powers to join, provided that they would accept the Treaty of Lodi without reservations. Alfonso accepted both the treaty and the League on January 30, 1455, but not until the text of the League was amended to eliminate Genoa and Rimini from taking part. When Pope Nicholas V signed the terms as nominal leader on February 25, the Italian League included all five major powers. Nearly all the smaller states as allies of the larger ones followed with their formal adherence to the League.<sup>45</sup>

Alfonso's aggressive activity toward Genoa and Rimini and his eagerness to attain hegemony in Italy brought instability to Italy during 1455-58 in spite of the League. This warlike situation, especially naval attacks against Genoa, served to encourage French aspirations in Italy and brought about the third occupation of the Republic by the French. Alfonso directed his hostilities against the faction-torn government of Pietro Campofregoso, backing instead the Adorni

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 143. A more detailed reference to the Italian League is included in Chapter II, pp. 25-27.

and the dei Fieschi, families more traditionally friendly to the Aragonese rule in Naples.<sup>46</sup>

Rivalry between Alfonso and Genoa was in reality a continuation of a long-standing struggle for supremacy in the western Mediterranean between Aragon and Genoa involving the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, as well as the Republic's friendship with King René. Genoa had agreed to the Peace of Lodi in April, 1454. However, in May, the Doge Campofregoso and the Council of Ancients had declared that they did not intend to ratify any articles in which the King of Aragon was concerned, and that they would not lay down arms if he did not return Castello on the island of Sardinia to them.<sup>47</sup>

When a Neapolitan fleet under the command of the Marquis of Villamarino appeared in the Gulf of Genoa in early 1455, Campofregoso made secret overtures to France, using the ambassador of Charles VII, as intermediary. Meanwhile, correspondence of the Duke of Milan with Naples and Genoa indicates his avid interest in the situation. An armistice was concluded on June 25, 1455, between the Republic of Genoa and Alfonso, thus forcing Villamarino's fleet to leave. It was broken on August 10, 1456, when Alfonso declared war on Genoa.<sup>48</sup>

Since the return of King René to France, his son, Duke John of Calabria, had remained at Florence as commandant of allied troops. The conclusion of the Peace of Lodi and

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<sup>46</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republic, p. 639.

<sup>47</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:229.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 229-30; Perret, Histoire, 1:281.

subsequent treaties put an end to his role there. His sojourn in Italy did not prove useless, however. In March, 1456, he returned to France with a mission, that of requesting Charles VII to take over the government of the Republic of Genoa in the name of the Doge. The events which brought about the Doge's request were involved intricately in the long-standing feud for power in Genoa, as well as Alfonso's declaration of war.

John of Calabria had left Florence in early 1455 and had gone to Genoa where he became involved in the machinations leading to French occupation before he returned to France. At this time, during the Dogeship of the Campofregosi, the noble families of Adorni, dei Fieschi and Spinola were the ones in exile plotting to take over the government.<sup>49</sup> It was they with whom Duke John was intriguing in 1455 to overthrow Pietro Campofregoso. The exiles had returned to Genoa after the conclusion of the truce in 1455 and it was they also for whom Alfonso declared war in 1456. It was for this very reason that Campofregoso requested the help of France by offering the overlordship of Genoa to Charles VII--to foil those plotting to overthrow him. Alfonso's war with Genoa then was joined to a long-standing civil war. Alfonso was so desperate to conquer Genoa that he finally offered aid to Campofregoso against France, unaware that the Doge was already conducting

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<sup>49</sup>This constitutes a reversal of those exiled at the time of the second attempt at French occupation in 1446.

secret negotiations with the King.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, Sforza too was restless in his attempt to keep the French away. He pleaded with the Signoria of Venice, through ambassadors, to help him to gain back Genoa for Milan. Venice consistently refused during 1455-58 and, as a result of long-standing friendship with Charles VII and with René, resolved to remain neutral. It was during this period also that Sforza sent Tommaso Tibaldo di Bologna on four separate missions to the court of France to assure the King that he was his loyal friend and ally, and to secure information concerning France's involvement with Genoa.<sup>51</sup>

When the Duke of Calabria returned to Provence, he left 900 infantry at Ventimille under the command of Doria, an old friend of King René. During his stay, he had acquired for France the principal nobles of Genoa--the Doria, Lomellini, Grimaldi, etc. The Doge Campofregoso was at this point incapable of resisting an attack from either his enemies or from the French. Hence his aforementioned request to Charles VII which Duke John took back to France in March, 1456. The ambassador of Sforza in Genoa wrote to him that "three-fourths of the Genoese were French at heart."<sup>52</sup> The reaction of Venice was that no help was needed for Genoa, the situation being

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<sup>50</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:280-95 passim; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:228-39 passim; Dispatches, 1:190-224, passim.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:285. ". . . les trois quarts des Gênois étaient Français de coeur."

exaggerated by Sforza and his envoy. This was in spite of the fact that Venetian envoys in France wrote that Charles VII had ordered an army held ready in the middle of April, 1456. It was not known against whom it was being made ready, but the general belief was that an Italian campaign was being prepared. Sforza was certain that it would be directed at Genoa.<sup>53</sup>

On May 24, 1456, the Duke of Calabria received authorization from Charles VII to negotiate with the Genoese. He then signed a treaty by which the overlordship of Genoa would be transmitted to the King of France and by which Duke John would be named governor. This treaty was confirmed by the envoys of Pietro Campofregoso.<sup>54</sup> The King formally invested the Duke of Calabria with the government of Genoa on August 20, 1456. In letters-patent of September 6, the Duke acknowledged receipt of the governorship, declaring that he would make use of it only for the good of the Crown and that he would remit it at the King's pleasure.<sup>55</sup>

The attempts of the Duke of Milan to keep the French from occupying Genoa were extensive and cannot be underestimated. His desperate efforts in 1455-56 to mediate an accord between Alfonso and either Campofregoso or the exiles in order to achieve an Aragonese protectorate over Genoa, thereby forestalling French control are abundantly documented in his

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 285-87.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 289; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:233.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 234; Perret, Histoire, 1:293.



correspondence with his ambassadors in Genoa. In June, 1456, the Duke of Milan backed an aborted attempt to take Genoa from the Doge made by Villamarino and some Genoese exiles.<sup>56</sup>

Also in June, 1456, Sforza sent Tibaldo di Bologna on the first of four missions to the court of France to assess the situation. He would go again in November, 1456, February and April, 1457. In several dispatches in the summer of 1456 Tibaldo kept the Duke informed about Genoa. On July 29, he wrote that a Messer Perrino would first raise the standards of the king and secure the citadel before Duke John appeared with galleys at Genoa. Further, he stated that it could easily be done provided that he was supported by the nobles and the wealthy class and that no further attempts to prevent it were made (meaning Sforza).<sup>57</sup>

After Tibaldo returned to Milan, Sforza wrote immediately to Pietro Campofregoso requesting him not to bind himself to a definitive agreement with a foreign prince nor make any changes in his state before the end of the year. It appeared at first that Sforza would get his wish. Campofregoso sent two ambassadors to him in October, 1456. Without revealing his secret pact with the Duke of Calabria, however, the Doge submitted to the Council of Ancients, on November 12, the conditions by which Charles VII offered to undertake the defense and protection of the Republic of Genoa.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Dispatches, 1:216.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 210-12.

<sup>58</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:234-35.

The Duke of Milan sent Tibaldo back to France in November for two reasons. He wanted first-hand information on Charles' plans for Genoa and he wished the King to understand that he was still the loyal ally of France who would do nothing to thwart preparations for Genoa. By this time Charles had begun to perceive the machinations of the Duke of Milan, despite his protests to the contrary, even though the king was preoccupied with the problems concerning the Dauphin's flight to Burgundy. Tibaldo went to France a third time in February, 1457.<sup>59</sup>

John of Calabria took the year 1457 to make his preparations for taking over Genoa. Meanwhile, the situation in Genoa was very precarious, an attack by Alfonso of Naples being constantly imminent. In March, 1457, a group of eight Genoese lords, among them the Doria, sent a plea to the king to take the Republic under his protection. Pietro Campo-fregoso wrote to Duke John on April 27 begging him to come with aid. Meanwhile, Sforza sent Tibaldo to France again in April for the same reasons as before.<sup>60</sup>

On February 7, 1458, a final treaty was effected with the Duke of Calabria under the title of lieutenant-general of the king and governor of Genoa. By this treaty, Pietro

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 236-37; Dispatches, 1:222-24. Reference to the Dauphin's flight to Burgundy in Chapter III, p. 76.

<sup>60</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:298-99; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:238.

Campofregoso declared the overlordship of Genoa transferred to Charles VII, the rights and privileges of the Genoese being maintained under the same terms as had been stipulated in 1396. This treaty was ratified on June 25 by the king at Beaugency. Meanwhile, Duke John entered Genoa on May 11 and accepted an oath of loyalty from the inhabitants.<sup>61</sup>

Because of the guarantee of the French, the Genoese had hoped that Alfonso would refrain from any more attacks. However, at the very moment of Duke John's entrance, Alfonso was preparing hostilities, incited by the exiles, the Adorni, the dei Fieschi, and the Spinola, who would attack from the land side. Alfonso sent ten galleys and twenty other vessels under the command of Villamarino to menace the harbor. John of Calabria, as well as Campofregoso, took measures for a proper state of defense. These measures included placing strong chains and floating bulwarks across the harbor and filling the fortresses with French and Genoese soldiers.<sup>62</sup>

The blockade had begun and the city was awaiting a combined assault by land and sea, when news came of the sudden death of King Alfonso on June 27, 1456. Almost immediately, the blockading fleet dispersed to Naples and Barcelona. The troops of the exiles lost hope and drew back over the mountains. Both Raffaello and Bernabò Adorno died soon after

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 238-39; Perret, Histoire, 1:299.

<sup>62</sup>Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, p. 262; Urquhart,, Francesco Sforza, p. 259; Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 640.

Alfonso, "of vexation at seeing their hopes blighted,"  
 "épuisés de chagrins, victimes d'ambition et de jalousie."<sup>63</sup>

The Genoese suffered severely from an epidemic. Duke John governed wisely, gradually obtaining the admiration and affection of the people.

The death of Alfonso, followed by the death of Pope Calixtus, in August, 1458, brought about changes in the Angevin plans and hopes for Naples. Calixtus had been adamant in refusing to recognize Ferrante as King of Naples. Not so Pope Pius II, elected in 1458. The reactions of Florence, Venice, and Milan to this situation and to the French occupation of Genoa took different courses.

Alfonso's death compounded the problem that the occupation of Genoa placed upon the adherents of the Italian League. The fact that France was stronger and more powerful than the coalition of the Italian powers constituted a serious danger for Italy. With Genoa in her power France might attempt to realize its long-standing pretensions on Naples or, for that matter, on Milan as well. Genoa could easily be considered as an advance post to the south and west. If France chose either or both of these moves, would the members of the League, the objective of which was to resist foreign encroachments, consolidate for defense?

Even with the frantic efforts of the Duke of Milan, the Signoria of Venice refused to see the danger posed.

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<sup>63</sup>Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, p. 262; Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, p. 260.

Although they considered all the angles, it was decided that Venice would remain neutral. Venice would not ally with France, but determined that French domination in Genoa was simply countermanding that of Sforza in that city. Moreover, Venice feared the advance of the Turks in her eastern possessions most at this time.<sup>64</sup>

It was during this time that Charles VII sent Milon de Liers as his ambassador to the Republic of Florence.<sup>65</sup> The Republic was a staunch friend and ally of France and totally opposed to the recognition of Ferrante as King of Naples. They took great pains to inform the King of France of their affection for John of Calabria, who had so impressed them during his stay in 1454. However, Florence was bound to the House of Aragon by a treaty which could not be broken without violating a sworn oath, that of the Italian League. Not even an embassy from King René in the persons of the Bishop of Marseilles and Jean Cossa could change the official stance of the Dieci di Balìa of Florence.<sup>66</sup>

The Duke of Milan did not cease his actions in opposition to the French occupation of Genoa, nor did he cease trying to convince Charles VII of his good wishes and devotion. The King was not satisfied and sent an envoy to Milan in September, 1458. The King wished Sforza to understand

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<sup>64</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:301-03.

<sup>65</sup>Reference to this embassy in Chapter II, p. 31.

<sup>66</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:242-43.

that he was acting in the interests of his brother-in-law, King René, and was counting on his help in recovering the Kingdom of Naples for him. He expected Sforza to assist John of Calabria in his governing of Genoa. He denounced the actions of the Marquis of Finale, a vassal of the Duke of Milan, who had been hostile to Duke John.<sup>67</sup>

Sforza, however, saw a danger to himself with the French in Genoa and constantly backed attempts to end their occupation from 1458-61. His intrigues worked, for soon Pietro Campofregoso began to cause serious problems for Duke John. Sforza permitted both Campofregoso and dei Fieschi to assemble men and arms in Milanese territory and to hire his condottiere, Tiberto Brandolini. Early in 1459, the Genoese stoutly defended their city and governor from the combined attack, while Villamarino's ever-present fleet bombarded from the sea. Gian Antonio dei Fieschi advanced too near the city walls and was killed. His barons deserted and Campofregoso was forced to retreat in failure.<sup>68</sup>

The dissident factions of Neapolitan barons led by Antonio Orsini, Prince of Taranto, requested the aid of John of Calabria against Ferrante early in 1459. He strongly intimated to Duke John that the time had come for him to reassert Angevin claims in Naples. Both the Duke of Calabria

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 241-42. There are no available dispatches for the years 1458-59 between France and Milan.

<sup>68</sup> Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 640.

and the King of France conducted intensive diplomatic campaigns in Venice and in Milan with Sforza, but to no avail.<sup>69</sup>

These barons had first approached Alfonso's successor in Aragon, his brother John, King of Navarre. However, John of Navarre was concerned with internal problems and had concluded beneficial negotiations with Charles VII. They approached John of Calabria a second time in the spring of 1459. In spite of the difficult situation in Genoa, he welcomed their proposition and began his diplomatic and military preparations.<sup>70</sup>

During 1459, while making plans to sail to Naples, the Duke of Calabria established his position as governor of Genoa more firmly. In addition, he fortified the defenses of Monaco and negotiated the submission of the Marquis of Finale, both in April, 1459. With the help of the Prince of Taranto, he obtained the services of the great condottiere, Jacopo Piccinino, who had rejected Ferrante's attempt to do likewise. Duke John accomplished these even while plagued by the attempts of Pietro Campofregoso to overthrow him.<sup>71</sup>

Because of Duke John's popularity, the citizens of Genoa eagerly took up his Neapolitan cause. Ferrante, however, financially backed Campofregoso's attempt to collect

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<sup>69</sup>Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, pp. 269-70. Reference in Chapter II, pp. 32-33.

<sup>70</sup>Perret, Histoire, 1:317-18; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:244-45.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 247; Perret, Histoire, 1:319-20.

another army. The success of the Genoese fleet against that of Naples emboldened the Angevin party (now including the Adorni and the Spinola) in Genoa to take more decidedly offensive measures than before. This included the advantage offered in obtaining Gaeta.<sup>72</sup>

At the very time that Duke John was ready to sail for the coast of Naples, Pietro Campofregoso, making another expedition against Genoa, crossed the mountains and stationed himself at Provenza, four miles from the city. The Genoese fleet had already sailed with a numerous force, but John relied on the loyalty of the citizens to him. Campofregoso attacked but found himself blocked by a second line of fortifications within the city. Rumors of the coming of the Adorni by sea in support of the French caused him to make a desperate effort to regain possession of the city. He died in a hail of stones, his army subsequently retreating and dispersing.<sup>73</sup>

The defeat and death of Pietro Campofregoso set Duke John free to follow the fleet already sailing to the Neapolitan coast. In October, 1459, he descended to Gaeta with a Genoese fleet consisting of ten galleys and two transport ships, strengthened by twelve galleys from Provence sent by his father, King René. The Genoese furnished him a subsidy of 60,000 florins from the Bank of Saint George, and a large

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<sup>72</sup> Sismondi, Italian Republics, pp. 640-41; Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, pp. 273-74.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 275-76.



sum of money was given to him by Charles VII. Louis de Laval was left at Genoa as acting French governor.<sup>74</sup>

During the course of the Neapolitan war, the Duke of Calabria accomplished his greatest inroads with a major victory at Sarno in July, 1460. During this time, both the King of France and the Duke of Milan waged diplomatic campaigns aimed at opposing goals. These missions primarily concerned Naples, but related to Genoa as well.

In March, 1460, Charles VII sent Dresnay from Asti with a letter to Milan in which he complained of Sforza's activity in support of the Adorni and the Campofregosi. Dresnay reported to the king in May, among other things, that Sforza declared (contrary to facts) that he had never interfered in the affairs of Genoa. During May also, the Duke of Milan sent Emanuele de Jacopo to the court of France. He was instructed to inform the king:

1. That, if he wished to control Genoa, he would have done so before the arrival of Duke John.
2. That Duke John had requested his aid but obligations to the League had not allowed him to provide it.
3. That neither he nor any of the Milanese had aided in the uprisings of Campofregoso against Duke John.

In addition, he reiterated all the actions of Duke John against the Milanese and contrary to their well-being. He had made these accusations in the past when charged with

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 275; Des Garets, Le Roi René, p. 211.

collusion by René and John. Duke John not only had denied them but had offered to submit the dispute to Charles VII.<sup>75</sup>

The king's next move against Sforza took place in the summer of 1460. He had obtained Savona and given its citizens the same privileges as those in Genoa. Laval requested that he send a contingent of troops to counteract the hostilities of Sforza. Charles VII decided to use diplomatic ploys instead. An embassy was sent into Italy to propagandize against the confederation opposing the Angevins, the Duke of Milan, Pope Pius II, and King Ferrante. This embassy included the envoys of the Dukes of Orleans and Brittany and the Count of Angouleme. Its major purpose was to request the Duke of Modena, the Marquis of Ferrara, and the Republic of Venice to form a league to overthrow Sforza as Duke of Milan and install the Duke of Orleans in his place.<sup>76</sup> All the while that Sforza was protesting his pro-French and pro-Angevin leanings, he was in hopes of concluding an alliance with the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy.

During the summer of 1461, the French were ousted by the Genoese for the third time since their republic was placed under suzerainty in the 1390's. From the time that Laval had replaced John of Calabria, oppression by the French had become so intolerable that the Campofregosi and the Adorni

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<sup>75</sup> Dispatches, 1:270-310 passim.

<sup>76</sup> Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:302-03.

actually combined their efforts against them.<sup>77</sup> In a note in a dispatch from Prospero da Camogli in Genappe of March 11, 1461, it was rumored that a Genoese ambassador had come to the French court to request an experienced governor. Francesco Sforza must be considered at least partly responsible for fomenting the revolt on March 9, 1461. Indeed, on April 4, in code, Prospero expressed the hope that Sforza would seize control of Genoa for himself.<sup>78</sup>

The people of Genoa found that, by 1461, they had gained nothing by a change of masters. Their treasury was exhausted by the expenses both of their own wars and of Duke John's expedition to Naples. It became necessary to impose new taxes to raise money for ordinary expenses of the state. The French method of taxation, which exacted nothing from the nobility, was intolerable to a people used to a sort of self-government. The rumblings and pleadings of the people were to no avail and finally they assembled on March 9, 1461, to discuss grievances. It was at this juncture that Charles VII was ill-advised to request the Genoese to fit an expedition against the English, with whom they had considerable trade.<sup>79</sup>

The mob increased and, by nightfall, the whole city was in arms. Laval, the French governor, was forced to take

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<sup>77</sup>Carden, Genoa, p. 42.

<sup>78</sup>Dispatches, 2:172, 238-41.

<sup>79</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republics, p. 641; Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, pp. 289-90.

refuge in the Castelletto, leaving word for the ministry to continue to cajole and expostulate. The two rival factions, under the leadership of Prospero Adorno and Paolo Campofregoso, the Archbishop of Genoa, had entered the city from opposite sides in an effort to control the city with the aid of the people. When it seemed that these factions would both be driven from the city, the mob was cajoled into attempting a siege of the citadel. Paolo took advantage of this diversion to negotiate with Adorno. The result was that Prospero Adorno was elected Doge.<sup>80</sup>

The siege of the fortress went slowly because artillery was lacking. Moreover, a contest against the French overburdened resources. Consequently, the Genoese played directly into the hands of the Duke of Milan. The attempt of the Angevins to regain Naples had placed him in direct conflict with them. Also, he had been negotiating with the Dauphin, who intimated to him that he would not view an attempt to drive the French from Genoa in an unfriendly manner, "a pleasure worthy of his heart and his vindictive politics."<sup>81</sup> The Duke of Milan therefore, "throwing off the disguise of neutrality which he had so long affected," sent a force of 1,000 men and considerable money and artillery to assist in the siege of the Castelletto.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Dispatches, 2:250; Sismondi, Italian Republics, pp. 641-42.

<sup>81</sup>Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, p. 270. ". . . un plaisir digne de son coeur et sa politique rancunière."

<sup>82</sup>Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, pp. 292-93.

On the very day, April 19, 1461, that the King of France wrote a letter to Sforza requesting the withdrawal of the Milanese from Genoa and help for the besieged citadel, Prospero informed him in code that Charles and René were planning an expedition to Genoa. He also stated that all Genoese nobles, except one of the Spinola, gave the king hope of recovering the city.<sup>83</sup>

Sforza's secret agents had, in fact, aggravated popular discontent against the French, and his troops were involved on the side of the rebels. Moreover, the Duke had been instrumental, through his ambassador, Tommaso da Rieti, in keeping Paolo Campofregoso and Prospero Adorno united in their efforts to expel the French from the Castelletto. In compliance with the king's request, the Duke of Milan sent another envoy to Genoa in June and in July with written orders recalling troops and giving transit and supplies to French troops. These "official" orders did not deceive the French ambassador.<sup>84</sup>

At the beginning of July, 1461, as the siege continued, the Genoese were informed that they were about to be attacked by the combined forces and fleets of the King of France and King René. René commanded these relief troops in person, embarking from Marseilles at the head of seventeen galleys and a corps of 6,000 of Charles' forces. They landed at Savona

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<sup>83</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:494-95; Dispatches, 2:290-91.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 316-17; Perret, Histoire, 1:357-58.

and marched unchallenged to within five miles of Genoa.<sup>85</sup>

Although Sforza sent no more troops, he engaged one Marcus Pius of Carpi to lead some cavalry to assist the Genoese. The city was partitioned in defense in the following manner: the Doge Adorno guarded the harbor, Marcus Pius one side of the city, Campofregoso the other. The French attack against these defenses for relief of the citadel took place on July 17, 1461.<sup>86</sup>

The French attack was a complete fiasco, some 2,500 troops perishing in battle or drowning in attempts to reach their ships. King René and the remnants of his shattered army retreated to Savona and then returned to France. The citadel was freed by Lodovico Campofregoso and the whole French garrison killed in the process. Thus ended France's domination of Genoa. Only Savona remained in French hands.<sup>87</sup>

Three days after the battle, the Duke of Milan sent a letter to the Dauphin apprising him of the defeat of the French and King René and also of the stepped-up rivalry between the Adorni and the Campofregosi. He stated in this letter that he had given access and supplies to René's troops

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 358; Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:340.

<sup>86</sup>Vincens, Histoire de Gênes, p. 271; Urquhart, Francesco Sforza, pp. 295-96.

<sup>87</sup>Beaucourt, Charles VII, 6:340. Thomas Basin, Histoire de Charles VII, 2 vols., ed. and translated by Charles Samaran (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1965), 2:270-75.

but carefully avoided mention that his own forces were crucial in the defeat of the French.<sup>88</sup> Charles VII died on July 22, 1461.

When the Dauphin became Louis XI, it suddenly became within his interests to continue French policy in Italy despite his actions to the contrary during the previous year.<sup>89</sup> During 1461-63 Louis attempted to gain hegemony in Italy. In 1462, he sent the Count of Dunois with troops to Asti and Savona near the borders of Milan and Genoa.<sup>90</sup>

In March of the same year, Florentine ambassadors informed the Dieci di Balia that Louis XI not only claimed sovereignty over Genoa, but wished their help in recovering it.<sup>91</sup> Finally, during 1463, Louis realized that problems concerning Catalonia and Savoy precluded his ambitions in Italy. The Angevin cause in Naples had been proved hopeless as well.

In 1463, Louis XI gave up rights to the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples and ceded Genoa and Savona to the Duke of Milan in December of that year. In exchange, Sforza promised to place troops at his disposal for whenever the king

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<sup>88</sup> Lettres de Louis XI, 1:354-56.

<sup>89</sup> There is a discussion of Louis' Italian policy and his reasons for it in Chapter III, pp. 85-87.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas Basin, Histoire de Louis XI, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Charles Samaran (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1963), 1:72-73.

<sup>91</sup> Négociations, 1:127.

would have need for them. Under this agreement, Sforza would send his son, Galeazzo Maria, to aid Louis XI in the war against the rebellious feudal barons of the Public Weal.<sup>92</sup>

Under the able direction of Alberico Maletta, the ambassador of the Duke of Milan, invited to France for the purpose, King Louis XI confirmed in letters-patent the alliance signed at Genappe in 1461 and announced to Sforza, by a letter of October 24, 1463, his intention of ceding Genoa to him.<sup>93</sup> On December 19, another message to the Duke invited him to take possession of Genoa, and at the same time informed him that French officials had been directed to turn Savona over to him.<sup>94</sup>

On December 22, 1463, the King of France formally enfeoffed the Duke of Milan with Genoa. On the same day, he wrote to the Genoese to swear an oath of fidelity to the Duke as their lord.<sup>95</sup> A letter was sent to the Doge of Venice on December 2, notifying him of the cession of Genoa to Sforza. On December 24, letters to the same effect were sent to the Archbishop of Genoa, the people of Genoa, the Marquis of

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<sup>92</sup>Basin, Louis XI, 1:74-75, 202-03; Dépêches, 1:xxxii. The League of the Public Weal was a conspiracy against Louis XI by the Dukes of Alençon, Burgundy, Berry, Bourbon, and Lorraine in 1465.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>94</sup>Lettres de Louis XI, 2:166-67. ". . . contem-  
tamur ut . . . studeatis civitatem Janue et alia quecumque cas-  
tra, oppida, loca et fortitalia nostra sub potestate vestra."

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 167-68; Dépêches, 1:440-45.



Montferrat and the Republic of Florence.<sup>96</sup>

The situation in Genoa itself during these two years involved the never-ending struggle for power between the Campofregosi and the Adorni. Lodovico Campofregoso was not suitable as Doge and was overthrown by his cousin, the Archbishop Paolo, in May, 1462. The Dogeship bounced between these two until Sforza actually gained control in 1464.<sup>97</sup>

Francesco Sforza ruled Genoa, which had been placed under him on the same conditions as had been made with the King of France, more moderately than other foreign rulers. Not so under Galeazzo-Maria Sforza, who succeeded his father as Duke of Milan in 1465. Many insurrections took place in Genoa under his cruel rule. When he was assassinated, in 1478, the Milanese were driven from Genoa. The Adorni and the Campofregosi then squabbled again for the Dogeship. By the 1490's Genoa had reached her lowest ebb. With her colonies gone and the Bank of Saint George almost ruined, Genoa succumbed without a blow to the successive invasions of Charles VIII and Louis XII of France.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Lettres de Louis XI, 2:169-77.

<sup>97</sup>Sismondi, Italian Republics, pp. 643-33.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 645-46; Carden, Genoa, pp. 186-87.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary and Conclusions

The history of French diplomacy in Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century is complex and often confusing. A study of the problems of inter-Italian politics alone requires a knowledge of more than one language. Added to this fairly well-documented *melée*, the course of French ambition and intervention provides a little-known and even less understood view of the world of diplomacy. The purpose of this thesis has been to unscramble the confusion and to analyze an area of French history either treated briefly or omitted altogether. This has been made possible primarily by the dispatches of the Milanese ambassadors, complemented by letters in both Latin and French to and from Charles VII and Louis XI as Dauphin and as King.

The vast body of documents, compiled and translated into English by two American historians of the period, has been made available recently. These documents from the archives of Milan, comprising the period of the latter years of Charles VII, 1450-1461, are not found elsewhere. They have brought to light the extensiveness of negotiations between France and Italy in a crucial period during which Italian efforts to withstand foreign claims were successful for nearly half a century.

French concerns in Italy encompass the history of the major powers. In the 1440's, there were French claims to both the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Milan. In this same decade, French suzerainty was extended to the Republic of Genoa at the request of the ruling faction there. The friendship and good relations that France had long enjoyed with the Republic of Florence did not flounder during this trying period. The Republic of Venice too had friendly relations with France over a long period, but this state generally stood aloof and neutral during the most troublesome times of French ambitions in the other Italian states. The diplomatic influence of the Popes during this time was not strong, especially with regard to France. The special task of this thesis has been to analyze the situation involving French relations with the three states over which they endeavored to gain hegemony--the Kingdom of Naples, the Duchy of Milan and the Republic of Genoa.

An aura of sadness surrounds the nearly life-long quest of the Angevins, le bon roi René and his son, Duke John of Calabria, to regain the throne of Naples, lost to them forever in 1442. René was a pawn in the hands and at the mercy of those from whom he required aid. He was very popular, but his leadership ability did not attain proportions necessary for such a monumental task. The account of his foray into Lombardy in 1453 to bring military aid to Milan and Florence in their war against Venice and Naples attests not only to his lack of accomplishment, but also to his

gullibility, especially with regard to Naples. René returned to Provence almost a broken man, but retaining the hope that his son would accomplish what he had attempted over and over, but was never able to effect.

When Duke John, a more capable and vigorous man than his father, invaded Naples in 1459, he was more successful than he could have dreamed possible. The regaining of the throne of Naples for the Angevins was almost within his reach in 1460. Unfortunately, he did not exploit his victories and was expelled from Naples in 1464. It was within the realm of probability that he could have reestablished the House of Anjou there. The fact that he did not do so had at least a two-fold cause. The vitally necessary backing that Duke John needed from the King of France dissipated when Louis XI withdrew his moral and financial support from his Angevin cousin in 1463. At the same time, the Duke of Milan vigorously continued financial and military support to King Ferrante.

The Angevin line became extinct in 1480 when good King René died. The Angevin claim to the Kingdom of Naples eventually reverted to the crown of France. It was on the basis of this so-called direct claim that Charles VIII invaded Italy in 1494.

The trials and tribulations of Charles, Duke of Orleans, in his later-life quest for his right to the Duchy of Milan, are reminiscent of those of René of Anjou. Both princes were brothers-in-law of Charles VII of France. Both were in prison at the very time that each could have more

easily pressed his claim, if free. Neither Charles nor René were forceful men. Both, however, had a large number of distinguished personal qualities, one being especially apparent, that of courage in the face of almost overwhelming odds.

Charles' situation was one of he who came too late with too little. His sortie into Italy to claim his rights, in 1447, left no lasting imprint on the Milanese. He was hardly noticed. Both Charles VII and Louis XI used the pretext of the Orleanist claim to force the hand of Francesco Sforza, but to no avail. When Italy was invaded for the second time by the French in 1498, Louis XII was finally, if temporarily, successful in establishing the claim of the Orleans to the Duchy of Milan contracted more than a century earlier.

Near anarchy was the prevalent status of the Republic of Genoa for more than a century before the French invasion of 1494. The two families who were in and out of power were backed by those powers who could gain something for themselves by doing so. Genoa was constantly in danger from the Kingdom of Naples and/or the Duchy of Milan, seeking to extend hegemony under the guise of aiding one or another faction as each saw fit at a given time. It was this ever-present danger that led to the extension of French suzerainty three times between 1396 and 1461.

The French were driven out of Genoa for the third time in 1461. Although he had proved a capable and well-liked governor, John of Calabria left Genoa for Naples in 1459,

causing a decline in French effectiveness. The Duke of Milan used the resultant lack of leadership to his advantage, while assuring Charles VII that he was in no way connected with continuing French problems in Genoa. It may be assumed that French suzerainty over Genoa to the benefit of both states would have continued indefinitely, if Duke John had not abandoned his post there to pursue his dream in Naples.

Genoa, and Naples as well, were the two states concerning which the extensive diplomatic activity between the King of France and the Duke of Milan was conducted. The right of the Duke of Orleans figured little in the correspondence and negotiations. Charles VII and his envoys were never a match for Francesco Sforza and his skillful diplomats. So often the correspondence of the Milanese ambassadors demonstrates the tactics of a cagey, ruthless duke playing a cat-and-mouse game with a patient and, at times, gullible king. Sforza was even able to convince the equally shrewd Louis XI that it would be to his advantage to give up Genoa and to forget about Angevin claims in Naples.

To this writer's knowledge, no previous work has dealt at length with the over-all scope of French relations in Italy in the fifteenth century. Nor has any historian made it at all clear the extensiveness of French-Italian diplomacy, as is evident in the dispatches of the Milanese ambassadors. Very little has been written at all to indicate the intricacies of this period of diplomacy. And certainly no work has made a detailed study of the obvious commitment

of Sforza to the territorial integrity of Italy, as is also evident from the Milanese dispatches.<sup>1</sup>

The single most important action which prevented the French from realizing dreams of hegemony in Italy in the fifteenth century was the formation of the Italian League in 1454-55. This League's chief accomplishment was that, not only was there no successful foreign intervention for nearly forty years, but also no major Italian war. The League, of course, could be only as strong as the member states which adhered to its precepts. Alfonso of Naples was the weakest link, Francesco Sforza the strongest. Along with other motives, Sforza used his diplomatic ties to the League as his method of breaking a long-standing francophile policy and of turning the wheels of diplomacy against French fumbling in Genoa and Naples. His success was complete when Genoa was ceded to Milan by Louis XI in 1463, thereby effecting the cessation of French control in Italy until 1494.

This thesis has focused on the attempts and the consequent failure of the French to extend hegemony into Italy in the middle of the fifteenth century. There are several reasons, based on research and analysis, for the ultimate failure of these ventures.

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<sup>1</sup>Ch. Petit-Dutaillis, who wrote about this period in both the Cambridge Medieval History and Lavissee's Histoire de France, devoted only a few pages to French-Italian diplomacy. Georges Peyronnet, in his informative article in Le Moyen Age, made little use of archives and, unfortunately, did not pursue the subject to 1463 when French policy changed.

The two French princes who claimed rights to Italian states, Charles of Orleans and René of Anjou, although not lacking courage, were too weak to establish themselves. Before 1450, Charles VII of France was far too tied up with the English to be of any benefit to French concerns in Italy. When Charles was ready to exert his influence, the Italian League had been formed. In addition, he was not able to counter either the strict adherence of Francesco Sforza, the strongest Italian ruler, to the precepts of the League or his skillful negotiations through his envoys. Even though Louis XI was strong enough and capable enough to bend the Duke of Milan to his will, he temporarily withdrew from Italian affairs in 1463.

This change of policy by Louis was necessitated by several things. The Angevin claim in Naples conflicted with Louis' expansionist ambitions in Catalonia and Savoy. In addition, he feared that an invasion by the English might occur and that the King of England and the Duke of Burgundy might lead discontented nobles against his authority. Because Charles VII was not concerned with French problems in Italy until late in his reign, and because Louis XI gave precedence to his plans in Catalonia and Savoy over those in Italy, the Italian League was able to maintain itself against French intervention until 1494.



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