

Negotiating Power in Sixteenth-Century Italy.
Ippolito II d'Este between Rome, France, and Ferrara



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ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATION CONVENTIONS

List of abbreviations

ACDF, SO: Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Archivio del Sant'Ufficio

ASFI, MdP: Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato

ASMI, AUT: Archivio di Stato di Milano, Autografi

ASMI, CCS: Archivio di Stato di Milano, Carteggio Cancellerie di Stato

ASMO, CDAP: Archivio di Stato di Modena, Camera Ducale, Amministrazione Principi

ASMO, CDA: Archivio di Stato di Modena, Cancelleria Ducale, Ambasciatori

ASMO, CDCPE: Archivio di Stato di Modena, Cancelleria Ducale, Carteggio con Principi Esteri

ASMO, CS: Archivio di Stato di Modena, Casa e Stato

ASV, AC: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Concistoriale

ASV, Misc., Arm II: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea, Armadium II

BEM: Biblioteca Estense Modenese

Translation conventions

All the quotations from archival and manuscript sources or from printed primary sources that are found in the body of the text (either inset or embedded) have been translated into English from the original document. The quotations that appear in the footnotes have been left in the original language, and the original spelling has been retained. In both cases, I have changed punctuation and capitalisation – when needed – to enhance readability.

INTRODUCTION

Ippolito II d'Este has been usually neglected by historiography, both in his personal character and in his connection to the events and broader trends of his age. Scholarship on the sixteenth century has focused extensively on the features of 'novelty' that characterised some figures and events of the period (the tribunals of the Inquisition, the Council of Trent, etc.) to explain the major changes that affected the Church. In order to frame the tension towards a radical modification of some of the key structures and relationships that had ruled Europe until that moment, much emphasis has been put on the reaction to the issues raised by the Protestant schism. Although the idea that the conclusion of the Council of Trent constituted the turning point of this process of renovation has been partially challenged – at least in terms of its immediate effects – a central issue has remained in the identification of the players of the dialectical struggle between change and conservation.¹ Within this frame, Ippolito d'Este has always been pictured as the quintessential 'Renaissance cardinal' – an anachronistic character, to some extent, and a relic of the past hanging onto a golden age of exterior splendour and little pastoral care that the reformation of the Roman church was slowly but inexorably coming to label as 'the past'.

More recent studies, however, have underlined the importance of understanding the structures and mechanism of the Roman curia in the same way as those of any other centre of political power, internally and in its relationship with its interlocutors: we are now much more knowledgeable about the functioning of the curia as a government, its officials and ministers, the functioning of the pope's and cardinals' courts, the role of the Sacred College and of the papal diplomacy, and the dialectic between centre and peripheries.² At the same time, there has been

¹ On these issues, and for a historiographical survey, see J. J. Martin, 'Renovatio and Reform in Early Modern Italy' in R. K. Delph, M. M. Fontaine and J. Jeffries Martin (eds), *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy* (Kirskville, 2006) pp. 1-16.

² A very good example of this approach is the collection of studies *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700*, ed. G. Signorotto and M. A. Visceglia (Cambridge, 2002). For further bibliographical material, I refer to the Bibliography at the end of this thesis.

much scholarship regarding small states in Italy and their particular strategies for survival, especially in relation to the two major European powers of the time, the Empire and France.³

The main purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to link Ippolito d'Este to this context, as a figure who, due to his own peculiar position, stood at the crossroads of many issues and broader phenomena of his age. In spite of – or better, at the same time as – being an example of what the Church renovators meant by the corruption of the clergy, Ippolito d'Este was also one of the leaders of the French faction in Rome, the cardinal protector of the French crown, the head (alongside his brother) of an Italian ruling family, and the papal legate to France just before the opening of the last session of the Council of Trent. Such a variety of roles, which put him at the very heart of some of the most important events of the century, makes it difficult to dismiss his whole figure as little more than a force resistant to change. On the contrary, the tension that was inherent in the performance of such roles, especially for what concerns the triangle between Paris, Ferrara, and Rome, whose political goals more often clashed than coincided, make Ippolito d'Este a remarkable case study of the power dynamics of his time. As Heinrich Lutz stressed in his biographical sketch of Ippolito d'Este, the evaluation of this kind of figure in the light of the historical and institutional conditions to which they were subject can only contribute to a more complex understanding of the new tendencies displayed by the ecclesiastical life of the sixteenth century.⁴

Such an understanding must take heed of the highly polycentric nature of power that characterised this period. In this respect, Ippolito d'Este is a quite exceptional figure, in that the three-way allegiances he owed made the preservation and enhancement of his own power subject to a high number of variables, which became ever more fluid as the relationships between the providers of that power changed over time. Ippolito d'Este was born in Ferrara as a member of an Italian ruling family – a family whose dominion depended partially on papal investiture, and whose connection with the Vatican had therefore been both a constitutional trait and a recurrent source of troubles. He was assigned to defend his house's interests in the Vatican palaces, as this was the destiny commonly envisioned for the second-born son of a ruler. He was a Catholic Cardinal at the time of the religious and political crisis provoked by rise of Protestantism. Furthermore, he defended the French interests in Italy – in Rome but also, as we will see, in Siena – during the years of continuous warfare between Valois and Habsburg, which also involved the papacy and the duchy

³ Important contributions on this topic are in *Carlo V e l'Italia*, ed. M. Fantoni (Rome, 2002), *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo*, ed. L. Lotti and R. Villari (Bari-Rome, 2004); *L'Italia di Carlo V. Guerra, religione e politica nel primo Cinquecento*, ed. F. Cantù and M. A. Visceglia (2 vols, Rome, 2003).

⁴ H. Lutz, 'Il cardinale Ippolito d'Este. Schizzo biografico di un principe della Chiesa', *Atti e memorie della Società Tiburtina di Storia d'Arte*, XXXIX (1966), pp. 127-156.

of Ferrara. The combination of these roles and relationships produced a number of problems, both for Ippolito himself and for the powers he represented, that this thesis will address – including the overlap of functions and interests, personal, familial and institutional, which characterised each role in relation with the others. The recurrent question of this thesis will be how and in what measure the tripartite obligations to which Ippolito d'Este was subject throughout his career affected the performance of his different roles, and if the multiple opportunities of personal advancement that were made available to him through the exploitation of these three different channels resulted in an enhancement of his personal and familial power.

To better highlight the clashing dynamics that are the object of this thesis, I have focused in particular on a limited period of time, namely from about 1548 to 1563 – although many references to the 1530s and the end of the 1560s are also present. In 1548, Ippolito d'Este was appointed cardinal protector of the French crown, a role that he kept until the end of his life, and he therefore returned from France to the Roman curia to take up that prestigious position. From 1549 onwards, with the support of the French monarchy, he relentlessly tried to ascend the papal throne. In 1552, he was appointed by King Henry II to be the governor of Siena, a role that projected him to the centre of the Imperial-French struggle to gain control over Italy, a struggle that also affected Ferrara's network of alliances and local diplomacy. In 1561, lastly, he returned to France as the papal legate to the crown, with the mission of reinvigorating the monarchy's defence of Catholicism and ensuring French participation in the upcoming Council of Trent. This limited time span, therefore, focuses the problems mentioned above, which do not emerge as vividly either before Ippolito's return to Italy as the French protector or in the years after his legation to France.

The only comprehensive work on Ippolito II d'Este is a biography written at the beginning of the twentieth century by a Tivoli historian, Vincenzo Pacifici, who also wrote extensively on Villa d'Este and its artistic heritage. Due to its author's own interests, however, the biography focuses much on Ippolito's patronage of the arts and on his grand lifestyle, whilst paying only minor attention to the broader political and social frame in which it was conducted. It serves nonetheless as an essential point of reference, especially as Pacifici integrated his work with many of the sources available in the Archive of Modena.⁵ In the same period as Pacifici, Lucien Romier examined Ippolito d'Este's relationship with the French crown in his work on the origins of the French wars of religion, providing accounts of Ippolito's role in the Colloquy of Poissy, in the war of Siena, and, briefly, in the defence of the French crown at the curia. Romier's analysis, however,

⁵ V. Pacifici, *Ippolito II d'Este, cardinale di Ferrara* (Tivoli, 1920).

is often incomplete and sometimes openly biased, as he was keen to use the French involvement with Italian politics as the main symptom of an illness that later determined the explosion of the wars of religion.⁶

In more recent years, Mary Hollingsworth has used the extraordinarily large number of ledgers carefully compiled by Ippolito's secretaries to portray the economic side of the life of this classic Renaissance cardinal. Thanks to the availability of this kind of documents – something, on such a scale, very remarkable – Hollingsworth has been able to track Ippolito's expenses in the 1530s and 1540s, ranging from his artistic commissions to the daily maintenance of his large household.⁷ The cardinal's contribution to the history of the arts has certainly been studied the most, both in France and in Italy: Villa d'Este in Tivoli, Fontainbleau and Chaalis in France, and the patronage of famous artists and men of letters have all been the object of several monographs and papers. The influence that Ippolito's taste seems to have played on the French royal court and on King Francis I has led some art historians to see the presence of the cardinal's artistic entourage in France as the main channel through which the Italian Renaissance arrived in France.⁸

Sources on Ippolito d'Este are plentiful for this period. In fact, the main issue faced whilst dealing with primary materials has been how to select them. Only a very small portion of the sources that regard Ippolito d'Este has ever been published, and, when some have, those documents are mainly dispersed in nineteenth-century collections of documents concerning the history of the Church. An exception is constituted by a handful of editions curated by the nineteenth-century Modenese historian, Giuseppe Campori, who published many documents concerning Ippolito d'Este and some of his *protégés*, such as Benvenuto Cellini and Bartolomeo Cavalcanti.⁹ Vincenzo Pacifici has accompanied his biography of Ippolito with an appendix that contains some first-hand materials, mainly aimed at highlighting his patronage of the arts, but also a few letters and documents.¹⁰ In more recent years, Carmelo Occhipinti has published a very interesting selection of letters sent from France to Italy (and *viceversa*) by both Ippolito d'Este and the Estense ambassadors, which perfectly illustrate the penetration of Ippolito's artistic taste in the Valois court.¹¹ All these publications, however, mainly focus on the artistic side of the cardinal's life. An

⁶ L. Romier, *Les origines politiques des guerres de religion* (2 vols., Paris, 1913-1914), i, pp. 89-131; 317-413.

⁷ M. Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat: Money, Ambition and Housekeeping in a Renaissance Court* (London, 2005).

⁸ C. Occhipinti, *Carteggio d'arte degli ambasciatori estensi in Francia (1536-1553)* (Pisa, 2001), pp. XCIII-CXLVII.

⁹ G. Campori, 'Notizie inedite delle Relazioni fra il Cardinale Ippolito d'Este e Benvenuto Cellini', in B. Cellini, *La vita di Benvenuto Cellini scritta da lui medesimo...* (Milan, 1974), pp. 403-409; Id., *Diciotto lettere inedite di Bartolomeo Cavalcanti* (Modena, 1868); Id., 'Gio. Battista della Porta e il Cardinale Luigi d'Este', *Atti e memorie delle RR deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, VI (1872), pp. 165-190.

¹⁰ Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 371-470.

¹¹ Occhipinti, *Carteggio d'arte*.

ongoing project curated by the archive staff aims to catalogue all the Este correspondence held in the Archive of Modena, which is otherwise dependent on generic compilations only available *in loco*; but only a small part has been so far made available on the Archive website.¹²

The backbone of this work, therefore, is constituted by original material from the Archive of Modena: correspondence between members of the Este family, between the Este and foreign powers, both Italian and European; diplomatic dispatches from and to Rome, France, Milan; documents concerning the local administration; documents concerning Ippolito's relationship with the French crown; and the account books that help us to understand the ramifications of his wealth. These vast collections of documents have been integrated with sources held in the Vatican Archive, especially for what regards the years of Ippolito's governorship of Siena and his legation to Paris, and from the archives of Florence and Milan, which have been particularly useful when dealing with Ippolito's controversies with Cosimo de' Medici and the Imperial representatives in Milan. As my main purpose is to stress the clashes between different powers that were embodied by Ippolito d'Este from his own perspective, my interest has been mainly focused on his own letters and documents. However, I have also relied heavily on printed collections of documents such as the correspondences of different French diplomats and cardinals, the dispatches of the Vatican nuncios to France, the reports written by Tuscan and Venetian ambassadors, and, when possible, coeval chronicles.

The three main chapters of this thesis, in Part II, focus on three pivotal moments in Ippolito d'Este's life, and I have chosen them because they better allow an analysis of the intersection of different powers that is my main subject. The first deals with his governorship of Siena, in the first years of the 1550s, which I have considered as the highest expression of Ippolito d'Este's political affiliation to the French crown. As the episode of the French intervention in Siena stirred the hostilities of other Italian powers, Florence and the Vatican in the first place, the direct involvement of Ippolito d'Este resulted in a clash between the Este's – and, therefore, Ippolito's – political position in Italy and the preservation of Ippolito's powers within the context of a French struggle against the Empire, Florence, and, to some extent, the Vatican.

The second chapter in Part II aims to analyse the division of spheres of influence that had been envisioned by the Este dynasty since the previous generation – that is to say, the defence of the duke's rule over the duchy was backed externally by the work of the family cardinal, whose action in the curia was particularly necessary due to the duchy's dependence on the Vatican

¹² L. Bandini, A. Casagrande and C. Pulini, 'Archivio Segreto Estense, Cancelleria, Carteggio con principi esteri', Archivio di Stato di Modena (2015).

investiture. In those years, however, Ippolito d'Este's political affiliation with the French crown clashed with the duchy's public neutrality, and therefore became a catalyst of conflicts that jeopardised the unity of the family leadership. As Ippolito's brother, Duke Ercole II, died in 1559, just after the end of the Italian wars, the last part of this chapter focuses on the role played by Ippolito d'Este in managing his family's perceived Francophilia within the new Spanish-dominated Italy.

The final chapter in Part II follows the cardinal's legation to Paris in 1561, on the occasion of the colloquy of Poissy between Catholics and Huguenots, but with the more general mission of preventing the French crown from holding a Gallican council and of reinforcing the monarchy's adherence to the Roman church. The chapter focuses on the reversed perspective from which Ippolito d'Este had to negotiate, on this occasion, his personal relationship with the French crown – that is to say, as a papal emissary to the Valois rather than as a French representative in the curia and in Italy. It also considers the problematic coexistence of Ippolito's personal and familial agenda with his official instructions as papal envoy, and the increasing criticism with which the pontiff and the Curia were looking at his legation.

These three chapters are preceded by a first part, which, spanning the whole period in analysis rather than focusing on a self-contained episode as the three chapters that I have just discussed, is more general in perspective. This first part is divided into three chapters. The first offers an analysis of Ippolito himself – it could be considered as a sort of second introduction – with respect to those traits that are not considered elsewhere in the thesis, namely the historical conditions that determined his ascent as a great pro-French cardinal, his well-known patronage of the arts, in relation especially to the connections and exchanges with the French kingdom, and, finally, with his religious stance, which deserves analysis all the more as it has always been easily ascribed to anachronistic disinterestedness.

The second chapter in Part I part aims to provide an overview of Ippolito's role as a representative of French power within the curia, both as the cardinal protector of the crown and as the monarchy's *favorito* for the papal throne in every conclave that took place from 1549 to 1559. Whilst conclaves are a topic with which historiography has dealt extensively, the protectorship of national crowns – a phenomenon that saw its affirmation right in the sixteenth century – is an institution on which only little has been written so far. The cardinal protector was what we would nowadays consider as a lobbyist: he was the official representative – recognised by the papacy, too – of a certain ruler's interests within the Vatican, and, as such, Ippolito often took up the leadership of the group of French cardinals, especially during conclaves. Ippolito d'Este remained in charge of

the cardinal-protectorship for about twenty-five years, whilst he was also relentlessly chasing his own election as pontiff. Both the analysis of his work as protector and that of his work of self-promotion during conclaves aim to highlight his relationship with the French crown and, especially, with the other representatives of the French king in Italy. Furthermore, it asks whether it is possible to identify the existence of a French faction of which Ippolito d'Este was one of the recognised leaders, or of a French agenda for the election of a pro-France pope. The last chapter of Part I analyses Ippolito's fortune in French benefices. From the reconstruction of the extent of the cardinal's ecclesiastical property in France, it emerges, first of all, the exceptionality of his assets in the French kingdom, especially in comparison with Agostino Trivulzio, who held the position of cardinal protector before Ippolito. Secondly, and more importantly for the general understanding of Ippolito's connection with the French monarchy, one can see that the cardinal's habits with respect to the obtainment, exchange, and tenure of French benefices, made him more similar to other great French prelates than to those Italian ecclesiastics who, like him, had received one or more ecclesiastical benefices from the Valois monarchy.

The third and final part of the thesis considers the last years of Ippolito's life from the perspective of a handover of powers to his nephew, Luigi d'Este – an attempt to reiterate that division of powers within the family that had characterised Ippolito and Ercole II's years. Due to disputes between uncle and nephew, however, this passage of power – mainly through Luigi's succession to his uncle's benefices – was fully accomplished only after Ippolito's death. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the differences between Ippolito's and Luigi's tenure of the protectorship of France and between their management of their French ecclesiastical assets, especially in the light of the changing juridical frame for ecclesiastical property into which the clergy had to fit. The following and last chapter presents the conclusions of this work.

PART I

1. THE CARDINAL AND FERRARA: DIPLOMACY, PATRONAGE, AND RELIGION

Ippolito II d'Este was born in 1509 into a Ferrara ruled by his father, Duke Alfonso I d'Este – a Ferrara whose long Estense rule had always been troubled by external political events. Like all small independent states in Italy, Ferrara had its local rivalries and historical alliances. Most notably, the Este had had a relationship of consistent enmity with both the Sforza of Milan and the Medici in Florence, whilst it had maintained a more positive relationship with Venice.¹ The Este's position was perhaps more problematic than others, however, as the territories over which they ruled had long been claimed by both the Pope and the Emperor. During Alfonso's reign, successive popes would re-stake their claims to part of the duchy's lands, and the last years of the sixteenth century would see the end of an Estense dukedom at Ferrara, terminating over two centuries of a papal vicariate that had first been bestowed in 1329; Borso d'Este, meanwhile, had been invested as Duke of Ferrara by the Emperor Frederick III only in 1452.² In the following century, the Este would find themselves still owing fealty to the both of these powerful – and not always friendly – geopolitical players.

Such a delicate diplomatic position had historically led the Este to what many commentators have seen to be a kind of Francophilia, in political and military alliances, and in a condition of cultural exchange and influence – to the extent that, in 1431, Niccolò III had been given permission to add the symbols of the French royal family to the Estense crest.³ Lockwood, indeed, notes a 'large-scale importation of manuscripts of French poetry, chronicles, and other

¹ W. L. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 32-33. See also T. Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara. Ercole d'Este (1471-1505) and the Invention of a Ducal Capital* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 8; L. Chiappini, *Gli Estensi* (Varese, 1967), pp. 211-247.

² Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*. p. 48; 152; Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, pp. 119-143.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 277, for an example dating back to the Quattrocento. On Alfonso, see Tuohy, *Herculean Ferrara*, p.8, and, for a general overview, *Alla corte degli Estensi: filosofia, arte e cultura nei secoli XV e XVI*, ed. M. Bertozzi (Ferrara, 1994).

writings' throughout Niccolò's reign and the rest of the fifteenth century.⁴ As an anonymous diarist wrote, highlighting the influence that French culture had over the duchy, by the turn of the sixteenth century, 'the Ferrarese almost all universally adhere to and are partisans of the King of France, and many are dressed and shod and hatted in the French manner, above all the courtiers'.⁵

However, during Alfonso's reign – a reign which would see Reggio and Modena subtracted from, and then added once more, to Este territory – the French alliances pursued by the Duke were primarily defensive, primarily provisional moves that were auspicious for the security of his territories and for the continuance of his reign. Such can be seen, for example, in the complex and equivocal diplomatic alliances and struggles of the years between 1508 and 1532, during the changing coalitions and leagues that characterised the Italian wars. In 1510, Pope Julius II used the skirmishes between Venice and Ferrara on the duchy's Eastern border as a pretext to revive once again the old papal claim to the Este lands, seeking to annex Modena and Reggio, in the first instance, in order to reinforce the historical Papal State in the heart of Italy.⁶ Indeed, in the late 1520s, Alfonso would sign an alliance with Emperor Charles V, as the French were considerably weakened by the failures of their successive campaigns in Italy – most notably in 1525, when Francis I himself was captured by the Emperor at Pavia in 1525 – and could no longer offer the support that Ferrara required of them. For its backing, Ferrara would be rewarded by Charles V with the re-investiture of Modena and Reggio in the early 1530s.⁷

As one commentator has put it, all Italian states were compelled, for the sake of maintaining their ever-threatened independence, to pursue a policy of 'playing these rulers [Charles V and Francis I] against each other'.⁸ This was a policy that Ercole II would continue after Alfonso's death in 1534: in diplomatic terms at least, and at least in this period, the Este's search for security need not be confused with an excessive sympathy for the French. Este marital policy throughout these years suggests, on the contrary, a diplomatic focus less attendant to the power play between the binary of Empire and France and more interested in cultivating relationships with other states and

⁴ L. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400-1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 2009), p. 83.

⁵ The quotation is in Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, pp. 226-227. See also E. Balmas, 'Ferrara e la Francia nel XVI secolo: uno sguardo d'insieme, in M. Bertozzi, *Alla corte degli Estensi. Filosofia, arte e cultura a Ferrara nei secoli XV e XVI* (Ferrara, 1994), pp. 355-365. The French influence also extended to the way in which the Estense dukes fashioned their funeral rites: G. Ricci, *Il principe e la morte* (Bologna, 1998), pp. 17-23.

⁶ C. Shaw, 'The Papacy and the European Powers', in C. Shaw (ed), *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of Wars (1500-1530)* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 114-115.

⁷ C. Magoni, *I gigli d'oro e l'aquila bianca. Gli Estensi e la corte francese tra '400 e '500: un secolo di rapporti* (Ferrara, 2001), pp. 42-58.

⁸ A. B. Williams, 'Power and Painting in Sixteenth-Century Ferrara. Titian's Portrait of Alfonso I d'Este', *Visual Resources*, 28/1 (2012), p. 83. See also Magoni, *I gigli d'oro*, pp. 50-51.

families across the peninsula. Alfonso, in his first marriage to Anna Sforza – and in his sister, Beatrice's, to Ludovico – had cultivated closer marital ties to the Sforza in Milan. Alfonso's sister, Isabella, would marry into the Gonzaga family, based in Mantua, whilst Alfonso himself, after the death of Anna, would marry in 1502, and father all his children with, Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of the infamous pope, Alexander VI – much to the disapprobation of future popes, but with the immediate political effect of improving his relations with the papacy.⁹ With this marital policy, Alfonso, and Ercole II after him, sought the construction of an heterogeneous fabric of independent relationships with peers in the peninsula – another layer of alliances that was as important as the support and protection that the Este were keen to obtain from European powers.

The exception to this trend was Ercole II d'Este's marriage to Renée of France, who came from the ranks of the French royalty. Her figure has remained famous for having ultimately provided Ercole II's reign with some of its central tensions. Indeed, often described as a 'liability',¹⁰ a 'trouble', or even a 'noose' for Ercole,¹¹ this marriage would tie the Duke of Ferrara – who led the duchy through the majority of Ippolito II's cardinalate – more closely to the French crown. In her attempts to influence members of the Este family into a more Francophile position, Renée may have encouraged the opposite effect in Ercole: using the Calvinist influences that she had brought into Ferrara as a justification, Ercole seems to have launched a zealous assault on the French manifestations in his court. Blaisdell suggests that Ercole was actually using 'religion as a pretext to reduce French influence in Ferrara':¹² indeed, it seems that, even before he was Duke, Ercole had indeed been deeply suspicious of his wife's agenda regarding Ferrara and the French, fearing too high a dependence of Ferrara on that crown. However, it is certain that Renée's Calvinist sympathies – which were bound to rouse the interest of the Inquisitorial tribunal over Ercole's territories – never stopped constituting a problem for him.¹³

⁹ Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara*, p. 128.

¹⁰ C. Jenkins Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara (1534-1559)', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 6/1 (1975), p. 70.

¹¹ M. Hollingsworth, 'Ippolito d'Este. A Cardinal and his Household in Rome in and Ferrara in 1566', *The Court Historian*, 5/2 (2000), p. 107.

¹² Jenkins Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara', pp. 76-77.

¹³ In 1536, an early Inquisitorial investigation on some of the members of Renée's household was put off by Ercole II, who handed the suspects over to the French ambassador, that way putting them under French protection. About twenty years later, in 1554, the relationship between Ercole and Renée had worsened to the point that Ercole ordered her to vacate her lodgings so that his men could search amongst her belongings. There, they only found books 'en vulgaire des doctrines dallemaigne [...] avec infinies lettres de tous les principaux hommes qui ont escript en Germaine et a Geneve. [...] ny en atrouve un seul bon, mais tous ceulx quon peult appeler les pires du monde': *Correspondance politique de Dominique du Gabre...*, ed. A. Vitalis (Paris, 1903), p. 96. See also E. Belligni, 'Renata di Francia tra Ferrara e Montargis', in P. Benedict, S. Seidel Menchi and A. Tallon (eds), *La réforme en France et en Italie. Contacts, comparaisons et contrastes* (Rome, 2007), pp. 363-379; id., *Renata di Francia (1510-1575): un'eresia di corte* (Turin, 2011).

As much as they constituted a source of embarrassment for the duke, however, Renée's Protestant leanings contributed to make the capital of the Este Duchy, in the 1530s and '40s, one of Italy's most vibrant cultural, artistic, and religious centres. The patronage that the Este gave to some of the most famous Italian artists and writers is very well known, including figures such as Ludovico Ariosto, Girolamo da Carpi, Dosso Dossi, Nicola Vicentino, Torquato Tasso. The protection that the Este traditionally accorded to humanists, artists and scientists, along with the strained relationship that the Duchy always had with the Vatican, created a fertile ground for the reception of religious debates inflamed by new ideas coming from the other side of the Alps.

Ippolito d'Este is mainly known for being one of the most enthusiastic patrons of the arts of his generation – in some accounts, perhaps even *the* primary patron in the Rome of the 1560s – and, for this reason, scholarship has generally dealt with him as the archetypal Renaissance prince.¹⁴ Ippolito's villa in Tivoli – a residence developed almost as a requirement for Rome's exclusive community of cardinals¹⁵ – is often seen as a zenith of the splendour of sixteenth-century cardinals.¹⁶ On the other hand, Ippolito's religious feelings have never been investigated. However, one cannot approach the figure of a sixteenth-century cardinal without even wondering what his involvement with the religious issues of his time was – or if there was any at all.

Ippolito, however, has often been seen as 'anachronistic' and impervious to the deep changes that were shaking the Church of his day, driven as he was by his commitment to defend the family's ambitions and his own thirst for wealthy benefices. This trait was so characteristic of Ippolito, it has been assumed, that he has sometimes been used to illustrate the corruption of Catholic prelates before the Catholic Reformation.¹⁷ Nevertheless, when judging his behaviour, it is also important to remember that complaints about the corruption in the Church were often prompted by the fact that its highest ranks were mostly occupied by men who came from noble or patrician families. For this kind of family, an ecclesiastical position was not necessarily something

¹⁴ J. J. Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano and Art in Rome, circa 1550-1600* (2 vols, Yale, 2000), i, p. 3. See also Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, pp. 12-24.

¹⁵ F. Bardati, 'Between the King and the Pope: French Cardinals in Rome (1495-1560)', *Urban History*, 37/3 (2010), p. 426.

¹⁶ G. Guerzoni, 'Between Rome and Ferrara. The Courtiers of the Este Cardinals in the Cinquecento', in J. Burke and M. Bury (eds), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 73.

¹⁷ Examples are in H. Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* (4 vols, Freiburg, 1951-1976), iv, p. 272 and in G. Alberigo, *I vescovi italiani al Concilio di Trento* (Florence, 1959), p. 272.

very different from a career in government.¹⁸ The same men who animated the contemporary religious debate – Contarini, Morone, Pole, Carafa – frequently came from the highest classes of society, and, as such, they shared not only their interest in religion but also the common values of those classes. Therefore, their efforts to fight what they saw as corruption or superstition did not necessarily prevent them from also pursuing their personal or family goals – a natural consequence of their birth and education.¹⁹

Indeed, in the wider literature on cardinals in sixteenth-century Italy, much has been made of the institution's emphasis on magnificence, munificence, and wealth, qualities that Ippolito ostentatiously embraced. Public displays of splendour and generosity – in clothing, residences, alms, gifts, and artistic collections – were the norm for the cardinals of this period, and such displays were even framed as an obligation, one that brought its own pressures and dependents. Such magnificence, such a 'high style of living',²⁰ was something expected of them: cardinals were to behave, and to be seen, in a style that was appropriate to the prestige of their station, and thus their displays, by their very nature, were rich in political significations.

The cardinals' income and household – topics much discussed both now and in the sixteenth century – might provide two germane and mutually dependent examples of the tension between a cardinal's wealth and his duty. According to Chambers, recommendations and rulings for the size of a cardinal's income ranged from between three thousand and twelve thousand ducats a year, and Chambers suggests the implausibility of a cardinal having to live on any less.²¹ However, this income was nearly always complemented by a number of other lucrative channels that a cardinal was able to exploit, including the possession of benefices, and the private ownership of land and funds, which, at least in the case of Ippolito d'Este, considerably overshadowed the basic stipend he was given by the Vatican.²² Yet, despite the extent of these channels of wealth – and despite the amount of wealth that flowed through them – the cardinal's responsibility for the combination of splendid displays, generous charity, and the sheer number of his attendants and dependents meant that much of this income immediately went elsewhere. As Chambers notes

¹⁸ B. McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals, Reform, and the Church as a Property* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 147-163; A. Spagnoletti, *Le dinastie italiane nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2003), pp. 269-277.

¹⁹ McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, pp. 164-168. See also G. Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della Cristianità* (Florence, 1988), pp. xii-xiii.

²⁰ D. S. Chambers, 'The Economic Predicament of Renaissance Cardinals', in D. S. Chambers, *Renaissance Cardinals and their Worldly Problems* (Aldershot, 1997), p. 293.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

²² All cardinals were entitled to their share of divisions from the apostolic camera, but their value could fluctuate much, as they depended on the earnings of the camera and the number of cardinals: *ibid.*, p. 297; McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, p. 16.

again, in his reading of Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu*, from the perspective of the ethics by which cardinals were expected to abide, 'money is a bad thing if it is not spent quickly'.²³ From this standpoint, indeed, it may well be true that a cardinal's magnificence was 'less a pleasure than a duty'.²⁴ The household that a cardinal was supposed to maintain, as we have said, was the first reason for high expenditure: Cortesi prescribed a figure of one hundred and forty members, but an average figure – gathered from a document from 1509 – is slightly higher, at one hundred and fifty-four.²⁵ But, as Fragnito notes, 'nothing was more elastic than the size of a cardinal's court',²⁶ dependent as it was on income and intent, and Ippolito's court provides an indicative case of this: the size of his court fluctuated from one hundred and fifty people in 1540²⁷ to four hundred in 1561²⁸ and to two hundred and seventy-five in 1566.²⁹

It has been stressed that these princely households, and the networks of artists and attendants that they facilitated, were distinctly nomadic: just as they were 'elastic' in number, they were also mobile and amorphous, with artists using the travelling households of cardinals to move to Rome to seek work with other major patrons.³⁰ Alongside the bolstering of the glory of Rome and the dignity of the purple, one of the major political aspects of these courts was the transference of cultural prestige and skill, with Ippolito's court becoming a major vessel through which culture could move between France and Italy, to his political benefit. In this respect, whilst Cortesi insisted that the cardinal should open the doors of his house and his libraries to anyone who might so be interested,³¹ in reality those who constituted a cardinal's household can be seen as indicators or confirmations of their patron's political stance or his diplomatic affiliations. A stark example of this can be found in Hollingsworth's work, where she uses Ippolito's ledgers to reconstruct the number of French labourers and artists present within the cardinal's household – something based both on

²³ D. S. Chambers, 'The Renaissance Cardinalate: From Paolo Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu* to the Present', in M. Hollingsworth and C. M. Richardson (eds), *The Possessions of a Cardinal: Politics, Piety, and Art, 1450-1700* (Manchester, 2010), p. 21.

²⁴ K. Weil-Garris and J. F. D'Amico, 'The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's "De Cardinalatu"', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 35 (1980), pp. 45-123.

²⁵ Chambers, 'The Economic Predicament', p. 293 (this figure, referring only to *familiares*, does not show the whole picture, however, as many people in the household were not listed).

²⁶ G. Fragnito, 'Cardinals' Courts in Sixteenth-Century Rome', *The Journal of Modern History*, 65/1 (1993), p. 39.

²⁷ M. Hollingsworth, 'Materializing Power. Cardinal Ippolito d'Este in 1540', in L. Golden (ed), *Raising the Eyebrow: John Onians and World Art Studies* (Oxford, 2001), p. 170.

²⁸ See chapter 'II.3. Serving the Pope', p. 139.

²⁹ M. Hollingsworth, 'A Taste for Conspicuous Consumption. Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and his Wardrobe', in M. Hollingsworth and C. M. Richardson (eds), *The Possessions of a Cardinal* (University Park, 2010), p. 133.

³⁰ As Marciari points out, 'artists arriving in Rome (at an ever-increasing rate) presented themselves to the projected directors and were hired almost as day labourers': Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano*, pp. 167-168.

³¹ Chambers, 'The Economic Predicament', p. 24.

his proximity to France and his upbringing in that very culturally French context, Ferrara.³²

This cultural exchange – and the material benefits resulting from it for Ippolito himself – is revealed by the case of Benvenuto Cellini, who met Ippolito in France in 1537. According to Cellini's account, he presented a basin to the Cardinal, which the Cardinal in turn presented to Francis I as a gift.³³ The king, appreciating this gift, gave Ippolito, in return, 'an abbey worth seven thousand crowns in revenue'. The artist's works then, and the gifts that they became – on which, in general, Ippolito is thought to have spent a fortune³⁴ – are remarkable for the political currency they had for the patron: as Knecht suggests, 'the cardinal knew that his favour with the king depended largely on his reputation as an art connoisseur. It needed to be sustained by plying Francis with gifts of the highest quality'.³⁵ In some accounts, the introduction to the French royal court, through figures like Cellini, Serlio, and Primaticcio, of artefacts of interest in the Italian Renaissance was one of the main reasons that Ippolito gained and maintained favour there.³⁶

Consequently, Ippolito d'Este's passion for wealth and for the collection and exchange of benefices – normal in itself for a cardinal, if somewhat excessive in Ippolito's case – cannot be a sufficient reason to deny the possibility that he could have had an interest in religious debates. Ippolito was, in fact, exposed to heterodox ideas throughout his life, from his boyhood in Ferrara to the later presence of Renée's Protestant court, which definitely gave Ferrara a reputation for being a relatively safe refuge for any Catholic dissenter. Around her court indeed gravitated two men who had been previously been in charge of shaping the culture of young Ippolito II: the renowned humanists Fulvio Pellegrino Morato and Celio Calcagnini, whose houses became centres for the dissemination of works by not only Erasmus, but, in Morato's case, also Zwingli and Melanchthon. Both Morato and his daughter, the famous poetess Olimpia, later converted to Calvinism.³⁷

This influence of Erasmus's thought and the connection with other preminent individuals involved in the Italian religious debate did not end with Ippolito's maturity. In the 1540s, he offered protection to Pier Paolo Vergerio, bishop of Capodistria and, from 1549, an exile *religionis*

³² Hollingsworth, 'A Taste for Conspicuous Consumption', p. 141.

³³ B. Cellini, *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, tr. G. Bull (London, 1956), p. 259.

³⁴ Hollingsworth, 'A Taste for Conspicuous Consumption', p. 173.

³⁵ R. J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron. The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 184.

³⁶ On the relationship between Francis I and Ippolito, see the 'Introduction' in Occhipinti, *Carteggio d'arte*. See also A. Venturi, 'L'Arte e gli Estensi. Ippolito II di Ferrara in Francia', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, XXIV (1881), p. 23-33.

³⁷ S. Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Kirkville, 1999), p. 235; *Renata di Francia*, pp. 113-114. Compared to Morato, Celio Calcagnini is a more controversial character, and his adherence to the Reformation is still to be proven: S. Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia*, pp. 95-96.

causa. When the Holy Office opened an investigation about Vergerio and his dubious religious beliefs, Ippolito commissioned the French ambassador to visit the papal nuncio Della Casa in Venice and to convince him to drop the accusations. Remarkably, just before taking the decision to flee from Italy, Vergerio made a last attempt to evade the pending menace of the inquisitorial trial by asking for a change of venue to Ferrara, and by requesting Ippolito d'Este as his judge.³⁸ One year later, when Vergerio had already been convicted of heresy, Ippolito still had a copy of his *Dialoghi* in his library.³⁹ During the same time, Ippolito d'Este was also in correspondence with two prominent figures amongst those who were advocating a reformation in the Church: Cardinal Gasparo Contarini and the Benedictine Gregorio Cortese, also later a cardinal. Notably, in April 1540, Cortese addressed a letter to Contarini in which he expressed his hope that the cardinal of Ferrara might be an ally in their plans for a renovation of the Catholic church.⁴⁰

Despite Gregorio Cortese's hopes, Ippolito d'Este never played an active role in the reformation of the Church, nor did he display any interest in a more thoughtful pastoral commitment. As a bishop, he did not reside in any of his ecclesiastical sees, which were administered by his vicars *in spiritualibus*. In conclave, he often opposed the so-called *spirituali* candidates, such as Morone or Pole, for the very simple reason that, besides being known for their open-mindedness to the issues brought up by the Protestant reform, they were both supported by the Emperor, who hoped to find in their irenic attitude an antidote to the religious drift in his territories.

One finds no further sign of any involvement of Ippolito d'Este in the religious debate after the 1540s. His book inventory, drafted in 1550, depicts a literary taste that favoured classical authors – Cicero, Thucydides, Aristotle – over religious texts, although it included a copy of Vergerio's book mentioned above (a gift from the author, one would imagine) and a luxurious edition of Erasmus's translation of the New Testament and one of his commentary on Luke's Gospel.⁴¹ In 1560, in Rome, he interceded for Ludovico Castelvetro, a famous Modenese humanist who had been charged with heresy by the Inquisition, and obtained that he could be transferred out of prison to defend himself – an interest that was probably due to Castelvetro's literary fame

³⁸ A. Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio. The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva, 1977), pp. 216-226; 244; F. C. Church, *The Italian Reformers, 1534-1564* (New York, 1932), p. 123; 353.

³⁹ ASMO, CDCAP, 169. See also Occhipinti, *Carteggio d'arte*, pp. 316-320.

⁴⁰ Gregorio Cortese to cardinal Contarini: *Regesten und Briefe des Cardinals Gasparo Contarini*, ed. F. Dittrich (Braunsberg, 1881), pp. 124-125. Some letters between Contarini and Ippolito d'Este are in *ibid.*, pp. 139; 148; 167.

⁴¹ ASMO, CDCAP, 169.

rather than to his religious stances.⁴² In the same period, Ippolito's comments on the increasingly strong Huguenot presence in France never showed anything but the concern that the Protestant riots might affect the political and social order of the kingdom. His mission to Paris in 1561 in order to help calm those riots, however, ended up casting some doubts on Ippolito's own catholic orthodoxy (as we will see in the following chapters).

A letter written by John Calvin to Theodore Beza on the occasion of Ippolito's legation to Paris has raised particular interest amongst scholars, as it seems to allude to a visit by Ippolito d'Este to Geneva thirteen years earlier – that is to say, in 1548.⁴³ Both Heinrich Lutz and the editors of Beza's letters, however, have stressed that there is no documentary evidence of any meeting between the cardinal and Calvin – whilst Romier, on the other hand, took Calvin at his word, but ignored the chronological reference and assumed that Ippolito had gone to Geneva in 1561.⁴⁴ The reconstruction of Ippolito's movements over that year can neither prove nor disprove that he might have visited Geneva in 1548, as he had travelled from France to Piedmont and back again, as a member of Henry II's entourage.⁴⁵

To understand the array of beliefs and tendencies that animated Italian life in the sixteenth century, it is essential to remember that there were grey zones, and a wide spectrum of positions, that encompassed more possibilities than the mere acceptance or denial of Protestantism. Many individuals shifted their positions over time, in response to political, social or cultural circumstances. In a recent analysis of the role of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, for instance, Paul Murphy has stressed that to wonder whether the Cardinal was a *spirituale* rather than a *intransigente* is no longer productive. In his opinion, Gonzaga's position is better characterized by the idea of a 'patrician reformer', well disposed towards the contemporary religious debate (Gonzaga, like Ippolito, had been a supporter of Vergerio) as long as it remained limited to a small circle of cultured people. When, on the contrary, the debate involved a larger section of the population, who could have easily turned the new religious ideas into a real rebellion with an unpredictable outcome, he stepped back. The preservation of the social and political order, both in his dioceses

⁴² Letter from Ippolito II to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 150, 3 December 1560.

⁴³ Calvin to Beza, 3 September 1561: 'Caeterum ne te amicitia Lotharingi lautum nimis reddat, te in tempore admoneo, me quoque esse fratrem Ferrariensis. Nam quum me hic ante annos tredecim amplecteretur, promisit se mihi semper fore optimum fratrem': *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, ed. A Dufour and H. Meylan (Geneva, 1963), iii, p. 146.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pag. 147, n. 8; Lutz, 'Il cardinale Ippolito d'Este', p. 147 n. 42; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, ii, p. 97.

⁴⁵ C. Roaf, 'Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, 1503-1562: A Critical and Biographical Study' (University of Oxford, D.Phil dissertation, 1959), p. 48. See also Campori, *Diciotto lettere*, p. 7; F. DeCruce, *L'action politique de Calvin hors de Genève: d'après sa correspondance* (Geneva, 1909), pp. 28-30.

and in his family's possessions, was his main responsibility, but this did not mean that he did not have a sincere interest in new religious ideas.⁴⁶

The case of Ippolito d'Este was not so different. The accumulation of benefices that supported his personal and family ambitions should not be considered as the criterion by which to demonstrate that he was alienated from the new ecclesiastical tendencies. That feature should, rather, be considered a sign that the debate around the Protestant Reformation produced different degrees of engagement, and probably involved also individuals who never turned words into action. More than that, the debate also involved individuals who never thought to abandon their role as great ecclesiastical princes, and who did not deal with reform issues as a new tendency separate from the prevailing system of traditional values such the personal affirmation and preservation of political power.

⁴⁶ P. V. Murphy, 'Between "Spirituali" and "Intransigenti": Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 88/3 (2002), pp. 446-469.

2. LOBBYING AT THE VATICAN. PROTECTORSHIP AND CONCLAVES

Ne fistes jamais en Italie tant pour vostre service que de luy avoir envoye

Cardinal Charles of Guise-Lorraine¹

The following chapter aims to illustrate the role of Ippolito d'Este as a representative of French power in the Roma curia, both as the cardinal protector of the crown – a post that he held for about twenty-five years – and as the King of France's *favorito* on occasion of all the papal elections that took place from 1549 to 1559. Ippolito returned to Italy in 1549, after his appointment to the cardinal protectorship, and remained in Italy until the end of his life, in 1572. Apart from two years, which he spent in France as the papal legate, and another similar period of time that he spent governing Siena, from 1552 to 1554, the cardinal mainly lived in Rome. There, he could exercise his function of representative of the French monarchy, both as the cardinal protector and as one of the leaders of the French group of cardinals that gathered every time it was necessary to elect the new pontiff.

Whilst the two sections that constitute this chapter focus on two different themes – the protectorship of the Valois crown and the conclaves in which Ippolito was running for the tiara – they address similar issues from a different perspective, as they both deal with the structure and cohesion of the French faction in the Vatican, with the leadership that Ippolito d'Este exerted on it, and with the relationship between the curia and the French crown. Talking about “French faction”, however, can be misleading: whilst we can identify a group of cardinals, who considered themselves as servants of the King of France, and who voted in conclave according to the instructions received, the existence itself of such a group of people united by the same national-factional interest during the normal course of curial life is arguable. As historians who have dealt with the functioning of factions in the Vatican palaces have pointed out, it is difficult to set a clear

¹ ‘You never did as much for your own service as having sent him [Ippolito d'Este] to Italy’. From a letter written by Charles de Guise-Lorraine to King Henry II on 28 December 1549, during the conclave that elected Julius III: *Lettres et memoires, des roys, princes, ambassadeurs...*, ed. G Ribier (Paris, 1666), ii, p. 259.

distinction between different groups that were equally trying to influence curial politics, and to measure their different weight on the outcome of the broader struggles that often rose between the papacy and European monarchies. As Maria Antonietta Visceglia stressed, the Vatican court was one of the battlefields on which interest-based groups (families, clientele, etc) also faced each other in an attempt to gain control over the relationship between the curia and the monarchy they represented.²

As we will see, Ippolito d'Este himself cannot be fully described as a neutral emissary of the King of France's will, as his theoretical dependency on the King's agenda and instructions was always contaminated by his own effort to enhance his personal, and, sometimes, familial position within the curia. Similarly, his relationship with the other French cardinals – both in conclaves and in other occasions – was anything but univocal, and his leadership constantly mediated by the presence of other emissaries of the royal power, whether other ecclesiastics or the monarchy's lay diplomats.

IPPOLITO D'ESTE AS CARDINAL PROTECTOR OF THE FRENCH CROWN

The role of cardinal protector of a crown involved, in a word, the defence of the protectee's interests in Rome, at the papal court, and particularly in the curia, that exclusive space closed to the lay ambassadors of European monarchies who otherwise acted as the authoritative figureheads of diplomatic representation in Rome. Scholars have traced the genealogy of the protector and identified the birth of the protectorship in the thirteenth century, in the context of the organisation of regular orders.³ Franciscans and Dominicans would both rely upon a cardinal protector, who

² M. A. Visceglia, *Roma papale e Spagna. Diplomatici, nobili e religiosi fra due corti* (Rome, 2010), pp. 34-35.

³ Scholarship on the cardinal protectors of the European crowns is quite lacking, and a comprehensive study is still missing. The main sources that inform what follows are the works by W. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England. Rome and the Tudors Before the Reformation* (Cambridge, 1974), which focuses on the cardinal protectors of the Tudor crown at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and O. Poncet, 'Cardinal-protectors of the crowns in the Roman curia in the first half of the sixteenth century: the case of France', in G. Signorotto and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 158-176 which considers the case of France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most extensive synthesis is still J. Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalem Protektorate der Kardinale und der römischen Kurie* (Innsbruck, 1938). It is a history of the institution of the protectorship, and it also provides a list of all the cardinal protectors from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century. Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 89-131 devotes a chapter to the 'cardinaux protecteurs' of the French crown during Henry II's reign, and the same subject is also briefly treated in M. M. Edelstein, 'Foreign Episcopal Appointments During the Reign of Francis I', *Church History*, 44/4 (1975), pp. 450-459 (although this contains some mistakes). Useful suggestions have also come from studies on single cardinal protectors, even though not exclusively focused on their role as protectors: D. S. Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge in the Court of Rome, 1509 to 1514* (Oxford, 1965); K. Wolfe, 'Protector and Protectorate: Cardinal Antonio Barberini's Art Diplomacy for the French Crown at the Papal Court', in J. Burke and M. Bury (eds), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 113-132; O. Poncet, 'Antonio Barberini (1608-1671) et la papauté. Réflexion sur un destin individuel en cour de Rome au XVIIe

was the spokesperson for the order in the curia and often played an active role in its constitution. Whilst the cardinal protectors of religious orders were an institution from the beginning permitted by the papacy, the protectors of the monarchs were more controversial: in 1425, Martin V forbade any cardinal to act as protector of ‘any king, prince or commune ruled by a tyrant or any other secular person whatsoever’,⁴ for the obvious reason that such an action would compromise a cardinal’s loyalty and counsel to the sovereign pontiff himself. Such a prohibition, however, would obviously suggest that this function – if not the official role itself – had been visible, and increasingly so, in recent years, and it had continued through the reigns of Pius II and Alexander VI. Only under Hadrian VI (1522-3) was the protectorship of states explicitly acknowledged.⁵

With this acknowledgement, the papacy established the ambiguous – and necessarily Janus-faced – role of the protectors, who were obliged to serve the interests of a secular power without jeopardising their primary devotion to the pope himself. However, the ambassador – as well as the crown’s other cardinals in the curia – was someone alongside whom the cardinal protector was required to work in order to mobilise the will of the distant monarch. Whilst his position in the curia gave him a role quite distinct from that of the ambassador, it was nonetheless a role partially conditioned by that of his lay counterpart. The cardinal protectorship was a function that was used exclusively by monarchs – namely, as a means to facilitate the process by which kings could propose their own candidates to head bishoprics and abbeys in their territories: the cardinal protector would review, and ultimately approve, the candidate and announce his candidacy to the consistory.⁶ As a result, then, this, in Poncet’s words, ‘first and most visible function’ of the cardinal protector would make him – whilst at the same time the servant of the pope – the enabler, or pawn, of his respective monarch’s designs to consolidate total power over his dominion; he was, as Wilkie observes, a symptom and agent of the growth of national monarchies.⁷

siècle’, in *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 108/1 (1996), pp. 407-402’. Some interesting comments on Ippolito d’Este’s activity as the French cardinal protector can be found in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*.

⁴ Poncet, ‘Cardinal-protectors’, p. 161

⁵ Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, pp. 5-10.

⁶ Poncet, ‘Cardinal-protectors’, p. 163. However, this seems to have been the case only in the later sixteenth century: it does not seem that Ippolito d’Este ever performed any control on the proposed French prelates.

⁷ Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, p. 10

Ippolito d'Este was appointed cardinal protector of the French crown by Henry II in April 1548, to fill the position left vacant by the death of cardinal Agostino Trivulzio.⁸ As we have already observed, the cardinal protector was an institution that, in the time of Ippolito II d'Este, the Roman curia was willing to recognise and work with. The pontiff, however, played no part in the protected crown's appointment to the role of any specific cardinal, as this was a decision that was entirely in the hands of the sovereign.⁹ In Ippolito d'Este's case, his appointment was the result of his successful networking activity during his stay in France and, especially, of his personal friendship with the late Francis I (who had seemingly promised him the post even before cardinal Trivulzio's death).¹⁰ The cardinal of Ferrara remained in charge as the cardinal protector of France for about twenty-five years, until the post was taken up by his nephew, Luigi d'Este.

To encourage the commitment that was required from a protector – a commitment that any primary attention to the pope would hardly seem to allow – the French monarch would shower him with sufficient gifts to make it worth his while. In a context in which cardinals were in a sense expected to live a life of luxury in order not to demean their station – a context in which extravagance and pomp were 'necessities' to which cardinals often had to 'resign themselves'¹¹ – the

⁸ After his appointment, the cardinal of Ferrara arrived in Rome only in July 1549. Before then, the role was taken up by cardinal du Bellay, who was already in the curia, and who therefore presented nominations to the French bishoprics in consistory: Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalem Protektorate*, p. 100; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 95-96. Ippolito had announced his appointment to his brother via letter: ASMO, CS, 148 (2 April 1548). The news of Ippolito's appointment was also confirmed by the Florentine ambassador to Milan, Francesco Vinta: ASFI, MdP, 3101a, fos. 1123. See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 98-99; Magoni, *I gigli d'oro*, p. 64; L. Byatt, 'Este, Ippolito II d'', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1993). See also Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalem Protektorate*, p. 100; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 90-91. Edelstein, 'Foreign Episcopal Appointments', p. 454, n. 16 misdates Ippolito's protectorship to the period 1529-1536 – something which is plainly impossible, considering that in those years Ippolito was not a cardinal.

⁹ With the exception of England, Scotland and Ireland, whose protectors were appointed by the Pope and not by the secular rulers: Poncet, 'Cardinal-protectors', p. 163 n. 22. The case of Scotland, however, is worth some extra consideration. In the period we are discussing, and after the marriage of Mary Stuart with the French Dauphin in 1548, the king of France actually managed to impose his own candidates on the pope – as Scotland was considered by Henry II as part of a "bigger French kingdom" and its protectorship a matter of royal concern. The French ambassador, Lansac, in his correspondence explicitly referred to the protectorship of Scotland as 'currently in the hands of the Queen, your daughter [Mary of Scots]': *Correspondance politique de M. De Lansac (Louis de Saint-Gelais)...*, ed. C. Sauzé de Lhoumeau (Paris, 1904), pp. 302-303. By January 1549, and acting in Mary's name, Henry II obtained the removal of Rodolfo Pio da Carpi from the post ('for right and good reasons') and forwarded a plea to the pope to have the protectorship assigned to the cardinal of Ferrara: *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 187. One would imagine that Ippolito's relationship with the house of Guise, who were also Queen Mary's maternal family, had played some part in his attempted appointment to this new protectorship. However, Ippolito's candidacy must have been halted by the pope, because the position eventually fell in the hands of another Francophile cardinal, Gian Domenico de Cupis, cardinal of Trani. When de Cupis died, in 1553, his successor was Nicolò Caetani, the cardinal of Sermoneta, who was one of Ippolito d'Este's most trustworthy allies in the curia and who held the post until his death, in 1585: Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalem Protektorate*, p. 123.

¹⁰ This was reported by the Estense ambassador to France: ASMO, CDA, Francia, 23 (1 April 1547) and also by cardinal Du Bellay, who wrote that 'monsieur le Cardinal de Ferrare me dist à son partement de France que le roy la luy avoit promise en cas de decés': *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 123 (6 March 1548).

¹¹ Fragnito, 'Cardinals' Courts', pp. 26-56

institution of the cardinal protector therefore had something of an allure. In a way, then, the protectorships also had the function of ‘filling a vacuum’ created by the fact that the simple role of the cardinal did not necessarily provide the most comfortable level of income.¹² In France, this endowment of gifts was made possible by the fact that the kings had increasingly gained control over the assignation of the French ecclesiastical benefices, eroding the pope’s authority in order to make use of the church properties to reward their most prominent subjects and to strengthen royal power. In this period, the appointment to French benefices was regulated by the Concordat of Bologna (1516), which allowed the king to appoint to 114 episcopal and archiepiscopal positions and 800 abbatial seats in France, in exchange for the payment of some taxes to the Vatican, and subject to the pope’s approval of each candidate. Although there were some restrictions on the king’s power of choice – such as the age of the appointed prelate, or the fact that abbots were supposed to belong to the same religious order as the abbey to which they were appointed – these were, in fact, almost never respected.¹³

Although most French protectors received substantial financial benefits (in the form of pensions) from the French crown in the first half of the seventeenth century, it does not seem that Ippolito d’Este was receiving a pension attached to his protectorship – but that might be easily explained by the fact that none of the seventeenth-century cardinal protectors could boast a portfolio of French ecclesiastical revenues even remotely as large as Ippolito d’Este’s.¹⁴ A benefit that the cardinal of Ferrara enjoyed, unlike his seventeenth-century equivalents, was an exemption from taxation on all his French benefices – a privilege that had been first granted to Agostino Trivulzio by king Francis I, and that Ippolito inherited alongside the protectorship.¹⁵ Although, as we shall see, this exemption was later revoked, it certainly enhanced Ippolito d’Este’s income for about a decade. Another important source of income, attached to the role of protector, came from his role in presenting, in consistory, of the monarch’s new appointment to any benefice: the appointed prelate, upon receiving the Vatican confirmation, was bound to pay the *annata*, a tax

¹² Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, p. 7. On the expenses that cardinals had to meet to sustain their lifestyle, see, for instance Fragnito, ‘Cardinals’ Courts’, p. 42.

¹³ On the Concordat of Bologna, see O. Poncet, *La France et le pouvoir pontificale (1595-1661): l’esprit des institutions* (Rome, 2011), pp. 51-71; H. O. Evennett, ‘Pie IV et le bénéfices de Jean du Bellay’, *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, 22/97 (1936), pp. 425-435.

¹⁴ Poncet, ‘Cardinal-protectors’, p. 166. See also David Chambers’s assessment of cardinal Bainbridge’s wealth in the early sixteenth century: *Cardinal Bainbridge*, pp. 125-130.

¹⁵ E. Picot, *Les italiens en France au XVIe siècle* (Bordeaux, 1918), p. 26. See also p. 165 in this thesis.

that was worth a year of the benefice's revenues – plus a fifteen percent fee that was also due to the cardinal protector for his mediation in consistory (called the *propina*).¹⁶

In Ippolito d'Este's case, the *propinae* that he was entitled to receive were carefully listed, alongside the name of the benefice, the name of the prelate receiving it, and the taxation applied, in the account books that went under the name of *protezione di Francia*.¹⁷ Although the *propina* depended on the number of vacant benefices that needed to be filled at a certain time, which makes it difficult to identify an average figure each year, one can gain an understanding of how lucrative the performance of this specific task was by looking at Ippolito's ledgers: in the period 1560-1561, for instance, Ippolito's accountants in Rome recorded and cashed in 13.576 *scudi* worth from the *propina*.¹⁸ If one considers that Paolo Cortese, in his exposition regarding the 'ideal cardinal' and published after his death in 1510, had estimated the annual income necessary to maintain a cardinal's lifestyle to 12.000 ducats, it is easy to understand that the *propina* alone brought to the cardinal protector some very significant benefits in terms of income.¹⁹

Indeed, if the cardinals themselves were required to advance displays of wealth and splendour, the cardinal protectors' same commitment to ostentation was necessarily multiplied. Bardati's study of Cardinal Jean du Bellay highlights some of the concerns of French cardinals in Rome, who were implicitly required to extend abroad an image of the magnificence of the French monarchy, through artistic patronages, luxurious residences, and a sumptuous court life.²⁰ In addition to engaging in diplomatic exchanges and maintaining good relations with the pope, these cardinals were also compelled to cultivate relations with the Roman elite and with the Roman populace in general, through the patronage – in the name of France – of improvement projects to the city's churches, and through public events and celebrations in honour of the French.²¹ If these cardinals were in the habit of competing with each other in the glory of their dedications to their monarch, the protector had to elevate his station further by organising ever more lavish displays and celebrations. It is consequently no surprise to see Ippolito ranked among the wealthiest cardinals in Rome, and his palaces of Monte Cavallo and Monte Giordano – the latter defined by

¹⁶ It seems that an additional five percent was allocated to any member of the protector's household who had aided him in supplying information to facilitate his audit, but I did not find any trace of this in relation to Ippolito d'Este: Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, pp. 8-9. Hollingsworth notes that, on top of the *propina*, the protectors also received a fixed fee of 41 *scudi* for each appointment: M. Hollingsworth, 'A Cardinal in Rome: Ippolito D'Este in 1560', in J. Burke and M. Bury (eds), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 83. See also Poncet, 'Cardinal-protectors', pp. 167-168; Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷ All of Ippolito d'Este's account books are in ASMO, CDAP.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 957; 958.

¹⁹ Chambers, 'The Renaissance Cardinalate', p. 20.

²⁰ Bardati, 'Between the King and the Pope', pp. 419-433.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

Pacifici as ‘the French embassy’ in Rome – the object of massive renovation works throughout the fifties and the sixties of the sixteenth century.²² It is interesting to notice, in this respect, that the vast majority of the money that Ippolito obtained directly from his position as protector (that is to say, the *propina*) appear to have been mainly allocated to pay for the renovation and embellishment of his properties in Rome – in what can be somehow seen as a circle in which the French money was ultimately used to enhance the public face of the French representation in Rome.²³

The public display of French grandeur was certainly an important part of the cardinal protector’s work – and something that, in the sixteenth century, was not always immediately distinguishable from what we nowadays consider as diplomacy. On a more practical level, however, the cardinal protector was supposed to be a direct channel of communication between the monarchy and the papacy every time a matter that directly affected or involved French interests was under discussion – and, of course, an active spokesperson for the defence of such interests.

Lucien Romier stressed that the protectorship of the French crown also gave the protector ‘la surintendance des affaires royales en Italie’.²⁴ However, as both a papal counsellor and a diplomat of a foreign power, the French protector’s room for independent manoeuvre was actually quite limited – particularly as he was only one of a number of his crown’s diplomats in Rome, and agents and ambassadors would often be sent from France to Rome to discuss specific diplomatic matters with the pontiff. As Poncet outlines, the position of the cardinal protector was rather conditioned always by ‘the freedom of action allowed by other representatives of France in Rome’.²⁵ Any cardinal protector’s autonomy for action was always contingent upon the presence – as well as the personalities and agendas – of any other French cardinals, and the official French lay ambassador to Rome himself, from whom the protector would often receive word of the monarch’s intentions.²⁶ In the case of Ippolito d’Este – that is to say, a cardinal but also a prince, and hence someone whose interests could not entirely transcend the Italian internal power system – it does not seem that his ‘surintendance’ ever made him the head of a well-defined diplomatic unit, nor that there even was a well-defined diplomatic unit to be made head of. In the case of the defence of the French interests in Rome, this also raises questions regarding the functioning of the French lobbying activity, its effectiveness, and even the actual existence of a French faction coherently orientated toward lobbying for the French crown. Whilst, as we shall see, the French group demonstrated a certain

²² Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 112; 253; 264. See also Hollingsworth, ‘Ippolito d’Este’, pp. 105-126; 107; Evennett, ‘Pie IV et les bénéfices’, p. 448.

²³ ASMO, CDAP, 957; 958; 961.

²⁴ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 90.

²⁵ Poncet, ‘Cardinal-protectors’, p. 166.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

degree of unity when called to elect the new pontiff, this does not seem to apply on a level of everyday practice to the defence of the French interests at the Vatican court. Although it is impossible to provide any thorough answer to these questions, Ippolito d'Este's protectorship helps shed some light on some aspects of these issues.

First of all, Ippolito d'Este did not live in Rome for a good deal of his time as a protector. The fifties of the sixteenth century coincided with a revival of the hostilities between the king of France and the Emperor – the wars of Parma and Siena and later the anti-Habsburg league promoted by Paul IV followed each other in rapid succession. Ippolito was first appointed governor of Siena in 1552, where he spent two years, and, as we will see, exiled from the curia by Paul IV in 1555. He did not return to Rome until the pontiff's death, in 1559. Furthermore, from 1561 to 1563, the cardinal was in France as the papal legate. The moments in which the cardinal's leadership emerged more vividly were the conclaves, but this was especially due to the fact that he was the king's candidate and was therefore lobbying for himself rather than for the French faction. For the rest of the time, his diplomatic action always developed in partnership with some other French representative: in Rome, with the French ambassadors and agents, and, even in Siena, within the limits imposed by the presence of the French military officials.

Besides being subordinate to the prominent role reserved to the ambassador, as French 'pure minister', as opposed to the 'hybrid' function of the cardinal protector, Ippolito's pursuit of an effective lobbying activity in the name of the king of France was also affected by the presence of other French cardinals, and by the personal rivalries that his presence stirred. Far from taking the form of a group of individuals united by the same political agenda, the French faction in the curia was divided by single affiliations, interests and loyalties. The fact that the protectorship was not a royal office, and that the boundaries of the protector's authority over the crown's other representatives were not clearly defined, made the role itself subject to the dialectics between the monarchy and the papacy, and to the dynamics internal to the French representation in Rome.

From the very beginning of his career as the French protector, for instance, the cardinal of Ferrara's presence in Rome was met by the hostility of Cardinal du Bellay, who had been managing the French affairs at the curia before Ippolito's arrival in Rome, and who had therefore resented the subsequent downsizing of his responsibilities.²⁷ In 1555 especially, the cardinal of Ferrara held du Bellay responsible for his exile from Rome ordered by Paul IV, something that the French prelate

²⁷ *Lettres et memoires*, ii, pp. 206-207 (13 April 1549); 243-244 (23 August 1549). See also Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalen Protektorate*, p. 100. On Cardinal du Bellay, see Bardati, F., 'Jean du Bellay, bâtisseur passionné de la France à l'Italie', in C. Michon and L. Petris (eds), *Le Cardinal Jean du Bellay: diplomatie et culture dans l'Europe de la Renaissance* (Tours, 2013), pp. 193-220; id., 'French cardinals in Rome', pp. 424-431.

had obtained (according to Ippolito) through a slandering campaign and in partnership with Rodolfo Pio da Carpi, who had a long-standing hatred for all of Ippolito's house due to an old feud between their families and to the annexation of Carpi to the Estense duchy, in 1527.²⁸ A few days before the Pope's order to leave the curia reached Ippolito, Paul IV had already appointed du Bellay dean of the College of Cardinals, in spite of the precedence that, owing to their having been bishops for a longer time, the title should have been given to two other French cardinals (Bourbon and Tournon). Ippolito interpreted this latter episode as 'a plot led by du Bellay and Carpi' in order to stir resentment within the group of French cardinals and put off cardinal Tournon from going to Rome as a 'lesser cardinal' than du Bellay.²⁹ When, just a few days after du Bellay's appointment, Paul IV charged Ippolito d'Este with simony, the cardinal interpreted his own exile as orchestrated by the same pair in order to undermine him too, so that du Bellay would remain the one head of the French representation in the curia and, together with Carpi, they would 'move the Pope as they wish'.³⁰ Whilst, as we shall see in the next chapter, Ippolito's use of money and benefices to draw votes to himself in the conclaves of 1555 certainly made it difficult to fully dismiss the accusation of simony as wholly unsound, corruption in this sort of circumstance was so common that it is difficult to believe that the pope, in ordering the cardinal's exile, was only led by a sense of justice. And soon after Ippolito had just received the news himself, the involvement of du Bellay and Carpi was indeed confirmed to the Duke of Ferrara by an agent sent by the pope's nephew, cardinal Carlo Carafa.³¹

²⁸ Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, pp. 235-240.

²⁹ Ippolito II to Ercole II: 'Nostro Signore pubblicò una bolla a favor del Cardinal di Bellay, con la quale lo costituisce decano in pregiudicio delli reverendissimi di Borbone et Tornone, che sono vescovi anteriori a lui [...]. Hora io lascerò considerar a Vostra Eccellenza quanto la cosa mi sia rincresciuta, vedendo che tutta questa è trama condotta da Bellay et da Carpi si per odio particolare che essi portano a esso Tornone, come per far dispetto a me, pensando di haver per questa via a impedire che quel signore non venga di qua, come quello che non sia per volersi trovar in grado inferiore a Bellay. [...] certamente l'essorbitantia et poco rispetto di Bellay mi par che hormai siano arrivati a segno che Sua Maestà non sia per doverli tolerar più oltre [...]': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.42 (28 August 1555). On this episode, see R. Scheurer, 'L'accession de Jean du Bellay au décanat du Sacré Collège', in C. Michon and L. Petris (eds), *Le Cardinal Jean du Bellay: diplomatie et culture dans l'Europe de la Renaissance* (Tours, 2013), pp. 99-111. On the friendship between du Bellay and Carpi, see Bardati, 'French cardinals', p. 425.

³⁰ Ippolito II to Ercole II: 'Mi rincresce che Sua Santità si lasci si facilmente indurre a credere et a fare contra una persona delle qualità mie, che ha la carica che ho io, si fatte dimostrazioni [...]. Non sono altri che Bellay et Carpi, i quali come hanno procurato et fatto ogni opra et per mezzo della Bolla del Decanato et per ogni via per impedir la venuta de reverendissimo Tornone a Roma, così hanno anche voluto cercare hora di levarne me di ques'altro modo, per poter poi essi tanto più facilmente et con minor contrasto movere il Papa come vogliono': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.43 (7 September 1555).

³¹ Carlo Carafa to Ercole II: 'Tutto è preceduto dalle mistigationi et astutie delli adversarii del cardinale, i quali havendo conosciuto per antica conversazione la natura di Sua Beatitudine piena di santissimo et ardentissimo zelo, hanno dipinto le cose tanto deformate et ben composte fra loro facendo testimonianza l'uno all'altro astutamente che a Sua Beatitudine non è parso di poterlo tollerare [...]. Questi adversarii credo che siano Carpi per il mezzo di Bellay che l'uno è mosso dall'odio antico et dal temor che ha che il Cardinal di Ferrara non sia ancora un di più potente che non sia ora [...] et Bellay è mosso dall'ambitione si di rimaner con più autorità delle cose del re, si dalla speranza che Carpi gli haveva data che possa esser papa': ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 119, p. 55 (21 September 1555).

Besides showing that the quest for personal power – whether bestowed by the pope or from the king – could create interest-based alliances that had nothing to do with – or, rather, went beyond – the existence of a ‘French group’ in the curia, this episode also shows that Ippolito d’Este’s supposed leadership as the principal conductor of the monarchy’s diplomatic affairs was anything but irreplaceable. The subsequent negotiations between the Valois crown and the pope to form a league against the Emperor were led by the cardinals of Lorraine and Tournon and by the French ambassador to Rome, and, despite his protestations that he did not want to be ‘left behind’, Ippolito only returned to the curia after Paul IV’s death in 1559.³² Throughout the fifties, however, the cardinal’s involvement in French politics in Italy and in Rome remained considerable even when he was not personally in the curia: as the governor of Siena, he was constantly informed of every negotiation that happened in the curia by the French ambassador, and the same happened during his exile in the second part of the fifties.

The cardinal protector was certainly not supposed to take over the ambassador’s function, nor to be a sort of co-ambassador: whenever the French ambassador was ill, that was deemed news worth reporting, because it meant that any ongoing negotiation was moving into the protector’s (or substitute protector’s) hands.³³ The one function that was specific to the cardinal protectorship, and that could not be performed by the French ambassador, was the presentation (*expeditione*) of the French benefices in consistory. During Ippolito’s absences from Rome, this task was taken up by a protector *ad interim*, whom Ippolito himself appointed and who acted as the cardinal protector (without, however, being officially appointed as a ‘vice-protector’, or ‘co-protector’, a more formalised use of the office that came into use later in the sixteenth century).³⁴ A letter written by the cardinal of Ferrara in 1561 seems to suggest that, even when it was another cardinal who proposed the king’s appointments to the French benefices in consistory, the fee that was charged for those appointments, the *propina*, was nonetheless paid to the ‘official’ protector and not to the substitute.³⁵ The fact that Ippolito d’Este was seemingly left some room as to how to fill the office

³² *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp. 483-484 (21 December 1555).

³³ *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 140; 206-207.

³⁴ Although we can see from the registers of the consistories that cardinal du Bellay often took over the presentation of the benefices whenever Ippolito d’Este was away from the Vatican, the latter seemingly had the power to appoint a substitute without much interference from other powers: in 1553, for instance, he dismissed cardinal Trani from the protectorship when du Bellay, who was previously absent, returned to the curia: *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 114 (10 July 1553); p. 140 (13 July 1553). See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 204. On the use of the title of ‘vice-protector’, see Poncet, ‘Cardinal-protectors’, pp. 163-164.

³⁵ In December 1561, Ippolito d’Este asked cardinal Salviati, who was taking care of the appointments to the French benefices whilst Ippolito was away, to forward all the money relative to the protectorship to his Roman accountants: ASMO, CS, 150 (4 December 1561); ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 131, p. 40. In November 1561, Salviati had indeed presented the king’s choices for several monasteries and abbeys: Wodka, *Geschichte der nationalem Protektorate*, p. 101.

of the protectorship whenever he was out of Rome demonstrates that, in the general frame of French diplomacy, the name of the substitute did not make such a difference – and that the presentation of the benefices in consistory was a role that was more honorific than substantial. This was even more true considering that, unlike what was to become customary in later years,³⁶ Ippolito d'Este never performed any check on the personal and religious background of the prelates nominated by the king, and, therefore, that he and his occasional substitutes merely announced the king's choices during the consistories.

However, over the course of Ippolito's protectorship, the validity of the king's right to appoint prelates, and the extent of this right, was often put under discussion. This was, mainly, a consequence of the imperfect nature of the Concordat of 1516, which had given Francis I and his successors the power to present their own candidates to French benefices, but not in the whole of their kingdom: some regions of France – the ones that had been most recently annexed, Provence and Brittany – were excluded by the Concordat, which was a permanent agreement, and the king's right over those benefices needed to be reconfirmed every time a new pope or a new king ascended to the throne. Furthermore, if any of the cardinals who held any of the French benefices should die in Rome, then, according to the Concordat, the pope had the right to fill those vacancies with a candidate of his choice (*ad sedem apostolicam*). Some bulls of exemption later granted by the pontiffs had basically nullified this clause, but, as much as the king's right to appoint prelates in the 'new' regions, these bulls of exemption also needed to be confirmed – and were subject, of course, to political circumstances as well as to the pontiff's broader agenda.³⁷ As both the monarchy and the papacy were interested in strengthening their own authority over the French benefices, to the detriment of the other, this provoked occasional diplomatic crises between France and Rome. Julius III, for instance, refused to confirm some royal nominations in consistory between 1552 and 1553. A few years later, Pius IV refused to recognise the validity of previous bulls of exemption *super vacantibus in curia*, and, when cardinal du Bellay died in Rome in 1560, his benefices became the object of a dispute between France and the Vatican.³⁸

³⁶ Poncet, 'Cardinal-protectors', p. 167.

³⁷ On the Concordat, see Poncet, *La France et le pouvoir pontificale*, pp. 51-71; F. Baumgartner, 'Henry II's Italian Bishops: A Study in the Use and Abuse of the Concordat of Bologna', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 11/2 (1980), p. 53.

³⁸ A first-hand account of Julius III's refusal to accept some of the French appointments is in the French ambassador's correspondence from Rome: *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp. 250; 317. The problem of the confirmation of the indults and the bulls is thoroughly considered in Evennett, 'Pie IV et le bénéfices', pp. 425-461. On Pius IV and du Bellay's benefices, see also Ippolito's account of the issue in a letter to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 150, 15 February 1560.

Although occasional papal opposition to the king's claims to these appointments never took the form of a more systematic revision of the task of presentation performed by the cardinal protector, Ippolito d'Este's role as the mediator between the French crown's management of the benefices and the papacy came under discussion at the beginning of the sixties, as a reaction to the French religious and political crisis that opened after Henry II's death and the continuous threat of a Gallican schism. In this context, the involvement of the cardinal protector with the French benefices lost some of its honorific status and acquired a more substantial character, as the whole process of appointment became the object of disagreement between the French crown and the Vatican. In 1561, a French diplomat was sent to Rome to discuss with the pope the cancellation – or reduction – of the *annate* that the newly-appointed prelates were bound to pay upon papal confirmation. In the context of this initiative, the same agent was also in charge of convincing Ippolito d'Este to renounce – or, again, reduce – the *propina* that he received as the protector of the crown, and which were, as we have said, an extra fee attached to the payment of the *annate*.³⁹ This request was, from a practical point of view, motivated by the critical state of the French royal finances, but it was also part of a long-term struggle to put the Gallican benefices more firmly under the monarchy's control. As we shall see, the *annate* were unilaterally suppressed by the Estates General in 1561, after the pope had refused to comply with the monarchy's request. As part of the same financial emancipation of the French benefices, the exemption from taxation that the cardinal protectors had enjoyed since the time of Agostino Trivulzio was withdrawn, and Ippolito d'Este's benefices became financially liable. The role that Ippolito d'Este had in negotiating the reintroduction of the *annate* with the French crown is considered in the second part of this work. Here, it is sufficient to observe that, whilst the Valois were trying to emancipate – at least financially – the French benefices from the Vatican, the pope was trying to gain more control over the appointments of the French prelates. In April 1562, when the cardinal of Ferrara was negotiating the reintroduction of the taxation, Pius IV insisted on that routine background check on the French candidates to the benefices that later became customary, but that had never been performed before

³⁹ As reported by the Estense ambassador to France: 'Mons. il presidente Ferrier [...] se ne va hora a Roma mandato da sua maestà per trattare con sua santità per la cosa delle annate, idest della spesa della ispeditione delle bolle per conto de benefici di questo regno. Questi signori non vorriano che si pagasse nulla per la ispeditione delle dette bolle, dicendo non esser ragionevole et aggravandosi che esca di questo regno così grossa summa de denari come dicono che esce per questo conto, et faranno ogni cosa per ottenerlo da Sua Santità se potranno. Et in caso che non possino, tenteranno almeno di minuire la detta spesa, et si forciaranno quanto potranno d'accommodarsi con sua beatitudine [...]. Il detto Ferrier par che habbi anco commissione di trattare col signor cardinale di Ferrara per levare, o almeno minuire, la propina che tira hora sua signoria illustrissima et reverendissima sulla speditione delle bolle dei benefici a causa della protetione ch'essa tiene di questo regno, che importa 15 per cento': ASMO, CDA, Francia, 36 (last day of February 1561).

by Ippolito d'Este. Presumably because of the suspicion and hostility that already existed between the papacy and France, the pope did not trust the cardinal of Ferrara to perform the check himself: on the contrary, cardinal Borromeo asked the nuncio to France, Prospero Santa Croce, to take care of it. Only after receiving Ippolito's bitter complaints via letter, did Pius IV decide to put him in charge of performing this task (in partnership however with the nuncio).⁴⁰ When, in the seventies, Luigi d'Este succeeded Ippolito to the protectorship, we have evidence from his documents that he was checking the appointed prelates' suitability on a regular basis.⁴¹

The cardinal protectors, as we have already observed, were a symptom of the growth of national monarchies. As the process was still ongoing, however, we can see, in Ippolito d'Este's case, some of the contradictions and changes that affected his protectorship. If, from a diplomatic point of view, some aspects of the role did not change much – as it always remained dependent on the ambassador's presence, both when Ippolito was in and outside Rome, for instance – Ippolito's continuous involvement in French politics was more the visible consequence of his ability to preserve the king's favour over the years (also through his personal connections at court) rather than part of his duties as cardinal protector. The dual nature that this role necessarily had – as it required loyalty to both the papacy and the sovereign – reached a moment of crisis when both the papacy and the monarchy tried to enhance their respective share in the management of the French benefices. Ippolito's protectorship, then, can certainly be seen as a moment of transition in the role of the protector itself: in comparison, by the end of the sixteenth century and, more evidently, in the seventeenth century, the protectorship seemed to acquire a more defined 'ministerial' nature, which is also reflected in the fact that the tenures of the protectors become shorter and the benefits attached to it less remarkable, at least for what concerns the possession of French benefices.

⁴⁰ 'Il nuntio a dì passati avvertì Nostro Signore che saria stato ben fatto a far pigliare informatione de le persone nominate a le chiese et monasterii di cotesto regno prima che le provisioni si proponessero in concistorio. Il che piacque a Sua Santità et così nel rispondere a detto nuntio se gli disse, che dovesse esser lui quello che pigliasse le dette informationi et ce le mandasse. Et perché non si restò per altro di commetterlo più presto a V.S.Ill.ma che al nuntio, che per non le caricar di tante sorti di fastidi, presupponende massime che'l nuntio le dovesse comunicare tutto quello che faceva, et S.S.tà ha dipoi pensato che la cosa passerà con maggior dignità et con più frutto se sarà trattata da V.S.Ill.ma, Sua santità dice che V.S.Ill.ma sia contenta di pigliare in sé ancora quest'altra cura, valendosi in ciò de l'opra del nuntio, più et meno, secondo che a lei tornerà commodo et servitio. Vostra Signoria Illustrissima sarà contenta di comunicar tutto lo spaccio al detto nuntio et admetterlo al trattare et concludere di questo presente negotio, perché N.S. crede che sarà buono ad aiutarla et servirla in più cose': J. Šusta, *Die Römische Curie und das Concil von Trient unter Pius IV* (4 vols, Wien, 1904-1914), i, p. 468.

⁴¹ For example: ASMO, CS, 410, 2056.XVIII.13.

IPPOLITO D'ESTE IN CONCLAVE

For all the different factions who tried to influence Vatican policies, the zenith of their lobbying efforts was reached, of course, every time the papal throne fell vacant. Because of the inherently fleeting nature of the pope's temporal power over the Vatican state – which equated the pope to any other temporal ruler but lacked the dynastic element, as it could not be passed on to an heir – the end of each pontificate opened a political breach in which continuity and change fought each other to determine later events. In these moments, the 'political activism' of some cardinals turned into a hectic lobbying activity, with faction leaders and prominent members of the College of Cardinals building or breaking alliances, strengthening their party's inner cohesion, discussing with the sovereigns' ambassadors, and counting and re-counting the votes at their disposal, all in order to push their *favorito* onto the throne of St. Peter.

During the forty years of his career as a cardinal, Ippolito d'Este took part in six conclaves as the cardinal protector of France – a role that made him one of the leaders of the French faction and, therefore, one of the pivots around which all the French forces rotated.¹ In all of these six conclaves, the *favorito* who Ippolito was trying to place onto the chair of St. Peter was no one but himself. The fact that, in spite of his huge efforts, his campaigns of self-promotion always ended up in a failure signals the limits of his leadership and sheds some light on the relations that the Cardinal of Ferrara had established with both the court of the Valois – with its different components – and the group of cardinals that were French by birth and not, as he was, by 'heart' only.

Whilst the size of the College of Cardinals, in the fifteenth century, had remained fixed between twenty-five and thirty-five members, it increased throughout the sixteenth century. The numerous promotions that took place during Paul III's papacy (1534-1549) resulted in the largest College of cardinals in history until then, with sixty-six members in 1539.² Ten years later, at the moment of Paul III's death, there were still fifty-four living cardinals, and the conclave that

¹ Having become a member of the College of Cardinals under Paul III, Ippolito II participated in the conclaves of 1549-1550 (Julius III del Monte), March 1555 (Marcellus II Cervini), May 1555 (Paul IV Carafa), 1559-1560 (Pius IV de' Medici), 1565 (Pius V Ghislieri) and 1572 (Gregory XIII Boncompagni).

² The cardinals promoted under Paul III are considered in J. E. Vercruyse, 'Die Kardinale von Paul III', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 38 (2000), pp. 41-96.

gathered in Rome to elect the his successor had the largest number of participants so far. In the central years of the century, the number of cardinals had few variations, fluctuating between fifty-four and fifty-six. During Pius IV's papacy (1560-1565), however, new promotions resulted in a College of Cardinals of seventy-six members in 1565, and, although this figure slightly decreased in the following years, there were still sixty-six cardinals entitled to express their vote at the conclave that decided Pius V's successor in 1572.³

The majority of these cardinals belonged to a 'faction', a term that was in use also at the time (*factiones*) and which described a group of cardinals who stood around one or more leaders to protect the interests of a secular ruler of whom they considered themselves 'servants', due to their own political and/or familiar affiliation. The capacity that these groups had to maintain and create support both at their inside and at their outside was severely put at test, of course, every time the cardinals were called to elect a new pontiff. In the sixteenth century, the great 'Italian' rivalry between Habsburg and Valois was mirrored, in the Sacred College, by the division between the French and the Imperial factions.⁴ They both had their leaders, who were usually cardinals from princely families tied by a network of interests to a certain sovereign: Ippolito d'Este was, by this respect, exemplary, but so, for instance, was Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, who was one of the leaders of the Imperial faction and who came from a very similar social background (so similar that the two were also cousins).

In addition to the French and Imperial factions, who enjoyed the explicit support of the Valois and the Habsburg rulers, there were also groups of cardinals who had all been appointed by

³ Julius III, Paul IV and Pius V appointed around twenty new cardinals each. Pius IV more than doubled that figure, bestowing forty-six ecclesiastics with the red hat – a number that still looks unimpressive compared to Paul III's seventy-one new cardinals. For the variations – numerical and geographical – in the composition of the Sacred College, see, for instance: J. F. Broderick, 'The Sacred College of Cardinals: Size and Geographical Composition (1099-1986)', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 25 (Rome, 1987), pp. 14-15; Weber, *Senatus divinus. Verborgene Strukturen in Kardinalskollegium der fruhen Neuzeit (1500-1800)* (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 122-123; M. Pattenden, *Electing the Pope in Early Modern Italy, 1450-1700* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 17-21. A list of the names of all the cardinals promoted by each pontiff during the XVI century is in C. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica Medii Aevi...* (6 vols, Regensberg, 1913), iii, pp. 9-53.

⁴ One of the contemporary historians of conclaves (who were also, often, eye-witnesses), Onofrio Panvinio, explicitly referred to the divisions within the College of Cardinals by talking of *factions*: Merkle, *Concilium tridentinum diarorum, actorum, epistolarum...* (13 vols, Freiburg, 1901-2001), ii, pp. 573-602. The term has been largely used by Church historians, such as Leopold von Ranke or Ludwig von Pastor, but without particular attention to the non-religious factors that motivated the existence of these *factiones*. Partially inspired by similar works on courtiers and ministers in the royal courts of sovereigns such as Philip II or Elizabeth I, the historiography on the Roman factions has grown exponentially in recent years, thanks especially to the work of M. A. Visceglia, who has analysed the phenomenon in both the sixteenth and seventeenth century. See, for instance: M. A. Visceglia, 'Factions in the Sacred College in the sixteenth and seventeenth century', in G. Signorotto and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 99-109; id., 'Politica internazionale, fazioni e partiti nella Curia romana del tardo Cinquecento', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 127/3 (2015), pp. 721-769; id., 'Farsi imperiale: faide familiari e identità politiche a Roma nel primo Cinquecento', in F. Cantù and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *L'Italia di Carlo V. Guerra, religione e politica nel primo Cinquecento* (2 vols, Rome, 2003), ii, pp. 477-508.

the same Pope and who formed a separate faction. They were often the late pope's family members and more distant relatives, or members of 'allied' families, and, as such, they united around a leader (usually a cardinal-nephew) to defend their own interests and to elect a pontiff who would ensure their families' future prosperity. The most emblematic example of this type of curial factionalism was the leadership that Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who was Paul III's grandson and the richest cardinal of his time, exerted over those cardinals who were Paul III's 'creatures', and who owed their social promotion to him – but the same could be said of Carlo Carafa or Carlo Borromeo.⁵ As the number of new cardinals promoted during a single pontificate could be incredibly high, these groups of cardinals could heavily influence the outcome of the following conclave, especially because the continuing hostility between France and the Empire made their share of votes essential for any successful election.

The French faction included both cardinals that were French by birth and Italian cardinals who had put themselves at the King's service, or – more loosely – whose families were traditionally allied with the Valois monarchy. However, we will see that there was a very clear distinction – also in the eyes of contemporaries – between 'French cardinals' and 'Non-French cardinals sympathising with the French crown'. The French cardinals, whose careers were strongly subject to the King's favour, usually voted in accordance with the instructions received at the beginning of the conclave, and their loyalty was taken for granted. The bulk of the votes that converged on a candidate recommended by the French king, therefore, came from the French cardinals. Their number, in this period, fluctuated between seven and fourteen. At an outer circle, were all those cardinals considered 'allies' of the French crown, whose votes and potential clienteles were necessary to build a majority within the conclave, and whose loyalty was anything but certain. As we will see, Italian cardinals were also often included in the King's list of *papabili*, perhaps as a second choice in case of a veto against one of the French cardinals.

Despite the high level of 'politicisation' of the College of Cardinals, not all of its members were affiliated to a party: some had a reputation for being 'neutral' and responding only to their conscience – a feature that made them particularly courted by the leaders of the parties whenever one of their candidates was in need of a few extra votes in order to win the tiara, and that also made them agreeable candidates for an election of compromise.⁶

⁵ In Ippolito's correspondence, one also finds mention, after Julius III's death, of the group of 'questi reverendissimi della casa di Monte': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.21 (23 March 1555).

⁶ Gian Pietro Carafa and Marcello Cervini were considered in this way, for instance, before being elected popes. In a letter addressed to Henry II during the conclave of 1549, Ippolito d'Este and Charles de Guise listed all the supporters they could rely on, and they added that 'Theatin [Carafa] et sainte Croix [Cervini] sont vos serviteurs: mais ils ne monstrent affection qu'à leur conscience': *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 259.

Given that not all the cardinals resided at the Vatican court – quite the opposite – the first and one of the major issues that the faction leaders faced every time the papal throne fell vacant was to gather as many voters as possible, prompting any absent cardinals to arrive in Rome in time for the beginning of the conclave. The organisation of curial life in these delicate moments of transition was taken up by the College of Cardinals and the Camerlengo. The main events of the interregnum – the Pope’s burial ceremony and the opening of the conclave – followed one another according to a fixed timetable, in use since the time of Gregory X: the mourning and the masses for the late Pope would end on the ninth day from the moment of his death and, on the tenth day, the cardinals would be locked in conclave. Obviously, this left very little time for those cardinals who were abroad to reach the Vatican. Given the difficulties in communication and travel, it was a common practice, for the leaders of factions, to try to delay the pope’s burial ceremony in order to gain time for those cardinals who were still on their way – although criticism against this kind of interference increased during the course of the century and eventually led Pius IV to issue a bull that restated the obligation of ten days.⁷

In order to gain time for their supporters to arrive, ambassadors and faction leaders had to work together, especially after the beginning of the conclave, when communications and updates between the Pauline chapel (where the conclaves were held in the sixteenth century) and the outside world were still important, in order to adjust one’s party strategy, but they were also more difficult, due to the cardinals’ forced segregation. Although cardinals were forbidden from having any communication with the outside, this rule was almost universally ignored or dodged. In the case of long conclaves – such as those of 1549 and 1559 – communications were, of course, particularly sought after, as alliances and majorities could change several times and monarchs might decide to support a different candidate from any of those originally indicated, or to express a veto against a ‘compromise’ candidate suggested by one of the other parties. Therefore, ambassadors and faction leaders were also the channel through which the King’s intentions and preferences were made known to all the cardinals in the faction, both before and after the beginning of the conclave, both *intra* and *extra* conclave.⁸

⁷ *In eligendis*, issued in 1562. The necessity of reforming the electing system – against external influences and against internal nepotism – was debated throughout the sixteenth century, and the debate was still ongoing in the seventeenth, when Gregory XV undertook a juridical reform of the institution of the conclave (*Aeterni patris filius*, 1622): Pattenden, *Electing the Pope*, pp. 57-58; 90-93.

⁸ The conclave of 1559, which elected Pius IV, has remained particularly famous both for its length – the longest in history – and for the continuous interferences of secular powers, to the point that it was necessary to expel from the conclave a good number of unauthorised people, to seal and patrol windows and door, to sequester letters and parcels, and to set up a curfew for the cardinals: K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant 1204-1571* (4 vols., Philadelphia, 1976-1984), iv, p. 727; Merkle, *Concilium tridentinum*, ii, p. 521-522.

Overall, the French cardinals were more easily found in France than in Italy – as they often served as royal advisors and, as a general rule, were not keen to distance themselves from the court and the King’s favour.⁹ The first step to take in order to try to determine the outcome of the conclave, then, was to make sure that the electors were all physically present in Rome, or else the French faction would have necessarily been outweighed by the others. With the exception of those who were too old to travel to Rome (complaints about the length and the discomfort of the journey are a popular *topos* in the letters written by cardinals on their way to the conclave), the French monarch usually urged all of his cardinals to undertake the journey to the Vatican in time for the upcoming election – though this was not, *per se*, a guarantee of participation.

When Paul III died on 10 November 1549, for example, there were only two French cardinals in Rome. Although the French ambassador, Claude d’Urfé, had warned the King about the likelihood of a conclave a few days before the Pope’s death, none of the French cardinals were expected to reach the Vatican in time for the beginning of the ballots.¹⁰ Having been given ‘express and special power’ from Henry II to prevent any election that might take place before the arrival of the French, the ambassador committed himself to seeking to delay Paul III’s burial ceremony for as long as possible. With the aid provided by Ippolito d’Este, d’Urfé managed to delay the funeral and thus the opening of the conclave, which started only on 29 November 1549.¹¹ The same strategy was used five years later, after the death of Julius III: Ippolito d’Este and the French ambassador, Louis de St-Gelais, Sr de Lansac, sent an envoy to France ‘to urge to send the Cardinals here, and in the highest number possible’ whilst they would ‘do what we can to gain time before their arrival, and before anything occurs’.¹² Therefore, they both committed themselves to delay Julius III’s funeral.¹³ Although the Florentine diplomat was positive that the election of the new Pope would begin on 26 or 27 March despite the French intervention, the conclave only started on 5 April: a delay that was unanimously attributed to Ippolito d’Este’s efforts at procrastination, and that drew on him the fury of the dean, Cardinal Carafa.¹⁴

⁹ Baumgartner observed that the King also preferred to have the French prelates in France, in order to avoid the clause *ad sedem apostolicam* included in the Concordat of Bologna: F. J. Baumgartner, ‘Henry II and the papal conclave of 1549’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 16/3 (1985), p. 303. The same point is in Bardati, ‘French cardinals’, p. 420.

¹⁰ *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 254. See also Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 216.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251. See also L. von Pastor, *History of the Popes* (40 vols, London, 1899-1953), xiv, p. 3.

¹² ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.21 (23 March 1555). They especially needed to wait for seven French cardinals who were travelling all together by sea, as reported by the Venetian secretary in France, Febo Capella: *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice*, ed. R. Brown and G. Cavendish Bentinck (38 vols, London, 1890), 6, no. 53.

¹³ *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori ambasciatore di Cosimo I...*, ed. G. Canestrini (Florence, 1853), p. 347.

¹⁴ ‘Il Reverendissimo decano sollecita molto et non vorria che si prolungasse oltre l’entrare et lo eligere il papa; et intendo che fa invettive [...] volendo alludere a Ferrara’: *Briefe und akten zur geschichte des sechzehnten jahrhunderts...* ed. K. Brandi, A. Duffel et al. (6 vols, München-Leipzig, 1873-1913), iv, p. 624.

In both 1549 and 1555, however, the success obtained in delaying the conclave did not result in a full participation of the French group. At the opening ceremony of 29 November 1549, only three French cardinals were present. A week later, those three cardinals were still the only French participants in the ballots.¹⁵ The exceptional length of the conclave in the end allowed the French party – eventually increased in number – to play a determining role in shaping the alliance that led to the promotion of Cardinal Del Monte.¹⁶ Five years later, upon entering the conclave with a very limited group of supporters, Ippolito d’Este promised King Henry II that ‘if nothing else, we would [...] temporise until the French Cardinals arrive’.¹⁷ However, the conclave of April 1555 proved to be much quicker than the previous one: after less than a week of voting, Cardinal Cervini was elected to the papacy – still without any of the French electors present (the only exception being cardinals du Bellay and d’Armagnac, who were already in Rome).¹⁸ Two weeks after Cervini’s promotion, Louis of Guise was still the only additional French Cardinals to have arrived in Rome, and he was ‘regretting very much having taken the trouble to come here [...], too late to serve the purpose’. Being aware that the Pope’s health was rapidly deteriorating and that the possibility of a new conclave in the near future was not unlikely, Louis of Guise wrote to the King asking him ‘to order the French Cardinals that they diligently finish the journey that they have started to elect a Pope, and especially that they do not fail to offer their vote to the Cardinal of Ferrara’.¹⁹

The gloomy prediction about Cervini’s health proved to be correct: the briefness of his pontificate – only twenty-one days – allowed most of the French cardinals who were still on the road at the time of Cervini’s elevation in April to participate at least in the final stages of the new conclave in May. Despite the three weeks’ time that they had unexpectedly gained due to the Pope’s

¹⁵ Three cardinals arrived between 12 and 13 December, two others on 29 December, and the cardinal of Lorraine on 21 January 1550: *Lettres et memoires*, ii, pp. 252; 254-257. See also *Legazioni Serristori*, pp. 220-221; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iii, pp. 512-515.

¹⁶ The conclave that elected Julius III started on 29 November 1549 and finished on 7 February 1550 (one of the longest in history). In January 1550, an anonymous conclavist wrote that ‘we are more in the dark than ever, and not only we may rely on remaining here another forty days, but [...] we shall come out without a Pope, unless God of his mercy provide against it; so great is the obstinacy of those who govern’: *Cal. State Papers Venice*, 5, no. 614. For a first-hand account of the conclave, see Angelo Massarelli’s *Diarium Quintum* in Merkle, *Concilium Tridentinum*, ii, pp. 1-146. See also Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iii, pp. 505-525; Baumgartner, ‘Henry II and the Papal Conclave’, pp. 301-303. On the important religious aspects of this conclave and the clash between Cardinal Carafa, the leader of the Inquisition, and Cardinal Pole, see also M. Firpo, *La presa di potere dell’Inquisizione romana, 1550-1553* (Rome, 2014), pp. 19-35.

¹⁷ Ippolito II to Ercole II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.23 (9 April 1555).

¹⁸ The conclave that elected Marcellus II ended on 9 April 1555. Absent cardinals are listed in the diaries compiled by Ludovico Firmani and Angelo Massarelli, both in Merkle, *Concilium Tridentinum*, ii, pp. 506-508; 245-248.

¹⁹ Cardinal Louis de Guise to his brother, the Duke of Guise, François de Lorraine, ‘Mémoires-journaux de François de Lorraine...’, in J. F. Michaud and A. Poujoulat (eds), *Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de France*, vi: *François de Lorraine, Le prince de Condé, Antoine de Puget* (Paris, 1839), p. 232.

abrupt death, many of the French were still missing when the conclave began on 15 May 1555. Once again, then, Ippolito d'Este had to commit himself 'not to spare any effort to undermine and sabotage the other party's plans until the arrival of the Most Reverend French Cardinals, whose number and quality are such that one could then hope for the best'.²⁰ Although this conclave, like the previous one, did not last long, all the French cardinals had eventually reached Rome when Cardinal Carafa was elected Pope, taking the name of Paul IV, on 23 May 1555.²¹

Although it was not strictly necessary for a cardinal to participate in the conclave in order to be elected Pope, a successful candidate usually needed to be personally present to work his way around the different factions through networking and negotiating.²² Therefore, given that the king of France's list of *papabili* usually included those same powerful ministers-ecclesiastics who mainly resided in France, the chances of electing one of them were significantly lowered – from a very practical perspective – by the fact that, in the period we are considering, the French cardinals arrived more often late than on time. In a letter that the Roman protonotary, Agostino Cocciano, sent to Girolamo Seripando to analyse the possible outcome of the conclave that followed Julius III's death, for instance, he excluded from the number of those who could aspire to the papacy most of the French cardinals, on account of the fact that '[they] are not here', even though – Cocciano added – they would give to their own election a 'serious thought, if there is time'.²³

Ippolito d'Este, being the French first choice for the papacy in both conclaves of 1555, was well aware that his run for the tiara had been seriously hampered by the iterated delay of the French cardinals. In a letter that the cardinal addressed to his nephew, in June 1555, two weeks after Paul IV's election, he announced that he was about to send his secretary to France to illustrate the causes

²⁰ Ippolito II to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.24 (15 May 1555).

²¹ The conclave that elected Paul IV lasted from 15 to 23 May. A day before the opening ceremony, the Cardinals Lenoncourt and Vendôme were still far from Rome: Guise, 'Mémoires-journaux', p. 233. Absent cardinals are listed in Massarelli's *Diarium septimum*, in Merkle, *Concilium tridentinum*, ii, pp. 264-266.

²² The only example of a serious candidacy advanced *in absentia*, in the period we are considering, was that of Cardinal Pole, who, having come very close to election in 1549, was still supported by the Imperials in the conclaves of 1555. Although Pole had already made clear that he would not go to Rome unless specifically requested by the College of Cardinals, King Philip gave 'commissions and orders [...] to the Imperial ambassador at Rome, and to the Cardinals his adherents [...] proposing the most illustrious Legate [in preference] to any [other candidate]': *Cal. State Papers Venice*, 6, no. 49; 51; 89. The candidacy of Pole – one of the leaders of the *spirituali*, who sought dialogue with the Protestants – had great significance in relation to the German schism and with the reformation of the Roman Church. In this sense, his figure and his candidacy had a political and religious weight that many others lacked. It is impossible here to give an outline of the complicated issues regarding the *spirituali*, which have been exhaustively studied by Massimo Firpo and others, and of Pole's position within the Curia. It is interesting to notice, however, that the Florentine ambassador pointed out that even such a great character had few chances of gaining the tiara, as the other cardinals did not like the fact that he 'is absent': F. Petruccelli della Gattina, *Histoire diplomatique des conclaves* (4 vols, Paris, 1864-1866), ii, p. 92; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, p. 618. On Pole, the *spirituali*, and Charles V's support, see, for example: M. Firpo, 'Politica imperiale e vita religiosa in Italia nell'età di Carlo V', *Studi Storici*, 42/2 (2001), pp. 245-261; id., *Juan de Valdés*, pp. 186-231.

²³ *Briefe und akten*, iv, p. 625.

of his own failure, and to ‘show His Majesty what measures should be taken to overcome the difficulties that we have had so far’. According to Ippolito’s analysis,

The extent of this business [Ippolito’s own election] can be limited to two points: one that His Majesty should send here as many Cardinals as possible, the other that He should reward these Cardinals who have served Him. And all of this is so easy to accomplish that I cannot believe that any difficulty will arise [...]. Indeed, if His Majesty decided on this, my affairs are in such a [good] state under all other respects that I am more hopeful than I have ever been.²⁴

We will return to the idea of ‘reward’ mentioned by the cardinal in his letter, and to the strategies he used to try and secure the tiara for himself. For now, it is sufficient to stress that the presence of the French cardinals was considered, by both external observers and the persons directly concerned, as an essential element in the support of any candidate expressed by the French king. The fact that such an analysis was drafted by Ippolito d’Este two weeks after the election of a new pope also clearly shows, as he himself wrote, that his hopes for the future were still very much alive, and that he was already preparing for the next conclave. The age of Paul IV at the time of his election – seventy-nine years-old – indeed convinced many contemporary commenters, Ippolito d’Este included, that they would have another conclave very soon.²⁵ Against any prediction, however, Paul IV survived until 18 August 1559: by the time of his death, the political situation had changed dramatically, both in Italy – with the Franco-papal league, the defeat of the French forces and the rise of Spanish dominion – and in France, where Henry II’s death had left the kingdom in the hands of an underage monarch.

Given the political and religious crisis that opened in France after Henry II’s death, it is not surprising that, some ten days after Paul IV’s death, on 23 August 1559, the Florentine ambassador to Paris reported that the French cardinals were generally believed to ‘care only but little’ about the incoming papal election. For this reason – the ambassador concluded – ‘if the King and the Queen will not force these Most Reverends, I do not believe that they will come to Rome’.²⁶ When the conclave to elect Paul IV’s successor opened, on 5 September 1559, only seven cardinals were missing: of these, five were French. Whilst two of them had never been expected to undertake the journey to Rome, owing to their old age, two others – Charles de Bourbon and Odet de Châtillon

²⁴ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.41 (6 June 1555).

²⁵ This opinion was widely shared: the French ambassador, for example, wrote to Henry II that it was necessary to start thinking of the next conclave, which ‘ne pourroit ester loin [...] à cause de son [Paul IV’s] aage déjà decrepit [...] et indisposition’: *Lettres et memoires*, p. 609. More examples are in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 267.

²⁶ *Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane...*, ed. A. Desjardins (6 vols, Paris, 1859-1886), iii, p. 404 (27 August 1559).

– had explicitly refused to leave France.²⁷ According to the master of ceremonies, Ludovico Firmani, the members of the French faction only accounted for twelve votes – that is to say, about half the votes that they had had in 1549, during the conclave that had elevated Julius III.²⁸ After the conclave, Ercole d'Este wrote a letter to his brother, Ippolito, in which the Duke expressed his disappointment over the absence of the French cardinals and his concern that the French crown might take little care in encouraging its prelates to go to Rome also in the future.²⁹

From the perspective of a French participation in the election of the pontiff, the election of 1559 indeed inaugurated a period of decline. In the two conclaves that followed, one in 1565 (Pius V) and another one in 1572 (Gregory XIII), the French group was nearly entirely absent. On both those occasions, only one French cardinal took part in the ballots: all the others – who were also the 'great names' of the French clergy – preferred not to leave France.³⁰ Despite the lack of French supporters, the Cardinal of Ferrara's life-long pursuit of the papal tiara did not stop. Although Ippolito's hopes to ascend the papal throne were ultimately put off only by his own death, in 1572, his chances to fulfil his ambition were irremediably stifled by the changed political scenario that followed Henry II's death and the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. During the ten years between the election of Julius III and that of Pius IV, however, he had been a plausible candidate to the papacy, and had always missed it for only a handful of votes.

Between 1549 and 1559, Henry II's list of *papabili* usually included the most powerful French cardinals – men like Lorraine or Tournon – and the most Francophile amongst the Italian cardinals – in the same period, Salviati, Pisani, and others. Usually, the Italian Francophile cardinals were the King's second or third choice in case of opposition against his 'home' cardinals. Given that the Italians in the Sacred College were about three times more numerous than all the other

²⁷ As the Florentine ambassador, Leone Ricasoli, reported a few days before the beginning of the conclave: Ibid. iii, p. 405. On this conclave, see Ludovico Firmani's *Diaria caerimonialia* and Onofrio Panvinio's *De creatione Pii IV* in Merkle, *Concilium Tridentinum*, ii, 518-531; 573-602. See also: T. Müller, *Das Konklave Pius' IV* (Gotha, 1889).

²⁸ To make things worse, for the French faction, Cardinal du Bellay left the conclave in December because of illness, and two Italian supporters, Cardinals Dandino and Capodiferro, died before the end of the conclave: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 284.

²⁹ 'M'incresce che [...] ella [Charles de Lorraine] si parta non solamente risoluta di non voler più tornar essa, ma che peggio non mostri di curarsi che questi altri signori francesi restino di qua, et certamente sarebbe molto a mal proposito che quei signori de la corte la intendessero del medesimo modo': ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXIV.26 (26 January 1560).

³⁰ In 1565, the only French cardinal in conclave was Jean Suau (also known as Jean Reumano), who died the following year. In the conclave of 1572, the one French present was Charles d'Angennes de Rambouillet, who had been serving as ambassador to the Holy See since 1563 and promoted to the cardinalate in 1570.

nationalities together,³¹ and that they all shared a strong bias against the election of a ‘foreigner’, whether a Spaniard or a Frenchman, the inclusion of some Italians in the list of *papabili* was a decision both strategic and unavoidable.³² An Italian pro-French cardinal was certainly more likely to build the network of consensus that was necessary to become Pope, not least through his family’s connections, and was thus more appealing as a compromise candidate, and more likely to attract the votes of other Italian cardinals attached to rival factions.

Upon arrival in Rome, all French cardinals and their ‘adherents’ were expected to ‘work until the very end’ in order to elect one of the cardinals who the King had decided to support, and who were considered as ‘faithful and affectionate to this crown’.³³ In case of insurmountable opposition from the other parties, the French faction was ultimately supposed to combine their votes for some ‘neutral’ subject of good reputation, someone ‘entirely devoted to the Church, and to the duties of his charge, that [will] be a common and unbiased Father to all the Princes of Christendom’.³⁴ What was essential, however, was to be acknowledged as the faction that had procured the winning cardinal’s election, because that was the ground on which the monarch could later claim his favour and the best antidote against the future pope’s hostility.³⁵

As we have seen, however, none of the factions alone could reach the two-thirds majority of votes that was necessary to make a Pope: therefore, in order to obtain the tiara for one of their candidates, they all needed the support – even partial – of at least one of the other factions. This

³¹ It has been calculated that, between 1513 and 1565, pontiffs appointed 232 cardinals. Of these, 163 were Italian (70 percent), whilst France and Spain together only accounted for 49 cardinals (less than 20 percent). This proportion was, of course, reflected in the number of cardinals who gathered in conclave after the death of a pontiff: in 1559, for instance, out of the 48 cardinals who were in Rome to elect Paul IV’s successor, 37 were Italian. See: Broderick, ‘The Sacred College’, p. 44. See also Pattenden, *Electing the Pope*, pp. 17-20.

³² There are several examples of candidacies that were hindered at a very early stage due to this widespread xenophobic bias, which made the possibility of having a ‘foreign’ Pope universally disliked by all the Italians: Pattenden, *Electing the Pope*, pp. 32-34; Baumgartner, ‘Henry II and the papal conclave’, p. 304; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iii, p. 509; iv, p. 723; 751. In 1555, the French ambassador wrote to the King that it would be impossible to obtain the election of Tournon or du Bellay, ‘estans naturel François’, whilst the Florentine ambassador wrote that ‘il cardinal San Jacopo resta addietro a tutti per essere spagnuolo’. In 1559, Ercole II d’Este told Cardinal von Waldburg, that he stood little chances of becoming Pope because of his being ‘ultramontano’: *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 610; *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 354; ASMO, CS, CDA, Roma, 65, 317.1.

³³ As recommended by Henry II during the conclave of 1549: *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 258.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ As Ippolito wrote in 1555, ‘procureremo con ogni sforzo non solo d’uscire presto di qua, ma di far un papa che riconoscerà da noi principalmente l’essaltatione sua’: ASMO, CS, 150 (16 December 1559). The fear of losing a potential Pope’s favour by not participating in the process of his election was feared by single cardinals too, and it is the reason behind the existence of tools that made compromises within the College possible, such as the *accessus* and the election *per adorationem*. The *accessus* allowed cardinals to cast their vote on a candidate that looked likely to win, whilst expressing their vote for their preferred candidate at the same time: this way, a cardinal could maximise his chances to support the winning candidate. The election *per adorationem* was organised to hasten the election of a strong candidate and to elude the balloting: a group of cardinals started bowing in front of a candidate, to induce all the others to follow. Del Monte, Cervini, and Ghislieri, for instance, were all elected *per adorationem*. For an analysis on the impact of these practices on the elections, see Pattenden, *Electing the Pope*, pp. 169-172.

simple numerical calculation, and the fact that the factions were far from being ‘block’ entities whose members would necessarily vote unanimously for a candidate, resulted in an element of unpredictability that made negotiations and compromises indispensable – and the corruption of single cardinals quite a popular resource.

From 1549 to 1559 – that is to say, in four different conclaves – Ippolito d’Este was the only Italian to figure consistently at the very top of Henry II’s list, coming not only before any other Italian but also before highly regarded French cardinals such as François de Tournon. In every one of these conclaves, the Cardinal of Ferrara was always included among the monarchy’s favourites, sometimes as the first candidate, sometimes as the second after a ‘great’ French cardinal. In 1549, for instance, Ippolito d’Este was King Henry II’s second choice after Jean de Lorraine, who was, at the time, the richest prelate in the kingdom: in case Lorraine was defeated in the first round of balloting, the French faction was ordered to combine all its votes for Ferrara.³⁶ In the conclaves of April and May 1555, the Cardinal of Ferrara was granted Henry II’s full and exclusive support as the French first candidate to the papacy – a decision that was communicated by letter to both the cardinal and the ambassador to Rome, with the express recommendation that no other cardinal should indulge in ‘any alternative hope’.³⁷ In 1559, despite the absence of the majority of French cardinals, Louis de Guise – who was Jean de Lorraine’s nephew and one of the leaders of the French faction – was instructed by the monarchy ‘to do his utmost for the Cardinal of Ferrara’. In case of Ippolito’s defeat, Guise and the rest of the faction were ordered to cast their vote in favour of François de Tournon, who was a prominent member of the French clergy and a royal advisor –

³⁶ Lorraine missed the election by four votes. After the cardinals of Lorraine and Ferrara, the French were ordered to try electing two other Italians, the cardinals Salviati and Ridolfi (both grandchildren of Lorenzo the Magnificent and supported by Catherine de Medici). As a last resort, and in order to avoid the election of an ‘unwanted’, Henry II recommended Marcello Cervini, who was considered as a mild sympathiser and as a man ‘devoted to the Church’: Ibid., p. 262. In the account of the conclave given by Onofrio Panvinio, a contemporary historian, it is said that the Cardinal of Ferrara was Henry II’s first choice – but this is most likely due to the fact that Lorraine’s exclusion became evident very soon: Merkle, *Concilium tridentinum*, ii, pp. 253-254. According to a list compiled by Charles de Guise and Ippolito d’Este at the end of December 1549, the French faction (once all the French cardinals had arrived) included twelve French and eleven Italian cardinals. As Guise wrote: ‘Tous les autres sont Imperiaux et Farnese, excepté deux secrets que l’Ambassadeurs vous mandera, et deux autres, don’t à tous les besoins Monsieur le Cardinal de Ferrare nous fait server’. The ambassador confirmed that ‘outre le nombre des Cardinaux qu’il vous mande tenant vostre party, il [Guise] en a acquis deux [...]; Monsieur le Cardinal de Ferrare deux autres’: Ibid., p. 261; 259. See also the relation written in 1551 by the Venetian ambassador, Matteo Dandolo, in *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ed. E. Albèri (3 series, 14 vols, Florence, 1839-1963), s.3, ii, p. 345. On Jean de Lorraine, see C. Michon, ‘Les richesses de la faveur à la Renaissance: Jean de Lorraine (1498-1550) et François Ier’, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 50-53 (2003), p. 66.

³⁷ Henry II to the Cardinal of Ferrara: ‘Mon Cousin, ie ne veux ny entends estre rien épargné de tout ce qui sera en ma puissance, pour fair eque vous, mon Cousin le Cardinal de Ferrare, parveniez au Papat; [...] outre ce que j’ay écrit resolutivement à mon Ambassadeur le Sieur d’Avanson, avec commandement exprés, qu’il n’ait à mettre, ny tenir aucun des Cardinaux en quelque esperance alternative’. Henry II indeed wrote to the ambassador in very similar tones: Ibid., pp. 604-605.

a reversed situation from 1549, when Ippolito's name had figured after Jean de Lorraine's.³⁸ Although monarchs were ready to claim that they had endorsed a winning candidate from the very beginning of a conclave even if, in fact, they had not – in order not to lose the opportunity to have a pope who owed his election at least partially to them – the support that Henry II granted to Ippolito d'Este was genuine.³⁹

However, and even though the French faction indeed voted according to the King's instructions, Ippolito's relationship with the other French cardinals was not characterised by blind trust – and it is not difficult to see that the efficacy of his leadership was negatively affected by his blatant desire to obtain the pontificate for himself. Lucien Romier insisted on the influence that the struggle for power between Guise and Montmorency had on French foreign politics during Henry II's reign, and on how the divisions existing at the French court were also reflected in the political affiliations of the French prelates and thus in their behaviour in Rome.⁴⁰ According to this interpretation, Ippolito stood as a representative of the Guise faction – since his niece had married the Duke of Guise – and those cardinals who were close to Montmorency, such as du Bellay, opposed him on this ground. Whilst it is undeniable that the hatred between Guise and Montmorency played an important part in the French events of the time, especially after Henry II's death, and it is also undeniable that Ferrara and du Bellay were anything but friends, it does not seem that such a deep political fracture affected the functioning of the French faction as a whole, at least when it came to the election of the new pontiff. In fact, in both 1549 and in 1555, and in spite of their numerical minority, the French were more successful than the Imperials in influencing the outcome of the conclaves – and, as Baumgartner observed, no hint of a reflection of the Guise-Montmorency feud emerges from any of the French correspondence to and from Rome.⁴¹

³⁸ In case of Tournon's defeat, the French were ordered to support, in this order, the cardinals Gonzaga, Pisani, Crispo and Capodiferro: *Cal. State Papers Venice*, 7, no. 95.

³⁹ In 1549, for instance, Henry II sent to his ambassador, d'Urfé, a letter in which he expressed his wish that Cardinal Salviati should ascend the papal throne, and which was meant to be shown to Salviati only in case of his election, as evidence of the support provided by Henry II. The French faction was actually ordered to support Lorraine, Ferrara, or Ridolfi: *Lettres et mémoires*, ii, pp. 261-262.

⁴⁰ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 318; ii, pp. 107; 118; 125-127. In his study of the conclave of 1549-1550, Baumgartner criticised Romier's approach: according to Baumgartner, Romier overstated the role played by the French court factionalism in determining Henry II's politics in Italy, especially with regard to the relationships between Henry II and the Vatican and between Henry II and the French cardinals: Baumgartner, 'Henry II and the papal conclave', p. 309.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* The elections of Julius III and Paul IV were both perceived as a defeat by Imperial diplomacy in Italy: M. J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (New York, 2005), pp. 43; 57-64. The same can be said of "neutral" Marcellus II, whose election was vetoed in 1549 and, unsuccessfully, in 1555 by Charles V: Petrucci della Gattina, *Histoire des conclaves*, ii, p. 77.

We have seen that Ferrara had recommended that the king pay attention to ‘rewarding’ those cardinals who would support his own candidacy. Whilst it was a common practice to support a cardinal’s campaign through the promise of a reward (in the form of ecclesiastical benefices, pensions, lucrative posts, etc) to those prelates who would cast their vote for him – from this point of view, Ippolito’s recommendation had nothing special to it – the worldly means that Henry II made available to the cardinal of Ferrara were quite exceptional. In 1549, the royal bankers in Lyon issued the Cardinal of Guise a note that authorised him to withdraw one hundred thousand *scudi* in Rome, which were to be spent on bribes in any way Guise and Ippolito d’Este would deem appropriate.⁴² In 1555, the cardinal of Ferrara was allowed by the King to offer all the benefices he possessed in France and his position of cardinal protector of the French crown as rewards to those cardinals who would support his election, with the promise that the King would accept their succession to the benefices or the protectorship ‘without any transgression or difficulty’.⁴³ To attract as many votes as possible, Henry II also made available an additional twenty-five thousand *scudi* worth of French ecclesiastical revenues, which would be assigned after the conclave in compliance with Ippolito d’Este’s indications – and special ‘thankfulness’ was promised to the cardinals of Trento and Mantua, the Imperial leaders, if they actively supported Ippolito’s run for the tiara.⁴⁴ Furthermore, in April 1555, a rumour spread in the Vatican that Piero Strozzi, captain of the French army in Tuscany, was ready to march six thousand infantrymen to Rome to procure by force what could not be achieved by negotiation or corruption. Even if this was probably just a *boutade*, it well demonstrates the boldness of the French crown’s involvement with Ippolito d’Este’s campaign.⁴⁵

⁴² *Lettres et memoires*, ii, pp. 256-257. A French agent in Rome wrote that an equally large sum of money had been made available by the Emperor to support his own *favoriti*: ‘Mémoires-journaux’, p. 13.

⁴³ ‘Le Roy permet et consent, qu’il les puisse gratifier de tous les Benefices qu’il tient pardeçà en ce Royaume, ceder et resigner la Protection qu’il a des affaires de France en Cour de Rome, en faveur de celuy desdits Cardinaux qu’il advisera, et dont il se sera prevalu, ou pourra prevaloit pour ce mesme effet et occasion; esperant bien qu’il ne mettra ladite Protection en main de personnage, qui ne soit avec son autorité et bon moyen, pour favoriser et tenir en reputation les affaires dependans de ladite Charge de Protecteur. Aussi pourra au nom du Roy ledit Cardinal promettre aux autres Cardinaux qui luy voudront et pouront aider, iusques à vingt-cinq mille escus de revenu en Benefices, des premiers qui viendront cy-après à vacquer en la disposition de sa Majesté’: *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 605. On Henry II’s support, see also the letter by the Cardinal of Lorraine to Ercole II d’Este: ASMO, CDCPE, Roma – Cardinali, 1386/124, 1 (16 May 1555); and the one by the Duke of Guise to Ercole II d’Este: ASMO, CDCPE, Francia, Guisa-Lorena, 1627/2, 1 (13 May 1555).

⁴⁴ *Lettres et memoires*, ii, p. 605.

⁴⁵ As the Florentine ambassador, Serristori, wrote to Duke Cosimo: ‘È capitato in Roma un uomo del maresciallo Strozzi con lettere credenziali a dieci cardinali della fazione francese, al duca di Ferrara, a quel d’Urbino e allo ambasciatore di Francia, ed ha espressa la sua credenza che è insomma che si tenti di fare il papa per forza d’armi, e che perciò egli offerisce secretamente in Roma tre mila fanti; e fuori il doppio. Ferrara non ha voluto che si sparga questo nome, e ha ricusato’: *Legazioni Serristori*, pp. 351-352. See also F. Trucchi, *Vita e gesta di Piero Strozzi, fiorentino, maresciallo di Francia, scritta su documenti originali* (Florence, 1847), p. 119. Pacifici claims that Strozzi’s letter was intercepted by a Florentine agent and shown to the College of Cardinals: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 262.

On top of Henry II's resources, there was Ippolito's enormous private fortune. Obviously, the cardinal did not spare it in order to pursue his papal ambitions. As observed by a Spanish ambassador, Ferrara 'spends most of his assets to support poor cardinals, and, this way, he holds as affiliated and obliged many of those who are servants of His Majesty [Philip II]'.⁴⁶ Ippolito's largesse was very well known in Rome, from the luxurious hospitality with which he welcomed other cardinals in his palace of Monte Giordano to the shameless offers of money and pensions in exchange for votes.⁴⁷ To support his compelling need of money during conclaves, the cardinal often turned to his brother, the Duke of Ferrara, who had of course a lot to gain in case of Ippolito's success: in March 1555, when Julius III was irremediably ill, Ercole II was asked to send twenty-five thousand *scudi* immediately to Rome and 'to be offered to the College'.⁴⁸ On 15 May 1555, when the conclave that elected Paul IV opened, Ippolito asked his brother for another six-thousand *scudi*, presumably to be spent for the same purpose.⁴⁹

In addition to Henry II's endorsement and Ercole II's money, the cardinal could also count on his family alliance with the House of Guise: Charles de Lorraine led the French faction alongside Ippolito d'Este in 1549, and tried to procure his election.⁵⁰ After the death of his uncle Jean in 1550, Lorraine had become the most powerful prelate of France: his influence was so large that, in 1559, the Florentine ambassador in Rome wrote that 'Lorraine is here Pope and King, with more authority than everyone has ever had in this kingdom'.⁵¹ The Guise had also managed to obtain the red hat for one of Charles's younger siblings, Louis, who substituted for his brother in leading the French cardinals during the conclaves of 1555, when Charles was absent. The correspondence between the two brothers is full of optimistic hopes regarding Ippolito's promotion.⁵² In 1559, Charles de Lorraine once again undertook the journey to Rome with the explicit purpose of 'bringing his support to the cardinal of Ferrara, to promote him to the pontificate'.⁵³

⁴⁶ Luis de Requesens to Philip II: *Beiträge zur politischen, kirchlichen und culture-geschichte...*, ed. I. von Döllinger (Regensburg, 1862), pp. 582-583.

⁴⁷ The palace of Monte Giordano was Ippolito's residence in Rome. Besides being a showcase of its owner's wealth and fine artistic taste, the palace also served as the French headquarters in Rome, often gathering cardinals and agents under its roof: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 143-147.

⁴⁸ Upon requesting the money, Ippolito promised his brother that 'non si sborseranno se non con tutte le sicurezze possibili': ASMO, CS, 1149, 1707.XX.18 (21 March 1555). See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 261 and Hollingsworth, 'A Cardinal in Rome', p. 4.

⁴⁹ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.40 (15 May 1555).

⁵⁰ ASMO, CDCPE, Roma – Cardinali, 1386/124, fasc. 1; *Lettres du cardinal Charles de Lorraine*, pp. 138-144. See also Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, p. 64.

⁵¹ Ricasoli to Cosimo de' Medici: *Négociations diplomatiques*, p. 405 (27 August 1559).

⁵² 'Mémoires-journeaux', p. 233-234.

⁵³ Leone Ricasoli to Cosimo de' Medici: *Négociations diplomatiques*, p. 405 (29 September 1559).

As we have already observed, however, Ippolito d'Este could not hope to become pope without the support of the other factions. To achieve his goal, it was necessary to exploit his network of Italian relationships, and his familial connections with other cardinals. From the correspondence that he held with his brother, Ercole, and with his nephew, Alfonso, it is easy to see how Ferrara became a crucial centre of diplomacy every time a conclave was about to begin. Taking advantage of his duchy's geographical position, which made it a convenient stop on the way to Rome for many cardinals travelling by land, Duke Ercole used all the means offered by Estense diplomacy to second his brother's papal ambitions. In order to be able to work beyond and around the French faction, Ippolito also asked Ercole to send to Rome one of his most trusted advisors, *monsignor* Rossetto, whom he could entrust with the management of more 'unofficial' negotiations with 'many [cardinals] that are not so well known to the others'.⁵⁴

Whilst, as a leader of the French faction, Ippolito conducted all the negotiations in partnership with Charles de Lorraine, it seems that, often enough, Ippolito was trying to make deals with cardinals of the Imperial faction so that their agreement would remain secret not only to other Imperial supporters, but also to the French. This was the nature, for instance, of secret deals he established with his cousin, Ercole Gonzaga – who was one of the leaders of the Imperial faction and enjoyed a good reputation in the Sacred College – and with Otto Truchsess von Waldburg, known as Cardinal of Augsburg, who was another prominent member of the Imperial faction. Whilst in 1549 Ippolito had tried in vain to convince Gonzaga to vote for him, in 1555, after a long negotiation that had also involved Duke Ercole, the two cousins had decided to support each other secretly – and Ippolito therefore believed Mantua's vote to be 'a certainty'.⁵⁵ Although the deal in the end did not work out, in 1559 Cardinal Gonzaga was again at the centre of a complicated tangle of promises weaved by Ippolito d'Este: this time, Ippolito – supported by the Guise cardinals – managed to unite all the French votes on Gonzaga, despite his being an Imperial cardinal.⁵⁶ At the same time, Ercole d'Este had struck a deal, on behalf of his brother, with an old friend of their house, Cardinal von Waldburg: according to Ercole, in case of Ippolito's exclusion from the ballots, he would induce all the French to vote for von Waldburg (under the pretension

⁵⁴ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.21 (23 March 1555).

⁵⁵ ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.70 (12 April 1554).

⁵⁶ The news that the French were ready to support an Imperial were received with surprise by contemporary observers. The Venetian ambassador, for instance, wrote that 'this information would seem incredible had it not been confirmed to me by the Ambassador from Mantua, and from the lips of Ludovic Gonzaga, the Duke's brother, who is here. This was the opinion of the Cardinal [...] de Lorraine, to whom it seems that the world being tired and sickened by seeing popes without authority and of low extraction, [...] it is necessary to make a prince by birth pope, that he may have authority not only with the cardinals, but also with other potentates.' *Cal. State Papers Venice*, 7, no. 96 (the curator of the *State Papers* mistakes Louis de Lorraine with Charles de Lorraine).

of a ‘vote of courtesy’ to enhance the cardinal’s reputation in Germany). In exchange, obviously, von Waldburg was asked to vote for Ippolito in the first place.⁵⁷ This unusual keenness – demonstrated by both Ippolito and Ercole – to find an agreement with Gonzaga and von Waldburg was due to the compelling necessity of undermining the position of another Imperial cardinal, Rodolfo Pio da Carpi, within his own faction. As Ercole explained to von Waldburg, the Este needed support to ‘exclude Pio from the papacy, because of the bad will that this cardinal shows towards my brother and all our house’.⁵⁸ Only when the ballots clearly showed that neither Ippolito himself nor Gonzaga would obtain the majority of votes, did Ippolito turn to the French crown’s list of candidates and tried – in vain – to procure cardinal Pisani’s election.⁵⁹ The way in which these negotiations were conducted, secretly, individually, and cross-faction, shows both that there was not a univocal strategy through which to gain the election, and that any sense of affiliation to a ‘French faction’ or to a broader ‘French agenda’ in Italy was subordinated, on an individual level, to private and familial concern.

Furthermore, in this pattern of behaviour, it is easy to see the clash between his role of candidate for the papacy – and one particularly obsessed with the papal throne – and that of leader of the French faction, thus technically committed to pursue the best course of action to defend the interests of the Valois. From this perspective, Estense diplomacy acted not only as an additional channel to convey more votes to the cardinal, but as a separate entity that sometimes aimed at different and conflicting goals. This emerges more vividly when considering the attempts made by Ercole d’Este to gain the support of Duke Cosimo de’ Medici, who, especially after Julius III’s pontificate, was believed to have a remarkable influence over the College of Cardinals: as Ippolito observed, ‘I do not think that I should worry less about this Duke than I do about the Imperials’.⁶⁰ In 1555, Cosimo’s contribution towards Ippolito’s election was sought by one of Ercole’s agents, who offered Ercole’s friendship and help to the Duke of Florence in exchange for his support of Ippolito during the conclave. The agent made it very clear that, in proposing this the Este intended

⁵⁷ ASMO, CS, CDA, Roma, 65, 317.10 (15 December 1559). Ercole II seemingly managed to convince von Waldburg to vote secretly for Ippolito also in 1555, but the deal did not work out: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.24 (13 April 1555).

⁵⁸ ASMO, CS, CDA, Roma, 65, 317.1 (instructions to Cristoforo Sertorio). See also *ibid.*, 317.4 (20 October 1559); 317.6 (22 November 1559); 317.10 (15 December 1559). A letter, presumably written by the cardinals Madruzzo and Santa Fiora but held among Gonzaga’s correspondence, confirms that the Imperials ‘did not spare any effort to elect Cardinal Carpi, who was so opposed by the French and by others, because of Ferrara’s hostility’: ASMO, CDCPE, Roma – Cardinali, 1380/114 fasc.1 (undated).

⁵⁹ ASMO, CS, 150, 16 December 1559.

⁶⁰ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.21; 22 (23 March 1555). Ippolito’s judgement on the importance of Cosimo’s support find confirmation in the report written by a Florentine diplomat in France: ‘On considère le duc Cosme comme exerçant une grande influence sur le conclave. Si Cosme le voulait, dit-on, Ferrare serait Pape’: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 405. See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 258-259.

to bypass both the king of France and the Emperor, ‘without letting either the Emperor or the King know, because this partnership being harmless for both of these majesties, they would be satisfied with it once it is done’.⁶¹ Despite these attempts, the hostility of Florence weighed against Ippolito’s chances of success throughout the period we are considering.

Duke Ercole’s involvement in his brother’s activity certainly reached its height on the occasion of a conclave. For the little duchy of Ferrara, whose control over part of its territories had always been threatened by the Vatican, having a friendly cardinal installed on St. Peter’s throne was as important as for the French crown – and the hypothetical consequences that might have derived from having a hostile or aggressive Pope far worse, as history had already shown in the past. Whilst the two brothers might have pursued different strategies to enhance their own power (as we will see in the next chapters), the preparation and then management of each conclave undoubtedly configured as teamwork.

As we know, Ippolito indeed never achieved his ambition, and there were a number of factors, alongside Cosimo de’ Medici and the simple fact that the French group of cardinals were often absent or delayed, that prevented this. Whilst it is impossible to analyse in detail the different dynamics within each conclave throughout this period, in general it may be said that the main reason why Ippolito achieved limited success in persuading the other members of the Sacred College to support his campaign was the impossibility to overcome the Imperial faction’s distrust. The Cardinal of Ferrara, despite serious attempts to woo the other parties, could never be a convincing compromise candidate: in the context of the relative successes of the French faction in conclave – there was, notably, no explicitly pro-Imperial pope during this period – Ippolito’s failure was due to his personal position. Given the near impossibility of a true Frenchman being elected by a college of cardinals constituted largely by Italians, Ippolito had been selected by Henry II as the best potential guarantor of Valois interests: from this perspective, his having sealed a family alliance with the powerful house of Guise, rather than projecting him into the Guise-Montmorency feud, had tied his destiny even more closely to that of the French crown. Whilst he could hope to persuade individual Italian cardinals such as Ercole Gonzaga to support him in spite of their Imperial affiliation – owing to their familial allegiances, or, more pragmatically, to corruption – he always faced the ultimate veto of the Emperor.

⁶¹ *Legazioni Serristori*, pp. 352-354. Serristori dismissed Ercole’s agent by replying that ‘tolto via questa congiuntura del pontificato, al Duca di Ferrara sarà uscita la voglia, e si pentirà in tempo che non avrà più rimedio; perché la confidenza non si può fare in un Avemaria, e bisogna seminare chi vuol ricorre’: *ibid.*, p. 354.

Further, however, although Ippolito always had the backing of the King of France, this voice had only limited currency behind the closed doors of the Pauline chapel. The ideal of the clearly demarcated opposition between the French and the Imperial factions, orderly arranged around a faction leader and an ambassador, in reality did not exist, or, at least, function coherently. The individuals that were part of these factions responded to a variety of impulses, and their own network of familial or private alliances overlapped, or, in some cases, overshadowed their political allegiance. Furthermore, as we have seen in the case of the deal between the cardinal Von Waldburg and Ercole II, sometimes the network of familial alliances overshadowed not only one cardinal's political allegiance, but also their private one, interfering in the broader factional strategy as much as in the cardinal's private one.

The other reasons that prevented Ippolito's elevation to the papal throne may have well been articulated by the Venetian ambassador to Rome, Giacomo Soranzo, who, in 1565, wrote that the Cardinal of Ferrara

is considered as the wisest and the most experienced amongst the cardinals; he has an unprecedented patience, but two things disadvantage him, the one having been born too high, the other one having shown too much desire in the past to be promoted to the pontificate.⁶²

Ippolito's being the member of an Italian ruling family posed the problem of a potential upsetting of the Italian geopolitical status quo, in a period when the rivalry between Habsburg and Valois had contributed to create a constellation of different interests and alliances in the small territorial states of Italy. This was a problem, indeed, raised by any prince aspiring to become pope, because the fear of a clash of interests alienated the sympathies of those who had something to lose by the sudden empowerment of an Italian dynasty. The question of Parma, which was far from being resolved at the moment of electing Paul III's successor, can serve as an example: Alessandro Farnese, whose faction swung between the French and the Imperials, refused to cast his vote for Ferrara – at a moment when he was claiming to be willing to side with the French faction – because he believed Ippolito's election to be 'suspicious' and feared that, as a pope, Ippolito would deprive his brother, Ottavio, of the Duchy of Parma, in order to annex it to the Estense territories.⁶³

Finally, it is interesting to notice how the contemporary sources often underline how one of the factors that undermined Ippolito's campaigns for the tiara was the almost unanimous opinion that he displayed an excessive desire for it. Although this could be easily dismissed as nothing more

⁶² *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, ed. Albèri, s.2, iv, p. 143.

⁶³ *Legazioni Serristori*, p. 352; Petrucelli della Gattina, *Histoire diplomatique*, ii, p. 90. See also: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.21 (23 March 1555).

than a colourful anecdote, the recurrence of similar statements in contemporary sources makes it worth taking into account. Coming consistently from diplomats and other prelates, and even from Ercole II d'Este,⁶⁴ this kind of criticism seems somehow to entail than the acknowledgment of a mere personality flaw: rather, it might reflect a progressive modification of the idea of the 'good Pope', which made characters such as Ippolito d'Este – rich, pluralist, princely prelates – look like the suspicious ambassadors of a revival of the great nepotistic age that had been perfectly embodied by Paul III. Whilst the lack of interest in the reformation issues that had troubled the Roman curia throughout the sixteenth century did not necessarily make the cardinal of Ferrara an unappealing pope, the blatant exploitation of his own powerful means and his strong support for the French crown could not but raise the suspicion of a too strong influence of a neighbouring or concurrent power – whether a princely family or a European crown – over the curia.

⁶⁴ 'Il Duca di Ferrara [...] disse che suo fratello si perdeva in questo desiderio d'esser papa per il troppo desiderio che n'aveva': *Legazioni Serristori*, p. 352 (9 May 1555). See also a letter from Ercole II to Ippolito in which the Duke resents his brother's eagerness to access the pontificate: ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.70 (12 April 1554). The Cardinal of Ferrara's burning ambition also alienated him the sympathies of the French cardinals, especially of du Bellay: *Legazioni Serristori*, pp. 351-352 (9 May 1555). Concerns about the Cardinal's too strong desire were also expressed by the Estense ambassador to Rome in 1559: ASMO, CDA, Roma, 65, 317.6 (22 November 1559). In 1560, the Tuscan ambassador again reported that 'tutti i suoi [the Cardinal of Ferrara's] pensieri sono posti nel pontificato': *Legazioni Serristori*, p. 397. More examples of similar statements are in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 262-267.

3. A CARDINAL PROTECTOR'S WEALTH

Sua Maestà mi replicò che questo era un picciol principio a quel molto ch'havea in animo di fare per mio profitto

Ippolito II d'Este¹

We have already observed that the best way a monarch had to secure the cardinal protector's commitment to the cause, especially if this cardinal was a foreigner, was to bestow him with enough benefices to make the cardinal's own interests coincide with the crown's. To this end, the kings of France used bishoprics, abbeys, and pensions. These were, however, the same means through which members of the French aristocracy were rewarded for their services to the royal crown, and, therefore, were the object of fierce competition. Although one might expect, as a consequence of the king's management of the French benefices, a visible 'gallicanisation' of the appointments, there was a large population of Italian prelates amongst the bishops appointed by the kings of France in the sixteenth century. Peronnet, Edelstein, and Baumgartner have all provided statistics that help us to understand the extent of this phenomenon as well as its causes and consequences. Overall, this remarkable Italian presence has been seen as a direct consequence of the French crown's presence – military and political – in Italy, which reached its peak during the reigns of Francis I and Henry II and then decreased in the second half of the sixteenth century, when French ambitions over Italy came to an end. Consistently with this interpretation, the number of foreign appointments to French bishoprics is similar for both the reigns of Luis XII and Charles IX, whilst it is significantly higher for those of Francis I and Henry II.² The same can be said about abbeys, which were sources of income sometimes as fruitful as bishoprics and which were extensively given in care to Italian prelates, often to those who already held at least one episcopal see in France.³

¹ 'His Majesty [Francis I] replied that this was only the small beginning of the much more that he intended to do for my own benefit'. From a letter written by Ippolito d'Este to his brother, Ercole II: ASMO, CDA, 145 (4 June 1536).

² M. C. Péronnet, *Les évêques de l'Ancienne France* (2 vols, Paris, 1977), i, pp. 416-417; Edelstein, 'Foreign Episcopal Appointments', pp. 451-452; Baumgartner, 'Henry II's Italian Bishops', pp. 56-58.

³ Edelstein, 'Foreign Episcopal Appointments', p. 457.

It is therefore worth asking how the cardinal of Ferrara fitted into this scenario, and whether his being the cardinal protector of France brought him, in terms of ecclesiastical benefices, any substantial advantage in comparison to other Italian prelates. The cardinal who preceded Ippolito d’Este as the protector of the French crown, Agostino Trivulzio, had received, throughout his career, nine bishoprics: of these, five were in France, and had all been given to Trivulzio by king Francis I, who had also appointed him cardinal protector.⁴ Ippolito d’Este’s career was seemingly very similar: he held, at various times, two bishoprics in Italy and six in France (see Table 1 and 2 below). A striking difference between these two cardinal protectors, however, lies in the quality of the French benefices that they received: whilst Trivulzio, like the majority of the other Italian prelates, was appointed to ‘poor dioceses’, Ippolito held some of the most remunerative benefices of France – such as the episcopal sees of Autun, Narbonne, Lyon, or the abbey of Chaalis, which gave 15.000 francs of revenues.⁵ Whenever a foreign diplomat – usually Venetian – tried to estimate the revenues that Ippolito was extracting from his French benefices, these figures were invariably around 100-150.000 *livres* per year, and this of course excluded all the properties (lands, palaces, but also the right to collect some taxes) that Ippolito had inherited from his family and the lesser – nonetheless wealthy – benefices that he held in the duchy of Ferrara.⁶ Mary Hollingsworth calculated that, in the sixties, the cardinal of Ferrara’s income was around 85.000 *scudi*: as a useful comparison, one can notice that Ercole Gonzaga, who was the cardinal protector of the Castilian crown and the member of another Italian ruling family, had an income of 20.000 *scudi* in 1540.⁷

Both Agostino Trivulzio and Ippolito d’Este came from families that had been allied with or had served the French power in Italy. They both started their ecclesiastical careers as supporters of the French monarchy, and they both received one or more French benefices before being appointed cardinal protector. From this perspective, then, the protectorship was a confirmation of the already existing relationship between the cardinal and the sovereign: the benefices that both cardinals gained after having been appointed to the post of protector represented a continuation and an enhancement of that same relationship. Whilst Trivulzio exchanged or resigned his French

⁴ Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, iii, p. 17 (from this list is missing the diocese of Périgueux, which is nonetheless to be found in id., p. 272). See also Edelstein, ‘Foreign Episcopal Appointments’, p. 453.

⁵ See Table 1 and Table 3 below.

⁶ Estimates of Ippolito’s wealth suggested by Venetian diplomats are in *Relations des Ambassadeurs*, i, p. 456; ii, p. 86; and in Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 90. Ippolito d’Este’s properties in the duchy of Ferrara are listed in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 331-333. In Italy, Ippolito also held the churches of Bondeno, Pomposa, San Benedetto, and Sant’Agnese, as he declared on the occasion of a general assessment of benefices in 1571: E. Hewett, ‘Assessment of Italian Benefices Held by the Cardinals for the Turkish War of 1571’, *The English Historical Review*, 30/119 (1915), p. 493. The revenues relative to Ippolito’s Italian benefices are in ASMO, CDAP, 921; 922; 923; 944; 996; 998; 1002; 992.

⁷ Hollingsworth, ‘A Cardinal in Rome’, p. 82; *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, ed. Albèri, s. 2, ii, p. 14.

benefices within just a few years, and mainly in favour of other Italians – thus participating in a trend that was common to all the Italian prelates – Ippolito held his for a much longer time, keeping Lyon, Narbonne, and Auch for around ten years each, and remaining the abbot of Chaalis for more than twenty years.⁸ The fact that Ippolito was receiving benefices from and resigning them in favour of the most prominent French cardinals – Lorraine, Tournon, Bourbon – could also be seen as a signal that he was much more naturalised within the elite of the French clergy than his predecessor had been.

Ippolito d’Este was certainly one of the great pluralists of the time. In addition to his various episcopal sees, he also possessed a vast array of abbeys *in commendam*, another practice that was increasingly being stigmatised as contributing to the corruption of the religious orders.⁹ On average, throughout his career, he held around ten French abbeys at once: in 1564, he had twelve, and in 1572 he had thirteen (see Table 3 below). With regard to ‘major benefices’, the only moments when Ippolito held only one diocese were before 1539 (when he was appointed to Lyon), from 1557 to 1562 (without considering his brief repossession of Milan), and during the five years before his death, in 1572 (see Table 3 below). Although McClung Hallman’s study on cardinals and their ecclesiastical property suggests that, during the fifties, the vast majority of cardinals complied with the legal obligation to choose one episcopal see and renounce all the others, Ippolito d’Este eventually became a non-pluralist bishop only in 1567. His pluralism had been occasionally sanctioned by the pontiffs: Paul III, for instance, had granted Ippolito permission to hold both Milan and Lyon at the same time.¹⁰ What emerges vividly from an analysis of Ippolito’s ecclesiastical career is that he exploited the protection provided by the Valois monarchy against any attempt to enforce limits on pluralism coming from the Vatican. In France, as an ambassador observed, ‘neither *spoglie* nor *decime* nor resignations (with or without *regressus*), nor pensions [...] go to Rome; but they are entirely arranged and managed within this kingdom’.¹¹ After 1551, all of

⁸ Péronnet, *Les évêques*, I, p. 491; Baumgartner, ‘Henry II’s Italian Bishops’, p. 57. On Ippolito d’Este’s benefices, see Table 2 and Table 3 in the following Appendix.

⁹ On the legal status of the *commendam*: Poncet, *La France et le pouvoir pontificale*, pp. 43-44. For criticism of its use: Lavagne d’Ortigue, ‘Le temps de faux abbés: la commende en France du XVI au XVIII siècle’, in D-M. Dauzet and M. Plouvier (eds), *Abbatat et abbés dans l’ordre de Prémontré* (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 161-165. See also the entry in Durand de Maillane, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique et de pratique bénéficiale* (4 vols, Lyon, 1770), i, 569-572.

¹⁰ McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, pp. 32-33.

¹¹ Ambassador Marino Cavalli, in 1546: *Relations des Ambassadeurs vénitiens sur les affaires de France au XVIe siècle*, ed. N. Tommaseo (2 vols, Paris, 1838), i, pp. 299-300. The right of *regressus* was a legal instrument that allowed a bishop who had resigned a benefice to receive it back whenever that benefice should fall vacant. During the XVI century, the *regressus* was extremely popular amongst the Church hierarchies, as it provided an efficient way to maintain some authority over more than one benefice, and, therefore, to dodge partially the legislation against the accumulation of benefices (not surprisingly, the *regressus* had been severely criticised by those seeking a reformation of the Church and had been included in the famous report on the abuses of the clergy, the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*). The same decree issued by Paul III that forbade prelates from holding more than one episcopal see specified that the rule also

Ippolito d'Este's dioceses are to be found in France, where the number of abbeys, pensions, and reservations (*regressus*) that he held was also growing exponentially. In Italy, on the contrary, he possessed only the archdiocese of Milan, which he renounced in 1555 but which kept coming back to him through the *regressus* until his final resignation in 1558. The decision to renounce Milan had been indeed motivated in the first place by the cardinal's desire to maintain his French bishoprics whilst, at the same time, he was forced to show at least some compliance with the legislation against the accumulation of bishoprics enforced by Paul III and Julius III.

The presence of so many Italian prelates amongst those who held benefices in France, as we have said, has been seen by historians as an 'exceptional conjuncture' due to the direct involvement of the crown in the political life of the Italian peninsula. Some common features seem to have been shared by this group of Francophile ecclesiastics: they were usually appointed to dioceses on the medium-low end of the revenues spectrum; they were part of a network of other Italian prelates to whom they used to resign their episcopal sees or to grant pensions; they rarely hold the same benefices for more than a few years. In this context, the quality and quantity of Ippolito's ecclesiastical properties in France make him an exceptional case in an already 'exceptional' scenario. What is more noteworthy, his habits in terms of benefices made him much more similar to French prelates than to his Italian equivalents.

applied to those bishoprics that were repossessed through the *regressus*. The reservation of the regress, however, was still tolerated (mainly because it was so popular that its eradication would have involved the whole Curia). In France, the *regressus* was subject to more restricted conditions (for instance, it could not be introduced to a benefice in which it was not already in use) and to the King's approval: McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, pp. 33-35; H. Jedin, *A History of The Council of Trent* (2 vols, London, 1957), i, pp. 423-425. On the legal aspects of the regress in France: Durand de Maillane, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, iv, pp. 298-300.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Dioceses held by Ippolito d’Este between 1519 And 1576

MILAN (archdiocese) ^I

1519-March 1550 and April 1555-December 1556 and June 1558

1519: Ippolito is appointed to succeed his uncle Ippolito I d’Este

MARCH 1550: Ippolito exchanges Milan for NOVARA → Giovan Angelo Arcimboldi

Ippolito keeps 2/3 of the income and the regress

APRIL 1555: Arcimboldi dies → Ippolito (regress)

DECEMBER 1556: Ippolito resigns → Filippo Archinti

JUNE 1558: Archinti dies → Ippolito (regress) → Gian Angelo de’ Medici (January 1560)

Ippolito renounces his right to regress

LYON (archdiocese) ^{II}

October 1539-May 1551 and April 1562-July 1564

OCTOBER 1539: Ippolito is appointed by the King of France

The King of France had promised Lyon to Ippolito d’Este already in 1536

MAY 1551: Ippolito resigns → Cardinal Tournon

Ippolito keeps the regress

APRIL 1562: Tournon dies → Ippolito (regress)

JULY 1564: Ippolito exchanges Lyon with ARLES → Antoine d’Albone

TREGUIER

April 1542-November 1548

APRIL 1542: Ippolito is appointed by the King after Louis de Bourbon’s resignation

NOVEMBER 1548: Ippolito resigns → Giovenale Orsini

AUTUN^{III}

June 1548-June 1550

JUNE 1548: Ippolito is appointed by the King of France

JUNE 1550: Ippolito resigns → Philibert D’Ugny

The King asked Ippolito to resign Autun in order to be appointed to NARBONNE

NARBONNE (archbishopric) ^{IV}

June 1550-April 1551 and October 1563-death

JUNE 1550: Ippolito is appointed by the King of France after the death of the Cardinal of Lorraine

APRIL 1551: Ippolito exchanges Narbonne with AUCH → Cardinal Tournon

Ippolito keeps a pension of 1.000 scudi

MAY 1551: Tournon resigns → Cardinal Francesco Pisani

Tournon keeps 1/3 of the income and the regress, which adds up to the pension that was already due to Ippolito d’Este

APRIL 1562: Tournon dies

OCTOBER 1563: Cardinal Pisani resigns → Ippolito
Cardinal Pisani keeps 1/3 of the income.

NOVARA ^V

March 1550-November 1551

MARCH 1550: Acquired from Giovan Angelo Arcimboldi in exchange for MILAN

NOVEMBER 1551: Ippolito resigns → Giulio della Rovere

AUCH ^{VI}

April 1551-October 1563

APRIL 1551: Acquired from Cardinal Tournon in exchange for NARBONNE

OCTOBER 1563: Ippolito resigns → Luigi d’Este

Ippolito keeps all the income of the diocese for himself (with the exception of 1.000 ducati)

ARLES

July 1564-1566/7

JULY 1564: Acquired from d’Albone in exchange for LYON

1566/7: Ippolito resigns → Prospero Santa Croce

SAINT-JEAN DE MAURIENNE ^{VII}

1564-1567

DECEMBER 1559: Girolamo Capodiferro dies →

MARCH 1560: Brandelasio Trotti is appointed

1563: Trotti dies → 1564: Ippolito

NOVEMBER 1567: Ippolito resigns → Pierre de Lambert

Notes to Table 1:

^I On the controversies regarding Ippolito’s possession of the Archdiocese of Milan, the difficulties in collecting its revenues and Ippolito’s several resignations, see chapter II.2 ‘Serving the family’, pp. 114-127.

^{II} Ippolito was appointed to the Archbishopric of Lyon by King Francis I in 1536, during his first visit to the French royal court. On 4 October 1536, he wrote to his brother Ercole that ‘essendo venute [...] novelle a questa Maestà che l’arcivescovo di questa città [...] era molto gravato dal male [...] anchor che li suoi benefici le fussero dimandati da altri, ella, ricordandosi de la servitù mia, senza altro mio ricordo, non solo mi fece gratia di l’arcivescovato de Lione ma anco di una bellissima abbatia di San Marco di Suason’: ASMO, CS, 145, 1709.II.34. However, to be confirmed to the episcopal see, he needed to obtain papal approval, which was only conceded in 1539. The reason behind this delay was the ongoing negotiation between Paul III and Duke Ercole II on the issue of Modena and Reggio and on Ippolito’s elevation to the cardinalate. The Pope required Ercole II to pay an enormous sum of money to be reinstated as the legitimate ruler of the two cities and to bestow Ippolito with the red hat (respectively, 170.000 and 40.000 *scudi*). This request encountered Ercole’s stubborn – but understandable – resistance, in spite of Ippolito’s efforts to convince his brother to comply with Paul III’s terms. As a temporary compromise, King Francis I offered Lyon to Jean de Lorraine, who promised to leave the benefice to Ippolito when his family dispute with the Vatican would be resolved. In a letter written to Ferrara in January 1539, Ippolito explained to Duke Ercole II, who would have wanted to see his brother appointed to Lyon, that he could not prompt the King to do so, because the archdiocese had been given to the powerful Cardinal of Lorraine. Nevertheless, Francis I kept his promise and bestowed Ippolito with the archbishopric of Lyon later on in 1539, upon resignation of the Cardinal of Lorraine, and after Paul III had publicly elevated Ippolito to the red hat (in the consistory of 5 March 1539) and had approved his appointment to the French benefice (in October 1539): Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal’s Hat*, pp. 130-132; 233; M. C. Giannini, ‘Ippolito II d’Este arcivescovo di Milano fra interessi familiari e scelte politiche (1535-1550)’, in A. Rocca and P. Vismara (eds) *Prima di Carlo Borromeo. Istituzioni, religione e società agli inizi del Cinquecento* (Rome, 2012), pp. 109-110. On Jean de Lorraine, who was the initiator of the Guise ecclesiastical dynasty, see: S. Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers. The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 37-41.

^{III} Upon resignation of the diocese of Autun, in 1550, Ippolito obtained the abbey of Flavigny and the abbey of Saint Vivant. See Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 332.

^{IV} In the consistory of 8 October 1563, Ippolito resigned Auch to Luigi and obtained Narbonne from Cardinal Francesco Pisani, who had held the diocese since 1551. Narbonne was worth 27.000 *livres*. Prospero Santa Croce, papal nuncio to France in 1553, wrote that Narbonne was worth 20.000 francs, and that Ippolito had offered (through the French ambassador to Rome, Lansac) to exchange it for the bishopric of Mirepoix and two abbeys that belonged to Julius III’s favourite, Cardinal Innocenzo del Monte: *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 249.

^V Although the diocese of Novara was not a metropolitan see, its revenues were equal to those of the more important archdiocese of Milan – both being worth around 5.000 ducats a year according to the Venetian ambassador Caroldo: *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, ed. A Segarizzi (3 vols, Bari, 1912-1916), ii, p. 28. When Ippolito d’Este resigned Milan to Arcimboldi in exchange for Novara, he promised to Don Ferrante Gonzaga, the governor of Milan, that he would later resign Novara in favour of Giulio della Rovere, a cardinal who was loyal to the Emperor: C. Marcora, ‘La Chiesa milanese nel decennio 1550-1560’, *Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Milano*, 7 (1960), pp. 261-264.

^{VI} The dioceses of Narbonne, Lyon, and Auch were at the centre of a complicated exchange of benefices that took place in April and May 1551 between Ippolito and the Cardinals Tournon and Pisani. In April, Ippolito and Tournon exchanged their respective dioceses of Narbonne and Auch. However, a dispute arose between King Henry II and Pope Julius III on their respective right to appoint the bishops to vacant French dioceses. When Ippolito resigned Narbonne to Tournon, Julius III appointed to Narbonne Cardinal Pisani, who, having a reputation for being loyal to the Valois monarchy, was not an unacceptable choice for King Henry II. Tournon was therefore convinced to renounce Narbonne, only one month after his appointment and under the provision of one third of the income and the right to re-enter the diocese in the future. At the same time as Tournon’s resignation, in May 1551, Ippolito resigned Lyon in favour of Tournon, but he too kept the *regressus*. For this reason, the Archdiocese of Lyon fell again into Ippolito’s hands after Cardinal Tournon’s death in April 1562. At the time, Ippolito still held the bishopric of Auch: therefore, in compliance with the existing decrees against the holding of more than one episcopal see, Ippolito would have had to resign one diocese or the other within six months. In October 1563, however, he had not yet done so. In a letter written to the bishops gathered in Trent, Cardinal Borromeo tried to justify Ippolito’s pluralism: Borromeo explained that the archdiocese of Lyon had been seized by the Huguenots during the wars of religion in France, and Ippolito had not been able to take official possession of the benefice. For this reason, the pope had decided not to apply the six-months deadline. The year of Ippolito’s resignation of Lyon is not fully clear. See R. Trisco, ‘Carlo Borromeo and the Council of Trent’, in J. M. Headley and J. B. Tomaro (eds), *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical*

Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century (Washington, 1988), p. 63. On the Concordat of Bologna and the dispute between Julius II and Henry II, see: Poncet, *La France et le pouvoir pontificale*, pp. 51-73; Baumgartner, ‘Henry II’s Italian Bishops’, p. 55. See also J. Tricou, ‘Un archevêque de Lyon au XVI^e siècle, Hyppolyte d’Este’, *Revue des études italiennes*, V (1958), pp. 147-166. Some information on Ippolito’s tenure of Lyon is available in Hours, Le ‘XVI^e siècle’, in G. Gadille, R. Fedou, H. Hours and B. de Vrégille (eds), *Histoire du Diocèse de Lyon* (Paris, 1983), pp. 123-127.

^{vii} The two main sources that informed this table do not agree on the years of Ippolito’s tenure of Arles. Eubel dates Ippolito’s resignation to 1566, and Gams to 1567. Furthermore, both Gams and the compilers of *Gallia christiana* dates Ippolito’s appointment (and cardinal d’Albone’s translation to Lyon) to 1562, while Eubel to July 1564. In the consistory of 8 October 1563, however, Ippolito was reported to be holding both Auch and Lyon, and this seems to dismiss 1562 as the year of his resignation of Lyon; it is more likely that this took place sometime between October 1563 and July 1564. See Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, iii, p. 116; P. B. Gams, *Series Episcoporum Ecclesiae catholicae* (Graz, 1957), p. 495; *Gallia christiana in provincias ecclesiasticas distribuita...*, ed. D. de Sainte-Marthe et al. (16 vols, Paris, 1715-1865), col. 590; Trisco, ‘Carlo Borromeo and the Council of Trent’, p. 62.

^{vii} After Girolamo Capodiferro’s death, the diocese of St-Jean de Maurienne (in Savoy) was assigned, in March 1560, to Brandelasio Trotti, provost of Ferrara. Trotti had been a member of Ippolito’s household since the thirties, and he had also followed him to France in 1536. At the beginning of the fifties, when the cardinal of Ferrara was in Siena, Trotti had served as an ambassador and representative of Ippolito before the Pope. In March 1560, Trotti held the important position of Ippolito’s *vicelegato al patrimonio*: from Rome, he managed all the cardinal’s payments and kept track of all his income and expenses. The cardinal of Ferrara obtained Trotti’s appointment to the bishopric of Maurienne as a reward for the support that he had offered to Pius IV during the conclave that had led to his election. In a letter written to his nephew, Alfonso II, the Ippolito d’Este wrote that ‘Nostro Signore ha dato a contemplatione mia al Preposto Trotti il vescovato di Moriana, che si figura due mila ducati, de quali mille ne ha riservati di pensione a me per parte de la ricompensa di Milano et d’altri cinquecento si trova aggravato di pension vecchia, di modo che cinquecento almanco ne restano per il vescovo’. However, this decision of Pius IV – taken at the beginning of his pontificate, when he needed to please his electors – provoked a harsh dispute between the pope and the cardinal of Ferrara about two years later, when the cardinal received news that Pius IV was considering appointing a man of the Duke of Savoy to Trotti’s diocese. Given the old age of Ippolito’s *protégé*, the Pope’s renewed interest in the bishopric of Maurienne was probably due to an illness of Brandelasio Trotti. However, the fact that Trotti had been appointed ‘in contemplatione’ implied that, in case of his death, Ippolito d’Este was expecting to succeed him to the benefice – or, at least, to appoint his successor. The dispute over Maurienne lasted for several months: on 31 December 1561, Ippolito angrily wrote to Rome that he was extremely displeased, because ‘with these rumours, someone might think that [Maurienne] is taken from the person I gave it to because I am held in very low esteem’. The developments of the controversy in the following months seem to suggest that, in the meantime, Brandelasio Trotti had died (although Eubel in his *Hierarchia catholica* lists him as the bishop of Maurienne until 1563). In a letter written from France in April 1562, when Pius IV’s decision to appoint someone else to the bishopric seemed irreversible, Ippolito d’Este begged Cardinal Borromeo to grant him at least his pension of one-thousand *scudi*, because he doubted that any newly-appointed bishop would be keen to pay him, and because he had already been prevented from cashing in his pension during the months when the controversy was going on. He also suggested that the Pope should produce a written statement to make clear that he had always intended to grant Ippolito that pension, that the former bishop (‘the dead man’) had been aware of it and never objected – and it is hard to imagine how ‘the dead’ could refer to anyone but Brandelasio Trotti, given that the previous bishop, Girolamo Capodiferro, had never paid Ippolito any pension. Despite this long debate with the Pope and Cardinal Borromeo, Ippolito d’Este eventually won his case: in 1564, he was appointed apostolic administrator of Maurienne, which he held until 1567. See: ASMO, CS, 150,1709.XXVI.48 (31 Dicembre 1561); *ibid.*, 1709.XXIV.32 (27 March 1560); ASV, Misc. Arm. II, pp. 64ss; *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 402; Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal’s Hat*, pp. 33, 88-89; Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, iii, p. 238; Gams, *Series episcoporum*, p. 830; McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, p. 34; Baumgartner, ‘Henry II’s Italian Bishops’, p. 55. Brandelasio Trotti is also remembered as a member of Ippolito’s household in a list of ‘Ferrara’s illustrious men’, but his biography contains various mistakes: Libanori, *Ferrara d’oro imbrunito* (3 vols, Ferrara, 1665-1674), i, pp. 89-90.

Table 2: Timeline

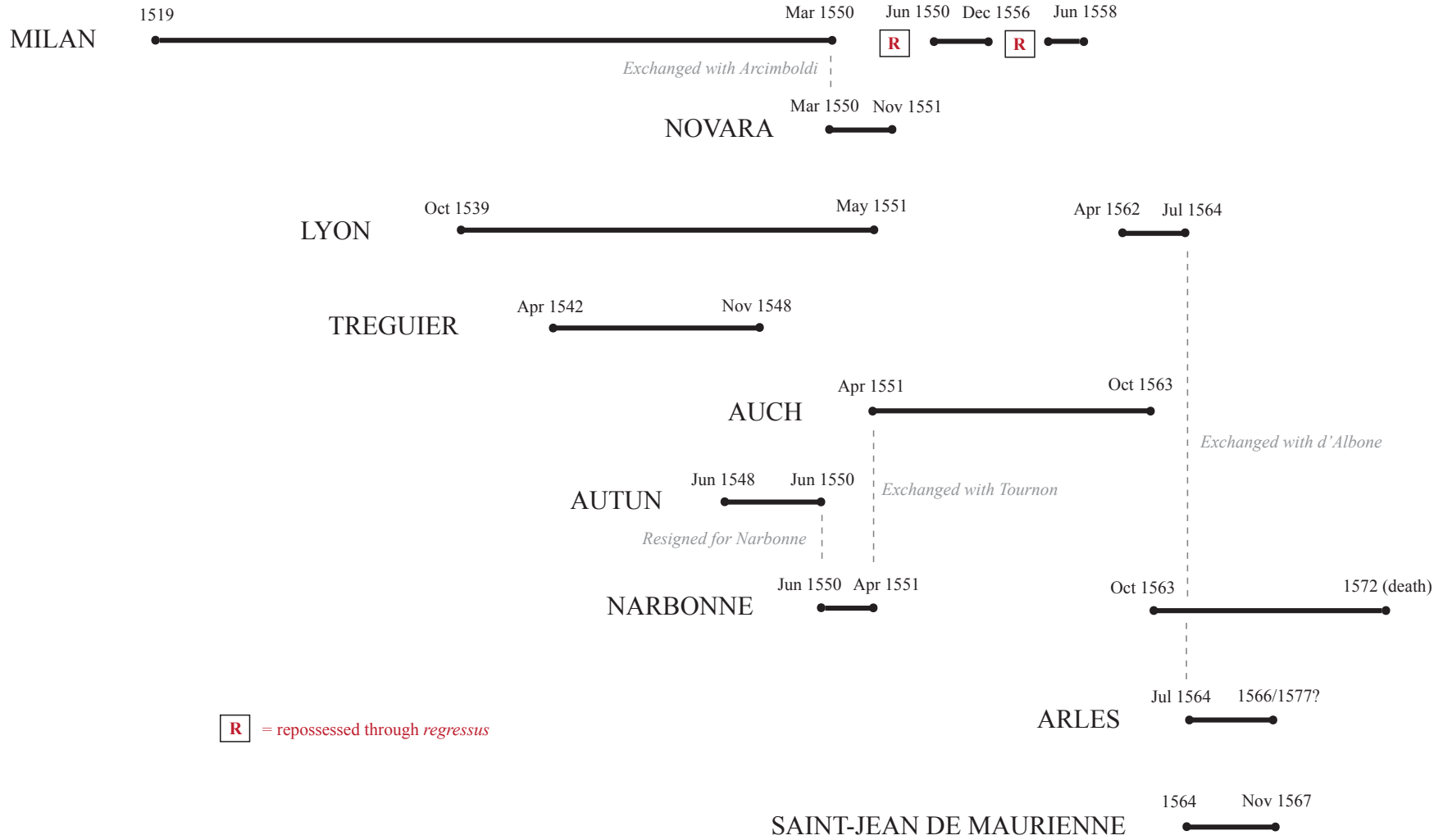


Table 3: French abbeys held in commendam by Ippolito d’Este between 1539 and 1572

Name	Revenues (if known)	Order	From
Saint-Médard de Soissons ^I	5.500 livres	Benedictine	1539
Jumièges	10.000 livres	Benedictine	1539
Chalais ^{II}	15.000 livres	Cistercian	1541
Flavigny ^{III}		Benedictine	1550
Saint-Vivant de Vergy		Benedictine	1550
Aumône ^{IV}		Cistercian	1551
Saint-Étienne de Caen ^V		Benedictine	1557
Beauport		Premostratensian	1557
Grandselve		Cistercian	1557
Pontigny ^{VI}		Cistercian	1560
Sainte-Trinité de Tiron		Benedictine	1560
Notre-Dame de Breteuil		Benedictine	1560
Saint-Chinian		Benedictine	1561
Saint-Mesmin de Micy		Benedictine	1561
Saint-Martin d’Ainay ^{VII}		Benedictine	1562
Prémontré (chief of order) ^{VIII}	8.000 livres	Premonstratensian	1562
Saint-Georges de Boscherville	4.000 livres	Benedictine	1563
Saint-Laumer de Blois	6.000 livres	Benedictine	1563
Notre-Dame de Lyre	8.000 livres	Benedictine	1563
Longpont	2.500 livres	Cistercian	1563
Boulbonne	8.000 livres	Cistercian	1563
Sainte-Marie de Bertheaucourt	5.000 livres	Benedictine	1563

Notes to Table 3:

^I Both Saint Médard at Soissons and Jumièges were promised to Ippolito by King Francis I in 1536, when he also promised him the see of Lyon. Just as with the archbishopric of Lyon, his possession of the abbeys of Jumièges and St-Médard was officially recognised by Paul III only in 1539. Ippolito d’Este wrote to his brother, Duke Ercole, to inform him that Jumièges was worth 4.000 *ducati* a year (or 10.000 livres), whilst Saint-Médard and the archbishopric of Lyon together were worth 18-20.000 livres a year: ASMO, CS, 145, 1709.II.34. See also Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal’s Hat*, p. 214. The Papal nuncio, Rodolfo Pio, confirmed in a letter to Rome that King Francis I had promised Ippolito ‘a good abbey and the bishopric of Lyon which would amount to 15.000 francs a year, if he who possesses them, who is very ill, dies’: McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, p. 43. The revenues of Saint-Médard are also mentioned in a list in ASMO, CS, 390 (undated).

^{II} Chalais was given to Ippolito d’Este by Francis I in 1541, after he had gifted King Francis I with an ewer and a basin masterfully crafted by his goldsmith, Benvenuto Cellini. Cellini himself reports the episode in his autobiography, saying that, in return for his gift, the Cardinal had received an abbey that was worth 7.000 *scudi*: Cellini, *Autobiography*, p. 259. Although Cellini does not mention its name, that the abbey in question was Chalais is confirmed by both the year of the donation and the abbey’s value, which roughly reflects the figure indicated in a list of benefices in the Archive of Modena (ASMO, CS, 390). Commenting on his latest acquisition, the Ippolito d’Este wrote to Ercole II that ‘the estate, the building and the location are very beautiful, and it is a place which is often visited by His Majesty’: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 67-68; Hollingsworth, ‘A Cardinal in Rome’, p. 83; Hollingsworth, ‘A Taste for Conspicuous

Consumption', p. 134. In the years following 1541, Ippolito d'Este employed a variety of renowned artists to renovate the abbey. The Cardinal's patronage of art reached one of its peaks in Chaalis: both the architectural works planned by Sebastiano Serlio and the decoration of the chapel, commissioned to Primaticcio, are well known to art historians. On this topic, see, for example: S. Frommel, 'Hippolyte d'Este à Chaalis. Architecture projetée, architecture peinte', *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, 87 (2008), pp. 143-172 and J-P. Babelon (ed), *Primatice à Chaalis* (Paris, 2006). On Ippolito as the abbot of Chaalis, see also: M-N. Baudouin-Matuszek, 'Hippolyte d'Este, cardinal de Ferrare, à Paris et à l'abbaye de Chaalis', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, 125-128 (1998-2000), pp. 1-15.

^{III} Both Flavigny and Saint Vivant were obtained from Cardinal D'Ugny upon Ippolito's resignation of the diocese of Autun, in 1550: ASMO, CS, 148, 28 June 1550.

^{IV} For a chronology of the abbots, see C. Cuissard, 'L'Abbaye de l'Aumône ou le Petit-Citeaux', *Bulletins de la Société Dunoise*, IV/1881-1884 (1885), p. 414; Lavagne d'Ortigue, 'Le temps de faux abbés', p. 165. In 1561, Ippolito d'Este exchanged Aumône for Prémontré, held by Cardinal Francesco Pisani: ASMO, CS, 390, *Brevetto del re*. The exchange of abbeys between Ippolito d'Este and Pisani displeased Pope Pius IV, especially because it took place at the time of Ippolito's legation to Paris. On his intention to acquire Prémontré from Pisani, Ippolito wrote to his Roman agent, Francesco Maria Visconti: 'In una permuta ch'io son per fare con monsignor reverendissimo Pisani dell'Abbatia sua di Premonstre con la mia del piccolo Cistiaulex non ho mirato ad alcuno mio interesse o comodo particolare, [...] essendomi mosso a ciò solo per la contentezza di quel signore et perché io ho veduto talvolta le cose di quella Abadia in tal termini che ho dubitato che non intravenisse qualche strano accidente per sua signoria reverendissima et che non li fosse levata il che non mi pareva che meritasse già la bontà et devotione antica di quel signore verso questa corona, per i meriti della quale non solo non si avesse a privare di quello che ha havuto fin qui ma che più tosto fosse premiato et riconosciuto davantaggio oltre che per essere la sua Badia capo d'ordine et male intrattenuta da un pezzo in qua non potrò mantenerla se non con maggiore spesa di quello che facevo la mia': ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 131, p. 40 (4 December 1561).

^V The abbeys of Saint-Étienne de Caen, Grandselve and Beauport were assigned to Ippolito d'Este's following Henry II's decision, in October 1557, to confiscate all of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's benefices in France – a punishment for Farnese's support for the King of Spain (although Farnese repossessed at least some of them only a few years later): Romier, *Les origines politiques*, ii, p. 90; F. Galabert, 'L'abbaye de Grandselve sous le Cardinal Farnése, 1562-1579', *Bulletin archéologique historique et artistique de la Société archéologique de Tarn-et-Garonne*, v. 61 (Montauban, 1928), p. 89. According to the papal nuncio Lenzi, the abbeys acquired by Ippolito d'Este thanks to Farnese's spoliation were worth 30.000 francs: *Correspondance de nonces en France. Lenzi et Gualtiero, legation du Cardinal Trivulzio (1557-1561)*, ed. J. Lestocquoy (Rome, 1977), p. 105.

^{VI} According to Evennett, Cardinal Du Bellay personally resigned Pontigny in favour of Ippolito d'Este just before his death. After du Bellay's death, in February 1560, Ippolito also received Tiron and Breteuil, which had belonged to the French prelate. However, a dispute arose between the French monarchy and Pius IV on who held the right to assign du Bellay's benefices. For this reason, Ippolito eventually received Tiron and Breteuil from the hands of pope Pius IV rather than from the king of France. On this, see: Evennett, 'Pie IV et les bénéfices', pp. 442-461; 453.

^{VII} Saint-Martin d'Ainay was one of the numerous benefices that fell vacant after Cardinal Tournon's death in April 1562. Ippolito d'Este resigned it in 1566, as requested him by the King: ASMO, CS, 410, 2056.XVIII.9.

^{VIII} The revenues of Prémontré and of the following six abbeys are all from a list of Ippolito's abbeys compiled between 1563 and 1564: ASMO, CS, 390 (undated).

PART II

1. SERVING THE KING. THE ADMINISTRATION OF SIENA, 1552-1554

Si commissione alcuna è dalle bande di qua, credemo che sia nel Cardinale di Ferrara

Pope Julius III¹

The traditional rivalry in Italy existing between the French kingdom and the Holy Roman Empire played a determining role in shaping the political destinies of the Italian States during the Renaissance. Between the end of the fifteenth century and the second half of the sixteenth century, the peninsula was the battleground for a series of micro-conflicts – collectively known as the ‘Italian wars’ – that involved the principal Italian rulers as well as France, the Empire, and the Holy See. In this scenario of ever-changing alliances and structural political tensions, every crisis had the potential to spread beyond its local borders and to provide the *casus belli* for the resumption of hostilities, which would inevitably entail the establishment of new alliances and counter-alliances, in a political domino effect. The presence of foreign troops in the Italian northern regions – in Lombardy and in Piedmont – and the strong imbalance of military power between the European sovereigns and the Italian rulers had made the political survival of the latter highly dependent on the protection respectively offered by the King or the Emperor and – consequently – on their own diplomatic resourcefulness in order never to alienate completely any of the political actors involved. The presence of the Vatican, whose territories covered a great portion of the Italian peninsula, contributed to the general frame of uncertainty, especially because its policies were never univocal but rather the combination of diverse interests – interests which could also abruptly change following the election of a new Pope. This was the case, for instance, in 1545, when Pope Paul III Farnese decided to bestow, as a fief, the cities of Parma and Piacenza – part of the Papal State – on his illegitimate son, Pier Luigi. This way, a new problematic political entity was added to the already

¹ ‘If there is any authority over those lands, we believe that it lies in the Cardinal of Ferrara’. From a note addressed by Julius III to his emissary to Siena, Giovanni Andrea Vimercato, on 12 August 1553: ASV, Misc. Arm, II, 79, p. 139.

fragmented Italian scene. When Pier Luigi Farnese, Duke of Parma and Piacenza, was suddenly murdered only a couple of years later, in 1547, the consequent political upheavals resulted in the resumption of the war between the French crown and the Habsburgs, and in the exacerbation of the already strained relation between the Valois monarchy and the Holy See.²

By the beginning of 1551, the situation had reached a critical point: Charles V had occupied Piacenza and was claiming Parma, Paul III had died and Pier Luigi's son, Ottavio Farnese, was trying to protect his inheritance from both the Emperor and the new Pope Julius III, who would have wanted to reintegrate Parma within the Church territories. Charles V and Julius III's ambitions for Parma had led Ottavio Farnese to seek an alliance with the Valois monarchy, the only power that could guarantee effective protection of his small dukedom. When the agreement between Ottavio and Henry II became formalised in May 1551, the Pope abandoned any attempt to bring the issue to a pacific resolution; instead, he declared the removal of Ottavio from his title of Duke and sought an alliance with the Emperor Charles V. In just a few weeks, this situation rapidly degenerated into open war, in which the joint forces of Charles V and the Pope opposed the French troops. This new scenario caused a breach of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican, and Henry II even ordered the Papal nuncio Cardinal Trivulzio to take immediate leave of his court.³ After less than a year of war, however, severe financial difficulties led the Pope, once again, to walk the path of diplomacy, and to sign a truce with the King of France and Ottavio Farnese, to which Charles V – who was struggling with the internal political and religious turmoil of his reign – adhered just a couple of weeks later.⁴ The truce, signed in April 1552, ended the war

² It is impossible to provide here a thorough account of the instalment of the Farnese dynasty in Parma and Piacenza, let alone one of the different stages of the long and complicated Italian wars. For a chronological, narrative account, see: M. E. Mallett and C. Shaw, *The Italian Wars 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (London, 2012), pp. 37-288. On Paul III's politics and Pier Luigi's investiture, see the classic work by C. Capasso, *Paolo III (1534-1549)* (Messina-Rome, 1923) and the critical analysis of it made by Signorotto, 'Papato e principi italiani', pp. 261-264. Also useful is G. Tocci, 'Nel corridoio strategico-politico della pianura padana: Carlo V, Paolo III e la creazione del ducato farnesiano', in F. Cantù and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *Carlo V e l'Italia. Guerra, religione e politica nel primo Cinquecento*, ii (Rome, 2003), pp. 375-388. For an outline of the years of war between Habsburg and Valois, see: A. Spagnoletti, 'Guerra, stati e signori in Italia nell'età di Carlo V', in M. Fantoni (ed), *Carlo V e l'Italia* (Rome, 2000), pp. 77-100; E. Stumpo, 'Il sistema degli stati italiani crollo e consolidamento (1492-1559)', in *La Storia. I grandi problemi dal medioevo all'età contemporanea*, vol. V: *L'età moderna. Stati e società* (Turin, 1986), pp. 35-53. A historiographical review of the works available on this topic is in E. Fasano Guarini, '«État moderne» et ancient états italiens. Éléments d'histoire comparée', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 45 /1 (1998), pp. 15-41. On the role played by the Duchy of Ferrara in the wars of the central decades of the sixteenth century, see also: G. Benzoni, 'D'Este, Ercole II', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1993).

³ In August 1551: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 201.

⁴ The military operations mainly involved the territories around Parma and Piacenza. The town of Mirandola, where the French had concentrated their forces, was put under siege by Ferrante Gonzaga, Governor of Milan and leader of the Imperial-Papal troops. During this stage of the war, the castle of Brescello, which belonged to the Cardinal of Ferrara, had been sacked by Gonzaga's troops. See chapter II.2 'Serving the family' in this thesis.

of Parma and Piacenza without introducing any substantial modification to the *status quo ante*, and Parma remained with Ottavio Farnese.⁵

Instead of inaugurating a period of peace, however, the end of the short war of Parma re-awakened the ambitions of the European potentates over the Italian region. The hostility between Henry II and Charles V remained unchanged, as did Henry II's resentment towards Pope Julius III, who had taken the Imperial side. As one of the French military commanders in Italy, Blaise de Monluc, wrote in his memoirs many years after these events, the King of France still 'wished to trouble the Emperor in Italy'. In order to do so, as we will see below, Henry II 'made the citizens of Siena revolt, so that the Spanish that were there were expelled [...] and as these people saw themselves free, they put up the French emblem and begged the King for his help'.⁶ Not surprisingly, the Emperor saw the presence of a French contingent in Siena – although 'requested' by the Siennese citizens themselves – as a deliberate aggression and a threat to the precarious Italian equilibrium, fearing that 'after a foot, [the King of France] would have put all his body in'.⁷ This way, Siena became the centre of a new chapter of the Italian wars.

Ippolito II d'Este, appointed as the 'general lieutenant and plenipotentiary' of the 'free Siena' by Henry II, was himself at the centre of this new chapter; for the only time in his political career, he acted as a direct emanation of the power of the French monarchy, and not just as the representative of their interest within the Catholic Church, as his role of cardinal protector entailed. In conjunction with chapter II.3 'Serving the King', in which Ippolito is seen, as Papal legate, as an official representative of the Pope, this Siennese episode demonstrates the contentious loyalties that the Cardinal owed and operated within: he could not afford fully to disavow his loyalty to the Church, yet here, in the complicated context of the Italian Wars, and in acting under the auspices of the French monarchy, he was in the equivocal position of potentially siding with a combatant against the Pope.

⁵ Further to the works referenced above, see also the text of the truce in Ribier, *Lettres et mémoires*, ii, p. 386-387.

⁶ B. de Monluc, *Commentaires de Messire Blaise de Montluc Marechal de France...* (4 vols, Paris, 1746), ii, p. 2. The idea of a French incursion in Siena, strongly advocated for by a group of Siennese *fuoriusciti*, was not new. It had been discussed since the previous year, but its execution had to be put on hold due to the hostility that had arisen between the Valois and the Pope, whose neutrality was deemed essential to the success of the coup. In the spring of 1552, Ippolito d'Este had, in his palace in Ferrara, hosted one of the principal Siennese conjurates, Giovanni Maria Benedetti, and had promised him to support the cause of 'the freedom of Siena' with King Henry II. On the discussions on Siena before 1552, see the sixteenth-century chronicle by A. Sozzini, 'Diario delle cose avvenute in Siena...', in *Archivio storico italiano* (Florence, 1842), ii, pp. 28-63. On Charles V's acquisition of Siena, which dated back to 1530, see: A. K. Isaacs, 'Impero, Francia, Medici orientamenti politici e gruppi sociali a Siena nel primo Cinquecento', in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del '500*, (2 vols, Florence, 1983), i, pp. 249-270; Hook, 'The Fall of Siena', *History Today*, 23/2 (1973), pp. 105-115; id. 'Habsburg Imperialism and Italian Particularism: The Case of Charles V and Siena', *European Studies Review*, 19/3 (1979), pp. 283-312.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

As ever, and particularly, given the war scenario, this picture is complicated further by his familial obligations, and the existence of a local framework of alliances. These alliances and tensions come to the fore in the second part of this chapter, as Ippolito's attempts to channel French power in Siena are hindered by the irruption of the feud between Cosimo de' Medici and Piero Strozzi. Until this point, which also coincided with a loss of powers of the Cardinal of Ferrara, he and Cosimo appear in parallel positions – forced to balance, but, also, keen to exploit, their foreign allegiance in the context of the Italian political frame.

The decision to intervene in the rebellion of the Tuscan city had been taken during an official gathering of the highest French representatives in Italy – and Italian Francophiles – which was held in Chioggia, on 17 July 1552, only three months after the signing of the truce that ended the war of Parma. The choice had fallen on Chioggia, part of the Venetian territories, because Ercole II d'Este had refused to host the meeting in Ferrara, which would have been the French designated choice. The Duke, although traditionally allied with France, on this occasion was struggling to maintain his State's neutrality and therefore feared that his offering a seat for such a meeting would have been perceived by the Emperor as a political statement.⁸

The purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on the next course of action in the war, and in particular on the possible ways to take advantage of the presence of those French troops that had remained quartered in Emilia after the truce of Parma. The chair of this conference in Chioggia was Ippolito d'Este. Under this circumstance, the Cardinal had been forced to abandon his usual tact and to take a very strong political stance in favour of the King of France. Instead of going back to Rome – which he had left in June 1551, at the moment of the definitive rupture between the Vatican and Henry II – he addressed a letter to the Pope in which he expressed his happiness about the recent reconciliation and in which he begged to be forgiven 'if at the time of the disagreement between you [Julius III] and the Most Christian King, I tried on many occasions to serve His Majesty'.⁹ When, shortly after, the Pope asked him to return to Rome, the Cardinal refused; he had already devoted himself to the organisation of the gathering of the French representatives.

⁸ ASFI, Mdp, 1865, fo. 88r. See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 204-205. Ercole II's attitude in this moment was perfectly summarised by Cosimo de' Medici, who, discussing the French movements with one of his ambassadors, wrote that 'the Duke of Ferrara pretends he does not know anything': *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 299. Romier argues that, after Ercole's refusal, the French chose Chioggia as a location in order to exert some pressure on the Venetians and convince them to join an anti-Imperial league: Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 318 (n. 3).

⁹ From a letter written on 24 April 1552, quoted in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 204, n. 1.

This episode was the peak of Ippolito's dedication to the defence of the interests of the Valois crown, and one of the very few circumstances in his long career – perhaps the only one – in which he failed to find a balance between the different powers to whom he owed loyalty. The exceptional situation of war certainly urged him to adopt such an exceptional stance. But behind this, there were also more personal and practical considerations. The Cardinal's career was on the rise and he was challenging the position of predominance held by Cardinal Tournon – who was his elder by twenty years and an experienced diplomat – over the management of French affairs in Italy.¹⁰ He was probably eager to demonstrate that his recent appointment to the protection of France had been a sensible choice: he had gained the trust of Henry II during the recent events of the war of Parma, when he had pawned 'what he had of value in his own house' in order to pay and to arm a column of soldiers who went to help the French troops besieged in the town of Mirandola (a contemporary observer – perhaps with a touch of hyperbole – wrote that 'if the Cardinal had not put his hands [in this matter], Mirandola would have been lost').¹¹ Furthermore, the decision of where next to deploy the French forces in Italy carried many consequences, not only for the Italian rulers (Este included), who were always exposed to the unsettling interventions of foreign powers, but also for some French families, who had personal interests or claims of ownership over some Italian territories. Amongst these was the powerful house of Guise, to which the Cardinal of Ferrara had recently succeeded in tying his own kin by arranging the marriage of his niece Anna d'Este with the Duke of Guise. The French dynasty was particularly keen to encourage a military intervention in the Kingdom of Naples, as they could claim over that crown an old right of sovereignty, which derived from René of Anjou, Duke of Lorraine and King of Naples in the fifteenth century.¹²

Two days before the French gathered in Chioggia, Cosimo de' Medici forwarded to his ambassador to the Imperial court, Pierfilippo Pandolfini, the dispatches that he had collected from some of his diplomatic emissaries about the upcoming meeting, in order to keep him posted on the identity of the participants and on the contrasting rumours he had heard about the intended target

¹⁰ Cardinal Tournon had personally negotiated the truce of Parma with the Pope and he was the principal referent for the Siense and Florentine *fuoriusciti*. The Prince of Salerno had also sent his secretary, Bernardo Tasso, to try to convince him to support a French attack against the King of Naples. See *Négociations diplomatiques*, p. 309.

¹¹ 'La ragione è questa, che subito che le genti del Papa che stava dentro detti forti per assediarli uscivano fuori, gli Imperiali vi entravano dentro, dove senza dubio sariano stati tanti, che l'haveriano presa, la qual cosa non poteno fare perché le genti che haveva fatta fare il Cardinale di Ferrara [...] furono i primi ad occupare detti forti': ASFI, Mdp, 1865, fo. 87v.

¹² Magoni, *I gigli d'oro*, p. 67; Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers*, pp. 22-23. See also a letter of June 1551 sent by an anonymous writer from Paris to Cosimo de' Medici regarding the Guise's well-known ambitions over Naples: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 277-278.

of their bellicose resolutions.¹³ The presence in Chioggia of both the Prince of Salerno, exiled in France after having unsuccessfully opposed Charles V and who was encouraging a French intervention in the South of Italy, and of the Tuscan *fuoriusciti* made the outcome of the meeting, to the eyes of the contemporary observers, quite unpredictable.¹⁴ It was indeed a varied group that gathered in Chioggia: besides Ippolito d'Este, there were French military commanders such as Paul de Thermes; the other main representative of the clergy, Cardinal Tournon; French diplomats such as the ambassador to Venice, Odêt de Selve; and, of course, the Prince of Salerno and a handful of Sienese and Florentine exiles, who had all been employed in the service of France, such as Giovanni Maria Benedetti, Cornelio Bentivoglio, and Girolamo da Pisa. The discussions went on for three days, with different plans being presented and discussed before a resolution was reached. Besides the obvious suggestions made by the Prince of Salerno and by the group of Tuscan exiles, who were both advocating an intervention in their native territories, the idea of an attack on Lombardy was also considered.¹⁵ In his memoir, the French commander, Monluc, later attributes Henry II's decision to attack Siena to 'the manoeuvres and practices of certain Cardinals who supported the King'¹⁶ – a not very cryptic reference to Ippolito d'Este. This remark, however, seems to be ascribable to Monluc's personal distaste of Ippolito and of the French involvement in Tuscany. The surviving chronicles of the discussions that took place in Chioggia do not depict Ippolito d'Este as championing the Sienese *coup* at all, and we have already seen that his personal affiliations made him rather lean in favour of Naples. More reliable seem to be the words of one of Cosimo de' Medici's informers – who were collecting rumours on the French military plans – according to whom the idea of attacking the state of Milan, strongly supported by Paul de Thermes, had been opposed by 'the King's Italian ministers' – another reference to Ippolito d'Este – who supported the Prince of Salerno and 'presented that endeavour as very easy'.¹⁷ It is not difficult to understand why Ippolito, the brother of the Duke of Ferrara and a rich Ferrarese landowner himself, should prefer targeting Naples rather than the state of Milan: an attack against Lombardy would have inevitably affected his brother's dukedom – Ercole's lands would have been criss-crossed by French

¹³ ASFI, MdP, 1865, fos. 88r-88v. See also: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 314; Sozzini, 'Diario', pp. 70-71.

¹⁴ Cosimo de' Medici, who was closely following the political developments, collected very contrasting rumours on the intentions of the French in the days immediately preceding the meeting. On 30 June 1552, he believed that 'Il trovarsi il Re di Francia consumato per le gravi spese fatte qui, ci fa credere che non sia per fare forma d'esercito, ma che quei fuoriusciti abbino solo a tentare col caldo delle armate di rivoltare e rubare qualche luogo nell'Abruzzo o nella Puglia'. On 5 July 1552: 'La impresa del regno [of Naples] della quale i francesi avevan cominciato a far tanto romore [...] si è da ogni ora raffreddata': *Négociations diplomatiques*, p. 307; 311.

¹⁵ It seems that the idea of Lombardy as a potential target came from Paul de Thermes: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 206-207 (n. 2).

¹⁶ Monluc, *Commentaires*, ii, p. 2.

¹⁷ Cosimo to Pierfilippo Pandolfini, 15 July 1552: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 314-315.

troops and the western border of the Duchy would have been, once again, ravaged by war.¹⁸ Siena was not as close to Ferrara as Milan, but yet the ‘liberation’ of the city – an action that had all the potential of degenerating into open war in Tuscany – would have presented more than one difficulty to a man in Ippolito’s position. It would have necessarily involved Siena’s immediate neighbour, the Duke of Florence, with whom the Estense had always been in competition (although under the mask of a tactful politeness). In the equilibrium of the Italian states, and after the upheavals caused by the war of Parma, the Este viewed a situation of open hostility with the Duke of Florence as neither desirable nor sustainable.

Therefore, when the idea of supporting the Prince of Salerno’s revenge against Charles V was eventually rejected due to its military unfeasibility, it took the Sienese *fuoriusciti* a good deal of persuasion to win over the Cardinal of Ferrara. He first asked them for a written statement signed by all the conspirators and then, only when offered the argument of the dangers of their producing such a document without arousing any Spanish suspicion, offered his reluctant support to the cause.¹⁹ The Cardinal convinced the Prince of Salerno that a French venture in Naples would have been, in that moment, ‘not just difficult but extremely difficult’. In order not to alienate his French sympathies, Salerno was kept unaware of the parallel negotiation regarding Siena. The Cardinal recommended he be patient and wait for a better chance: a defeat of the Spanish in Siena was not only achievable but would have also provided the King of France with an ideal launch-pad from which to proceed to the conquest of Naples²⁰ – and we will see that, even after the fall of Siena, Ippolito kept supporting the idea of a naval attack against the southern Kingdom.

The outcome of the conference was kept carefully secret. Contrasting news on what had happened in Chioggia spread after the French ministers parted ways: Don Diego de Mendoza, the Governor of Siena and Spanish ambassador to Rome, believed that nothing had been decided (‘When the conference of Chioggia finished, rumours spread that those French lords had not concluded anything, because the Imperials started to say that that conference had been a waste of

¹⁸ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 320. According to Romier, the ‘first artisan’ of the Sienese rebellion had been Cardinal Tournon, convinced and supported by the Tuscan exile Giovanni Maria Benedetti: *ibid.*, p. 322.

¹⁹ ASFI, MdP, 1865, fos. 89r-89v. This ASFI document is a report written by an anonymous, presumably someone close to the Cardinal of Ferrara (a member of his household, a secretary?). Its rendition of the events sounds sometimes too apologetic. Nevertheless, that which the anonymous author writes on Chioggia seems reliable because it is corroborated by other – less partial – sources. According to the Sienese chronicler, Sozzini, for instance, the Cardinal of Ferrara had strongly opposed the idea of any involvement of the French army in Siena before they had conquered Naples: Sozzini, ‘Diario’, p. 71.

²⁰ ASFI, MdP, 1865, fo. 90v. The same idea had been suggested by Paul de Thermes, but, according to his plan, Milan would have been the base camp from which the French would have later attacked the Kingdom of Naples: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 314-315.

time [*una dieta di meloni*], and Don Diego was saying the same’).²¹ The Spanish governor even decided to reduce the number of his men in Siena in order to patrol the coastline in case a naval attack was launched against the Kingdom of Naples, which he thought to be a more likely military target; whilst Don Ferrante Gonzaga, governor of Milan, feared an incursion in Lombardy.²² Even Cosimo de’ Medici, who had always been very suspicious of the political *liaison* between the Tuscan exiles and the Valois monarchy, did not believe that the French would have marched their army to Tuscany, even though he had been carefully following the plots of the Tuscan *fuoriusciti*. On the contrary, he wrote to his envoy to Germany that the hopes of both the *fuoriusciti* and the Prince of Salerno had been quashed and that ‘no certain resolution was taken [...] but Siena was really doubtful [as a target]; it is believed that they will turn themselves to harass the state of Milan’.²³ Only as a preventive measure, therefore, the Duke decided to improve the defences of some Florentine castles and strongholds close to the Sienese border, in the belief that, all considered, ‘if the French venture to Siena, it cannot be that they will not harass our State’.²⁴

The expulsion of the Spanish from Siena worked out according to what had been planned during the meeting in Chioggia. On 26 July 1552, an army of Italians and French, led by one of the leaders of the Sienese exiles, Enea Piccolomini, arrived beneath the walls of the city. At the same time, the people inside rose against Mendoza’s troops, and managed to open some of the doors and let the soldiers from outside burst into the city. Over the following day, the Spanish troops were forced to retreat into the citadel, where they remained besieged by the Sienese and the French for a few days, until an official agreement allowed the Imperial soldiers to leave the city.²⁵

Paul de Thermes, who, after the meeting in Chioggia, had returned to Ferrara with Ippolito d’Este, arrived in Siena on 11 August – apparently provided with a sum of money, by the Cardinal

²¹ Ibid.

²² Similarly, the Papal nuncio to Germany, *monsignor* Pietro Camaiani, was unable to tell whether the French had decided to move against Naples, Milan or Siena: R. Cantagalli, *Cosimo I de’ Medici granduca di Toscana* (Milan, 1985), p. 183.

²³ Cosimo concluded by saying that the French would not try anything before having received clear instructions from the King and that ‘a voler fare cosa segnalata nel regno o nel stato di Milano, era necessario che il Re venisse in Italia’: Cosimo to Pierfilippo Pandolfini, 20 July 52: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 316.

²⁴ Cosimo to Pierfilippo Pandolfini, on 20 July 1552. The Duke also added that ‘non potrà patire quello stato [Siena] sinistro alcuno, che non ne patisca anco il nostro’: *ibid.*, iii, pp. 317-318.

²⁵ The days of the upsurge against Charles V are narrated by Sozzini, ‘Diario’, pp. 73-88. See also: Hook, *The Fall of Siena*, pp. 187-188.

of Ferrara, in order to pay the soldiers.²⁶ An anonymous informer from within the city walls wrote to Cosimo that, after the Republic of Siena had officially accepted the protection of the King of France, all the Siennese authorities had left the Palazzo Pubblico (the town hall) and, accompanied by *monsieur de Thermes*, had unfolded a white standard decorated with golden fleur-de-lis. With that – and shouting ‘freedom, freedom!’ and ‘France, France!’ – they had gone to the Duomo to praise the Lord for their recently retrieved freedom; from there, they had walked to the citadel, where, using hammers, picks and other tools, they began to destroy the Spanish fort (Porta Camollia) – with the rest of the population, including women and children, soon following.²⁷ The atmosphere of euphoria that surrounded the first moments of the liberation was also confirmed to the Duke of Florence by his resident ambassador in Siena, Leone Ricasoli, who wrote to his lord to inform him that ‘these people have so much faith and hope in these things of France, and so much happiness about what might come, that even if they only have six-thousand men in their army, they seem to fear nothing’.²⁸ Cosimo I, outlining to Charles V the information that he had obtained on the political and military situation of Siena in the immediate aftermath of the revolt, informed him that ‘the universal [part] of the city leans towards the French, and they are sure that His Majesty would not forgive their past mistakes, and they fear him; and that fear makes them easily acquiesce to the will of these French ministers’.²⁹

In August 1552, Henry II appointed Ippolito II d’Este to govern the Tuscan city on his behalf (whilst Paul de Thermes remained in charge as the leader of the French army). In September, the news reached the Cardinal in Ferrara, where he had remained and from where he had been following the developments of the rebellion.³⁰ Ippolito hesitated; in his own words, he was very reluctant to accept and eventually ‘took up this burden’ only because he was ‘forced by the King’ – as he wrote in a letter to Archbishop Sauli.³¹ A Florentine agent in Ferrara, however, insinuated that not only had Ippolito been seeking the appointment, but that he had also managed to obtain the removal of the Siennese Cardinal Fabio Mignanelli, who, in August, had been hurriedly

²⁶ ASFI, MdP, 1865, fos. 91r-92v.

²⁷ This anonymous dispatch – ‘Notitia di alcuni avvisi di Siena’ – is dated ‘August 1552’: ASFI, MdP, 410, fos. 810r-810v. The same story is told by Sozzini, ‘Diario’, p. 79.

²⁸ ASFI, MdP, 410, fo. 484 (12 August 1552).

²⁹ Cosimo also added that the French, in order to gain the trust of the Siennese citizens, were careful to show that they were seeking nothing but the city’s freedom and safety: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 326 (25 August 1552).

³⁰ Henry II appointed Ippolito d’Este his ‘general lieutenant’ in Italy and assigned him a pension of 12,000 golden *scudi*: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 210-211.

³¹ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 331. The author of the anonymous report on Chioggia corroborates the Cardinal’s words: ‘Il Cardinale non si curando di andarvi [to Siena] andava intervenuto, per che il re gli scrisse di nuovo, mandandogli una patenta amplissima dove lo faceva suo locotenente generale nelle cose di Toscana et che potesse fare et disfare come la persona del Re proprio’: ASFI, MdP, 1865, fo. 92v.

appointed *legatus a latere* to Siena by Pope Julius III in order to help govern the city, and with whom the more powerful Cardinal of Ferrara had no intention of sharing his authority.³² Mignanelli aside, there were also more dangerous competitors: Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, traditionally a Francophile, had insistently tried to replace Mignanelli in the legation. As Farnese was one of the richest and most powerful Cardinals in the Curia, his chances of fulfilling his desire were probably higher than those of anyone else.³³ At the same time, the group of the Tuscan *fuoriusciti* who were spending their exile at the Valois court were – quite obviously – willing to see one of them appointed to rule Siena, and they could count on the influence of Henry’s wife, Catherine de’ Medici, who had taken them under her protection.³⁴ In Italy as well as in France, the Siennese upsurge had triggered more than one political mechanism, and, already at the beginning of August, there was not much room left in which to manoeuvre – not even for someone as influential as Ippolito d’Este. Although he had not been amongst the early Siennese enthusiasts – or, maybe, exactly because of that – to allow someone else to be appointed to govern Siena would have been a *faux pas* for the Cardinal’s career, especially as the protector of the French affairs in Italy. It is possible, then, that Ippolito asked for support from the Guise, his powerful French relatives, in order to be assigned the lieutenancy over his other competitors – as Lucien Romier claimed – and that the ‘reluctance’ he displayed when his appointment was made public was only due to his ‘hypocrisy’.³⁵ The governance of Siena was a task the performance of which would have proved difficult to anyone; in the case of Ippolito d’Este, the task was certainly made even harder by his personal political position, which needed to be constantly renegotiated both with the other Italian players (above all, the Vatican and the Florence of Cosimo de’ Medici) and with the other French representatives in Italy, secular and ecclesiastical. The Cardinal’s affiliation to both the Vatican and the Duchy of Ferrara made it necessary for him to minimise the perception that his thirst for French power had made him an unconditional supporter of an enterprise that had the potential to upset all the Italian equilibria, especially if he wanted to preserve his and his brother’s friendship with the suspicious Duke of Florence. Hence, presumably, the necessity for Ippolito to play the card of understatement when publicly commenting on his appointment.

After his promotion to the much sought-after position of cardinal protector of France, however, the mission to Siena confirmed Ippolito’s position at the very top of French diplomacy

³² Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 332.

³³ ASFI, MdP, 1851, fo. 26 (6 September 1552).

³⁴ On the relationship between Catherine and the *fuoriusciti*, see H. Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (Toronto, 2003), pp. 94-95.

³⁵ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 331-332.

in Italy. The moment was critical: the hostility between the Valois monarchy and the Vatican – and the recrudescence of the war with the Habsburgs – had made, as we have seen, the fragile political balance of the Italian states even more uncertain. The fact that he was both a Roman Cardinal and a ‘French minister’, however, made him a particularly suitable candidate to be the link between the Valois monarchy and the Vatican of Julius III, whilst the fact that he also was an Italian prince – and had a much better understanding of the Italian political scene than any other French candidate – could have made him more easily accepted by the Sienese. The mission to Siena was a particularly difficult task also because of the inner divisions and hostilities that had marked the history of the city in the previous decades and that, at the time of Ippolito’s appointment, were anything but resolved.³⁶ Despite the expected difficulties, the Cardinal wrote in very optimistic terms to his brother, Duke Ercole II, saying that he had been very well received by the Sienese authorities upon arrival: they ‘let me know with many words that not only they are very thankful and devoted to His Majesty, but also that they are immensely happy to see me in this place’.³⁷ A slightly different opinion, however, was expressed by the Florentine ambassador, Leone Ricasoli, who wrote to Duke Cosimo that ‘the most illustrious and reverend Ferrara had been received very warmly, but not as warmly as Cardinal Mignanelli’: the Sienese feared his ‘greatness’ and his interference in the government of the Republic – and Ricasoli therefore concluded that ‘everyone is awaiting, and if His Lordship will lend his ear to their words and passions he will indeed be very busy’.³⁸

SEEKING PEACE FOR THE KING. IPPOLITO BETWEEN SIENA, ROME AND FLORENCE, 1552-1553³⁹

³⁶ The resentment and hostility that characterised Sienese political life was well known to King Henry II, who, in August, addressed a letter to the city recommending everyone to drop their ‘haines particuliers, les passions et les injures, qui ont eu cours parmi vous, et par quoi vous tombates dans le malheur et la necessité, d’où nous vous avons retires. Nous vous exhortons et vous prions de vivre désormais en commun avec douceur, amitié et amour’: *ibid.*, p. 325. For an outline of the political life of Siena as a republic and under the Empire, see: J. Hook, *Siena. A City and its History* (London, 1979), pp. 172-183.

³⁷ Ippolito d’Este arrived in Siena in the evening of 1 November 1552 and met the representatives of the city on the following day. To their manifestations of friendliness, he replied by saying that he ‘non saria mai per perdonar a cosa alcuna per conservarli in quella maggior libertà che havessero mai’: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.8. The Cardinal’s household included four-hundred men, three-hundred horses and fifty Swiss guards: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 212.

³⁸ ASFI, MdP, 1851, fo. 148. Cardinal Mignanelli had actually been received very coldly by the Sienese, as pointed out in M. Gotor, ‘Mignanelli, Fabio’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 2010).

³⁹ For a comprehensive survey of the sources available on the war of Siena (especially contemporary chronicles and relations), see A. D’Addario, *Il problema senese nella storia italiana della prima metà del Cinquecento* (Florence, 1958), pp. 267-271. Only few scholars have dealt with this topic after D’Addario’s work was published in 1958: to my knowledge, R. Cantagalli’s *La guerra di Siena, 1552-1559. I termini della questione senese nella lotta tra Francia e Asburgo nel ‘500 e il suo risolversi nell’ambito del principato mediceo* (Siena, 1962) and *Id.*, *Cosimo I* are the most recent and extensive studies available. Very important remains also Romier, *Les origines politiques* (not included in D’Addario’s

The role played by Julius III during the French protection of Siena greatly influenced the outcome of the whole episode. The attempts made by Papal diplomacy to secure an agreement between France and the Empire on the future of the city, and especially to avoid provoking a new fire of war in central Italy,⁴⁰ kept the Vatican busy during the spring and the summer of 1553. This outburst of diplomatic activity had been induced, in the previous months, by a succession of upsetting events that had enhanced the Pope's wish to pacify Siena as soon as possible. The Viceroy of Naples (Cosimo de' Medici's father-in-law) in January 1553 had left his Kingdom to march his troops to Siena, where his son, don García de Toledo, had attacked and destroyed several lands in Sienese territory and laid siege to the town of Montalcino;⁴¹ Cosimo de' Medici had been forced by the turn of the events to take more openly the side of the Emperor, to grant some help to the troops of his father-in-law and to offer his state as the base camp for supplies and soldiers;⁴² the Valois monarchy was negotiating for the return of the Turkish armada to the Italian seas, where their previous incursion had been so effective as to destroy completely the Papal town of Gaeta.⁴³

Julius III had seemingly no intention of offering his unconditional support to one of the contenders and was rather aiming to find a solution that would drive both the French and the Spanish out of Siena. The Pope's sympathies, however, leaned towards the Medici house: his election had been strongly supported by Cardinal Burgos, Juan de Toledo, who had managed to overcome the opposition of other members of the Imperial faction, such as Cardinal Pacheco and Cardinal Gonzaga. Being the Viceroy's cousin, Juan de Toledo had become, in the previous years,

list, although known to Cantagalli), whilst an interesting analysis focused on the European game of alliances and the role of the Vatican is provided by Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 592-606. On the political situation of Siena in the first half of the Sixteenth century, see also: Isaacs, 'Impero, Francia, Medici', pp. 249-270. A brief history of Siena from Charles V's acquisition in 1530 to the French intervention and the war is in Hook, 'The Fall of Siena', pp. 105-115. On Mendoza's governorship, see E. Spivakovsky, *Son of the Alhambra. Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, 1504-1575* (Austin, 1970), chap. 13.

⁴⁰ Rumours about the outbreak of open war between Siena and Florence had been echoing since the beginning of the revolt. The day after his arrival in the city, the Cardinal of Ferrara wrote that the rumours on the upcoming war were spreading in Siena, but there was no clear evidence of any war design: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.8 (see also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 214). The Florentine ambassador, Ricasoli, also wrote that 'il sospetto della guerra qui da un'ora a un'altra cresce e sciamà': ASFI, MdP, 1851, fo. 148.

⁴¹ The Viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, was too old to lead the siege personally. While his son and his troops were camped outside Montalcino, Don Pedro was staying in Florence with Cosimo de' Medici. On the relationship between Cosimo de' Medici and the Toledo clan, see: Hernando Sánchez, 'Naples and Florence', pp. 133-248.

⁴² Cantagalli, *La guerra di Siena*, pp. 115-116; id., *Cosimo I*, pp. 194-199.

⁴³ Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 582-583.

the spokesperson of both the Toledo and the Medici's interest in the Roman Curia, contributing to cement the alliance between the two families.⁴⁴

At the beginning of the Sienese crisis, in July 1552, Cosimo de' Medici had written to his ambassador to the Emperor that the French were continuously trying to 'drive the Pope to their side', and that the Imperials should therefore be very careful not to 'exacerbate and annoy him'.⁴⁵ When the news of the upsurge arrived at the Holy See, however, the Pope told Cosimo de' Medici's ambassador to Rome, Averardo Serristori, that he believed that 'the French, once they had liberated Siena from the Emperor, would let it be on its own; without expecting, after that, to deal with it anymore'.⁴⁶ Therefore, the Pope believed that both the Vatican and the Duke of Florence would 'prefer to have Siena as a neighbour standing alone, rather than accompanied by the Emperor; and that, given that the Sienese are mad, and these princes are about to persecute each other with slanders, they will keep each other busy and will not harass Your Excellence'.⁴⁷ While the French definitely did not manage to drive the Pope to their side, one of the Duke of Florence's courtiers, who witnessed the events of Siena and later wrote a report on them, claimed that the Pope, although forced by the difficult political circumstances to insist on his neutrality, was actually keen to advantage Florence⁴⁸ – and we will see that, over the course of the following year, Julius III's Sienese policies ostensibly changed, as well as his profession of neutrality.

While the Imperial siege of Montalcino was continuing throughout the spring of 1553, the Pope was growing more concerned about the Tuscan situation. In April 1553, his desire to find an agreement on Siena between the Emperor and the King of France eventually led him to send legates to both Paris and Brussels,⁴⁹ as well as to begin negotiations to organise a meeting – to take place in the towns of Viterbo or Orvieto, both more or less halfway between Siena and Rome – between

⁴⁴ C. J. Hernando Sánchez, 'Naples and Florence in Charles V's Italy: Family, Court and Government in the Toledo-Medici alliance', in T. J. Dandeleit and J. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy. Politics, Society, and Religion, 1500-1700* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 170-171.

⁴⁵ This was also a reference to don Diego de Mendoza's diplomatic clumsiness, which had caused a serious incident with an emissary of the Pope: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 317-318 (20 July 1552). On Mendoza in Siena see: Spivakovsky, *Son of the Alhambra*, chap. 13 and id., 'El vicariato de Siena. Correspondencia de Felipe II, príncipe, con Diego Hurtado de Mendoza y Ferrante Gonzaga', *Hispania*, XXVI (1966), pp. 583-596. On Mendoza and Julius III, see Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 59-63.

⁴⁶ The news was brought on the morning of 27 July 1552 by Cardinal Sermoneta, who had been told by the French that 'tenevano per certo che a quest'ora Siena si tenesse per loro': *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 341.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ A. Montalvo, *Relazione della guerra di Siena di Don Antonio di Montalvo...* ed. C. Riccomanni, F. Grottanelli and L. Banchi (Turin, 1863), pp. 14-16.

⁴⁹ Girolamo Capodiferno and Girolamo Dandino, who both left the Curia in April 1553. Their diplomatic efforts, however, were to prove unsuccessful against the unrelenting hostility that was between Henry II and Charles V, the first refusing to return Siena and the latter demanding it unconditionally. See Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 596-597; *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp. 135-140, 193-194; *Documenti di storia italiana*, ed. G. Molini (2 vols, Florence, 1836-1837), ii, p. 449-450.

himself and the representatives of both sides: Siena and France on one, Florence and the Empire on the other.⁵⁰ It was quite an exceptional event that a Pope should leave Rome to deal personally with the spokesmen of the European and Italian powers – a sign that the efforts of the numerous crowd of envoys and couriers continuously marching along the Florence-Rome-Siena axes had been fruitless and that no mutually agreed conditions for the restoration of peace could be established. The last of these emissaries to reach Siena before the opening of the negotiations to organise a face-to-face meeting with the Pope was *monsignor* Federigo Fantucci, who, in April, presented Ippolito d'Este with Julius III's proposals for peace. These entailed the return to Siena and to the city authorities of all the lands occupied by the Imperial troops, the retreat of both the French and the Imperial troops from Sienese territory, and the appointment of a captain, a 'guard' – supported by one thousand infantrymen – who would be an impartial guarantor of peace in the aftermath of the French retreat. In order not to burden excessively the already strained finances of Siena, the Pope also offered to take upon himself the payment of the wages of the infantry for the time necessary for the city to recover from the war. The Cardinal of Ferrara and Paul de Thermes decided to defer any decision to Henry II's judgement, dismissed Fantucci with the simple claim that their main concern was to defend the King's honour, and immediately sent a dispatch to France.⁵¹ Henry II's written response was handed to the French ambassador to Rome, Lansac, who was at the time in Ferrara and who, from there, forwarded it to Siena. The king did not dislike the idea of leaving Siena under the Pope's control, but left the final decision to the Cardinal of Ferrara and Paul de Thermes – only reminding them that 'they could have not served him any better than by relieving him of the great expenditure that he was making on the infantry'.⁵² Ambassador Lansac, however, added to the King's answer a more articulated analysis of the situation and of all the reasons that should contribute to make up the cardinal's mind:

His Holiness would make the Spanish retreat from the State of Siena and give back Orbetello and everything else [...]; Siena would appoint some good Captain and a number of people as their guards, who would be paid by His Holiness; and, given that it is impossible to agree on the Captain's appointment, His Holiness would provide one, trusted by all and impartial to both

⁵⁰ 'Il Papa cominciò a voler trattare di accordare le cose di Siena tra lo Imperadore et il Re, et così gli scrisse a tutto doi che volessero vedere di accordare le cose di Siena et lassare quella Repubblica libera, l'Imperadore et il Re risposero che loro erano contenti et così fu remisa da tutti doi la cosa nel Papa': ASFI, MDP, 1865, fos. 96v-97r.

⁵¹ A written copy of Julius's proposal was personally carried to the King of France by Girolamo da Pisa, who had participated in the organisation of the Sienese coup from the very beginning. On the way to France, Girolamo da Pisa stopped in Ferrara to inform Duke Ercole II about recent developments: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.13 – all. A (13 April 1553). See also: *Correspondance du Gabre*, pp. 42-43; Sozzini, 'Diario', pp. 65-66; 112-113; 131; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, p. 597.

⁵² ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.13 – all. B (24 April 1553). From November 1552 to April 1553, the King's expenditure on the army (in France and Italy) was worth 400.000 *ecus* a month. From April 1553 to September 1553, 600.000 *scudi*: *Correspondance Lansac*, p. 271.

sides [...]. You may want to consider that the most compelling issues are now occurring in other places, where His Majesty and his enemy are in person and where it is necessary to address the biggest part of our efforts and expenses; because you know that even when the King acquired half of Italy, and things were going bad in his own kingdom, he would lose the whole [...].⁵³

Lansac believed that the Vatican's offer represented, all considered, a very good deal for the King of France – who in that way could have 'very honestly got out' – and that, if properly negotiated with the Pope, that deal could have become even more advantageous.⁵⁴ The same opinion was shared by another representative of the French crown, Dominique du Gabre, bishop of Lodève and treasurer of the French army, who was in Ferrara. However, that Lansac felt the need to highlight to Ippolito in this letter the fact that Siena was only one of the many pawns on the French monarchy's chessboard indicates the different mind-set with which a 'pure' French minister and an 'hybrid' like Ippolito looked at Italy – the former reflecting above all else the King's will to preserve the Kingdom of France, and therefore considering all the external territories of the Kingdom as subordinate to the greatest interest of France, and the latter having in Italy the bulk of his powers and therefore someone who could not relocate his priorities as easily as the French King. Cosimo de' Medici had expressed a very similar feeling when he had complained with his ambassador to Germany about the poor care that the Spanish were taking of Tuscany, saying that 'they do not pay with their own home, as we do and as these poor people of our neighbours do'.⁵⁵ The Spanish attitude, in this case, reflects the more generic attitude of the European powers towards the small Italian regional states, namely an attitude that implicitly framed Italy as a field upon which contests over European supremacy were played out. However, at the same time, the Italian states were concerned, as they had to be, with both their local interests and the general political scene in which they were forced to take sides. This was something that had already emerged vividly during the meeting in Chioggia at which – whilst Paul de Thermes, a French army official, had supported the idea of attacking Milan, basing his judgement upon strategic considerations – Ippolito had supported Naples for reasons that were very different, in that they were both local (i.e., to keep the spectre of war away from Ferrara) and particular (i.e., not purely strategic concerns, but rather to support the Guise's ambitions).

⁵³ Ibid. Ercole II wrote to Ippolito that 'per quanto riferisce il predetto monsignor di Lansac, [the King] desidera molto di essere sgravata per poter più gagliardamente attendere negli luoghi più importanti al suo regno': ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.54. See also: *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp. 16-19.

⁵⁴ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.13 – all. B (24 April 1553). This opinion was also shared by Piero Strozzi, who wrote to Ippolito d'Este to let him know that the King's priority was 'to be discharged of such a great expense': *ibid.*, 1709.XVIII.13 – all. C (24 April 1553).

⁵⁵ Original quotation is in Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 180-181.

To obtain a response on the proposed terms of the peace, Julius III appointed an envoy, Giovanni Andrea Vimercato, to visit first the Cardinal of Ferrara and Paul de Thermes in Siena, and then Cosimo de' Medici and the Imperials in Florence. The Duke of Florence had been claiming that the physical presence of the Pope in the Tuscan lands would have benefitted and hastened the peaceful resolution of the war, whilst the Cardinal of Ferrara had agreed with him that 'one could not find a better suited way to push [the peace agreement] forward and make it succeed than the meeting that Your Excellence had suggested'.⁵⁶ However, the Pope – although eager to promote 'peace and quiet throughout Christendom, especially in Italy, more especially in Tuscany for being our birthplace'⁵⁷ – had no intention of leaving Rome without first being given a written reassurance that both Siena and Florence were serious in seeking his mediation and in discussing the terms of the peace offer that he had put forward.⁵⁸ Given the importance of the matter under discussion and having not yet received a satisfactory response from the French side, Julius III decided to send to Siena Cardinal Sermoneta to Siena, whose authority largely outweighed Vimercato's. Julius's instructions to Sermoneta were as follows:⁵⁹

You will say that a Pope who moves is something more exceptional than somebody might think [...], and you can remember that it was said in the Congregation this morning that Pontiffs [in the past] did not want to move to talk with Kings and Emperors if they had not received those assurances that they deemed sufficient; and if they want us to move towards Orvieto, which is on the border with their territory, it is necessary that they abandon generic [statements] and provide a clear picture of their minds, in writing or by giving you their word. [...] If they are not pleased or do not trust us, they should freely tell us this, because once the world has no chance to say that we have been fooled and once our conscience is not burdened before God, then we will adjust ourselves to any decision in the best way we can.⁶⁰

In the case of a positive response from the French, Julius III ordered Cardinal Sermoneta to send a message to Florence, so that the Cardinal of Perugia, Julius's nephew, could prompt the Imperials to participate in the meeting.⁶¹

⁵⁶ ASFI, MdP, 3721, fo. 614r.

⁵⁷ ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 79, p. 132 (Memoriale per M. Gio. Andrea Vimercato, 6 May 1553).

⁵⁸ 'Non basta che tanto una parte quanto l'altra dica che avvicinandosi la persona nostra a quelle bande potrebbono torre molte difficoltà et dare più prest'ispeditione al negozio, perché non sarebbe honesto che ci movessimo senza haver prima chiarezza di quello che le parti vorranno fare [...]. Et si tal chiarezza piacerà alla sua divina bontà e misericordia che sia secondo il desiderio nostro, non mancaremo di conferirci quanto prima fin a Viterbo': *ibid.* See also: *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ Ippolito wrote to his brother about Sermoneta's arrival on 3 June 1553: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.15 (3 June 1553). Both the visits of Vimercato and Sermoneta were recorded in his chronicle by Sozzini, 'Diario', pp. 133-135.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133 (*Recordo per il Cardinale di Sermoneta*).

⁶¹ 'Accioché egli [the Cardinal of Perugia] habbia a procurare che si superseda in l'innovatione dalla banda imperiale, come voi ancora havrete a procurare che si superseda dalle bande francesi': *ibid.* Fulvio della Cornia, Cardinal of Perugia, was Julius III's maternal nephew.

The hesitancy of the Cardinal of Ferrara, whose presence had been specifically requested by the Pope, was due to the fact that both he and the Siennese suspected the Pope of being willing – beneath the guise of an unbiased agreement – to push an agenda favourable to the Imperials and Florence (and we will see that they were quite correct). The point that aroused their suspicion was the Pope's request to appoint a captain of his choice and to establish an infantry regiment in the city under the captain's command. Even though Ippolito had already received the indirect permission of the King to accept all of the Pope's terms – as well as a more explicit permission through the words of the French ambassador, Lansac – he now found himself in the difficult situation of having to overcome the resistances of the Siennese authorities, who, 'not knowing who shall govern them [...], are afraid and have good reason to be afraid'.⁶² In this situation, the Cardinal was forced to take into account the interests of the people he had been appointed to 'protect' – and this, of course, was not just out of generosity, but was also motivated by the desire both to defend his own reputation and to prevent any insurrection in Siena. At the same time, he was irremediably bound to his own personal relationship with the King of France and, therefore, ultimately subject to the French political agenda – something which in itself reveals the inherent weakness of his position. While he was aware, as much as ambassador Lansac, that Italy was for the Valois monarchy only a piece in a much broader picture, he could not afford, unlike King Henry II, to relocate his priorities and was obliged to play a much more complicated diplomatic game.

Into these specific circumstances, in order to remind Ippolito that he was at risk of neglecting the other source of his personal power, Duke Ercole II intervened, writing to his brother to advise him that he should consider his affiliation to the Vatican before taking any dangerous stance towards the agreement: to displease Julius III and be perceived by the Vatican as the one responsible for the failure of the peace would have been very dangerous for Ippolito's ecclesiastical career.⁶³ This mildly alarmed letter from Ferrara had reached Siena just as the opposition of the Siennese authorities to the Pope's plan had become more substantial: ignoring Ippolito's attempts to sweeten the deal, they had told Cardinal Sermoneta that they were unable to accept the presence of a 'foreign' captain and that they were therefore begging the Pope not to force this condition upon them.⁶⁴ While the Cardinal was trying to convince the citizens of Siena to accept Cardinal

⁶² ASMO, CS, 1709.XVIII.15 (3 June 1553).

⁶³ Ippolito replied to Ercole saying that he accepted his advice on 'le commodità che se havevano et che si potriano perdere dello Stato del Papa quando a Sua Beatitudine cadesse in opinione che dal canto suo si fosse mancato di venire a questo accordo': *ibid.*

⁶⁴ To explain his difficulties to Ercole II, Ippolito wrote that 'perché Sua Santità persiste pur in volere che l'elettione del capo sia rimessa liberamente a lei, et tutta l'importantia et la difficultà di questa pratica consiste in questo punto,

Sermoneta's peace offer – or, if nothing, to 'make them reply politely, as they have done'⁶⁵ – he reassured his brother and Lodève that he had understood the King's priorities and that he was actively working on hastening the resolution of the conflict:

We did not neglect to keep this deal alive, to make it easier, to do everything to prepare it, and to convince these citizens to be happy and satisfied with it, this last being the main difficulty we face in this negotiation [...]. We have paid the utmost attention to the King's will, with regard to both this situation and His other occurrences and plans elsewhere.⁶⁶

It is easy to see, then, that the main reason for the Cardinal of Ferrara's hesitation was his expectation of the difficulties involved in convincing the Sienese to accept the imposition of a captain they themselves were unable to choose, as well as the fact that, given that the infantry would have been paid by the Pope, the Sienese would have been left with an armed body within their city walls that responded not to them but to an external and potentially hostile power such in the Vatican. He personally shared this concern about the political future of Siena and was suspicious of the Pope's firmness in advocating for his own appointment of the captain: 'Because I see how much His Holiness insists on keeping this appointment in his hands, I cannot but doubt that His Holiness is planning on appointing someone who will much please neither these lords nor our side'.⁶⁷

This ongoing commentary on the situation in his letters to his brother demonstrates another reason for his behaviour at this time: his personal risks and the risks to his family. Although during the war of Parma, Ercole II had taken a position of overt neutrality, and if he had refused to host the meeting of the French diplomats on Ferrarese land, Ippolito's own position as an ally – and tool – of the French problematized the Duchy's own affiliation to France. The Duke had no intention of being forced into any position of unambiguous and flagrant support for the Valois, whilst he needed his brother to be at the same time the spokesperson for the Estense interests within the Church, and he did not want Ippolito to alienate the Pope's sympathies as a result of his too-close support for the French.

Alongside his political and private considerations, the Cardinal of Ferrara had another good reason to procrastinate the meeting with the Pope: from Siena, the French commanders were

sicome da cosa de la quale questi signori intendono che dipenda ogni bene et ogni male che possa nascere a questa città, non si è potuto in effetto persuadere loro a far liberamente questa rimissione a Sua Santità': *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Ippolito also wrote to his brother that he could easily guess the name of the person appointed by the Pope, but without making any explicit reference to it: *ibid.*

eagerly following the Turkish armada which, allied with the Valois, were advancing along the southern coasts of Italy.⁶⁸ For weeks they had been banking on the fact that a prompt arrival in Neapolitan waters of the fearsome Turkish naval forces would have, in all likelihood, forced the Viceroy to take at least a part of his troops back to the south in order to defend the coastline. The dismantling of the troops that were ravaging the Sienese countryside would have not only represented an invaluable military aid but would have also allowed the city – and its political leader, Ippolito d'Este – to sit down at the peace table and negotiate from a completely different perspective. In the case of Ippolito, this new negotiating position would have immediately allowed him to overcome the contrast between the King's desire to cut his military expenses and the Sienese refusal to accept the Pope's deal as it had been drafted when Sienese territory was under siege. The cloud of uncertainty that surrounded the arrival of the Turks had indeed been a determining factor in any decision regarding an agreement between the Emperor and the King of France, not only for the Sienese but also for the Duke of Florence. The Duke believed that the Cardinal of Ferrara was instrumentally using the promise of the arrival of the Turks, among 'many other great things [...], to keep those people firm' during the war.⁶⁹ He therefore concluded that 'the French are weak, and because the King knows that he cannot defend it [Siena], he will try to find a way out. And he will try even harder now, because he is losing hope that the Turk will ever arrive'.⁷⁰ Cosimo's opinion had been also influenced by the fact that the Cardinal of Ferrara, while delaying his final response to the Pope (for reasons we have already seen), had taken care always to reassure the Duke of Florence that he and the Sienese were 'inclined to quietness, and ready to work to the achievement of this agreement as much as we can'.⁷¹ Whether the Duke believed Ippolito to be sincere or not, the Cardinal's frequent demonstrations of 'very good will' had been interpreted by Cosimo as a sign that even the French shared his scepticism regarding the arrival of the fleet, and that the French were trying to get out of a desperate situation without losing their reputation. The Duke of Florence had therefore written to the Emperor that the quashing of their hopes for the Turkish arrival 'will make it easy to come to an agreement, especially on the French side, because we see that they are well inclined'.⁷²

Despite Cosimo's prediction, however, the bet on the arrival of the Turks was eventually won by the French: when the Pope left Rome for Lazio, on 8 June 1553, the Cardinal of Ferrara

⁶⁸ On the movements of the Turkish armada, see Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 582-598.

⁶⁹ Cosimo de' Medici to his ambassador Pandolfini: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 338 (9 March 1553).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁷¹ ASFI, MdP, 3271, fo. 479r (10 May 1553).

⁷² *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 338 (9 March 1553).

had just received the news that the armada had left Sicily and was heading for Naples.⁷³ The following day, Giovanni Andrea Vimercato arrived in Siena to inform Ippolito that Julius III was keen to meet him in Viterbo:

Yesterday night, late, while I was waiting for His Holiness's decision [on the meeting], Vimercato appeared here with a letter from His Holiness that called me to him and asked me to go see him as fast as I could, and in order to do so I took care this morning to have the four ambassadors appointed [...] and I have decided to leave on Monday with no hesitation.⁷⁴

Soon after the Cardinal's departure from Siena – and in accordance with the French prediction – the Viceroy's son and leader of the army, Don García de Toledo, abandoned the battleground of Montalcino and headed back south, taking not just the cavalry but the entire army with him.⁷⁵ The news of the Viceroy's retreat from Montalcino reached the Cardinal on 15 June, while he was having breakfast in Monte Fiascone. The news was brought by the Pope's envoy, Giovanni Andrea Vimercato, who had visited Ippolito to let him know that Julius III was waiting for the Cardinal's arrival, and that he was expected to join the Papal table for dinner on the following day.⁷⁶ In a letter to his brother, Ercole, written a few days after the meeting with the Pope, Ippolito commented on the arrival of the Turkish fleet saying that his happiness upon receiving the news had been increased by his 'clearly seeing that this result completely reflects the opinion that I always held, which was that any mediocre diversion that one could exert by that means would have freed the State of Siena from war'.⁷⁷

The Cardinal had received order from the King to reject any agreement that might eventually entail the return of Siena to the Emperor; at the same time, he was supposed to do everything in his power to save both Henry II's finances and his reputation (that is to say, Ippolito had to find the most honourable way to get the French out of Siena). Thanks to the abrupt reversal of French fortune, the Cardinal could now negotiate with the Pope from a much stronger

⁷³ Sozzini, 'Diario', pp. 138-139.

⁷⁴ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.17 (10 June 1553).

⁷⁵ 'Se ne andò alla volta di Napoli con l'essercito et questa fu la fine della impresa del Monte Alcino': ASFI, MdP, 1865, 97v. As Ippolito d'Este explained to his brother, 'la causa è stata, havendo mandato loro il reverendissimo Pacecco trenta mila ducati, fece loro anche intendere che dovessero con essi levare quell'essercito et condurlo per difesa di quel Regno [the Kingdom of Naples] [...], il che hanno subito messo in esecuzione': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553). See also: Sozzini, 'Diario', p. 138-144; *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp 86-87.

⁷⁶ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553).

⁷⁷ The Cardinal did not miss the chance to point out that, if the Imperials had been so scared by a mere fleet, they would have been even more so had the French sent the infantry to Naples, 'come si era dissegnato' – a reference to the meeting in Chioggia, where the Cardinal had supported the idea of an attack against Naples rather than against Siena: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553).

position.⁷⁸ Contemporary witnesses disagree on what happened between Julius III and Ippolito d'Este when they eventually met on 16 June 1553. The Siense contemporary chronicler, Alessandro Sozzini, writes that the Cardinal, as soon as he was informed that the Imperial army was no longer threatening Montalcino, dropped any discussion, 'kissed the foot of His Holiness and came back [to Siena]'.⁷⁹ An anonymous report, however, states that it was the Pope who, acknowledging that the situation had changed after the departure of the Spanish troops, refused to pursue the original agreement, despite Ippolito's insistence: 'the Pope dismissed the Cardinal, who wanted to travel to Rome with him, but the Pope did not want him to'.⁸⁰ To understand what happened between the Cardinal of Ferrara and Pope Julius III, it is worth considering the timings involved in the dispersal of the information surrounding the Imperials' departure, as that – their departure – was the event that overturned the existing balance of power. Both Alessandro Sozzini and the anonymous author of the report, while partially disagreeing on the role played by the Cardinal, write that he found out about the retreat of the Imperial army once his meeting with the Pope had already started, thanks to an express courier promptly sent by Paul de Thermes on 16 June.⁸¹ However, as we have seen, when the dispatch sent from Siena reached the Cardinal, he had the previous day been informed by the Pope's envoy, Vimercato. Furthermore, that day, 15 June, Vimercato's news had also been corroborated by the French ambassador, Lansac, and by Cardinal du Bellay, who were both in Viterbo with the Pope's household and who both went to see Ippolito while he was on his way to Bagnai – presumably in order to find an opportunity to confer with him before he met the Pope.⁸² The rumours of Don García's departure had therefore already spread throughout the Roman Curia at least one day before Ippolito managed to actually see the Pope – a fact that should be taken into account when judging the outcome of their meeting.

⁷⁸ The King's conditions to come to terms with the Emperor were that Ippolito should be present in the meeting, that the Republic should not go back to the Emperor, and that the Siense citizens should be involved in any decision: ASFI, MdP, 1865, fo. 97r.

⁷⁹ Sozzini, 'Diario', p. 148.

⁸⁰ 'Il Papa gli [to Ippolito d'Este] disse che poiche gli Imperiali se erano partiti del Stato di Siena, che per allhora si poteva differire di trattare le cose di Siena et scriver di nuovo all'Imperadore et al Re et vedere quello che loro dicevano, et così licentiò il Cardinale': ASFI, 1865, MdP, 1865, fos. 97v-98r.

⁸¹ The anonymous report seems to have been written, or informed, by someone close to the Cardinal of Ferrara, because the Cardinal's role is often described in apologetic tones whilst the facts are also presented according to his own point of view. Nevertheless, this report too states that Ippolito found out about the Turkish armada when he was already with Julius III: ASFI, MdP, 1865, fo. 97v. Alessandro Sozzini's diary is also the source that informs Setton's rendition of the meeting: Sozzini, 'Diario', p. 148; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 598-599.

⁸² 'Il quale aviso mi fu poi anche confermato da Monsignor di Lansach che venne ad incontrarmi a mezza strada, et dal reverendissimo du Bellay, che mi incontrò poi di un pezzo fuori dalla porta, havendomi l'uno et l'altro aspettato in Viterbo. Ma il dì dipoi ne hebbi nova certa per lettere di Monsignor di Termes mandatemi per huomo espresso': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553).

That the Cardinal of Ferrara had indeed left Siena with all the intentions of signing the peace agreement – as it had been recommended by the King, and in spite of the fact that he already knew that the Turkish armada was heading for Naples – is demonstrated by a letter that he sent to his brother just a few days before meeting the Pope, in which he discussed his and Henry II's plans for the immediate aftermath of the peace.⁸³ Another letter sent by the Cardinal to Duke Ercole informs us that the Pope had suddenly decided to go back to Rome without having met Ippolito. On 14 June, while he was on his way to the meeting, Ippolito had received news that the Pope had left the castle of Viterbo – where the meeting should have taken place – and was heading to Bagnaia, a town nearby, with the intention of leaving for good.⁸⁴ The Cardinal had just decided to continue his journey to Viterbo and join Cardinal du Bellay and ambassador Lansac, who were waiting there for him and with whom he would have then followed the Pope to Rome, when he was told by Vimercato that the Pope had changed his mind and was waiting for him in Bagnaia.⁸⁵ In this context, the idea does not therefore seem to stand that Ippolito d'Este had suddenly decided to drop any negotiation, as a result of the war scenario having suddenly become more favourable to his side, and had disregarded the Pope's efforts to force France into a peace treaty. At the same time, it is hard to see any plausible reason for which the Pope might have decided to head back to the Vatican before even meeting the Sienese ministers other than the spreading of the news about the Turks – even though it is not immediately understandable why he should have given up his previous diplomatic efforts when he had just managed to bring the Imperial and the French representatives together. According to Ippolito d'Este, Julius III believed that the recent military success would have persuaded the King of France to turn his back on the peace agreement, and he therefore suggested to wait for the King to express his intentions:

About what happened between Our Lord and myself, I will briefly tell you that I have been received twice by His Holiness [...] so warmly and with so many pleasantries and demonstrations of love and good will as one could wish. However, as things have completely changed due to this retreat of the enemies, it occurred to His Holiness that the agreement should not be discussed anymore and that it is convenient to wait for His Majesty's decision after he will be noticed this

⁸³ 'Benchè Sua Maestà mi habbia scritto che dopo la conclusione di questo accordo l'animo suo è che io mi ritiri a Roma [...] l'ho supplicata a non mi voler astringere a questa andata, ma lasciarmi riposare per qualche giorno [...]; ho pensato di venirmene dopo questo accordo a passar questo resto del caldo in Ferrara con l'Eccellenza Vostra': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.17 (10 June 1553). That the peace treaty was considered as nearly achieved is also well shown by a letter sent to Ippolito from Piero Strozzi, where Strozzi regretted having missed a chance to serve the King of France in Tuscany: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.13 – all.C.

⁸⁴ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553).

⁸⁵ 'Anche che io havessi inteso che Nostro Signore si fosse partito da Viterbo et andato in Bagnaia con animo d'andarsene poi a Roma, io nondimeno continuerei a inseguir Sua Santità': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553). This confusion about the Pope's movements is also the reason why the meeting is often said to have happened in Viterbo rather than in Bagnaia. See, for instance, Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, p. 599; Byatt, 'Este, Ippolito II d'.

success. And having left things as I just told you, he heard and dismissed these Ambassadors saying that he will go to Rome and that they and I could go back to Siena.⁸⁶

We have seen that the Sieneſe feared that the Pope might appoint someone who would have dragged the city into the Imperial orbit. It is therefore possible that, under this circumstance, the Pope decided not to push a peace treaty that had few chances to be respected, at least in the long term. It seems quite likely, especially, as we have seen before, in the light of the Cardinal of Ferrara’s suspicion regarding Julius III’s appointment, that the Pope actually intended to advantage the Duke of Florence under the label of a ‘neutral peace agreement’, and that he dropped the negotiations because he saw that, with the departure of the Imperial army, he had lost his best leverage to make the French and the Sieneſe accept what was, in reality, a disadvantageous agreement – and we shall see that the Pope will indeed in time take Cosimo de’ Medici’s side more openly.

Julius III’s attempts to mediate between the parties and his attitude towards the Sieneſe authorities sensibly changed subsequent to – or, probably, due to – the meeting in Bagnaiſa and the end of the ſiege of Montalcino. The Pope continued to work actively to end the war in Tuscany; but when, in the following August, Giovanni Andrea Vimercato was ſent once again to viſit Siena and Florence, his miſſion was to preſent a harſh complaint againſt the one-sidedneſs of Ippolito’s diplomatic policies, which the Pope ſaw, in his own words, as ‘clear, evident, ſtraightforward and ſafe for one ſide [...] and not only doubtful and dangerous, but completely disadvantageous for the other’.⁸⁷ The inſtructions left to Vimercato in August required him to make the Sieneſe aware of the Pope’s utter diſſatisfaction and to forward to the Cardinal of Ferrara Julius’s requeſt – or, rather, mild threat – that he ſhow more conſideration for the poſition of the Duke of Florence, whoſe diffidence was on the verge of breaking into armed aggression:

What really concerns us, and this is the reaſon why we are ſending you there, is that we have never believed that it is either uſeful to the King or beneficial to Siena to keep the Duke of Florence in that ſuſpicion, diffidence and animoſity in which they put him. He has his State well-equipped and ſtrong, he has money, artillery and ſoldiers and ways of having as many as he likes in four days. Theſe Imperials told us juſt today that they have reſolved not to leave him for any reaſon and to give him part of the forces that they have in this reign [...] We believe that the Duke will ſatisfy himſelf with ſtaying within his own borders and enjoying his State, and he will not bother other people’s States nor will he quarrel with the King; on the other hand, if he [the King] ſatisfies himſelf with Siena being in a real ſtate of freedom, as his miniſters have always ſaid and as His Majeſty has ſaid to our legate (and which ſome people will hardly believe until

⁸⁶ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.19 (20 June 1553).

⁸⁷ ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 79, p. 137 (‘Memoriale per M. Gio. Andrea Vimercato’, 12 August 1553).

the governance and custody and army of the city is in the hands of His Majesty's ministers), then we do not see why the Cardinal and the Duke should not come to an agreement very quickly.⁸⁸

The Pope had already to some extent demonstrated, whilst professing neutrality, that he was not alien to some demonstrations of partiality (for example, he had granted the Viceroy of Naples safe-conduct to march his troops through the Papal state on the way to Siena).⁸⁹ This time, however, the mission of Julius's agent contained a much more straightforward declaration of intent. Once he had left Siena, Vimercato was to head straight to Florence. There, he was to explain to Cosimo de' Medici that the French did not trust him and that they were afraid that he might be the vehicle of an Imperial attack, to which Siena could have offered little resistance. The more important task of Vimercato, however, was to perform an apology before the Duke of Florence of the Pope's past behaviour, explaining to him that the Vatican's attempts to draw the French to sign the peace had been frustrated by their political ambiguity ('these ministers here [in Rome] speak in a way and those who are in Siena in another, and it seems that these here speak for themselves')⁹⁰. Julius III was also keen to let Cosimo know that he had tried to be friendly with the French but, at the same time, he had strongly refused to take Henry II's side against the Emperor, not least because that would have entailed entering into an alliance that included the forces of the 'heretics' (i.e. the German Protestant princes and the Ottoman Empire).⁹¹ For the near future, the Pope suggested to the Duke of Florence that he should not 'intervene in the things regarding Siena and [...] do not help the Emperor against the King'. The Pope, of course, knew that his recommendation would not be taken up. Cosimo de' Medici was the Emperor's principal ally in central Italy and, after the Viceroy's troops had arrived in the Sieneese, his state had served as a military base for men, news and supplies. It was just a matter of time before the Duke decided to put also his troops at the service of the Spanish – and the Pope had already sanctioned Cosimo's position by issuing a decree that forbade everyone in the Church State from joining either the Imperial or the French troops, a

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 137-138.

⁸⁹ Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 595; *Legazioni Serristori*, p. 529; Sozzini, 'Diario', p. 95.

⁹⁰ This was in all likelihood a reference to Cardinal du Bellay, who was one of the leaders of the French faction and a personal enemy of Ippolito d'Este: see chapter I.2 'Lobbying in the Vatican' in this thesis. The Pope also added that the French representatives in Rome had told him that they had asked the King for more powers, but that until that moment the one authority to deal with in regard to Siena was the Cardinal of Ferrara, and that every effort to find an agreement had to go through him: ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 79, p. 139 (memoriale per M. Gio. Andrea Vimercato, 12 August 1553).

⁹¹ 'Li Francesi [...] non se mostrano alieni dalla concordia, anzi se ne mostrano desiderosi, ma non sapremo allo strignere qual conditione volesseno. Noi li havemo detto più volte per conto nostro che quello che tocca a noi che son due sorti [...], una ero amicus tuus et amicorum tuorum, l'altra ero amicus tuus et inimicus inimicorum tuorum, et a questa seconda sorte non volevamo in alcun modo esser sottoposti, perché non volevamo essere inimico dell'Imperatore che è inimico del Re, né volevamo essere amico di Turchi et Lutherani che sono amici del Re': *ibid.*

decree that did not apply to whoever decided to serve the Duke of Florence. Under a pretension of neutrality, therefore, the decree pretended to forget that Cosimo was playing a very relevant part in the war of Siena, and that to enter his service meant to offer, at least, silent support to the Emperor.⁹² The menacing tones with which Vimercato was supposed to approach the Siennese authorities had, of course, no equivalent in the instructions left him regarding his mission in Florence. Not only did Julius III content himself with this insipid request of non-intervention, but he also ordered Vimercato to manage according to Cosimo's will any further negotiations with Ippolito d'Este and with the other Siennese ministers, and in such way as to pursue only Cosimo's own satisfaction – more than just a mild profession of partiality:

When you will happen to return to the Cardinal or to negotiate towards the peace, you will manage yourself as the Duke commands, because in this matter we do not care about anybody's benefit or satisfaction but his own.⁹³

LIMITS TO FRENCH POWER. IPPOLITO D'ESTE BETWEEN COSIMO DE' MEDICI AND PIERO STROZZI, 1553-1554

Cosimo de' Medici's diplomatic duplicity found its perfect counterpart and best recipient in Ippolito d'Este. In many respects, when the Siennese rebellion began, the two Italian lords were not in a dissimilar situation: they were both allied – or, better, subject – to a much stronger power, to which they owed a good deal of their influence and wealth, and from which they were hoping to gain more in the future. We have seen how the attention that families like the Medici and the Este paid to the 'local' dimension of Italy was necessarily very different from that of the great European powers. The affiliation with the Emperor or the King of France had become, in the sixteenth century (with the exception of Venice, traditionally neutral), an essential element in the life of any Italian small state, as it provided protection against their enemies and opportunities to acquire honour and prestige. However, in the context of the deep political instability that affected the Italian peninsula, to tie one's own destiny too tightly to the Italian fortunes of either the Habsburgs or the Valois was never a recommendable choice, and so every ruler tried to maintain for their state the favour of all the European sovereigns. In case of a new eruption of hostilities in Italy, too straightforward an obligation to serve either the Emperor or the King of France would

⁹² As Cosimo's courtier, Montalvo, observed, 'questo bando fu fatto a cautela, perché chi andava dal Duca non poteva incorrere nel bando': Montalvo, *Relazione*, p. 16.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

have determined, for most Italian states, the exposure of their dominions to the uncertainties of war and to the retaliation of the other side – a scenario that most Italian rulers were keen to avoid (as we have seen, for instance, when Ercole II refused to host the meeting of the French in Ferrara).

This was exactly Duke Cosimo de' Medici's situation when the French took control of Siena. The Duke had always been highly suspicious of the connection the Tuscan exiles enjoyed with the French monarchy and especially with the Queen, Catherine de' Medici, who had offered them protection and had made them very influential at the royal court.⁹⁴ Cosimo had feared that the *fuoriusciti* might have managed to convince Henry II to support military action against one of the Tuscan towns, which, in Cosimo's eyes, were Florentine satellites, and for which he had always had an expansionistic thirst. His relationship with the Valois court was nonetheless far from hostile, at least on the surface.⁹⁵ Although his rise as the Duke of Florence had been helped by the support provided by Charles V, that alliance had not spared Cosimo from experiencing more than one disappointment, and his own plans over Tuscany diverged from those of Charles V.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Cosimo had never liked the Spanish governor of Siena, Don Diego de Mendoza, to whom he attributed several mistakes in the management of the Imperial interests in Tuscany, and whom he subsequently also blamed for his poor handling of the Sienese revolt.⁹⁷ We have already seen that the Duke of Florence, whilst fully aware of the attempts made by the Tuscan *fuoriusciti* to find support to 'free' Siena from the Imperial tyranny, had failed to foresee that the French would take Siena under their military protection and that a small and 'local' rebellion would degenerate into a two-year war. Cosimo de' Medici's biographer, Roberto Cantagalli, claims that the Duke was not displeased with the idea of a popular rebellion in Siena, which, resulting in the expulsion of the hated Don Mendoza, would both have relieved Florence of his principal rival in Tuscany and have made the Emperor see that Cosimo's long-standing criticism of Mendoza's governorship had been prophetic.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ The group of Florentines at Henry II's court was very influential, not only politically but also economically. Among their number, many were bankers and regularly loaned money to the sovereign to fund his campaigns against the Emperors: Heller, *Anti-Italianism*, pp. 94-95.

⁹⁵ To shield himself and Florence from a potential attack by the Valois (and, probably, also to gain time in the case of a request of unconditional support coming from the Emperor), the Duke had also signed a pact of mutual non-aggression with the French – even though it is hard to believe that, in case of open war, either of the two parties did seriously intend to abide by it: Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, p. 182. The Pope was aware that Cosimo had signed an agreement with the French, but he too seemed to attribute little value to it: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 340 (20 July 1552).

⁹⁶ Cosimo aimed to expand Florence's influence over Tuscany, whilst Charles V preferred to counterbalance the Duke's power and maintain some form of control. See Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 180-181.

⁹⁷ *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 322. The Duke lamented that Mendoza was 'suo inimicissimo' and a man 'atto a fare molto maggiori mali e maggiori perdite a Sua Maestà delle fate, se come strumento lo vorranno adoperare': *Lettere di Cosimo I*, ed. G Spini (Florence, 1940), pp. 118-119. See also Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 179-181; 184-186.

⁹⁸ Cosimo de' Medici's insistence on blaming Mendoza for his poor management of Siena, although certainly motivated by their different ambitions over Tuscany, was also part of an aggressive campaign, led by the Toledo house, aimed to

When the rebellion broke out, Cosimo avoided immediately taking a strong position against the Sienese citizens. He managed to send a few of his troops into the city, through a door that was still controlled by the Spanish soldiers, but rather than fighting the rebels and calming the turmoil, his officials contented themselves with occupying the fort and remaining there – an action that was more symbolic than effective and aimed to demonstrate to Charles V that the Duke was a trustworthy ally.⁹⁹ That Cosimo was deliberately biding his time instead of deploying his army surprised even the Florentine ambassador to the Vatican, Averardo Serristori; not so the Pope, who told the incredulous Serristori that he ‘did not believe that Your Excellence [Cosimo] will uncover himself so much, in order not to drag this flood upon himself, and not to have this pest all upon his shoulders; because the Emperor can neither defend himself nor others’.¹⁰⁰ Cosimo’s line of action – a clever but risky game that, through a claim of neutrality, aimed to reassure Charles V of his loyalty without provoking a French intervention against Florence – was perfectly described by *monsieur* Lodève, who wrote that ‘it seems that he wants to make an effort and swim into two waters [i.e. take both sides], which will be very difficult to do’.¹⁰¹

Part of Cosimo’s plan was to maintain a friendly and unsuspecting relationship with the French representatives in Siena, especially with the Cardinal of Ferrara. The kind of relationship that the Duke and the Cardinal aimed to establish had already been made clear at the very beginning of Ippolito’s work as the King’s representative: travelling from Ferrara to Siena, the Cardinal had stopped in Florence, where he had been welcomed very warmly by the Duke and his family.¹⁰² There, according to the anonymous writer from Ippolito’s household,

Discussing many times with the Duke of Florence, who thought that the King of France might have sent the Cardinal of Ferrara to Siena in order to move war against him, the Cardinal told him that his King’s will was to maintain that Republic free, and that if the King had had any intention to do otherwise he would have not sent him.¹⁰³

disqualify and ultimately replace the ‘old’ Imperial ruling élite in Italy, namely Don Ferrante Gonzaga and Don Diego de Mendoza himself – something that emerges clearly from Mendoza’s correspondence and that has been thoroughly studied by scholars in recent years. See: *Algunas cartas de Don Diego*, pp. 257-260 and the introduction by A. Vázquez and R. S. Rose. On the alliance Medici-Toledo: Hernando Sánchez, ‘Naples and Florence’. On the change in Imperial politics – and representatives – in Italy, see Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 43-64.

⁹⁹ Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, p. 185.

¹⁰⁰ *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 340 (27 July 1552).

¹⁰¹ *Correspondance du Gabre*, p. 52. Du Gabre wrote this after Cosimo had granted safe passage to the Viceroy’s troops, but it well describes Cosimo’s politics from the very beginning of the Sienese rebellion. See also: Hernando Sánchez, ‘Naples and Florence’, p. 174.

¹⁰² As Ippolito himself later told Cosimo’s ambassador, Leone Ricasoli, when he arrived in Siena: ASFI, MdP, 1851, fo. 148.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1865, fo. 93r.

The Cardinal of Ferrara was therefore hoping to ‘make the Duke of Florence become friends with the King, so that the affairs in Tuscany would always remain in peace’ – something that would have been difficult to achieve, given the reserve with which Cosimo was seen at the Valois court.¹⁰⁴ That both men had decided to temporarily embrace this friendly attitude is also the opinion of one of Cosimo’s courtiers, who, mirroring the judgement expressed by the anonymous writer, stated that ‘with the Cardinal, [the Duke of Florence] had a good correspondence, and they exchanged very polite letters with each other’.¹⁰⁵ It was an arrangement that, whilst opportunistic and hypocritical, served the purposes of both: Cosimo did not want to arouse a climate of hostility against Florence that would have forced him to defend his state when neither his nor the Emperor’s forces were ready; Ippolito did not want to cloud his administration with an open war, an occurrence that not only would have deprived him of his leadership in favour of the French military officials, but would have also exposed the Duchy of Ferrara to the risk of another war in central Italy. Therefore, for the time being, a situation of strained neutrality was preferable to any other alternative.

However, that, behind the superficiality of their claims of ‘friendship’, the Duke and the Cardinal ‘were both waiting for a chance to pursue their own plans’ is something that occurred even to contemporary observers.¹⁰⁶ This was particularly true in the case of the Duke of Florence, who was playing a difficult game between the Emperor and France and who had definitely more to gain (and to lose) in the immediate future than the Cardinal of Ferrara. While his letters to Ippolito were as polite as ever, Cosimo’s real efforts focused on collecting information on Siena. Immediately after the beginning of the rebellion, he sent, alongside his troops, a couple of agents who devoted themselves to gathering all the information available on relations between the French ministers and the citizens, on the food supplies in the city, on the number of troops heading to Tuscany, and on the forts, walls, and artillery of Siena.¹⁰⁷ Besides employing several casual and ‘anonymous’ informers who sent him dispatches from within the walls of Siena, the Duke also employed a resident ambassador, Leone Ricasoli (from August 1552) – another sign that Cosimo was more eager to promote the image of someone neutral rather than that of the loyal Imperial servant. Ambassador Ricasoli’s frequent letters provided the Duke with a thorough picture of the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Montalvo, *Relazione*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ These were Ippolito da Correggio and Leone Santi. The Duke shared everything they had found out with Charles V. See, for example, the numerous letters that Cosimo addressed to his ambassador to Germany, Pandolfini, between July and August 1552: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 319; 321-322; 326-328. See also Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, p. 186.

strengths and weaknesses of the French presence in the city, in a way that resembles more the work of an intelligence agent than that of a mere ambassador.¹⁰⁸ Cosimo's Janus-faced behaviour was well explained to Charles V by the Florentine ambassador to Germany, Pierfilippo Pandolfini, in August 1552:

These French agents who are in Siena have started to repose so much confidence and safety in us, that without any precaution they send couriers with their dispatches across this State [Florence]. Which is something we keep dissimulating, in order to be able to so easily get to know and penetrate their plans and their secrets; in the belief that this might be really helpful to His Caesarean Majesty. [...]. If this will be treated with the appropriate discretion, we hope we will really benefit him [Charles V]. We also believe that, the more Don Diego and I dissimulate in regard with these things of Siena and show that we do not care about them so much nor we do want to interfere, the more these French agents will fall asleep and will take fewer defensive measures for the city, persuading themselves that there is no reason to worry about His Caesarean Majesty.¹⁰⁹

While committed to acquiring information through every available means, Cosimo also allowed the French to cross his territories with men and supplies. This behaviour, however, became more difficult to sustain when the Viceroy moved to the siege of Montalcino. The Duke had managed, once again, to defend his neutrality and to provide only a limited support to the Imperial troops – a fact that the Cardinal of Ferrara did not neglect to appreciate and praise.¹¹⁰ At the same time, the Cardinal had kept relying on Cosimo's 'politeness' to obtain free passage of goods and supplies through the Florentine state, making sure, for his part, that none of the French troops heading to Siena would trouble the Duke's dominion.¹¹¹ Paradoxically, when the Viceroy's troops attacked the Sieneese, the exchange of courtesies between the two men increased.¹¹² Although, as we have seen, the Duke had previously justified his blatant lack of initiative to Charles V by explaining that he was aiming to gain the trust of the French, his excessively polite relationship with Siena, in the end, aroused the Emperor's suspicions. In March 1553, Cosimo was forced to defend himself and to write a letter to Germany in which he blamed Don Diego de Mendoza as the one who had spread rumours about the Duke's negligence in patrolling the border with Siena and in preventing the transit of French goods – something that, as we have just seen, he had indeed done. Cosimo played the role of the indignant loyal servant and hypocritically reassured the Emperor that 'our

¹⁰⁸ Ricasoli's correspondence mainly dealt with the fortifications in the Sieneese territories, the movements of the French troops, and the food supplies available in the city. It is quite clear that the ambassador also coordinated a network of informers, who, even after his departure from Siena, kept addressing their letters to him. See, for example, ASFI, MdP, 410/1851, fos. 4-147; 413a, fos. 696-767.

¹⁰⁹ *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 323 (17 August 1552).

¹¹⁰ ASFI, MdP, 3271, fo. 433r.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, fo. 433v.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, fos. 434;437.

conscience is not burdened with the slightest sense of negligence'.¹¹³ At the same time, and on the other side, the Cardinal of Ferrara too was accused by some of his own *protégés*, the Sieneese, of 'having some business with the Duke of Florence' – a suspicion that, whether sincere or not, could be easily induced by Ippolito's well-known 'friendliness' with the Duke.¹¹⁴ This behaviour, as we have seen, had its primary rationale in Ippolito's obligation to soothe the hostilities in Tuscany – nonetheless, it was at risk of appearing politically duplicitous and it could be very easily used to undermine Ippolito's reputation before the French monarchy.¹¹⁵ The private favours that the two men kept exchanging with each other resulted, for both of them, in suspicions of betrayal on the part of their allies.¹¹⁶ In the case of the Cardinal of Ferrara, these suspicions are echoed even in the words of a modern historian such as Lucien Romier, who argued that while Ippolito's behaviour might have been a sign of his 'trahison' – but it was probably the sign only of his 'fatuité naïve'.¹¹⁷ We shall see that the Cardinal of Ferrara's relationship with the Duke of Florence was not as naïve as Romier thought, and that he had a clear sense of Cosimo's agenda. However, though Ippolito was forced by his conflicted loyalties to stick to his programme of appeasement, Cosimo de' Medici's ambitions over Siena had the benefit of being more independent, and it was therefore the Duke who was first to abandon his pretended neutrality.

While the private relationship between the Cardinal of Ferrara and the Duke of Florence seemed to be oblivious to the increasing tension caused by the ravages of the Spanish troops in the Sieneese, the tactful circumspection that had surrounded the 'official' diplomatic relation between Siena and Florence in the summer and the autumn of 1552 was giving way, in the winter, to an atmosphere of increasing hostility. Suspicions about the Florentine ambassador's involvement with an anti-French conspiracy started to make the ambassador's permanence in the city problematic – to the point that, in February 1553, Cosimo decided to recall him to Florence.¹¹⁸ Immediately after Ricasoli's departure, the Sieneese arrested a certain Monterchio, one of his collaborators, who had

¹¹³ The Duke also polemically asked: 'E forse che i francesi non possono per altre vie che per il nostro stato mandare denari e ciò che vogliono in Siena, e che gli mancano le strade per donde mandarli?': *ibid.*, pp. 337-338 (9 March 1553).

¹¹⁴ Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 231.

¹¹⁵ The Cardinal had found a letter, written by 'qualche maligna persona di questa città' and addressed to Constable Montmorency and Cardinal Tournon: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.24 (24 August 1553). The suspicions of the Sieneese are also accounted for in some of Bartolomeo Cavalcanti's letters (Cavalcanti had followed Ippolito d'Este to Siena to help him manage the government of the city): Campori, *Diciotto lettere*, p. 8. See also Cantagalli, *La guerra di Siena*, p. 147.

¹¹⁶ Ippolito, for instance, took care of returning to Cosimo three slaves of his that had been imprisoned in the Sieneese. Cosimo, given the difficulties in supplying the Sieneese with food during the siege, personally presented Ippolito with five-hundred measures of wine for his household: ASFI, MdP, 3271, fos. 431; 436.

¹¹⁷ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 350.

¹¹⁸ *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 333-334 (19 February 1553). Cosimo justified his decision to the Sieneese by saying that it had been due to the 'menacing quality of the times': Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 347 (fn.1).

been seen ‘measuring’ the city fortifications and whose visits to Ricasoli’s house had led to suspicions that he was a spy.¹¹⁹ To save Monterchio from prison, the Capitano del Popolo, Giulio Salvi, intervened, prohibiting the accusers from questioning Monterchio about his relationship with Ricasoli and eventually obtaining his release (a favour that Monterchio could not return when the Capitano del Popolo himself was arrested and beheaded a few months later, with the accusation of having organised the anti-French conspiracy).¹²⁰ The withdrawal of an ambassador represented, in the best case, a severe breach in any diplomatic relationship; in the worst, it was the prelude to a declaration of war. The departure of Leone Ricasoli briskly tore the veil of ostentatious courtesy that the Cardinal of Ferrara and the Duke of Florence had spread over their diplomatic communications since the beginning of the Siennese rebellion. While on 30 January 1553 (and continuously even during the siege of Montalcino) the Cardinal of Ferrara was still warmly reassuring Cosimo of his friendship (‘Not only do I desire the health of this city without any dangerous harm for yourself, but whenever I might learn of a way to obtain the preservation of your freedom and your State more safely and peacefully, I will be as committed and prompt to walk that path as Your Excellence might wish’), only a week later, on 12 February, he claimed to be shocked and hurt by Cosimo’s decision – Ricasoli’s departure was, in Ippolito’s words, a personal offence.¹²¹ In his letter to the Duke – which he wrote because he wished it ‘to remain with you as a witness of truth, and because my conscience compels me to do so’ – the Cardinal bitterly regretted Cosimo’s decision and especially lamented the fact that, ‘having decided Your Excellence to remove this ambassador, he did not do it in a different way [*sotto un colore diverso*]’.¹²² After this first burst of animosity, the Cardinal must have believed that Cosimo was going to abandon his pretence of neutrality and show his real intentions over Siena, because, in April 1553, he wrote to his brother

¹¹⁹ ASFI, MDP, 413a, fo. 696r (15 February 1553). See also ASFI, MDP, 1866, fo. 17r (16 February 1553).

¹²⁰ ASFI, MDP, 413a, fos. 706r-707r (16 February 1553). Ottaviano Salvi, a clergyman and Giulio Salvi’s brother, was one of Leone Ricasoli’s most active spies. In his dispatches, he used codenames to talk about the Siennese authorities (Ippolito II d’Este, for instance, was ‘the widow’). He also asked Ricasoli to provide him with ‘quella mistura di poter leggere le lettere nel modo che mi diceste, [...] in volta in vinti quattro bracia di buratto negro’ so that he could write more explicit things about the Siennese politics – the ‘mixture’ was probably some sort of invisible ink. Ottaviano was sentenced to death with his brother in May 1553. The Salvis had also helped Ricasoli to obtain the removal of some offensive sonnets and paintings (‘sonnettacci e dipinture’) that were targeting Charles V: in order not to arouse suspicion among the French, the Capitano del Popolo, Giulio Salvi, had prohibited the display of any kind of poster. See ASFI, MDP, 413a, fos. 706r-707r (16 February 1553), 766r (16 February 1553); 1851, fo. 98. See also Sozzini, ‘Diario’, p. 142; Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 199-200.

¹²¹ ‘Ho compreso che la cagione che l’ha indotta a rivocarlo è stata il parerle che noi caminiamo in queste cose di Siena ad altro fine ch’ella non pensava; né posso fare che io non mi dolga che Vostra Eccellenza habbia conciputo così fatta opinione, sì per esser tutto contraria al vero, sì per venire ad essere congiunta con qualche diffidentia de le parole mie’: ASFI, MDP, 3271, fo. 479.

¹²² Ibid.

that 'he [the Duke of Florence] is starting to uncover himself'.¹²³ As for their own relationship, another sign that private friendship and reason of state were starting to collide came from Cosimo's espionage, in the difficult moment when the Cardinal was managing the negotiations for the peace agreement proposed by the Pope. Keen to penetrate into the real thoughts of the French over the agreement that they kept delaying, the Imperials seized a batch of ciphered letters that one of the Cardinal's men was carrying, some of them written by Duke Ercole and addressed to the Cardinal in Siena, some others written by the Cardinal and addressed to Ferrara – even though both the carrier and the letters were protected by a safe-conduct signed by the Duke of Florence. When the Cardinal discovered the loss, he complained to the Duke of Florence and scornfully wrote to his brother that he was not expecting any help from the man who had in all likelihood benefitted from the theft: although I did not neglect to report it to the Duke of Florence [...], my opinion is that he was informed of everything, and that the letters found their way into his hands; therefore, I think that he is going to respond more in words than actions'.¹²⁴ A month after the episode, the Cardinal's stolen letters were returned, but in such terms that made it quite clear that Cosimo's 'neutrality' and 'friendship' were definitely a thing of the past:

The day before yesterday, this lord the Duke sent me, through his secretary sir Bartholomeo Concino, two large sheets of opened letters, which were given to him (he says) by Don Garcia, who was in Florence the other day and to whom he claims he had addressed several requests. I did not find, among these sheets, other letters of importance but those from Your Excellence, [written] in cipher on the VII and on the X [...]; and regarding those that were cyphered, this lord the Duke wrote me that Don Garcia told him that he had sent them to the Emperor's ambassador in Venice to have them deciphered – *Ippolito starts writing in cipher* – hence, one can well imagine that having the letter of mine for Your Excellence, they might have deciphered it and might have also seen, if they had deciphered the other ones too, what was there said against this business [the peace deal].¹²⁵

This episode did not put on hold the parallel and 'friendly' diplomacy that Ippolito d'Este and Cosimo de' Medici had established between them,¹²⁶ whilst the arrival of the Turkish armada and the failure of the peace conference, in June 1553, dropped the curtain on the 'official' diplomatic activity that had involved Florence, Siena and Rome in the previous months. In the summer of 1553, war quickly opened on several fronts; the political environment in which Ippolito d'Este was in charge of defending the French-Sienese interests completely changed. After the attack against

¹²³ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.12 (13 April 1553).

¹²⁴ Ibid., 1709.XVIII.14 (3 May 1553).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 1709.XVIII.15 (3 June 1553).

¹²⁶ Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 204-205.

the Kingdom of Naples, the Turkish fleet had sailed to Tuscany; upon arrival, on 9 August 1553, the fleet attacked and destroyed the islands of Elba and Pianosa, part of the Florentine state. The French, galvanised by the sudden turn of the events, decided to send Paul de Thermes and a great number of soldiers to conquer Corsica (under the control of Genoa, allied with the Emperor), leaving Siena poorly defended. The destruction of part of his dominion by the Turks, combined with the vulnerability in which Siena had been left, offered Cosimo the perfect excuse to abandon his tactfulness and eventually take the initiative against the French. During August and September 1553, the Duke of Florence started discreetly organising his forces and seeking Charles V's support to gather more men and horses, whilst also sending his troops to help Genoa fight the French in Corsica but still without threatening the border with Siena.¹²⁷ Soon after that, rumours spread in Italy that the King of France had decided to appoint Piero Strozzi, the leader of the *fuoriusciti* in France, to be his General Captain of the army in Siena – formally to replace Paul de Thermes, although it was clear that Strozzi's appointment was not of the same quality of Thermes's, who was a 'pure' French official with no personal relations in Italy.¹²⁸

We have already noticed that Cosimo de' Medici had been displeased to see that Tuscan exiles were gaining more and more influence at the French court, thanks to the support offered them by Catherine de' Medici; the fact that the King of France was now sending to Tuscany the most dangerous of them, the son of that Filippo who had tried to overthrow Cosimo and who had built a fortune lending money to half the monarchies of Europe, provided the Duke of Florence with the perfect *casus belli* to move war against Siena and fulfil his expansionistic desires. The hatred that existed between Cosimo de' Medici and the Strozzi family was public knowledge: the King of France himself had refrained from sending Piero Strozzi to Italy when the rebellion had first broken out, in spite of his insistent requests.¹²⁹ He had chosen, instead, a man of compromise, Ippolito d'Este, who would have done anything in his power to keep Tuscany as quiet as possible, giving

¹²⁷ For the developments of war in the summer of 1553, see Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 202-204; Montalvo, *Relazione*, p. 8. The French ambassador to Rome, *monsieur de Lansac*, wrote nonetheless to Siena to say that the 'grandes provisions et préparatifs que fait le duc de Florence [...] sont telz que plutost l'on deveroyt avoir suspeçon que se fust pour offenser et non pour se deffendre': *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 155.

¹²⁸ Piero Strozzi was the son of Clarice de' Medici and Filippo Strozzi, who had been one of the richest bankers of Europe and had been banished from Florence after leading an attempt to overthrow Cosimo de' Medici. Clarice Strozzi had helped raise Catherine de' Medici, who was her niece, and Filippo had contributed to her dowry when she was about to marry to the future Henry II. After Filippo died, Piero passed into the service of the French monarchy, helped and protected – alongside other *fuoriusciti* – by his cousin, Catherine de' Medici. In France, he had also gained a reputation for being a successful military commander: Heller, *Anti-Italianism*, pp. 94-96. On Piero Strozzi's fortune in France, see also Trucchi, *Vita e gesta*, chap. 3.

¹²⁹ Trucchi, *Vita e gesta*, p. 66. The King did not want to provoke Cosimo by violating a convention signed by Florence and Siena in 1542 that forbade either of them to give shelter to the other's political enemies; Montalvo, *Relazione*, p. 14-15; Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, p. 205-206; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 396; 404-405.

the King time to reassess the monarchy's priorities without burdening its finances. The time of compromise definitively closed during the summer of 1553; the choice to send Strozzi – a soldier, not a politician – signalled that change, but was also the result of the increasing influence of the aristocratic factions that revolved around the royal court. It is hard to believe that Henry II did not realise that, by appointing Cosimo's 'capital enemy', he was provided the Duke of Florence with the perfect excuse to attack Siena, especially when the Duke knew that the city had been left without adequate defences.¹³⁰ It seems that everyone involved was expecting Florence to take serious measures against Strozzi's presence – the French, the Sienese and also Pope Julius III, who told his nephew, Ascanio della Cornia, that he was sure that Strozzi's arrival in Tuscany would have provoked 'some great demonstration' on Cosimo's part.¹³¹

Factors that had probably contributed to King Henry II's decision were the success achieved by Piero Strozzi in Metz, where he and the Duke of Guise had forced the Emperor's troops, larger in number, to a shameful retreat;¹³² and the influence of both the Tuscan *fuoriusciti* and the Queen, who were keen to take the opportunity to trouble Cosimo de' Medici and who had put their substantial financial assets at the service of the French crown.¹³³ However, according to the Florentine ambassador, Averardo Serristori, Strozzi's election had been determined not by political or economic considerations but rather by the hatred that was between the factions of the Guise and of Constable Montmorency, who were in competition to have their *protégés* and friends appointed to the highest offices in the Kingdom: rather than seeing the Duke of Guise granted the title of general captain, Montmorency had preferred to endorse Piero Strozzi's ambitions.¹³⁴ In this

¹³⁰ As Montalvo, Cosimo's courtier, wrote to sanction his lord's behaviour: 'Non contenti [the French] per fargli l'ultimo affronto, avevano mandato a Siena Pietro Strozzi, ribelle e fuoriuscito del suo stato e suo capital nemico, con la carica di Capitano Generale del Re nello Stato di Siena. Di maniera che, chiaritosi dell'insolenza dei francesi [Duke Cosimo] aveva determinato, vedendo ogni ragione dalla sua, pigliare l'arme': Montalvo, *Relazione*, p. 15. Ambassador Lansac had suggested to Cardinal Tournon to appoint Camillo Orsini instead: *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 204.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16. In January 1554, Lodève warned Henry II that Cosimo had already started 'a parler nouveau langage, qu'il vous a toujours été serviteur, et s'esbahist qu'on luy ait envoyé pour voisin un sien rebelle': *Correspondance du Gabre*, pp. 22-23. Some of the Sienese also feared that Strozzi's presence would have drawn Cosimo's anger upon them: Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 404 (fn. 2).

¹³² Trucchi, *Vita e gesta*, pp. 60-65.

¹³³ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 395-396. Whilst appointing Strozzi, to Italy, the King of France also allocated 600.000 *scudi* a month for the war. Roberto Strozzi, Piero's brother and the administrator of the family's bank, very soon arranged a loan of 50.000 *scudi* to finance the royal army in Italy: *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 300 (December 1553); *Correspondance du Gabre*, p. 90 (February 1554).

¹³⁴ 'Il papa essere avisato di buon luogo che Piero Strozzi era stato mandato per opera del Conestabile, il quale haveva proveduto col mezzo di Piero perché non ci venissi monsignor di Guisa, havendo mostro al re che l'andata di detto Piero a Metz era stata la cagione di salvare quella città': ASFI, MdP, 3272, fo. 499 (14 January 1554). Piero Strozzi was actually closer to the Guise than to Montmorency, who opposed him and all the *fuoriusciti*. According to Strozzi's biographer, however, after the success of Metz, Montmorency had looked for a reconciliation and had therefore strongly supported the captain's desire to be appointed to Siena. Strozzi's star was on the rise after Metz, and it is likely that the Constable thought that, by sponsoring his ambitions, he would both draw him into his sphere of influence and avoid the risk that Henry II might appoint the Duke of Guise: Trucchi, *Vita e gesta*, pp. 65-67.

situation, the limits of Ippolito d'Este's powers were quite evidently. His chances of influencing the royal court, without the support of the Guise, were small. But the Guise too saw Italy as a part of a larger puzzle, an extension of their power and not the bulk of it, and that their 'Italian policies' had to be subject to broader considerations, as much as those of the King. If it is true that Strozzi's appointment had been encouraged by the Constable, it also appears that the Guise had not particularly opposed it – or that they had thought it more convenient to accept Montmorency's candidate – even though they were aware, as everyone else was, that Strozzi's presence in Siena would have strained the relation with Florence and, inevitably, deprived Ippolito d'Este of his supreme authority over the city. In April 1553, several months before Strozzi was officially invested as General Captain and at a time when the negotiations for the peace agreement were still on-going, the Cardinal of Lorraine (the Duke of Guise's brother) had already started to enquire about Ippolito's feeling regarding the possibility of Strozzi's appointment:

With regard to what *monsignor* de Lorraine wanted you to ask me, that it is whether I would be happy to see Piero Strozzi here, I cannot but be surprised by such a question, because I do not see why anyone should not believe that I would happily see that lord here with me; besides regarding him as a friend of mine and someone whom I could not love or favour more even if we were related by blood, he is also known to me for being a valiant and illustrious knight.¹³⁵

The Cardinal of Lorraine probably knew that Ippolito would have not liked at all to share part of his powers with Strozzi – something that Ippolito's rhetorical enthusiasm can barely hide. It was more than a generic concern, because, if the presence of Strozzi was expected to induce the Duke of Florence's reaction, that would have also necessarily shifted the balance of power from the civil to the military sphere – that is to say, from Ippolito d'Este to the freshly appointed General Captain of the army. The Cardinal of Ferrara, while reassuring Lorraine of his good feelings towards the Tuscan captain, objected nonetheless that the arrival of one of Cosimo's principal enemies would have strained the atmosphere of 'neutrality' that he had established with difficulty with Florence – an objection that, as we have already seen, lost most of its resonance after the peace agreement had failed and Cosimo had sent his troops to Corsica.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, the Cardinal tried to use the news of Strozzi's arrival to his advantage, telling the Florentine ambassador that whenever Cosimo 'took the decision to sort things out with the Most Christian King, then [Strozzi] would be called

¹³⁵ Ippolito II to Ercole II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.12 (13 April 1553).

¹³⁶ 'Potrebbe ben essere che sul principio che questo Duca non si era scoperto tanto a diffavore et disavantaggio nostro, et che mostrava pur qualche buon animo verso le cose del Re et di questo Stato, fusse stato di parer che non si havesse a mandare per non eccitar col sospetto di lui l'animo di Sua Eccellenza et darle materia di dichiararsi contra noi': *ibid.*

back'.¹³⁷ That Ippolito d'Este was not the right man to represent this new aggressive turn in King Henry II's Italian politics was quite evident: too many ties and interests conditioned his actions, and in a situation of war he had very little to gain and a lot to lose – having to protect his house from the Emperor's revenge on the Duchy of Ferrara, and himself from the veto of the Imperial and 'Florentine' Cardinals during the next conclave. The Tuscan exiles, on the contrary, believed that 'there is no doubt that the liberation of Siena will result in the ruin of the Duke of Florence'.¹³⁸

Piero Strozzi's appointment was officially notified to Ippolito d'Este in November 1553. Although the Cardinal did not know exactly what kind of division of powers the King had envisioned to allow the two men to work side by side, he assumed that the General Captain would be his subordinate.¹³⁹ However, as soon as Strozzi arrived, in January 1554, it became clear that he had no intention to be subordinate at all, and a very harsh dispute over their respective responsibilities arose between the two men. Although, according to the King's intention, Strozzi was supposed to be in charge of the military defences and Ippolito of the civil government of the city, the situation of war in Sienese territory made the distinction more blurred in practice than it was on paper – and neither of the two men seemed to be willing to share any part of the other's prerogative. The clash of responsibilities arising at the very height of the Sienese hierarchies resulted in a vicious circle of resentment and misunderstanding, which went as far as to immobilise the life of the city. The Cardinal of Ferrara immediately addressed to the King a request of clarification with regard to his and Strozzi's respective position, to which soon followed a request to be permitted to resign his office and leave Siena for good.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, Cosimo de' Medici decided to take advantage of the confusion amongst the Sienese hierarchies: through a surprise attack, the Florentine troops managed to occupy the fort of Porta Camollia, next to the city walls, and, from there, they laid siege to Siena.¹⁴¹ The fact that Siena was now threatened by Cosimo's army shifted the balance of power more drastically towards Piero Strozzi. Although the Cardinal had eventually

¹³⁷ *Legazioni Serristori*, p. 326.

¹³⁸ As Piero Strozzi wrote to the King of France soon after he had arrived in Siena: Montalvo, *Relazione*, pp. 240-241.

¹³⁹ 'Non sapendo anchora le comissioni ch'egli porta, per essersi Sua Maestà rimessa a quel che mi farà intendere per lui': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.32 (13 November 1553). The French ambassador, Lansac, had told Ippolito that Strozzi would have been the 'lieutenant général aux affaires de la guerre, avec semblable autorité que avoit Monsigneur de Termes': *Correspondance Lanssac*, p. 314.

¹⁴⁰ As the Cardinal explained to his brother: 'Quanto pur apertamente esso signor Pietro dichiara qual sia l'animo suo, et qual l'autorità egli pretende d'havere in questo stato (il che era conosciuto prima da me, et però io faceva poco conto di quella obediencia ch'egli diceva di volermi portare) tanto più mi rendo certo ch'ella conoscerà ch'io non mi poteva governar d'altra maniera di quella che ho fatto, et ch'io non potrei haver maggior occasione di quella che ho di dimandar la licentia ch'io dimando, conoscendo ben chiaramente che il mio star qui di questa sorte non potrebbe se non essere in gran pregiudicio de l'honore et de la reputatione con la quale ci sono stato infino ad hora': *ibid.*, 1709.XIX.4 (15 January 1554).

¹⁴¹ On Cosimo's attack and the following events, see Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 213-223.

‘contented himself with letting Lord Piero manage the things of war’,¹⁴² the hostility between the two men did not decrease. The Cardinal’s correspondence with his brother during the winter of 1554 is devoted to complaints about Strozzi’s provocations, who ‘relentlessly tries to make the world believe that he holds supreme authority over this State’ and whose ‘bad attitude [...] annoys me’.¹⁴³

Given the impossibility of convincing Strozzi to subordinate himself to the Cardinal’s authority,¹⁴⁴ Ippolito’s efforts, from February onwards, focused on obtaining the King’s permission to leave Siena in order to preserve his reputation. He was eventually granted licence to leave in March 1554, but, as the war continued in Sienese territory, and because of the size of his household, he could only depart in May.¹⁴⁵ In the meantime, he had to give up his claim of superiority and adjust himself to Strozzi’s presence. To convince the Cardinal to take this course of action, his brother, Duke Ercole, had intervened, who, having recognised that the political conjuncture was unfavourable to Ippolito, recommended him not to spoil their relationship with the King only out of his hatred for Strozzi.¹⁴⁶

When he was eventually in the position to leave Siena, the Cardinal reiterated his intention to avoid Rome. In February 1554, before he was allowed to resign, he had already told Ercole II that

I have heard from a secretary of mine that His Holiness defends these movements of the Duke of Florence strenuously [...]; therefore, if I was to go there, I could well say that I managed to dodge one struggle to get into another one, which might be even worse in many respects, and especially because one can see [...] that this war will not end anytime soon.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² *Correspondance du Gabre*, p. 91. Du Gabre also told the King that, regardless of any clarification he could provide on the two men’s respective duties they ‘sont fort différentz de sa complexion et de profession et seront presque toujours en opinion contraire’: *ibid.* See also: *Correspondance Lanssac*, pp. 345-346.

¹⁴³ ASMO, CS, 1709.XIX.6 (30 January 1554). More letters in which Ippolito d’Este complains about Piero Strozzi are published in appendix in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 420-429. Strozzi’s biographer, adopting a point of view more favourable to his subject, claims that Strozzi had done everything in his power to sooth the Cardinal’s hurt pride and to start a fruitful collaboration with him: Trucchi, *Vita e gesta*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴⁴ Ippolito II to Ercole: ‘E però che il signor Pietro recusò liberamente di voler consentir alla superintendenza [...] sono stato costretto a cedere et contentarmi che tutte le cose si siano accomodate a vantaggio suo’: ASMO, CS, 1709.XIX.9 (19 February 1554).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1709.XIX.20 (22 March 1554).

¹⁴⁶ Ippolito to Ercole: ‘Havendo visto [...] quanto ella disideri che in queste cose non habbi Sua Maestà cagion di restar mal sodisfatta di me, io la [...] prego a esser certa che quando ben manchi dal canto di esso signor Pietro di non proceder meco con que termini che commanda Sua Maestà et che converrebbe, io però non sia per mancar di accomodarmi intieramente con lui in maniera che Sua Maestà non havrà causa di alcuna mala satisfattione’: *ibid.*, 1709.XIX.23 (2 May 1554).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1709.XIX.7 (5 February 1554).

Despite his best diplomatic efforts, when Ippolito left Siena he found himself at odds with the Pope, and without having succeeded in his implicit agenda of preventing hostilities with Cosimo de' Medici: war had broken out between the two Tuscan powers, and this appears little other than the result of a general failure, on the Cardinal's part, to mediate between the various parties with a stake in the region. As a Florentine agent ironically observed in the summer of 1554, Ippolito d'Este's dissatisfaction with the latest course of events in Siena was so deep to make him potentially employable by the Emperor, 'if the Emperor wanted to compensate him'.¹⁴⁸

It seems undeniable that the Sienese episode ended in a personal failure for Ippolito, and a political failure, if limited and local, for France, since Cosimo ultimately succeeded in conquering the city. It may be to some extent true, as is the received wisdom, that the weaknesses inherent to this enterprise were ultimately due to the arrogance and insufficient political capabilities of the Cardinal himself. Romier's perception of Ippolito's role, for example, is one that is utterly convinced of its underlying incompetence. Yet, Romier's unwavering sympathy for the King of France, and his identification of a French error in becoming too involved in, and ultimately manipulated by, these seemingly irrelevant, local Italian disputes, does not leave space to consider the minutiae of political contingencies that hampered Ippolito's movements and opportunity. A naive Ippolito was not necessarily fooled by Cosimo; rather, as the Cardinal's correspondence shows, he was fully aware of the superficialities in their communications. In fact, Ippolito seemed to have had no room for manoeuvre: Cosimo was in a much stronger position, enjoying both the support of the Pope and an organised army – two things that Ippolito most definitely lacked. When Strozzi took up his position in Siena, Ippolito was forced to make himself scarce, valuing his personal and familial relationship with Cosimo over the fraught political stance that the circumstances were otherwise forcing him to adopt. It is not by accident that Strozzi himself did not hesitate to take advantage of the Cardinal's personal involvement with the Duke of Florence to strengthen his own position in Siena, and that rumours about Ippolito's supposed political unreliability were spread in the city by the *fuoriusciti*.

A more sympathetic analysis than Romier's might divide Ippolito's time in Siena into two distinct periods. Initially, the Cardinal was appointed to Siena as a result of the recognition of his abilities in mediation, a result of a French faith in his capacity to keep the monarchy's best interests in mind and to not overtly exacerbate tensions. As Ippolito d'Este himself had told Cosimo de' Medici at the beginning of his mission to Siena, he would not have been appointed to the role if

¹⁴⁸ Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 410.

the King had not thought him the best person in whom to entrust the peaceful stability of Tuscany. However, this period ends abruptly with the arrival of the Turkish armada and the immediately strengthened French position that resulted. Ippolito's skills in diplomatic compromise were therefore no longer needed, and he was the first to recognise that he was unable to express the new timbre of the French political agenda: the arrival in Siena of Strozzi – the most explicit representation of a new French belligerence toward Cosimo – only signals the confirmation of this change in political tack. Piero Strozzi's arrival shifts the emphasis of this Tuscan conflict towards a more local dimension: whilst appointed as a representative of the King of France, Strozzi's presence in Siena kindles all the personal and dynastic relationships and hostilities that had been to this point below the surface rather than out in the open.

Meanwhile, Ippolito faced the flux of the factional strife in France. Whilst he had been sufficiently cunning to marry his family with the Guise, the appointment of Strozzi seems to indicate the extent to which the Cardinal was the victim of their political whim. In influencing the King's politics, the Guise, as much as the King himself, were playing a game that took into account not just Italy but also the other fronts of the war against the Emperor and, especially, the changeable scene of the factions in their own kingdom. Put simply, the Guise's failure or unwillingness to intervene in the positioning of Strozzi in Siena indicates that Ippolito could not always be their priority. Seemingly without sufficient leverage in the French court, all Ippolito could do was to accept their decision.

Preparing to leave Siena for good, the Cardinal of Ferrara took the hot weather as an excuse to delay his return to Rome, and decided to head north rather than south ('it is very dangerous for everyone to go to Rome in such a season').¹⁴⁹ His brother had already warned him not take the path of Tuscany, which was certainly quicker but which would have also forced Ippolito to publicly meet some of Cosimo de' Medici's representatives, as it was customary for high-rank travellers. In order to escape this unwanted contact, which would have damaged Ippolito's reputation, already negatively marked by his 'friendliness' with the Florentine duke, Ercole offered to obtain from

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 1709.XIX.25 (23 May 1554). See also: *Correspondance de Lanssac*, p. 417 (18 May 1554).

Cosimo a safe-conduct for the Cardinal's luggage and servants; Ippolito himself, however, would have had to take a longer but diplomatically safer journey through the Vatican state.¹⁵⁰

After having sent most of his household and belongings ahead, Ippolito d'Este left Siena on 5 June 1554. Following Ercole II's advice, he travelled across Umbria, boarded a ship in a town on the Eastern coast and sailed up to the Po estuary, from where he sailed the river upstream until he arrived in sight of Ferrara.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ 'Non mancherò di procurare col Duca di Fiorenza che le robbe et la famiglia di lei possino passar sicure per lo stato di Sua Eccellenza, ma quanto alla persona di Vostra Signoria Illustrissima non mi piacerebbe già ch'ella passasse per lo detto stato, poiché è da credere ch'il predetto Duca manderebbe ad incontrarla et si forzaria farli far di quelli honori che ordinariamente si convengono, il che non mi parrebbe punto in proposito in questi tempi, anzi per fuggire tale incontro per conveniente rispetto lauderei che a Vostra Signoria Illustrissima non gravasse pigliare l'incomodo di allungar qualche poco la strada': ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.66 (20 February 1554). See also Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, pp. 600-601; Sozzini, 'Diario', pp. 226-227.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1709.XIX.26; 27 (14 June 1554; 23 June 1554). On the developments of the Sieneese conflict after Ippolito's departure, which ended – as it is known – with the defeat of the French forces (April 1555) and the annexation of Siena to the Florentine state (July 1557), see: Cantagalli, *Cosimo I*, pp. 223-236; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, pp. 393-430. See also Cosimo's letters relative to this period in *Lettere di Cosimo I*, pp. 140-159. It has been observed that the acquisition of Siena, soon followed by the peace between Spain and France, sanctioned Cosimo de' Medici's role as the pivot of Spanish politics in Italy, and as Philip II's principal Italian ally: Signorotto, 'Papato e principi italiani', pp. 271-272; E. Fasano Guarini, 'Cosimo I de' Medici', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1984).

2. SERVING THE FAMILY. DIVERGING IDENTITIES AND DYNASTIC UNITY, 1552-1561

Alla sicurtà degli stati, non basta la grandezza e la comodità, essendovi due altre qualità necessarie: la fortezza e l'abbondanza, imperocchè quello stato che non è né forte né unito, non può esser sicuro

Emiliano Manolessio, Venetian ambassador to Ferrara¹

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the war of Siena and Ippolito's prominent role in those events, in the years 1552-1554, created a highly conflicted situation in which the Cardinal of Ferrara's leadership could no longer work effectively. Furthermore, his family's position and his relationship with the Church were put severely at stake. The fifties of the sixteenth century, with the crisis of Parma and Siena first and then the establishment of Paul IV's anti-Habsburg league, manifested all the contradictions that were inherent not only to Ippolito d'Este's personal power, but also to the Duchy of Ferrara. Whilst Ippolito's governorship, from a perspective of personal enhancement, had put him at the very head of the French forces in Italy (diplomatically, at least) and had confirmed that 'great dependence and understanding with that crown'² that had previously determined his rise to the post of cardinal protector, the same episode, when seen in the context of a shared familiar strategy, had rather constituted a disruptive factor.

In order to assess the influence that personal choices and affiliations undertaken by members of a ruling family could have on the political life of the small Italian states, it is worth insisting on the multifaceted dependencies that characterised these dominions, and on the strategies that were used in order to engage with the presence, in Italy, of stronger political entities – the

¹ 'To make states safe, dimension and location are not enough, as two more qualities are necessary: strength and resources, because that state which is neither strong nor united cannot be safe'. From the report written by the Venetian ambassador to Ferrara, Emiliano Manolessio, in 1575: *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, s. 2 v. II, p. 406.

² From a description of Ippolito II d'Este written by Marcantonio Barbaro, Venetian ambassador to Paris: *Relations des Ambassadeurs*, ii, p. 84.

French and Imperial monarchies, and the Roman Church. A certain degree of ‘duplicity’ and ‘fickleness’ – to use the definitions that have been traditionally associated with the political behaviour of many Italian rulers of the time – was necessary to ensure the survival of the small Italian states (Mantua, Florence, Parma, etc). A familiar strategy that allowed an Italian dynasty to gain representation at the crucial junctions of power was therefore essential, for example through a marriage or the offer of military service.³ In the case of the Church, the presence of a family member in the College of Cardinals opened a privileged channel through which to seek the pope’s favour – whose authority weighed on the actions of secular rulers, and whose vast territorial presence constituted an essential piece of the Italian puzzle. In the case of Ferrara, the relation with Rome was at the very core of the dukes’ policy-making, and a factor of continuous instability, induced by the relation of vassalage that tied Ferrara to the papacy, by the proximity of their territories, and by the aggressive foreign politics of some of the popes.⁴ For the Este more than for other dynasties, therefore, the Vatican always remained an essential interlocutor, and the acquisition of the red hat for one of their members almost a necessary course of action.

The strong political position gained by Ippolito II in the course of the forties and the fifties, however, went far beyond the defence of the Estense interests in the Roman curia, and became, for Ferrara, rather a factor of further instability. Whilst other cardinals, invested with similar dynastic expectations, managed to strengthen their family’s political position (Ercole Gonzaga with the Duchy of Mantua, for instance, or Alessandro Farnese – with due differences – with the Duchy of Parma)⁵, Ippolito’s dependence on the French monarchy did not seem to have brought similar benefits – in terms of stability and political leverage – to the Duchy of Ferrara. On the contrary, in fact: the years of Siena and Ippolito’s strong involvement in a situation of hostility with the Imperial forces, the Duke of Florence, and the Pope, had undermined Ercole II’s neutrality. We have seen, in the previous chapter, that Ercole II – whilst limiting Ferrara’s support of their traditional French

³ The accusation of ‘duplicity’ had been often raised, for instance, against Alfonso I d’Este and Federico Gonzaga, who had both struggled to maintain their state autonomy in the first half of the sixteenth century. It has been argued that the location itself of their dominions, which connected the North to the South and were an obliged route for men, goods and information, forced these rulers to seek agreement with all the political players: M. J. Rodríguez Salgado, ‘Terracotta and Iron. Mantuan politics (ca. 1450-1550)’, in C. Mozzarelli, R. Oresko, L. Ventura (eds), *La Corte di Mantova nell’età di Andrea Mantegna: 1450-1550* (Rome, 1997), pp. 15-16. See also: Signorotto, ‘Note sulla politica’, pp. 58-59; Spagnoletti, ‘Guerra, stati e signori’, pp. 86-87.

⁴ On the clashes between the dukes of Este and the popes, see Magoni, *Gigli d’oro*, pp. 43-58; M. Folin, *Rinascimento estense: politica, cultura, istituzioni di un antico Stato italiano* (Rome-Bari, 2004), pp. 287; 343-344. Very interesting also is the analysis by Signorotto, who defines the relation between Este and France as an ‘underground’ connection always present in the history of the Duchy, and the dependence on the Vatican investiture as the crucial factor in the political life of Ferrara: Signorotto, ‘Papato e principi italiani’, pp. 266-268.

⁵ G. Signorotto, ‘Note sulla politica e la diplomazia dei pontefici (da Paolo III a Pio IV)’, in M. Fantoni (ed), *Carlo V e l’Italia* (Rome, 2000), pp. 68-70.

allies to diplomacy and information – had repeatedly reminded his brother of the delicateness of Ferrara's position within the other Italian powers, especially with regard to those that the French venture in Siena was provoking.

At the end of his years as governor, Ippolito took back his role of cardinal protector and, after some time in Ferrara, returned to Rome, from where he remained in charge of a 'supervision' of the French affairs in Siena.⁶ It is worth noticing that it had been his brother who had begged him to go back to Rome and take up that protection not only of France, but also, and especially, of his family's interests, which had been largely neglected whilst he was in Siena.⁷ The death, in 1555, of Julius III – who, under the pretence of neutrality, had supported Florence and the Empire, as we have seen – and the election of Paul IV, a pope who was known for his hatred of the Emperor, could have steered Vatican politics more favourably towards the French crown, and hence brought an easing in relations between Ferrara and the Holy See. Paul IV's aggressive Italian politics, however, determined Ferrara's subsequent involvement in a war that, as it is known, ended with the defeat of the papal league and the triumph of the Imperial-Spanish forces, later confirmed by the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis.⁸

To the world outside of the duchy, nonetheless, the Duke and the Cardinal made an effort to defend each other's interests and presented an image of dynastic unity and mutual support. Besides the role that he played in the major diplomatic and geopolitical issues of the time, Ippolito II also endeavoured to defend the local economic interests of Ferrara in Rome, for example in the case of the frequent disputes with the Vatican over salt production in the Po estuary.⁹ Due to the fact that, in the sixteenth century, the structure of power was based on family and clientele, the success in any field of one's personal relations provided the means for the socio-economic

⁶ The hostility with Piero Strozzi, which had marked the last month of Ippolito's governorship, continued when the Cardinal was following the Siense situation from Rome. In the summer of 1555, for example, Ippolito wrote to his brother that '[Strozzi] non si è curato di mai di dare notizia di cosa alcuna se non quando ha avuto bisogno di denari': ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXII.23 (undated, but written between May and June 1555).

⁷ ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.74 (21 May 1554). See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 249-250; Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 248.

⁸ Magoni, *I gigli d'oro*, pp. 68-75; Signorotto, 'Papato e principi italiani', pp. 269-274; Stumpo, 'Il sistema degli stati italiani', pp. 50-53.

⁹ Disputes on the extraction of salt in the area around Ravenna, as well as on the border between the Duchy of Ferrara and the Papal State (near Bologna), followed one other throughout the sixteenth century. They were well known to contemporary observers, and a Venetian diplomat mentions them both as the principal cause of hatred between the Roman pontiffs and the dukes of Ferrara: *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, s. 2 v. II, pp. 415-416.

advancement of one's whole kin. This is one of the reasons why Ercole II, as we have seen, had supported Ippolito financially in his attempts at conclave to become pope, and why the Duke would, as we will see, employ his diplomats in order to obtain for Ippolito the payment of the revenues of Milan.

However, this picture – and the external standing of Este unity along with it – was continually complicated by Ippolito's increased loyalty to France. This became problematic particularly, as already said, during moments of war, when his personal affiliation began to cause problems for his brother in Ferrara, who was attempting, like his father before him, to maintain a diplomatic balance between the Emperor and France. The example of Ippolito's governorship of Siena, between 1552 and 1554, illustrates the divergent agenda of the two Este brothers. Ippolito's own personal engagements in this instance put into focus the different political identities that these brothers had, as well as the different expectations that they had of foreign powers such as France.

The distinction between the brothers' roles was therefore much less straightforward than a simple division between spheres of influence – between the secular and the ecclesiastical, and between Rome and Ferrara. Even within the ecclesiastical sphere, the pursuit of family power could come up against different political interests: as we will see, when Ercole sought, in 1549, to install his son, Luigi, as bishop of Ferrara, Ippolito argues against his nephew's appointment, seeking rather to preserve his vast collection of French benefices by having his nephew succeed him and carry on the proximity to the Valois. To this end, we will see that Ippolito used all his influence in order to secure Luigi the diocese of Auch and his role of cardinal protector of the French crown.

As we will see, these tensions which characterised the relationship in the 1550s between the Duke and Cardinal of Ferrara – who acted as the leaders of the family – were put to one side both when it came to defending Estense interests 'outside' the duchy and when 'internal' interferences threatened their division of power within Ferrara. We see this particularly in the case of their third brother, don Francesco, against whose claims to the castle of Massa Lombarda they united in opposition. Although don Francesco played an important role in the maintenance of Ferrara's external diplomatic face – in his position at the court of Charles V – when it came to the arrangements of power 'inside' the duchy, he was deliberately excluded.

However, these dynamics which characterised the management of power within the Este came to an abrupt end at the end of this decade, when 1559 brought the deaths of Ercole II and of Henry II of France, and the peace of Cateau-Cambresis, which sanctioned Spanish dominance over Italy. The succession of Alfonso II left Ippolito as the *de facto* leader of the family, at an historical moment at which it was imperative to reassess the condition of the family's diplomatic relationships

and alliances. Significantly, it was Ippolito that attempted to ameliorate the hostility – or to seal the rift – between the Este court and that of Philip II in the wake of Cateau-Cambrésis, through the employment of his personal agents and through his choice of the Ferrarese ambassador.

POWER AND CONFLICT INSIDE FERRARA: THE INHERITANCE OF ALFONSO I

A desire to maintain a degree of centralisation with regards to dynastic assets was an impulse that motivated many sovereign families in sixteenth-century Italy. In the inheritances of a prince, it was common – and often felt as necessary – to sacrifice the younger children, economically and dynastically, in order to keep intact the family's power and wealth. Whilst one of the other sons would often be encouraged, or expected, to pursue an ecclesiastical career in order to receive an income from a different source – particularly in cases, such as the Este, in which there was already a cardinal within the family – the remaining were instead often provided with a source of income or, sometimes, with a minor title, and were themselves expected to seek employment and favour with the greater powers in Europe. These solutions were particularly auspicious for the minor Italian states, as they also offered the means to ensure that a spokesperson for their interests would be present in foreign courts.¹⁰ This was, of course, particularly pertinent for Ferrara, as the Este dukes already owed loyalty to both the Pope and the Emperor, on account of the historical investitures given on Ferrara and on Modena and Reggio respectively.

At the same time, however, the personal ambitions of cadet sons, which were necessarily frustrated by the principle of primogeniture, could be easily exploited by foreign or competitive powers to bring tension within a ruling family. The non-competitive complementarity of roles that, ideally, should have characterised the 'teamwork' between brothers, was therefore much more easily established in the case of a ruling prince and his cardinal brother, whose sphere of influence was more evidently separated. The role of other male members of the family, who often were not offered an opportunity of political and economic self-realisation comparable to a career in the Church, remained a potential factor of disruption. Therefore, although explosions of violence between

¹⁰ On the Italian dynasties and their political strategies, see: A. Spagnoletti, *Le dinastie italiane nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2003), pp. 13-37; 225-294; C. Casanova, *La famiglia italiana in età moderna* (Rome, 1997), pp. 85-128. On the theoretical developments in the ideas of 'nobility' and 'family', see: Donati, *L'idea di nobiltà*, pp. 52-150. For a comparison with the political strategies of other contemporary Italian families, such as the Gonzaga and the Farnese, see: Rodríguez Salgado, 'Terracotta and Iron', pp. 15-59; R. Tamalio, 'Tra Parigi e Madrid. Strategie famigliari gonzaghesche al principio del Cinquecento', in C. Mozzarelli, R. Oresko, L. Ventura (eds), *La Corte di Mantova nell'età di Andrea Mantegna: 1450-1550* (Rome, 1997), pp. 69-90; J. Martínez Millan, 'Alessandro Farnese la corte di Madrid e la monarchia cattolica', in A. Bilotto, P. Del Negro and C. Mozzarelli (eds), *I Farnese. Corti, guerra e nobiltà in antico regime* (Roma, 1997), pp. 93-116.

members of the family were relatively rare, the political treatises of the time almost unanimously recommended Italian princes to beware of their own male relatives before anyone else.¹¹

The most famous sixteenth-century episode of family violence provoked by the ambitions and the frustration of the cadet sons took place in Ferrara: in 1509, Ferrante and Giulio d'Este organised a conspiracy to overthrow their brother, Duke Alfonso I.¹² The betrayal of the two brothers strengthened the axis constituted by Alfonso I and his cardinal brother, Ippolito I, who participated in the defence of the duchy's interests – and whose influence as an ecclesiastic was much needed due to the conflictual relationship that was between Ferrara and the Vatican in the first decades of the sixteenth century.¹³ Although no further episode of familiar violence occurred, a similar axis ruled the Este family also in the following generation: Ippolito II and Ercole II took up their legacy, ecclesiastic and secular respectively, and both pursued a shared strategy to maintain and enhance their family's power.

Between the summer of 1552 and the summer of 1553, the inherent fragility that characterised the duchy of Ferrara as a political unity – and that had been nothing but emphasised by the decades of the Italian wars – was reflected in a series of controversies regarding the Duke's jurisdiction and the role of the other male members of the dynasty within the more general strategy of the enhancement of familial power. Not coincidentally, the opportunity for a family clash arose at a moment when Ippolito II's active involvement in the King of France's aggressive Italian politics was affecting his own and his brother's roles as Italian princes. The conflict, however, was not rooted in their relationship with France, but rather in that with Ferrara, namely in the testamentary disposition that the late Duke, Alfonso I, had taken some twenty years before, in 1534. At the moment of setting up his bequests to his male heirs who were not destined to inherit the ducal title, Alfonso had decided to provide them with a source of income emancipated from the reigning Duke's jurisdiction. He had therefore bequeathed the castles of Brescello and of Massalombarda respectively to his younger sons, Ippolito II and Francesco d'Este.¹⁴

¹¹ On the role of cadet sons, see: Spagnoletti, *Le dinastie italiane*, pp. 225-238; R. Ago, 'Giochi di squadra uomini e donne nelle famiglie nobili del XVII secolo', in M. A. Visceglia (ed), *Signori, patrizi, cavalieri nell'età moderna* (Rome-Bari, 1992), pp. 256-264.

¹² The conspiracy failed and the two brothers were both sentenced to life imprisonment. Whilst Ferrante died in jail, Giulio was eventually released by Alfonso II in 1559: L. A. Muratori, *Delle antichità estensi ed italiane* (2 vols, Modena, 1740), ii, pp. 280-281. See also Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, pp. 215-221.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-237; Folin, *Rinascimento estense*, pp. 318-321.

¹⁴ It was not unusual, for sovereign families, to start a cadet branch by bequeathing a minor title with a fief to one of the younger sons, in order to have another line of male heirs who could take up the main title in case of a dynastic emergency. Usually, however, the condition attached to this kind of feudal alienations was that the fief would return to the main line of the family if the cadet son had no male heirs to succeed him. On this topic, see: Spagnoletti, *Le dinastie italiane*, esp. pp. 225-226.

The *castrum* of Brescello had become part of the Duchy of Ferrara in 1479, when Duke Ercole I had obtained it from Ludovico Sforza in exchange for Castelnovo Tortonese. In 1492, Ercole's thirteen year-old son, Ippolito I, was appointed abbot *in commendam* of the Benedictine monastery of San Genesio in Brescello, which also controlled the surrounding lands and the fortifications.¹⁵ Due to its geographical position – on the shore of the Po river and at the border with both the Duchy of Mantua and the Duchy of Milan – Brescello acquired an important military and commercial role during the first half of the sixteenth century. When Cardinal Ippolito I prematurely died in 1520, all his assets – ‘all goods movable and immovable, lands and rights wherever they may be [...] and fruits and rents of any kind, also ecclesiastical’¹⁶ – went to his brother, Duke Alfonso I, who then bequeathed Brescello, as a *castellania*, to his second-born son, Ippolito II d'Este. From the year of Alfonso I's death, in 1534, Ippolito II had been the legitimate owner of the *castrum*, which was therefore excluded from Ercole II's jurisdiction: it was Ippolito's officials who took care of the military defences of the castle, who administered criminal justice and who collected taxes.¹⁷ This decision of the late Duke Alfonso I deprived his successor of the jurisdiction over a territory that, in the following years, became one of the crucial battlegrounds between French and Imperial troops – and, as such, it provoked more than one misunderstanding between Ippolito II and his brother, Duke Ercole. Alfonso I's dispositions regarding Francesco's share of inheritance were also to become a source of resentment within the Estense family, but for quite a different reason.

The object of the dispute that, in 1553, opposed Francesco to his brothers was a clause that the former Duke had added to the second draft of his will, in order to bind Francesco d'Este's share of inheritance to a *fidecommesso*, a trust. As a consequence of this testamentary resolution, which had been enforced at Alfonso I's death, Francesco was only entitled to the income produced by the properties he had inherited, but he did not hold any right of possession over them. In order to rent out, sell, or give away any part of his legacy, Francesco was forced to ask for the permission of his brother, Duke Ercole II, who was the trustee appointed by their father, Alfonso I. Amongst sixteenth-century Italian families, the institution of a trust was indeed a popular way to preserve the unity of the family's assets for future generations. It accompanied, ideally, the social-juridical

¹⁵ G. Tiraboschi, *Dizionario topografico-storico degli stati estensi* (2 vols, Modena, 1824), i, p. 10. See also L. Byatt, ‘Este, Ippolito d’’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Roma, 1993).

¹⁶ Ippolito I's will, which named Alfonso I as the universal heir of the Cardinal's immense fortune, is held among the documents of the Este princes in the Archive of Modena: ASMO, CS, 387, 2037.VIII. See also McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, p. 89.

¹⁷ See Guerzoni, ‘Between Rome and Ferrara’, p. 63.

principle of primogeniture, which prescribed that the first-born son inherited all of the family's properties – whether a dominion, in the case of sovereign dynasties, or a commercial enterprise, as in the case, for instance, of rich Venetian merchants – in order not to disperse the wealth accumulated by the previous generations.¹⁸ In the case of the Este, Alfonso I had passed his title and the duchy on to his first-born son, Ercole II – as his ancestors had done before him – but, at the same time, he had bequeathed smaller portions of the Estense fortune (such as castles and palaces, but also, for instance, the right to collect some taxes) to Ercole's younger brothers, Ippolito II and Francesco.¹⁹ The institution of a *fidecommesso*, in this case, was not meant to preserve the family's wealth: whilst the first draft of Alfonso I's will assigned to both Ippolito and Francesco the same rights over their respective legacy, Alfonso had later decided to bind Francesco's assets to a trust as a punishment for having run off to the Valois court without his approval.²⁰ Unlike Ippolito II – who had received Brescello and several other minor properties with no legal conditions attached, and who was therefore free to manage them as he wished – Francesco had therefore found himself forced to seek his brother's permission before taking any financial initiative regarding his inheritance.

Whilst Massalombarda lay in the eastern part of the Duchy of Ferrara, Brescello sat on the vulnerable western border. Due to the succession of conflicts that marked the history of the north of Italy in the first half of the century, and that had its epicentre in the Duchy of Milan, Ippolito's possession was much more exposed than Francesco's to the consequences of war. Already in 1544, the governor of Milan, Ferrante Gonzaga, had sent his troops to face the French army, who were stationed in the town of Mirandola and who were preparing an attack against Lombardy, and had let them occupy and sack Brescello. Ippolito, who was at that time in Rome, could only write to his brother Ercole, to warn him of the danger of the Imperials gaining control of Brescello, and ask the Pope to help him defend his possession.²¹ When the conflict calmed, Ercole II negotiated the restitution of Brescello on behalf of Ippolito, but he also took advantage of the situation in order

¹⁸ For an outline of the use of the *fidecommesso* in the period we are considering, see: M. L. Ferrari and G. Vivenza, 'Tutelare la famiglia conservazione o incremento del patrimonio. Percorsi sei-settecenteschi italiani o inglesi', in S. Cavaciocchi (ed), *La famiglia nell'economia europea, secoli XIII-XVIII* (Florence, 2009), pp. 205-208.

¹⁹ Besides the castle of Massalombarda, Francesco had inherited several estates, a villa and a palace, with also a sum of money to furnish it: L. Bertoni, 'Este, Francesco d'', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1993). Alfonso I had acquired Massalombarda (and other territories in Romagna) when he had married Lucrezia Borgia, as part of her dowry: G. Guerzoni, 'Di alcune ignote e poco nobili cause del soggiorno Bolognese di Kaiser Karl V', in M. Fantoni (ed), *Carlo V e l'Italia* (Rome, 2000), p. 207.

²⁰ In 1534, when he was eighteen years-old, Francesco had gone to France seeking social promotion and against his father's explicit wish that he served as a military official at the Emperor's court instead: Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, p. 244.

²¹ Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 90-91.

to erode his brother's authority over the *castrum*.²² That Brescello was a vulnerable target, and likely to be exposed again to the military raids of the Spanish troops stationed in Milan, was quite clear to Ippolito II, who, in 1549, wrote to Ercole II predicting a gloomy destiny for his possession in the case of a new outburst of war between France and the Empire.²³ Two years later, when the latent rivalry between Charles V and Henry II was once again on the verge of becoming virulent – the *casus belli* this time being the protection of the Duchy of Parma – the Spanish army, led by the Governor of Milan, Ferrante Gonzaga, occupied Brescello as a preventive measure aimed to keep the French troops from establishing their military headquarters there. In May 1551, the Tuscan ambassador to France, Luigi Capponi, wrote to his Duke Cosimo de' Medici that the occupation of Brescello had deeply displeased the King of France, who had seen it as a violation of the existing armistice, because that agreement 'included allies and servants, and given that the Cardinal of Ferrara is a member of the private counsel and a most faithful servant, this means that now the war will break out if these [Lords] want it so'.²⁴

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the war eventually did break out. The war of Parma lasted for less than a year, and the peace was restored in April 1552 by an armistice that involved the King of France, the Emperor, and the Pope. However, when Ferrante Gonzaga was ordered to suspend the hostilities and hand over the territories he had occupied during the previous year to their legitimate owners, the exceptional state of Brescello – a possession that fell under the direct jurisdiction of the 'French' cardinal Ippolito d'Este – raised some controversies. While those parts of the Duchy of Este that had fallen under the Emperor's control were immediately given back to Ercole II, who had tried to remain neutral and had worked towards a quick resolution of the conflict in order to preserve his state from the turmoil of war, Ferrante Gonzaga refused to return Brescello alleging that 'this is the Cardinal of Ferrara's property'.²⁵ Only several months after the armistice, in October 1552, was Brescello eventually returned – although not to Ippolito d'Este, but to his brother Ercole.

While Ippolito d'Este was negotiating, from Siena, the restitution of Brescello with his brother, Don Francesco tried to change the state of financial subordination in which his father's will had put him. From Mantua, where he had stopped on the way back from Piedmont, he sent an envoy to Ercole II asking for the annulment of the *fidecommesso*. Francesco's agent justified this

²² In 1546, for instance, Ercole II included Brescello in an agreement with the Duke of Parma without informing his brother: *ibid.* This episode is the same mentioned by Ercole II in his letter of 1 December 1552 (p. 118 in this work).

²³ ASMO, CS, 149, 27 July 1549.

²⁴ *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, pp. 270-271.

²⁵ Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 197; 202.

request by saying that ‘it was too shameful to him to ask for permission every time he wished to sell for two or three thousand *scudi*’. Whilst rejecting the agent’s plea as ‘something unusual and unfair’, ‘a fantasy of little reason’, Duke Ercole offered to authorise the alienation of Francesco’s assets for forty-thousand *scudi*, also remarking that he would never deny him permission in the future. Francesco, however, stubbornly insisted on the full annulment of their father’s trust, refusing ‘to agree to any solution; on the contrary, he is firmer and more convinced than ever in his purpose, saying that he wants what is his own not to sell it or alienate it [...] but to enjoy it as long as God will allow him, and to leave it to friends and relatives’. In order to dodge the legal bind of the *fidecommesso*, Francesco suggested his brother to state that Francesco’s legitimate share of their father’s inheritance was worth exactly the value of the properties that he had received, so that he could claim his compensation accordingly – ‘without causing harm to anyone’.²⁶

After several weeks of negotiation, having recognised that ‘no reason could persuade him [Francesco] not to get into a controversy’, Ercole II asked his other brother, Ippolito, for advice.²⁷ The political situation, in 1553, was particularly delicate. We have seen in the previous chapter that Ippolito’s position in Siena was dependent on both the local and the international political scenario, and that he struggled to comply with all the different obligations and loyalties that his hybrid role required. He had committed himself to soothe Cosimo de’ Medici’s hostility, and Duke Ercole had intervened to remind him about the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the Vatican too. Over the course of the war of Siena, both brothers had presented themselves as interested in pursuing peace rather than war, Ippolito defending the ‘freedom’ of Siena and Ercole defending his own state’s neutrality. Interestingly, when Francesco d’Este advocated the annulment of Alfonso I’s *fidecommesso*, Ercole immediately ascribed his brother’s request to the influence of someone from the Imperial court – a political manoeuvre in which Francesco’s ambitions were being used in order to weaken the family union:

Because it seemed strange to me that His Most Illustrious Lordship [...] had fantasised over such a request, given that a trust cannot be broken without causing harm to justice, I thought that the aforementioned lord our brother did not make this request just out of his own will, but after the work and the persuasion of someone from the Emperor’s court, who wishes to see and to cause bad intelligence and contrariety amongst us rather than that brotherly love and harmony that ought exist [...] Because I did not know what more to do in regard to this matter, in which I suspect there might be another influence rather than our brother’s simple will, I did not want to give him a response before letting Your Excellence know what has happened so far.²⁸

²⁶ This and all the quotations in this paragraph are from ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.58 (9 August 1553).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Whether these suspicions were real, or instrumentally used by Ercole II to keep Francesco in a subaltern position, they certainly weighed on the final decision of dismissing his brother's request, and articulate a concern that is indicative nonetheless, as it exemplifies a legitimate and no doubt real anxiety about an external political player seeking to influence the internal dynamics of the Este's familiar and domestic policy. Ippolito II, as much as Ercole II, had no reason to change a settlement – which was mainly economic but which, in the light of Ercole's suspicions, had also the potential to become political – that had put him in a leading position within the family. The stronger French vocation of the Cardinal certainly made it preferable for him, to keep any potential Imperial influence outside the Duchy, especially in a moment of open conflict between Habsburg and Valois – and the respect due to the late duke's decision, avowed by both brothers, could easily mask more practical concerns.

In the case of Brescello, Ercole II's behaviour was different from the 'family loyalty' he had shown to Ippolito when the two brothers had unanimously decided to keep Francesco subject to their father's testamentary decisions. In the dispute that arose around Brescello, Ercole II was eager to adopt the point of view of the Emperor and of Ferrante Gonzaga in order to take advantage of the situation and to reintegrate the *castrum* into the duchy's jurisdiction. This episode, which opened a fracture in the relationship between the two brothers, offers the perfect example of how two leading members of the same sovereign family – although both allied, if not military, at least 'morally' to France – could be perceived very differently by their 'enemies' under the exceptional circumstance of a war scenario. It also shows how Ippolito's political identity – and others' perception of it – was constantly renegotiated and influenced by external factors. At the same time, it highlights the different dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that the Estense family adopted when projecting their sovereign power outside the duchy.

Following the armistice between Valois and Habsburg after the war of Parma, Ippolito had followed the negotiation on the restitution of Brescello first from Ferrara and then from Siena, where he had gone to take up the post of Governor in October 1552. The political implications of the long Imperial occupation of Brescello had been such that, in the months after the end of the war of Parma, when Italian diplomats were collecting rumours on the next movements of Henry II's troops, Cosimo de' Medici's agents had even postulated a French military intervention aimed at retrieving Ippolito's possession from the hands of Ferrante Gonzaga.²⁹ In October, as we have

²⁹ Cosimo de' Medici wrote to his ambassador to the Emperor that 'alcuni credevano che [the French] volessino andare alla recuperazione di Brescello': *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 314 (15 July 1552).

seen, Ercole II had eventually sealed a deal with the Emperor and had then annexed the *castrum* to the duchy.

As soon as the Cardinal of Ferrara realised that his brother was not going to hand over Brescello, as he had thought at the beginning, a harsh dispute arose between the two brothers, and the mutual resentment poisoned their relationship for longer than a year. The Cardinal's anger at his brother is more easily understandable when one considers that, among all the possessions that were providing the Cardinal with a monetary income, Brescello was one of the most lucrative and its revenues exceeded those of all the other lands Ippolito owned in Italy.³⁰ To come to an agreement with his brother, Ercole even suggested – in person during the summer of 1552 and via letter in the following November – they take the issue before an impartial 'person or council', to avoid the spread of any rumours about their disagreement and to keep 'the world from believing that the love we share has changed in any way'.³¹ To avoid any leak of information, Ercole also suggested to conceal their real names in the papers and to use pseudonyms instead.³² Ippolito's reply followed just a few days later:

You can easily imagine that I was very displeased to see that the more I wanted to come to an agreement regarding these things of Brescello, the more you tried to procrastinate [...]. If I am requesting my possession of Brescello from Your Excellence, as I did in person and in yet another letter, I am requesting it from you because you hold it in your hands, and not [because I want to obtain it] through arbitration; because I said I would content myself with everything that our father the Duke commanded in his will, and he never mentioned that this should be remitted to a council or to anyone else; it seems inappropriate to me that judges and doctors in law should interfere in such a simple matter, because I do not recognise anyone's authority but that of Your Excellence over that place [...]. If Your Excellence wishes to retain Brescello and abide by our father's will, I do not understand why we should discuss whether I should receive another equivalent jurisdiction or not; it is clear that the testator's opinion was to give me a castle with more jurisdictional powers and bigger than those he left to his other children. And I cannot agree on any compensation that is not of the same quality and quantity of the one I was assigned in the first place [...].³³

A month later, in December, the Cardinal of Ferrara more clearly recognised that Ercole II had negotiated the restitution of Brescello by distancing himself from his brother. Ippolito

³⁰ Thanks to its thriving cloth industry, Brescello, in 1537, was providing Ippolito with 2.460 *scudi* a year and was one of his main Italian sources of income. Although in the following years the Cardinal received some very lucrative positions, such as the archbishopric of Lyon, Brescello certainly remained a very important asset. The figure regarding Brescello's value is in Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, p. 138.

³¹ 'Bene vedo che essendo poco conveniente che fra noi si havesse da far lite pubblica per tal causa, per ogni rispetto et massimamente per non dar da rider a malevoli nostri, havrò caro che tra Vostra Signora Illustrissima et me si trovasse via et modo che questo punto, il quale non credo io che porti molte difficoltà per risolverlo, si facesse decider a qualche personaggio o colleggio confidente ad amendue, senza liti': ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.49 (13 November 1552).

³² Ibid.

³³ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.9 (22 November 1552).

consequently accused him of having adopted ‘the same arguments as the Emperor, who takes me [Ippolito] as his enemy’, instead of behaving ‘as a brother should do with a brother’.³⁴ In a long letter written at the beginning of the same month, Ercole had defended his course of action by saying that he had obtained Brescello from the ‘supreme Lord of that fief, who is the Emperor, who took possession of it under his own name, as it is well known, and who deliberated that Your Excellence’s power over that place had elapsed’.³⁵ Ercole had argued that, given the exceptional way in which Brescello had been returned to him, he was obliged neither to abide by their father’s will nor to compensate Ippolito with a possession equivalent to the castle he had lost.³⁶ Ercole also mentioned that the Cardinal had no reason to complain, because he had been forced to behave as he had done because of the adverse circumstances and because of the Emperor’s hostility – a subtle criticism of Ippolito’s one-sided politics, which had made him a target of the Emperor’s revenge and had often put Ercole’s neutrality at risk:

I do not know why [...] you believe that you can now complain about me, because, trying to retrieve it [Brescello] from His Majesty as my own possession and something that is very important to my State, I could not, given the quality of these current times, avoid to promise and to accept things that do not allow me now to give that place back to you, as I did that other time when I got it back from the Marquis of Vasto who had indeed taken it from you. There is no reason why Your Excellence should blame me or complain about myself or my good intentions rather than about the bad condition of the present times, which has forced me, if I wanted to have it [Brescello] returned, to consent to such things [‘consentir a cose’] that were not mentioned the other time. [...] I would happily give you [...] along with my life and my State also that castle of Brescello, if only I did not find myself, in this matter, bound to such conditions that prevent me from doing it.³⁷

It is clear that Ercole had obtained from the Emperor an agreement that worked to Ippolito’s detriment. When the Marquis of Vasto had occupied Brescello in 1546, as mentioned in the letter above, the Cardinal of Ferrara was already emerging as one of the most zealous defendants of French interests in Italy. However, he had not been as personally involved in the French operations in Italy as he had been in the fifties, when he convened the meeting that led to the Sienese rebellion. If Ippolito tried to appeal to his brother’s ‘sense of family’ in order to receive his

³⁴ Ibid., 1709.XVIII.14 (18 December 1552).

³⁵ ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.51 (1 December 1552).

³⁶ ‘Mi par molto strano ch’ella [...] mostri credere hora che [...] habbi a darle senza cercar altro la essecutione di tutto quello che Vostra Signora Illustrissima pretende dover haver da me in questa materia per virtù del testamento, come se fossimo nel caso di esso, et che io havessi havuto Brescello da lei, per ricompensa del quale fossi obligato darli equivalente intrada, si come ordina il predetto testamento [...]. Non volendo ella ricordarsi che siamo in termine molto differente [...] non so come ella pensi di esser hora interamente nel caso del predetto testamento, et per qual causa io a semplice dimanda di lei habbi ad esser tenuto per ragione darle il detto luogo’: *ibid.*

³⁷ Ibid.

castle back, as had indeed happened in the forties, Ercole put the reason of state above his brotherly loyalty.

Therefore, given the impossibility of convincing Ercole to return Brescello – or at least ‘its revenues [...] or a compensation equal to the testator’s will’ – the Cardinal advocated the intervention of the King of France:

Given all that happened in that place, I fear Your Excellence might think of using the same argument that the Emperor could put forward to my disadvantage, although this would surprise me given that His Majesty (as you know) did not deprive me of my jurisdiction over that place of mine but kept it under the word of Don Ferrante. If this was to be the case, I could not avoid remitting the matter to the King of France rather than to some people in a council and asking him to give me some compensation for what I lost whilst serving him [...]. I would not like to be deprived of my possession and to be involved in a fight with you, but I know from experience that all the issues that ever mattered to me have always been so delayed that I never got to see their resolution [...].³⁸

The clash between the two brothers grew so bitter that Ippolito, while agreeing with Ercole on the need to keep ‘the resentment that might arise between us secret’,³⁹ almost stopped any communication from January to April 1553, with the exception of a handful of very brief and standardised letters to recommend some people who were about to visit Ferrara.⁴⁰ In the same period, Ercole visited Brescello quite often, presumably to make the reintegration of the castle under his own jurisdiction effective and to assess the damages resulting from the war.⁴¹

The issue was eventually presented to Henry II through the French treasurer of the army, the bishop of Lodève, who, in April, wrote from Ferrara to his King that the Cardinal was expecting ‘the greatest rewards for his services’ – in the form of some wealthy temporal and spiritual benefices.⁴² A few months later, Ippolito’s secretary, Nichetto, came back from Paris bringing the

³⁸ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.9 (22 November 1552).

³⁹ Ibid. On this point, Ercole bitterly remarked that ‘Se si darà pur alegrezza a nostri inimici me ne rincrescerà infinitamente per l’honor di casa nostra, però perche ciò non procederà per causa o difetto mio me ne dolerà più per lei che per me, benchè, per dire il vero, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima nanti la partita sua di qua publicò così fattamente la mala sodisfattione ch’ella volea si sapesse da tutti quelli che intravano nella camera sua esser in lei di me per quella materia, che horamai mi pare che non vi sia artigiano che non lo sappi in questa terra’: ASMO, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.51 (1 December 1552).

⁴⁰ In the last letter that Ippolito sent to Ferrara about Brescello, he complained that his brother had given him an additional source of concern, ‘appresso tanti altri ch’io mi trovo haver, il quale posso dir liberamente che mi pesa più di tutti gli altri’. In April, the Cardinal remarked that ‘vedendo ch’ella [...] non è disposta ad altro che a darmi repliche et parole, non so anco che mi dir altro se non rimettermi ch’ella che ha di già piena notitia del mio animo ci pigli poi quello ispediente che più le piacerà’: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.5 (21 January 1553); *ibid.*, 1709.XVIII.12 (13 April 1553).

⁴¹ *Correspondance du Gabre*, p. 37.

⁴² Lodève recommended that the King satisfy Ippolito d’Este’s expectations: ‘Je serois d’advis, soubz correction, qu’il vous pleust accorder cela, car monsieur le Cardinal vous est si affectionne que quant vous prendriez tout son temporel, et le sprituel avec, pour votre service, il n’y aura jamais regret et pourrez accomoder cela avec luy’: *Correspondance du Gabre*, p. 41. The bishop of Lodève, as the *tresorier général des armées en Italie*, resided in Ferrara for the whole of 1553.

news that the King had accepted Lodève's proposal and was keen to compensate Ippolito for his services by bestowing him with another benefice as a replacement for Brescello:

I will follow Your Excellence's advice and solicit that compensation, part in spiritual and part in temporal goods [...], and I will demand that land about which *monsieur* di Lodeva [de Lodève] wrote to me. [...] Those lords had already told me that the King wanted to compensate me and would send me a letter about it. Nevertheless, given that I had not received any letter before Nichetto made his return, I did not believe it was true and I thought that it was just words. And you can be sure that if His Majesty had informed me earlier about his decision, I would have not failed to accept it as I am doing now, and this in order to please Your Excellence rather than pursue my own benefit.⁴³

Whilst providing an example of how the identity of a man like Ippolito d'Este was always subject to a difficult negotiation of interests between Italy and France, the Brescello episode also shows that even his role as a member of the Estense dynasty could be sometimes exposed to a re-negotiation. As we will see, whenever it was necessary to enhance the power of the family *outside* the borders of the duchy (as in the case of the revenues of the Archdiocese of Milan, which had been part of the family assets for almost sixty years), the Este united against what they saw as an injustice and a violation of the family's rights. However, in the case of Brescello and, more generally, in the administration of the duchy of Ferrara as a political entity, the dynamics within the Este were quite different. The Brescello episode shows how the alliance of the Este with France was taking, in the fifties, diverging directions: whilst Ercole II remained more or less anchored to his subaltern role as an Italian ally, Ippolito II acted – and was perceived – as a 'real' Frenchman.

DYNASTIC UNITY OUTSIDE FERRARA: THE REVENUES OF MILAN

A series of episodes that provide a different insight on the Este family dynamics, when projected outside the duchy and engaging with a hostile power, occurred when Ippolito II d'Este held the Archdiocese of Milan. During the wars, the revenues of the diocese were frozen by the local authorities on several occasions – the first time between 1536 and 1538-1539, the second in

He was one of Cardinal Tournon's *protégés*, but he was also in very friendly terms with the Este (significantly, Lodève named his son Hercule). In Ippolito's words, Lodève was 'nurritura di Monsignor Reverendissimo Tornone et mio amicissimo': ASFI, MdP, 3271, fo. 756.

⁴³ Ippolito II to Ercole II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XVIII.32 (13 November 1553). Despite the King's promise, the Cardinal of Ferrara never received any benefice as a compensation for Brescello. It was then decided that, until Ippolito's appointment to a benefice of the same value of Brescello, he would receive an annual pension instead – but Ippolito never received the pension either. On this, see chapter 'Luigi's succession' in this thesis.

1543-1544 (when Brescello was sacked by Charles V's army), and the third and last between 1555 and 1558.⁴⁴

Ippolito II had been appointed to the archbishopric of Milan in 1519, when he was only ten years old, in order to succeed his uncle, Ippolito I, who had held the benefice since 1497 – a classic nepotistic manoeuvre aimed to keep the assets of the Church within the family and to provide the next generation of ecclesiastics with a solid base of income and power.⁴⁵ Whilst the first two decades of Ippolito's tenure had been marked by his non-residency and had been relatively uneventful, the situation changed when the Duchy of Milan fell under the Emperor's direct control, following the death of Duke Francesco Sforza, in 1535.⁴⁶ This event marked a new beginning in the war between Francis I and Charles V.

In this situation, Ippolito's well-known sympathy for the French crown made his possession of the archdiocese of Milan – now an Imperial attachment – more problematic than it had previously been. At the same time as Milan's devolution to Charles V, the non-resident archbishop openly manifested his Francophile feelings by starting a long residence at King Francis I's court, in this way rousing the hostility of the Imperial officials in charge of the Duchy – who subsequently decided to seize the revenues of the archdiocese. A similar situation occurred in 1543, when Ippolito was still at Francis I's court: a new outbreak of war between the Habsburg and the Valois resulted, for the second time, in the issue of a decree that froze the payment of the ecclesiastical revenues (by obliging all the diocese's employees to retain any sum of money in their possession without transferring it out of the Duchy). On both occasions, the restitution of the revenues was immediately taken up by Ippolito's brother, Duke Ercole II, who ordered his ambassador at the Imperial court and his agents in Milan to protest against the seizure, which was perceived as

⁴⁴ The episodes that took place 1537 and 1543-1544 are both analysed in M. C. Giannini, 'Ippolito II arcivescovo di Milano fra interessi familiari e scelte politiche (1535-1550)', in A. Rocca and P. Vismara (eds) *Prima di Carlo Borromeo. Istituzioni, religione e società agli inizi del Cinquecento* (Rome, 2012), pp. 107-112, which is the main source that informs the following paragraph.

⁴⁵ On the archdiocese of Milan during the years of Ippolito I and Ippolito II, see also the studies by C. Marcora, 'Il cardinal Ippolito I d'Este arcivescovo di Milano', *Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Milano*, 5 (1958); Id., 'Ippolito II arcivescovo di Milano (1519-1550)', *Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Milano*, 6 (1959)' (although more focused on the life of the Milanese clergy and generally critical of the Estense Cardinals because of their status as non-resident bishops); 'La Chiesa Milanese nel decennio 1550-1560', *Memorie storiche della Diocesi di Milano*, 7 (1960)' (especially for the original documents published). On the state of Milan and its religious life under Charles V, see: F. Chabod, *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell'epoca di Carlo V* (Turin, 1971).

⁴⁶ On Charles V's dominion over the State of Milan, see: A. Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariano, 'The State of Milan and the Spanish Monarchy', in T. Dandeleter and J. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy. Politics, Society, and Religion, 1500-1700* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 104-111; G. Signorotto, 'Lo Stato di Milano nell'età di Filippo II. Dalle Guerre d'Italia all'orizzonte confessionale', in L. Lotti and R. Villari (eds), *Filippo II e il Mediterraneo* (Bari-Rome, 2004), pp. 25-56. Some letters written by Ippolito and addressed to the Duke of Milan can be found in ASMI, AUT, 27, 130 (12 August 1531; 8 July 1533).

detrimental to Ippolito's honour, and, therefore, as 'a demonstration [...] against our whole house'.⁴⁷

Whilst it is unclear when exactly Ippolito managed to have his rights on the revenues restored after the first sequestration of 1536⁴⁸ (although it is worth remembering that, at the time, the Estense diplomatic efforts were fully focused on establishing the terms of Ippolito's elevation to the cardinalate with Pope Paul III), in 1544 the Duke's diplomacy managed to obtain the rectification of the decree quite easily, through a plea to the Emperor.⁴⁹ For the Cardinal of Ferrara, however, the archbishopric of Milan remained a source of concern rather than income – the only source of concern in what was an otherwise very remunerative collection of benefices, whose peaceful possession was granted by his friendship with the King of France.

In this context of increasing political tension between Habsburg and Valois – and, as we will see, a context of increasingly strict control by Imperial officials over the Archdiocese of Milan – must be seen Ippolito's project to resign his one Italian episcopal see. The Cardinal sought to acquire a 'safer' benefice in a place in which his avowed French partisanship would not expose him to the danger of having his right to the revenues diminished at every stirring of the French-Imperial war (although, for someone with his vast income, the Milanese revenues represented more a matter of honour than a worrisome financial loss). Around the years 1548-1549, the Cardinal started a negotiation to exchange Milan with the diocese of Ferrara, his family's 'home diocese', which the Este had never ceased to consider a family benefice even though it had been held by Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, a Florentine, since 1520.⁵⁰ Besides the obvious desire to bring the diocese of Ferrara back into the family's bosom, the Cardinal was also driven by more compelling considerations. As he explained to his brother in a long letter written in 1549, a consistorial decree, recently approved, against the accumulation of benefices made his acquisition of another diocese (in this case, Ferrara) little recommendable; hence the need – in his opinion – to exploit the

⁴⁷ ASMO, CS, 145, 4 November 1537.

⁴⁸ Whilst Giannini is inclined to attribute the seizure to the war between Francis I and Charles V – and he therefore dates the suspension of the decree to the signing of the truce of Nice between France and the Empire in 1538 – Hollingsworth interprets the episode as a deliberate retaliation against Ippolito d'Este's increasing familiarity with the French monarchy, and argues that the sequestration of the revenues was lifted in 1539, after Ippolito was eventually publicly created cardinal: Giannini, 'Ippolito II', pp. 109-110; Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, p. 130; 137; 233.

⁴⁹ Giannini, 'Ippolito II', pp. 108-110.

⁵⁰ The diocese of Ferrara had been one of the benefices of Ippolito's uncle, Ippolito I, who had held it until his death in 1520. The then disastrous relationship between Ferrara and the Vatican, however, had made it impossible for the Este to tie the benefice to the family through the succession of young Ippolito, and the bishopric had therefore been assigned to Cardinal Salviati. Similarly, in 1529, Duke Alfonso I had faced Clement VII's opposition when he had unilaterally tried to bestow the bishopric of Modena upon Ippolito II. See Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 5-6; 64 (fn.3).

opportunity offered by Cardinal Salviati's availability to take over the bishopric of Milan, and the necessity to carry out the exchange:

Having been decided in consistory (as you must know) that no one, from now on, can hold more churches than those he holds in the present, and given that I cannot keep but three, as I do now, I thought that these three should be those that might be more beneficial to me; and that one should be the archbishopric of Lyon and the other the bishopric of Autun, and I thought of keeping the latter in the hope that one day I could have it exchanged by the King with something more valuable (as I hope will happen one day). Then, coming to the exchange of the bishopric of Ferrara that is now under discussion between me and the Most Reverend Salviati, I wanted it to be the third one, so that I would only need to be discharged of Milan, and this is what I wanted to do. Because that church is in the place and in the hands that we know, and I am where I am, and [...] there could be hostilities between them [the Emperor and the King of France] [...].⁵¹

Ippolito also pointed out that, having to resign one of his churches in order to acquire Ferrara, Milan would have been the most appropriate choice, not only because of the hostility of the Emperor, but also because, upon resignation, he could have gained the right to regress to the bishopric in the future (whilst the same did not apply to his French benefices).⁵² According to the negotiation that Ippolito was carrying out with Cardinal Salviati, he might even have ended up obtaining not only Ferrara but also Modena, 'which I could not keep due to the aforementioned reasons [Paul III's decree], but even if I could not keep it, I would exchange it with some abbeys and I would also gain the regress on it'.⁵³

Besides relieving the Cardinal from the inconvenience of holding a bishopric in an Imperial state, the appointment to Ferrara would have also had the advantage of making it easier to pass on the bishopric to the next generation of family's ecclesiastics, namely to Ippolito's nephew, Luigi d'Este – and to steer Luigi's career firmly towards the French monarchy, without the uncertainties related to the Emperor's favour:

Even if Your Excellence were determined to make Luigi a clergyman, which I would really appreciate as something that would be the greatest satisfaction I could possibly have, it seems to me that to make him great (as I indeed want him to be) it would be by all means more easily accomplished following this [the French] path rather than the Emperor's or anyone else's [...] and the bishopric of Ferrara would be more suited to him than any other he could receive.⁵⁴

⁵¹ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXII.24 (the letter is undated; however, from the bishoprics that are mentioned in the text and from the fact that Ippolito refers to the French benefices as 'these' and to the Italian ones as 'those', it is possible to date the document between January 1549 – that is to say, after the Cardinal's resignation of the diocese of Treguier, which would have otherwise figured amongst his benefices, and the first half of 1549, when Ippolito moved from France to Italy). On Ippolito's pluralism, see pp. 58-59 in this thesis.

⁵² 'Havendo io a lasciar come è necessario che lasci una di queste chiese, mi par che habbi anco da lasciar più tosto di quelle d'Italia, dove posso guadagnar il regresso, che di queste di Francia dove non può più cader': *ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

This last observation regarding Luigi's career, which was probably partially motivated by Ippolito's genuine desire to enhance his family connections with the French crown, can also be read in the light of Ippolito's previous refusal to resign Milan to Luigi, as suggested by Ercole II a couple of years previously, when Luigi was eight years old.⁵⁵ Whilst the age of Luigi did not raise any sort of consideration either in 1547 or in 1549, Ippolito insisted that he would have been happy to see his nephew embrace the ecclesiastical career, but that he nonetheless thought that his brother should wait before taking any decision regarding Luigi's future until his elder brother, Alfonso, had reached an age at which Ercole could be sure that he could succeed him to the Duchy. This especially 'considering the very few people that are currently in our house, and because I see that Your Excellence has only two brothers and there is little hope that Don Francesco [Ippolito and Ercole's brother] will give us many more in the future'.⁵⁶

That Duke Ercole did not agree with his brother's considerations on their familiar strategy is well demonstrated by the fact that, in 1548, he had already opened a parallel negotiation with Cardinal Salviati to obtain Ferrara for Luigi. Ercole had even sought the advice of his cousin, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, to find the best way to ensure Luigi's succession and to dodge the obstacle of his young age. At the time, Ercole II and Cardinal Gonzaga had agreed that Ippolito would have not been able to take up the church on behalf of his nephew (as a *coadiutor*) because he already had too many bishoprics of his own, and the Pope would therefore have not given his consent.⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, then, in 1549 Ercole reacted with stubborn opposition to his brother's projected exchange of dioceses, which he must have seen as an undue interference in his own plans. The exchange of bishoprics did not take place and Ippolito remained archbishop of Milan. About a year later, in May 1550, Julius III granted Luigi d'Este the right to succeed Cardinal Salviati as administrator of the bishopric of Ferrara (the right of *accessus*), as a reward for Ippolito's support towards his election to the papal throne.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ ASMO, CS, 148, 1 May 1547. A letter from the papal nuncio Dandino suggests that, in 1547, Ippolito was already considering the idea of resigning Milan, but it is unclear if that project initially involved Luigi or not. In a conversation between the two men (Ippolito was at the time in France), the Cardinal of Ferrara had told nuncio Dandino that he wanted to comply with Paul III's decree and renounce his church of Milan: Giannini, 'Ippolito II', p. 112 n. 16.

⁵⁶ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXII.24. Don Francesco d'Este had only two daughters: Bertoni, 'Este, Francesco d'.

⁵⁷ 'Io veggio l'età di Don Luigi tanto tenera che non so se il papa in questi tempi vorrà admitter la rinunzia in persona di lui, et dovendosi dar ad alcun confidente non lo so trovare, havendo Monsignor Vostro fratello tante chiese et io non ne potendo havere più che questa di Mantova': V. Pacifici, 'Luigi d'Este', *Atti e memorie della Società Tiburtina di Storia e d'Arte*, IX-X (1929-1930), pp. 54-55.

⁵⁸ Cardinal Salviati only insisted on reserving a pension of 1.000 *scudi* (a quarter of the overall income): ASMO, CDCPE, 1416/164 fasc. 6, 22 May 1550. When Salviati died, in October 1553, Ercole II immediately took possession

Ippolito II eventually resigned the archdiocese of Milan in 1550, in favour of Giovan Angelo Arcimboldi. The Cardinal kept two-thirds of the revenues and the right of *regressus* for himself.⁵⁹ Because of the regress, when Arcimboldi died in April 1555, the archdiocese of Milan returned to Ippolito – as he had indeed predicted at the time of his resignation. In those five years, Habsburg politics had changed further: the Empire was going through a period of transition, and Charles V, in 1545, had left the management of Milan to his son, the future Philip II of Spain.⁶⁰ As a consequence of this change of asset, the champion of Charles V's agenda in Italy and Governor of Milan for ten years, Ferrante Gonzaga – to whom Ippolito was also closely related – fell into disgrace after a slanderous inquiry into his Milanese administration and was called back to Brussels. According to the Venetian ambassador to the Emperor, Charles V himself later told Gonzaga that his misfortune 'was attributable to the interests of his [Philip II's] dearest ministers, who did not let him know Don Ferrante's great worth [...], apologising for his son greatly, and blaming his ministers greatly'.⁶¹ When Ferrante Gonzaga eventually left his Milanese post, in March 1555, his appointed successor was the man who more than anyone else embodied the aggressive new course of Philip II's 'dearest ministers': Ferdinando Álvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alba – who had been long pulling the threads that eventually led to Gonzaga's deprivation.⁶²

When Giovan Angelo Arcimboldi died, on 6 April 1555, the Cardinal of Ferrara was participating in the conclave that would elect Marcello Cervini as Pope Marcellus II. Being aware

of the diocese on behalf of his son: *ibid.*, CS, 79, 1654.XXII.59 – all. See also Ippolito II's letter to Ercole: *ibid.*, 149, 1709. XVIII.31 (12 November 1553).

⁵⁹ In exchange for the Archdiocese of Milan, Arcimboldi had resigned the diocese of Novara – which was one of Milan's suffragan dioceses – in favour of Ippolito d'Este, who held the benefice until November 1551: Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, pp. 240; 260; ASMI, AUT, 27, 130 (7 May 1550).

⁶⁰ On the transition of Milan from Charles V to Philip, see: Álvarez-Ossorio Alvaríño, 'The State of Milan', pp. 99-132; M. Peytavin, 'Government/Administration: The Italian Kingdoms within the Spanish Monarchy', in T. Dandeleit and J. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion, 1500-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 356-357; Signorotto, 'Lo Stato di Milano', pp. 25-56.

⁶¹ Federico Badoer to the Doge and Senate (6 April 1555): *Cal. State Papers Venice*, 6, April 1555, no. 45.

⁶² Philip announced Alba's appointment in April 1555: Álvarez-Ossorio Alvaríño, 'The State of Milan', p. 107. Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga had written to Ercole II d'Este to announce the appointment of Alba already at the beginning of January, commenting that 'mi da molto fastidio per la riputatione che vedo perder alla persona di lei [Ferrante Gonzaga]'. Two months later, he confirmed that the Duke of Alba was arriving in Italy 'omnipotente': ASMO, CDCPE, 1380/114, fasc. 1, 8 January 1555, 2 March 1555. On Ferrante Gonzaga's deprivation, see: F. Chabod, *Carlo V e il suo Impero* (Turin, 1985), pp. 451-514; M. J. Rodríguez Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority, 1551-1559* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 106-110; M. Rivero Rodríguez, *Felipe II y el gobierno de Italia* (Madrid, 1998), pp. 45-48. On the shift in Spanish politics in Italy and Milan, and on the rise of Philip II's ministers, see, for example: J. Martínez Millán and M. Rivero Rodríguez, 'Hacia la formación de la Monarquía Hispánica: la hegemonía hispana en Italia (1547-1566)', in J. Martínez Millán (ed), *La Corte de Carlos V* (Madrid, 2000), part I: *Corte y Gobierno*, ii, pp. 189-208; J. Martínez Millán, 'Fazioni politiche e correnti spirituali nel servizio dell'Imperatore', in F. Cantù and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *L'Italia di Carlo V. Guerra, religione e politica nel primo Cinquecento* (2 vols, Rome, 2003), i, pp. 3-39. On the Duke of Alba in Milan see also: W. S. Maltby, *A biography of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba, 1507-1582* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 87-96.

that the ongoing conflict between the King of France and the Imperial-Spanish forces would have probably undermined his regress to the church of Milan, he asked his brother to forward a message to Philip II, in which he asked for the peaceful possession of the Archdiocese of Milan:

I beg Your Excellence to make the warmest office with the King of England [...] so that I will not be impeded in my possession, letting him know that that church was mine even before, and that I have held it in peace as well as in war, begging him not to show that mistrust that I have not been shown so far, and promising him that although I am a servant of the King, I would not use such a thing as an instrument to serve him, and that I will only take care of those things that concern the respect of the church and my revenues, without being prejudicial to the things of the State in the least part.⁶³

Regardless of the Cardinal's demonstrations of impartiality and Ercole's embassies, however, the Cardinal did not manage to overcome the opposition of the stern Spanish government and of the local officials, who were in charge of issuing the ducal *placet*, the official authorisation necessary to take possession of major abbeys and dioceses within the State of Milan.⁶⁴ On 8 April 1555, the Chancellor, Francesco Taverna, and the Senate of Milan recommended the fiscal administrator to take possession of the archdiocese and its revenues in order to later 'give the possession to the Cardinal of Ferrara' – but, in the document, the words 'Cardinal of Ferrara' had been crossed out and replaced with 'to whom it will pertain'.⁶⁵ On the same day, a letter sent by the *castellano* of Milan, Juan de Figueroa (who was also a relative of the Duke of Alba), insisted that the Senate immediately get a hold on 'everything that belongs to the archdiocese', because he had heard that the Cardinal of Ferrara, an 'open enemy of His Majesty', held the regress to that church.⁶⁶

Not surprisingly, in the period between April and May 1555, Ippolito could not have his right to Milan officially recognised. Given the Duke of Alba was yet to make his entrance into Milan, the Chancellor served as the Governor and, therefore, he and the Senate managed the

⁶³ ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XX.24 (13 April 1555). Ippolito later wrote a letter to the Chancellor to claim the archdiocese – 'la qual ritorna in persona mia in virtù del rigresso che io vi ho sopra' – and to introduce his agent Francesco Maria Visconti: ASMI, AUT, 27, 130 (10 May 1555).

⁶⁴ The Dukes of Milan had tried to prevent the instalment of 'unwanted' ecclesiastics over the major benefices in their territory by requiring every candidate to obtain the Duke's *placet* in conjunction with the papal appointment: L. Prosdocimi, *Il diritto ecclesiastico dello Stato di Milano dall'inizio della signoria viscontea al periodo tridentino (secoli XIII-XVI)* (Milan, 1941), pp. 60-80.

⁶⁵ The Senate and Chancellor Francesco Taverna to the *economista*: ASMI, CCS, 196 (8 April 1555).

⁶⁶ 'Ancor che io non solamente creda ma tenghi per fermo che le Signorie Vostre havevano dato ordine che'l possesso del detto arcivescovato sia preso a nome di sua Reggia et Ducal maestà, nondimeno stante hoi le cose nei termini che stano con la morte del Pappa et per certo regresso che intendo haver il Cardinal di Ferrara, nemico alla scoperta di sua maestà, io non ho voluto lasciare di ricordarli questo per parte mia, et di procurare Vostre Signorie di impatronirse di tutte le cose spettanti al detto arcivescovato': *ibid.* (8 April 1555).

administration of the archdiocese ‘on behalf of the Cardinal of Ferrara’. They therefore ordered the fiscal administrator to appoint officials and a vicar *in spiritualibus* – with the authorisation of the newly elected Pope Marcellus II, who had nonetheless warned the Milanese Senate not to violate Ippolito’s rights to the *temporalibus* (i.e. the collection of the revenues).⁶⁷ The Pope’s premature death left Ippolito without a solid ally to obtain the recognition of his rights to the archdiocese. If he had had some leverage on Ferrante Gonzaga – thanks to the good relationship between their families and especially with Ferrante’s brother, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga – neither the absence of the Governor nor, as we will see, the presence of the Duke of Alba advantaged the Cardinal of Ferrara’s claim.⁶⁸

Having very little hope of convincing the Senate to let him enjoy his archdiocese without the support of the Roman Curia, Ippolito turned, once again, to his brother.⁶⁹ Ercole ordered one of his ambassadors, Claudio Ariosti, to defend Ippolito’s cause with the Milanese officials and with the Duke of Alba, who, in the meantime, had officially taken up the position of Governor. However, in the summer of 1555, ambassador Ariosti reported back to his lord that other Francophile ecclesiastics who held benefices in the Milanese had already been deprived of their revenues, and that he had heard many grim rumours indicating that the sequestration of Ippolito’s diocesan money was imminent.⁷⁰ Ambassador Ariosti’s report soon proved to be correct: the Milanese authorities carried out the sequestration of the diocese’s revenues and kept them under seizure for the following year and a half, in spite of an admonition issued by Marcellus’s successor, Pope Paul IV.⁷¹

⁶⁷ The Senate and Chancellor Francesco Taverna to the *economio*: *ibid.*, (25 April 1555). See also Giannini, ‘Una Chiesa senza arcivescovo’, esp. pp. 238-254.

⁶⁸ It seems that the cardinal had managed to keep a good relationship with Ferrante Gonzaga during the ten years of his Governorship, despite their opposite political loyalties. Don Ferrante had even approved Ippolito’s resignation of Milan to Giovan Angelo Arcimboldi without first asking for the Emperor’s approval. When the cardinal had taken over the diocese of Novara, he had granted Don Ferrante the right to appoint someone of his choice to the custody of a fortress on the island of San Giulio, which was of strategical interest for the Emperor but which belonged to the diocese: Marcora, ‘La Chiesa milanese’, pp. 261-264; ASMO, CS, 390, 2038.VI.87 (undated, probably written in the spring of 1550). Ferrante Gonzaga and Ippolito d’Este were still in very good terms in 1557, despite the war alliance between Duke Ercole and France against the Habsburg: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 282.

⁶⁹ Ippolito II to Ercole II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXII.23 (undated, but written between May and June 1555).

⁷⁰ Ariosti reported that the Spanish government of Milan had already seized the revenues of the benefices belonging to Bernardo Salviati, who was one of Catherine de’ Medici’s *protégés* (and the brother of that Giovanni Salviati who had resigned the diocese of Ferrara in favour of Luigi d’Este): ASMO, CDA, Milano, 36, 27 August 1555; 4 September 1555. Ambassador Ariosti had been also ordered ‘di metter l’autorità di Vostra Eccellenza in compromesso nella simil causa del prior di Roma [Bernardo Salviati]’: *ibid.*, 9 September 1555. On Bernardo Salviati’s relationship with France, see: Baumgartner, ‘Henry II’s Italian Bishops’, p. 51.

⁷¹ In October 1555, the fiscal administrator of Milan issued a document that thoroughly listed all the products that had been seized from the properties of the archdiocese (*Scrutinio de frutti dell’Arcivescovato...*): ASMI, CCS, 202 (12 October 1555).

In December 1556, given the impossibility of restoring his right to the revenues, Ippolito resigned the diocese again, this time in favour of Filippo Archinto, a Milanese patrician (once again, Ippolito kept the *regressus*). The Cardinal of Ferrara was probably hoping that, by appointing a bishop who belonged to the ranks of the local patriciate and who was in good terms with the Spanish authorities, he would have eventually managed to enjoy the revenues that he had been so far denied – especially because, according to the very advantageous terms of his resignation, Ippolito would have still received the entirety of the diocese’s revenues, whilst Archinto would have only been entitled to a small pension.⁷² The newly appointed bishop, however, never managed to establish his right to possess the diocese: after many attempts to obtain the Government’s consensus on his instalment and the lifting of the sequestration decree, Archinto left Milan and died in Bergamo in June 1558.⁷³ In the period between Arcimboldi’s death and Archinto’s death (1555-1558), therefore, neither the Cardinal of Ferrara nor Filippo Archinto managed to obtain the Ducal *placet*; in response to their reiterated requests that the sequestration of the revenues be suspended, the Spanish and Milanese authorities always argued that they were bound to comply with the King’s will.⁷⁴

Whilst Filippo Archinto was seeking the help of the Curia to support his reasons against the Government’s abuse, Ippolito and his brother prompted the drafting of a legal memorial aimed to both demonstrate Ippolito’s rights over the revenues of Milan and to establish their precise amount. An inquiry aimed to assess the amount of money that was due to Ippolito had been made necessary by the fact that, because of the sequestration, the ‘fruits and the revenues had been withheld and were in the hands or under the control of the most reverend *economio* [the Milanese fiscal administrator]’.⁷⁵

According to the four witnesses who, in March 1557, gave their testimony – all agents or employees of the Cardinal of Ferrara who were in Milan in that period and who had unsuccessfully tried to claim the money due to their lord – the Senate of Milan had improperly withheld the

⁷² Archinto was assigned a pension of 1.000 *scudi*, whilst the share enjoyed by Ippolito would be decided year by year according to the real income produced by the diocese. Thanks to the regress and following Filippo Archinto’s death in June 1558, Ippolito repossessed and resigned again Milan in favour of Gianangelo de Medici, the future Pius IV. However, Pope Paul IV died before having given his official approval to Ippolito’s *resignatio in favorem*, and when Gianangelo de Medici became Pope, at the beginning of 1560, the resignation was still pending. Once ascended to the papal throne as Pius IV, Gianangelo de Medici made Ippolito’s resignation official and transferred the Archdiocese of Milan to his nephew, Carlo Borromeo, who committed himself to apply the principles of the Council of Trent to the archdiocese. See: Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, iii, p. 240; Giannini, ‘Una chiesa senza arcivescovo’, pp. 270-272.

⁷³ On Filippo Archinto, see G. Alberigo, ‘Archinto, Filippo’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1961).

⁷⁴ ASMO, CS, 389, *Testi esaminati per... Arcivescovato di Milano*, esp. pp. 14-15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

revenues of the diocese after Arcimboldi's death and had objected to Ippolito's right to administer the bishopric. When Ippolito had resigned in favour of Archinto, the Senate had also objected to the latter's instalment, and Archinto had therefore argued that he would not pay Ippolito his share of the revenues if he could not manage to 'peacefully possess the Archdiocese'.⁷⁶ During the year and a half after Arcimboldi's death, Ippolito's agents had repeatedly travelled back and forth seeking the permission of the local authorities to let the Cardinal first, and Archinto later, enjoy the revenues of the Archdiocese, but with little success – especially because 'everything was debated, negotiated and discussed in a secluded and private way'. The Chancellor of Milan, Francesco Taverna, had even prevented one of these agents from visiting the territories of the Archdiocese, and only when confronted with the strong protests of Ippolito's man had he eventually given his consent – but he had pointed out that that visit should take place 'privately, and had ordered that this witness [Ippolito's agent] should not make any official demonstration of possession or show any sign of superiority in any way, either by action by word'.⁷⁷ The President of the Senate had told Francesco Maria Visconti – one of Ippolito's closest servants, who had been expressly sent from Rome to Milan – that the Senate had taken over the revenues of the Archdiocese following an order of Philip II and that the only way to have them back was to forward a plea to the King. Visconti eventually managed to have a meeting with the Duke of Alba, but he was dismissed without receiving any positive answer.⁷⁸ The only thing that Ippolito's agents accomplished was an examination of the account books that the administrators of the diocese had been keeping in the previous years, and an enquiry into some of them. They unanimously testified that the revenues of Milan have always been worth around 5.800 golden *scudi* per year⁷⁹ – and one of them pointed out that in 1555 that figure had peaked at 6.573,5.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ 'Ipse Reverendissimus Archintus non velit solvere pensiones et cetera conventa adimplere nisi consecutus fuerit possessiones pacifice dicti Archiepiscopati, quod totus cadit ad grave damnus et preiudicium ipsius Illustrissimi Cardinalis sine sua culpa': *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁸ Ercole II's ambassador, Claudio Ariosti, had been dismissed too by the Duke of Alba, and so another of Ippolito's agents, who had made 'molte, et molte, et più, et diverse volte instanzissima istanza' to obtain the *placet* for his lord: *ibid.*, pp. 7-10. The Duke of Alba held the governorship from March 1555 (although he arrived in Milan in June) to June 1556, when he left for Flanders. For a list of all the governors of this period, see: F. Bellati, *Serie de' governatori di Milano dall'anno 1535 al 1776 con istoriche annotazioni* (Milan, 1776), pp. 2-3.

⁷⁹ This figure is also confirmed by other sources: *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, ed. A. Segarizzi, ii, p. 28; Picot, *Les italiens en France*, p. 111.

⁸⁰ The witness who provided this very precise figure was Paolo Albertino, who had been Ippolito's agent in Milan and administrator of the diocese's finances during the years of Ippolito's first tenure (since 1535) and therefore knew all the *fattori* (stewards) who were keeping track of the money produced by the diocese: ASMO, CS, 398, *Testi esaminati per... Arcivescovato di Milano*, p. 10. Albertino's reports from Milan are in ASMO, CDA, Milano, 35. See also Giannini, 'Ippolito II', p. 108.

If Ippolito's French loyalty could *per se* explain why the authorities of Milan tried to sabotage the instalment of a Cardinal who was not just an ecclesiastic but also – and, in this period, especially – one of the highest representatives of the King of France (therefore an 'open enemy' of the Habsburg) and a leading member of a neighbouring sovereign family, this explanation does not suffice when one considers the case of Filippo Archinto, a bishop who had no personal affiliation with the Valois. For a long time, historiography has ignored – or partially ignored – the complex political tensions that were behind the management of the Archdiocese of Milan in the years before Carlo Borromeo's appointment. The clashes between the local authorities, the Imperial-Spanish government, and the Roman bishops have often been seen only as the product of the dialectic between the impulses of the Catholic Reformation and the resistances of a 'secularised' clergy and abusive local powers – in other words, as a moment of spiritual decadence as opposed to the religious rebirth inaugurated with Borromeo's residency.⁸¹ Studies on the State of Milan under Philip II's rule, however, have provided a much more solid analysis of the political clashes that were not only external – Spain versus France, or Spain versus the Vatican – but internal, in the form of a new Spanish ruling elite that was more decisively drawing the politics of the Italian peninsula towards a restricted circle of Philip II's courtiers. The condition of 'non-tenure' that characterised the diocese of Milan before the advent of Carlo Borromeo has been explained in a similar fashion by Massimo Giannini, who has stressed the thick web of personal relationships as well as the games of power that were behind the sequestration of the diocesan income. He has focused especially on the aggressive campaign led by the powerful Cardinal de Granvelle, in conjunction with the Milanese official responsible for the fiscal administration (the *economista* to whom Ippolito's legal memorial referred), to take hold of the economic produce of the Milanese benefices – an initiative that went beyond the anti-French politics pursued by the State of Milan, and that paralleled the action of the Governor in charge.⁸² In this sense, the sequestration of the revenues pursued in the years 1555-1558 differs from the similar episodes occurred in the previous decades, and it must be seen in connection with both the 'new course' of Philip II's Italian politics and with the local and private initiative of the Milanese *economista*. This scenario finds confirmation in the testimonies of Ippolito's agents regarding the period 1555-1556, and in their unanimous understanding that their

⁸¹ Giannini, 'Una chiesa senza arcivescovo', pp. 227-229; 248-250. Whilst the most recent reference I have found of Ippolito as the archbishop of Milan defines the years of his tenure as 'non-government' and the Cardinal himself as a 'shameful archbishop' and 'a heathen', Filippo Archinto's struggle to take possession of Milan has been often attributed to the reaction of the corrupted local clergy to Archinto's reputation as a 'reformer bishop': A. Rimoldi, 'La prima metà del Cinquecento (1500-1559)', in A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi and L. Vaccaro (eds), *Diocesi di Milano* (Brescia, 1990), pp. 378-380. This interpretation still echoes in Alberigo, 'Archinto, Filippo'.

⁸² Giannini, 'Una chiesa senza arcivescovo'.

work in Milan was impeded by the ‘secrecy’ in which all the discussions occurred, and by the role played by the *economio*.

The overlap of an ‘official’ Milanese policy and a more private initiative is ultimately demonstrated by the developments of Ippolito’s litigation with the government of Milan in the following year. A legal text written in 1558 by a professional Modenese jurist, appointed by the Duke of Ferrara to support the Cardinal’s claim over the revenues of the Archdiocese, sheds more light on the parallel initiative pursued by the Milanese *economio*, and on the fact that his personal initiative went well beyond the mere exercise of his functions.⁸³ In 1556, the royal officers had seized the cash from the revenues from the people in charge of its transportation, despite their holding a *salvacondotto* – a safe-conduct – that had been granted to the Cardinal of Ferrara’s agents in order to move the revenues across the border safely. The ‘res controversa’ revolved around the terms of this safe-conduct: the *economio* of the fiscal office of Milan quibbled over the word ‘silver’, claiming that it only applied to silver objects or artefacts and not – as was the case – to silver as ‘money’ (*monetam* or *pecuniam*). The fact that the people who were carrying the money were French, and that they were actually transporting it to France, corroborates the suspicion that the interpretation of the fiscal office was just a pretext for the retaliation against Ippolito as a ‘French Cardinal’ during the last stage of the war between France and Spain. Therefore, the jurist who wrote Ippolito’s *allegationes* insisted that those who come from France or speak French call money ‘argent’ (i.e. silver) and that the safe-conduct had been requested *secundum morem loquendi*. He therefore concluded that ‘restituendam esse pecuniam male ablatam’.⁸⁴ This new seizure of Ippolito’s money happened when the governorship of Milan had been taken up by the Cardinal of Trento, Cristoforo Madruzzo, who – also in accordance with the relaxation of the war between Habsburg and Valois – had soothed the terms of the sequestration of the revenues in the Milanese and had issued the safe-conduct that Ippolito’s agents were carrying.⁸⁵ Rather than an episode of ‘bureaucratic schizophrenia’, then, the behaviour of the *economio* demonstrates that the prolonged sequestration of the Cardinal’s revenues in the fifties was not simply a result of the French-Spanish opposition.

It is therefore easy to see that, when the power over Milan shifted drastically towards Brussels and Philip II’s court, the lack of a direct access to the court of the sovereign and to his

⁸³ ASMO, CS, 389, *Allegationes Iuris pro Duce Mutini*.

⁸⁴ ‘Apud Gallos, vel eos qui eorum voce loquuntur, argenti vocabulo monetam significant [...] et vulgariter etiam scimus, Gallos ea voce *l’argian* significare pecuniam. Cum igitur hic, qui salvum conductum petiit, e Gallis veniret, petitionem suam concepit secundum morem loquendi’: *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Cardinal Madruzzo succeeded the Duke of Alba in June 1556: Bellati, *Serie de’ governatori di Milano*, pp. 2-3.

powerful representatives – such as the Duke of Alba or Cardinal de Granvelle – weighed heavily against not only Ippolito d’Este, but also against Filippo Archinto. During the first fifteen years of his reign, Duke Ercole II had been careful to maintain a good relationship with Charles V, to whom he owed his investiture over Modena and Reggio.⁸⁶ He had refused, for instance, to join the King of France in a league against the Emperor in 1548, and had struggled to keep his State neutral during the war of Parma and when Henry II had fomented the anti-Imperial rebellion in Siena – a strategy of political balance that followed the path laid down by the late Duke, Alfonso I, who had planned his sons’ careers in accordance with his diplomatic vision.⁸⁷ For this reason, in the same years in which Ippolito was building his ecclesiastical grandeur in the shade of the Valois monarchy, his younger brother, Don Francesco d’Este, had been serving the Emperor as a military official.⁸⁸ Francesco’s presence at Charles V’s side had also helped Ercole and Ippolito obtain the payment of the revenues when they had been seized in the previous decades.⁸⁹ In the fifties, however, Francesco had left Charles V’s service and had slowly started to reposition himself in the French orbit, encouraged by his brother, Ippolito II, and also by Duke Ercole II’s increasing vicinity to the Valois monarchy – which eventually led him, in 1556, to join an anti-Spanish league.⁹⁰ Not only the Duchy’s politics, then, but also the personal political affiliations of the members of the house of Este contributed to tying the destiny of Ferrara to the French kingdom more closely in the fifties of the sixteenth century, – a choice with some bitter consequences for the Estense Duchy when, after the peace of Cateau-Cambresis of 1559, the King of Spain emerged as the principal power in Italy.

Having failed to establish Ippolito d’Este’s right to the revenues with the State of Milan and the King’s representatives in Italy, the claim over the sequestered revenues moved on, in the following years, to the field of international diplomacy. Here too, however, both Ippolito and the Estense duchy found themselves affected by the lack of connections with what had become, in the meantime, Philip II’s Madrid court (we will see in the next part of this chapter the difficulties met

⁸⁶ On the problem of the investiture, see: Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, pp. 243-244; 252-253; Folini, *Rinascimento estense*, pp. 51-53; 331-333.

⁸⁷ On the league of 1548, see: Romier, *Les origines politiques*, i, p. 67. On the war of Siena, see chapter II.1 ‘Serving the King’ in this thesis.

⁸⁸ For a biographical sketch of Don Francesco, Alfonso I’s third and last son, see Bertoni, ‘Este, Francesco d’.

⁸⁹ Giannini, ‘Ippolito II’, p. 108.

⁹⁰ Magoni, *I gigli d’oro*, pp. 59-75.

by Duke Alfonso II, who succeeded his father as the Duke after Cateau-Cambrésis scenario, in competing with other ‘more Spanish’ Italian rulers – those of Savoy and Florence, for instance – when seeking Philip II’s favour). In the case of the Milanese revenues, an agent sent by the Cardinal of Ferrara, in 1559, obtained the King’s promise that he would return ‘that money that had been sequestrated in Milan under the safe-conduct’, and that the Duke of Alba would be in charge of the bureaucratic aspect of the payment. With regard to the revenues of the Archdiocese that the State of Milan had withheld during the years of war, Ippolito’s agent was told that, because of the terms of the peace between the Valois and the Habsburg, Philip II was not due to return them at all.⁹¹ Despite Ippolito’s optimism ([his agent] gives me such good hope on this matter that I hope that the outcome will be in accordance with my wish)⁹², neither the revenues nor the money sequestrated in violation of the safe-conduct were paid back in 1559. Partial compensation, however, was offered by the newly-elected Pius IV, who, in March 1560, assigned a pension of one-thousand *ducati* to the Cardinal of Ferrara, ‘as a compensation for Milan’.⁹³

That the dispute over Milan mattered to the Estense family as a whole and not only to the Cardinal of Ferrara has already been demonstrated by the diplomatic efforts sustained by Duke Ercole at the time of his brother’s tenure of the archdiocese, and by the fact that the jurist in charge of presenting Ippolito’s claim had been appointed – and salaried – by Ercole II. A definitive confirmation is also offered by the subsequent developments of the litigation. Although Ippolito II, as we have just seen, had eventually obtained from the King of Spain the restitution of the money sequestrated from his agents, that promise had been kept neither in 1559 nor in the following years. At the moment of his death, in 1572, Ippolito d’Este had still not been reimbursed with the money which he had been expecting for thirteen years. His heirs, his nephews Alfonso II and Cardinal Luigi d’Este, became therefore involved in another legal dispute with the State of Milan over the payment of those same revenues, as they tried to establish their right to receive the money that had been due to their uncle when he was still alive. Disregarding that first refusal opposed by King Philip II, they claimed both the revenues of the archdiocese (which were worth the considerable sum of 14.000 *scudi*) as well as the money seized from Ippolito’s employees, which

⁹¹ Ippolito II to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXIV.22 (4 January 1560).

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ In March 1560, Pius IV appointed one of Ippolito’s most loyal *protégé*, the provost Brandelasio Trotti, to the diocese of Maurienne, whose revenues were worth two-thousands *ducati*. The Pope then assigned half of the revenues as a pension to Ippolito: ASMO, CS, 149, 1709.XXIV.32 (27 March 1560). On the diocese of Maurienne, see chapter I.3 ‘Appendix’ in this thesis.

accounted for an extra 10.000 *scudi* and which the Cardinal had already claimed in 1558 and 1559.⁹⁴

IPPOLITO AND ALFONSO: ESTENSE POLITICS AFTER CATEAU-CAMBRESIS

In April 1559, Philip II and Henry II signed the peace of Cateau-Cambresis, which ended over sixty years of war between Habsburg and Valois and left Philip in control of almost the whole of Italy.⁹⁵ In July, Henry II died after having been accidentally wounded in the eye during a joust held to celebrate the peace. The French king was followed, one month later, by Paul IV, the pope whose hatred of the Emperor and inflammatory politics had contributed to revive the hostilities in the second half of the fifties. In October, during the conclave that would elect the more diplomatic Pius IV, Duke Ercole II, who had reluctantly backed Paul IV's anti-Habsburg action, died in Ferrara.⁹⁶ Over the course of little more than six months, the protagonists of the alliance against Charles V and Philip II left the scene. Whilst the death of the authoritarian Paul IV has remained famous for having been welcomed with rejoicing by the Roman population, the death of Ercole II and Henry II left their respective states to deal with the consequences of the defeat sanctioned at Cateau-Cambresis.

For the Kingdom of France, Henry II's death marked the beginning of a period of instability: the war had left the royal finances in a wretched state, and the confessional hatred between Huguenots and Catholics was fuelling episodes of violence throughout the country. The delicateness of the situation would have required a firm leadership – something that Henry's

⁹⁴ The Este presented the Senate of Milan with the sentence in favour of Ippolito II and with a letter from the King of Spain that ordered the fiscal office to return the money, but the magistrates of Milan refused to execute the sentence and argued that the King's letter was personal and could not apply to the Cardinal's heirs. An Estense agent had nonetheless found another letter from the King that commanded 'che si paghino detti crediti alli heredi del Cardinale di Ferrara': ASMO, CS, 390, 2038.VI.79.

⁹⁵ In the North, the French renounced their claim to the State of Milan, which was left to Spanish rule; Savoy and Piedmont were restored to Philip's ally, Emmanuel-Philibert of Savoy (although France kept some fortresses); Genoa, also allied with Spain, obtained Corsica. In Central Italy, Philip directly controlled the *Stato dei presidi*, a group of cities on the Tuscan coast, and had in Cosimo de' Medici his principal Italian ally. The South of Italy remained under Spanish control. This political arrangement lasted, with little changes, for over one-hundred and fifty years.

⁹⁶ Ercole II, following his traditional policy of 'moderation', had initially tried to maintain Ferrara neutral. He had eventually agreed to finance the French military operation in exchange for the title of general of the French-Vatican league and the promise of the annexation of the city of Cremona at the end of the war. Helping to make up Ercole's mind had been the fact that the main supporters of a new aggressive action in Italy were his close relatives, the Guise: see Benzoni, 'Ercole II' and Carroll, *Murderers and Martyrs*, pp. 75-79. On the involvement of the Duchy of Ferrara and the role of Paul IV, see the analyses by Signorotto, 'Note sulla politica', pp. 50-51; id., 'Papato e principi', pp. 269-271. See also T. J. Dandele, *Spanish Rome*, pp. 53-108. On the last stage of the Italian wars, which led the French to the defeat of Saint-Quentin, see: Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, pp. 250-289.

successor, the sickly, fifteen-year-old Francis II, could not provide.⁹⁷ For the Duchy of Ferrara, the consequences of 1559 were of a different nature: whilst the succession to the dukedom was easily secured with the return from France of Alfonso d'Este, Ercole II's twenty-six-year old son, Henry II's death deprived the duchy of its foremost protector.⁹⁸ The most compelling matter on the new duke's agenda, therefore, was the fragile political position of Ferrara in the now Spanish-dominated Italian scene.

As we will see in the next chapter, this moment of transition also coincided with Ippolito's return to the French court as the papal legate (1561), more than ten years after his last stay and under very different political circumstances. Whilst the cardinal's efforts to enhance Alfonso II's relationship with the French monarchy are considered in the following chapter, here it is necessary to ask what the broader Ferrarese agenda was, and what role the cardinal of Ferrara played in it. Until Ercole II's death in 1559, Ippolito II and Ercole II had always been the ultimate representatives of their family's power in Italy and abroad: a two-headed leadership based on the theoretical division of spheres of influence, but in which the two heads – as we have seen – did not necessarily work unanimously towards the same aim. Alfonso II's succession changed what had been, in fact, an equilibrium – although sometimes a controversial one – between peers. The young duke's inexperience and duchy's political fragility shifted the balance of power more decisively towards the Cardinal of Ferrara, whose influence was much more required than before. If in the past, as we have seen, Ippolito had been the family's strongest advocate for an ever-increasing union of interests with the French crown, the years 1560-1561 brought a modification of the 'traditional' roles of the Este.

All the portraits and descriptions that have remained of Alfonso II depict him as deeply influenced, in his manners, tastes, and attitude, by his French ascendance. Unlike Ercole II, Alfonso was a direct descendant of the French royalty – through his mother, Renée of France – and had spent his youth living in France (where he still was when Ercole II died). A report written in 1561 by the Venetian ambassador to France, aimed to illustrate the relationships between the French

⁹⁷ On Henry II's last years of kingship and the rise of a 'Huguenot problem', see: Romier, *Les origines politiques*, ii, pp. 225-390. For more bibliographical references, see the following chapter.

⁹⁸ Alfonso II had been in France from 1552 to 1554, and again from 1556 to 1557. When Ercole II had joined the league against Philip II, Alfonso had gone back to Italy to take part in the military operations. In 1558, after the defeat of the French, he had married Lucrezia de' Medici as part of the reconciliation process between Ferrara and Spain. Immediately after, however, Alfonso had returned to the French court, where he witnessed Henry II's joust incident. When his father died, Alfonso was still in France. See Renée of France's letter to Ippolito II, on 7 October 1559: ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.7 (misplaced among Alfonso II's correspondence). On Alfonso II's life, see: R. Quazza, 'Alfonso II d'Este', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960)

monarchy and the various Italian princes, offers a good example of what was the perception of Alfonso II's 'confidence' with the Valois in the eyes of contemporary observers:

Ferrara [Alfonso II], for confidence, does not differ from French natives, not only because he was born [...] from a French mother and raised in France, and because of the numerous honours and great demonstrations he was given in that kingdom, but also because of the many interests he has there, as he receives a pension of fifty-thousand francs a year from the king, further to the lands he owns in Normandy, thanks to some money that his ancestor, Duke Alfonso, lent to King Francis a long time ago; but also because (what is more relevant) he is in credit of more than a million and one-hundred thousand *scudi*, of which more than six-hundred thousand were borrowed when lord Guise came [to Italy]. Furthermore, there are the interests of his own house, which, without the help and protection of France, and the great profits that come from it, would remain poor: I am referring to the cardinal (who enjoys more than one-hundred and fifty-thousand francs a year of ecclesiastical revenues, which he hopes will pass on to Luigi, his nephew), as well as to the privileges that lord Don Francesco and Don Alfonso, his uncles, receive from the king, both being knights of the order. Therefore, even if the duke were not French by choice, he should be so by obligation: and the French hold him as obliged.⁹⁹

It is particularly significant, in this context, to highlight the efforts made by the cardinal of Ferrara to realign, at least partially, his dynasty with the Spanish crown. Ippolito's attempt to promote such a shift of politics emerges vividly from the correspondence he held with Alfonso II during the first year of his nephew's reign, when the French crown's loss of influence over the Italian states made the duchy's 'obligation' to the Valois less convenient than it had been at the time of Henry II, and the lack of good and continuous diplomatic relations with the Castilian branch of the Habsburg power – especially with Philip II's state apparatus – was strongly disadvantageous. It has been observed by scholars that Philip's court, after Cateau-Cambrésis, emerged as the ultimate arbiter of the dynastic rivalries and ambitions that animated the life of the Italian nobility, as they all looked at Madrid for pensions, rewards, and titles that could support their kin. The Spanish capital became, in this way, the centre of a system of alliances and control that subordinated Italian princes to Philip II – a sort of Spanish informal protectorate, which functioned through a clever 'politics of honours'.¹⁰⁰

Despite the hostilities between Ferrara and Spain that had marked the second half of the fifties, the cardinal of Ferrara was quite optimistic that Philip II would not exclude his family from his favour in the future. In January 1560, Ippolito wrote to Alfonso that he believed that they had more opportunities to gain favours in Spain rather than in France, which 'given all its debits should

⁹⁹ *Relations des Ambassadeurs*, i, pp. 456-458.

¹⁰⁰ The expression is by D. Frigo, 'Politica estera e diplomazia', in G. Greco and M. Rosa (eds), *Storia degli antichi stati italiani* (Rome-Bari, 1997), p. 134. See also G. Galasso, 'L'Italia nel sistema imperiale spagnolo da Filippo II a Filippo IV', in P. Pissavino and G. Signorotto (eds), *Lombardia borromaica, Lombardia spagnola* (2 vols, Rome, 1995), pp. 13-40.

show itself much more benevolent and generous'.¹⁰¹ Consequently, Ippolito started a negotiation with cardinal Farnese to marry one of Alfonso's sisters to one of Ottavio Farnese's brothers, as the Farnese were now amongst those Italian families that enjoyed Philip's favour. The cardinal was positive that Philip II would not object to his plan and would give his permission to celebrate the marriage, but the following months showed that he had overestimated Philip's benevolence towards his house.¹⁰² The marriage that had been already celebrated, in 1558, between Alfonso II and Lucrezia de' Medici, Cosimo's daughter, had been meant to seal the peace treaty signed with Spain, and Cosimo's mediation between the two parts. A marriage deal with the Farnese, then, would have enhanced the Este's opportunities to shift their politics towards Spain.

The alliance between Este and Medici that had started – in theory – with the marriage between Alfonso II and Lucrezia, however, never turned into actual support of each other's politics: on the contrary, the stronger position that Cosimo held in the panorama of the Spanish-controlled Italy constituted, for Ferrara, a danger rather than a help, as the two powers were still competing on the right of precedence and Cosimo had nothing to gain by offering his better connections with Philip II's court to the Este. Not surprisingly, then, in July 1560, Ippolito wrote to Alfonso that he believed that Cosimo de' Medici 'was acting very timidly in gaining the Catholic king's confidence [...]. We can say that he is keener to give us advice rather than help'.¹⁰³ That Cosimo would not put himself on the line to help the Este improve their political position appeared even more evidently after the advent to the papacy of Pius IV, to whose election had contributed Ippolito and the French cardinals, but who was, in the first place, an old friend of Florence. When Cosimo de' Medici visited Rome after Pius's elevation, he was welcomed – in Ippolito's own words – 'with all those means that are usually reserved to that category of Princes who are called *magni*': a violation of the traditional ceremonial that made it clear what side the pontiff was most likely to take in case of a dispute between Medici and Este.¹⁰⁴

The fact that Ippolito, at this moment, was orientating Alfonso's decisions in matter of foreign politics is well demonstrated by the fact that not only did he personally choose the Estense ambassador to Madrid, but that he also convinced him to accept the position after he had forwarded his refusal to Duke Alfonso.¹⁰⁵ Until that point, diplomatic dispatches from the Madrid court had

¹⁰¹ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXIV.22 (4 January 1560).

¹⁰² Ippolito to Alfonso II: 'Quanto al rispetto della Maestà Catholica, [...] non mi pareva si dovesse dubitar che fusse per sentir male il nome di Vostra Eccellenza, sì per esser mutati i tempi, come per haver Sua Maestà qualche capara di già dell'ottima volontà di Vostra Eccellenza di fare il servitio suo': ASMO, CS, 150, 26 June 1560.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 150, 20 July 1560.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 150, 2 November 1560.

¹⁰⁵ BEM, Fondo Campori, 189, Rangoni Fulvio – Copialettere, *Istruzioni a voi...* (September 1561).

been mainly provided to Alfonso II by one of Ippolito's agents, *monsignor* Montemerlo, who sent duplicates of his letters to Ferrara.¹⁰⁶ In order to improve Alfonso's chances to gain Philip II's favour, however, it was necessary to have a resident ambassador who could not only perform all the functions associated to the post, taking care of both practical issues and negotiations, but who could also perform the more general task of representing and defending his lord's status on the official occasions and the ceremonies that were an important part of the court's life. It is telling, then, that the choice of the man that was charged with restoring the Este's image before Philip's eyes was actually made by Ippolito d'Este.

The correspondence between Fulvio Rangoni – the ambassador – and the Cardinal of Ferrara indeed shows that the ambassador was taking his instructions from the prelate rather than from the duke. The ambassador himself, once in Madrid, defined the relation between himself and Ippolito d'Este as 'the main reason for which I have come here', leaving little doubt as to who was setting the priorities of his diplomatic action.¹⁰⁷ After his arrival in Spain, in 1561, Fulvio Rangoni embarked in a frantic activity to procure the Este with some supporters in the Spanish court. Following Ippolito's advice, the ambassador tried to revive the old relation that tied the house of Ferrara to the Borjas, or Borgias, from whose ranks had come Alfonso I d'Este's wife, Lucrezia Borgia, but that had later been neglected by both parts.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, count Rangoni tried to cultivate the friendship of the king's most powerful *privado*, Ruigomez de Silva, through whom the ambassador was hoping to deliver his petitions to the king, and whose influence over Philip was extremely well known (as observed by another diplomat, 'Ruy Gómez always has the last word in matters of honors, rewards, favours, and payments').¹⁰⁹

From the very beginning, however, the cardinal of Ferrara and the Estense ambassador had to accept that their 'little knowledge of this court' and the lack of political allies ('there is no man

¹⁰⁶ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXIV.22 (4 January 1560).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., *Lettera al cardinal di Ferrara* (10 April 1562). As the ambassador wrote to the cardinal of Ferrara: 'Io potrò d'haver da lei avvertimenti et commandamenti, et secondo che le cose verranno trattate da me, o riprensioni o lode': ibid., *Lettera al cardinale di Ferrara* (6 February 1562).

¹⁰⁸ As Fulvio Rangoni wrote to Ippolito d'Este: 'Ho ritornato in piedi con mille officii et dimostrationii il parentado con la casa Borgia, il quale era sì scordato che dal duca di Candia [Francisco Borgia] niuno di loro sapeva ni a qual grado fossi Vostra Signoria Illustrissima, ni monsignor Illustrissimo a lei': ibid.

¹⁰⁹ The quote is from J. Boyden, *The Courtier and the King Ruy Gómez da Silva, Philip II, and the Court of Spain* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 83. As Boyden writes, 'In the eyes of the ambassadors at court, the *privado* was an indispensable source of access to the king and of information on Philip's wishes and disposition towards their affairs': ibid. The Estense ambassador Rangoni wrote to Ippolito that he wanted to 'guadagnare Ruigomes con tutte le strade': BEM, Fondo Campori, 189, Rangoni Fulvio – Copialettere, *Lettera al cardinale di Ferrara* (1 May 1562).

that has any confidence with him [the duke]’) were obstacles that were unlikely to be overcome in the near future.¹¹⁰ As Fulvio Rangoni wrote,

Many things have happened that could rouse in this court little love for Your Most Excellent House, and, although one can take the pot away from the fire, the mark of where it used to be stays for longer, and it is not possible for a servant like me to remove it at once.¹¹¹

The main reason that had motivated Ippolito d’Este’s keen desire to gain Philip’s favour through a renovated diplomatic connection was, besides the need of protecting his house’s political future, that he was seeking the monarch’s support to be elected pope. The outcomes of previous conclaves in which Ippolito had participated had shown that, despite the French support he had always enjoyed and despite his vast financial means, the veto expressed against him by the Habsburg had always hampered his chances of success. The marriage of Alfonso with Lucrezia de’ Medici had offered a good opportunity to try Cosimo de’ Medici’s reliability as an ally, not only in political matters, but also in Ippolito’s own quest for the papacy. Therefore, the cardinal had inquired whether the duke of Florence would support his campaign to gain Philip II’s favour in the next conclave, and the decision of improving the level of the Estense diplomatic representation in Spain had been also – or, rather, especially – a consequence of the cardinal’s need to secure new allies for his own goals.¹¹² As the ambassador had repeatedly wrote to both duke Alfonso and the cardinal of Ferrara, however, Philip’s court was a very difficult system to crack, and the lack of a network of support made it very unlikely to obtain anything from the King.

Fulvio Rangoni’s diplomatic mission indeed ended in a failure. It paved the way, nonetheless, to a future realignment of the Este with the Spanish monarchy, also through the recruitment, in their courts, of men that were more experienced about the dynamics of Madrid

¹¹⁰ Ibid., *Lettera al cardinale di Ferrara* (30 January 1562).

¹¹¹ Ibid., *Lettera al cardinale di Ferrara* (1 May 1562).

¹¹² ‘Bisognerebbe piuttosto procurar di moverlo per consentia a disporre il Re suo a non escluder alcuno [...]. Ma se ben io mi persuado che quella Maestà sia per intender le cose mie altrimenti di quel che ha fatto per l’adietro, essendo hora mutati i tempi, et cessando la causa che ella pretendeva contra di me, in evento però che per qual si voglia modo l’opera fusse frustatoria, et che con effetto ella volesse pur l’esclusione de la persona mia, il punto è di sapere di che modo Sua Eccellenza pensasse di proceder in tal caso con me, però che quando pur si deliberasse di moversi a beneficio mio etiam nonostante l’esclusione, si potrebbe dir che ci venisse veramente di bon gambe, ma se anche volesse che questa esclusione gli fusse impedimento, io non vederei che fondamento si potesse far su l’aiuto suo, ne vorrei havermi a ridur a termine che quando si fusse a le strette volesse Sua Eccellenza coprirsi sotto a questo scudo’: ASMO, CS, 150, 20 July 1560. Similarly, in 1565, Ippolito d’Este forwarded a request to the Emperor, Maximilian II, to endorse his candidacy to the papacy, but he was answered that the Emperor could not do it: *ibid.*, 390, 2038.VI.28 (24 December 1565).

than the ambassador was himself.¹¹³ As we see in the next chapter, Ippolito d'Este's contemporaneous stay in France offered him the opportunity to strengthen that connection with the Valois that had been shaken by Henry II's abrupt death, whilst, at the same time, the cardinal could still try to present a convincing image of the Este to any audience in the Spanish court.

This chapter has presented three episodes that elucidate the dynamics that mobilised the Este family in the decade up to 1561, the year in which Ippolito returned to France. From these episodes, the picture we see is complex, determined by divergent tendencies and priorities, by dynastic imperatives, and by the shifting personal dynamics between the brothers, the Duke and the Cardinal. As the two leaders of the Este family, we have seen Ippolito and Ercole ensure the presentation – to the outside world – of dynastic unity, as they worked to pursue together the ends that the other sought. The case of the revenues of Milan provides an example of this, as not only Ercole and Ippolito, but the following generation too litigated together for the return of this money. Incidentally, in a similar move, Luigi, Ippolito's nephew, would, as cardinal, pursue the payment of pensions still pending for Ippolito after the latter's death.¹¹⁴ The case of Don Francesco, furthermore, reveals the coordinated unity of the two Este leaders in the face of a challenge to their father's will – a challenge which, by the Duke's estimate, may well have come from an external force. This exclusion will be further confirmed by the absence of Francesco from Ippolito's will.¹¹⁵

Yet, behind this veil of unity, the contrasts and tensions between these brothers are clear and regard both the influence of external powers on the dukedom and the individuals' differing pursuits of dynastic continuity and, more surprisingly, their conflicting appetites for personal gain. The case of Brescello focuses these dynamics, appearing as it does as a filial argument – with one, Ercole, taking advantage of the other's misfortune – in the context of a wider geopolitical struggle between an Emperor and a France embodied by our Ferrarese cardinal.

¹¹³ Such as Plinio Tomacelli, who was a secretary to Giovanni Andrea Doria and who had spent two years in Madrid: BEM, Fondo Campori, 189, Rangoni Fulvio, Copialettere, *Lettera al cardinale di Ferrara* (29 luglio 1562); *ibid.* (26 September 1562).

¹¹⁴ See chapter III.1 'Luigi d'Este's succession' in this thesis.

¹¹⁵ This document, very simple and general, left all of Ippolito's fortune to Luigi and Alfonso II d'Este, in equal parts (minus some bequeaths and a debt of 4000 *scudi* with Cardinal Borromeo): ASMO, CS, 389, 2038.III; *ibid.*, 390, 2038.VI (this also contains a letter written by Don Francesco, on 27 October 1573, in which he complains about the exclusion from Ippolito's will). The Cardinal's will is also mentioned in McClung Hallman, *Italian Cardinals*, p. 89.

This picture of external unity and internal tension ends in 1559 with Ercole's death, which, in a microcosm of Italy's larger geopolitical scene – in which France fell away to leave the peninsula dominated by the Emperor – left a stronger pole of power within the family, namely Ippolito. In the changed cartographies of power that characterised Italy after Cateau-Cambresis, the Este found themselves on the back foot: the protection and reinforcement they had received from France – in terms of cash, reputation, and dynastic support – fell away, leaving the family to find new strategies with which to survive. In this context, Ippolito, as we see in the next chapter, returns to France and reaffirms a relationship with a country under new leadership. Yet, as we have seen here, this only came after his effective supervision of Ferrarese diplomacy, in which he was required to guide and orientate an inexperienced Alfonso II.

3. SERVING THE POPE. THE LEGATION TO PARIS, 1561-1563

Non sunt ferenda vitia: sed qui nullum vitium fert, nullum hominem feret

Ippolito II d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara¹

After the years in Siena, Ippolito II d'Este had experienced the harshness of Paul IV's papacy. The Pope had charged him with simony and forced him to leave the Roman court; furthermore, he had deprived the Cardinal of the governorship of Tivoli, where he had built his famous Villa d'Este. From 1555 to 1559, Ippolito had lived a golden exile in his hometown of Ferrara, surrounded by the finest paintings and statues. But with the death of Paul IV and the election of Pius IV, the political situation abruptly changed and turned more favourable to the Cardinal. He was first readmitted to the curia and then, in early 1560, he was reappointed governor of Tivoli.²

A new degree of dialogue with the Protestants and sovereigns whose kingdoms were 'plagued by heresy' was the principal change which occurred when Gian Angelo de' Medici ascended to the papal throne. He had inherited from his predecessor Paul IV a Vatican politically isolated and at odds with all the European powers, even with the solidly Catholic Spain.³ During the conclave that led to his election, Cardinal de' Medici had announced to his cardinal colleagues that he was ready to endorse some liturgical reforms in order to restore the unity of Christianity, following the example of the Interim issued by Charles V a few years before. This statement did not appeal to Cardinal Ghislieri, the Grand Inquisitor, and at that time the future Pius IV had wisely preferred to withdraw from his initial position in order not to arouse the hostility of Ghislieri's supporters.⁴ Once elected, though, Pius IV persisted in his attempt at pacification and

¹ 'Vices should not be borne. But he who does not bear any vice, will not bear any man'. From the notes taken by the humanist Marc-Antoine Muret of a conversation between himself and the Cardinal of Ferrara at Villa d'Este: M. A. Muret, *M. Antonii Mureti opera omnia, cum brevi adnotatione...* (3 vols, Lips, 1834-1841), iii, p. 366.

² ASMO, CPE, Vaticano – Papi, 1300/25 (18 May 1560). See also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 293-294.

³ Signorotto, 'Note sulla politica', pp. 51-55.

⁴ E. Bonora, *Roma 1564. La congiura contro il papa* (Rome, 2011) p. 56; Setton, *Papacy and Levant*, iv, p. 734.

turned his eyes especially to France, where the political and religious situation was particularly delicate: the kingdom was ruled by an underage King; by his side was a Queen Mother who, issuing some edicts of tolerance, had dismantled the rigid anti-heretical legislation of Henry II.⁵ But Calvinism had already penetrated deep into the highest ranks of the nobility, which were now divided into rival factions that hungered to control the throne. Several French bishops and cardinals were already suspected of heresy, and both Calvin and the European Protestant powers were striving to propel France into the arms of the Reformation.

As a consequence of the increasingly alarming news which came from the other side of the Alps, Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este was appointed *legato a latere* in the consistory of 2 June 1561⁶ and ordered to leave immediately for France, where the news of his upcoming arrival soon spread through the royal court.⁷ The Vatican's expectations, in this tense international environment, were to boycott the assembly of the French clergy that was about to take place at Poissy, and to persuade the queen to send bishops to the general council in Trent.⁸ Pius IV saw the assembly of the French clergy as the materialisation of the long-standing threat of a Gallican council, and as an event that would have deprived the Vatican of its universal authority over religious matters. Furthermore, a national council would have undermined the meaningfulness and the validity of the general council of Trent.⁹ By 1561, Pius IV had already sustained a remarkable diplomatic effort to come to an agreement with Spain and the Empire about their participation in the new conciliar session, and he was now determined to see the French bishops cross the Alps to Trent.¹⁰

⁵ For a chronology of the edicts of tolerance, see N. Sutherland, *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 101-128 and P. Roberts, *Peace and Authority During the French Religious Wars: c. 1560-1600* (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 15-28.

⁶ ASV, AC, Acta Vicecanc. 9, p. 84v. Two days later Ippolito wrote the news to Alfonso II d'Este: ASMO, CS, 150, 4 June 1561. See also: ASMO, CPE – Vaticano, Papi, 1300/25 (28 June 1561).

⁷ According to the papal nuncio, Sebastiano Gualterio, who wrote to Ippolito d'Este on 14 June 1561: *Correspondance des nonces en France. Lenzi et Gualterio legation du Cardinal Trivulzio (1557-1561)*, ed. J. Lestocquoy (Rome, 1977), p. 344. The bull of appointment and the letters of presentation, addressed to the principal member of the French court and signed by Pius IV, are dated 28 June 1561: ASMO, CPE, Vaticano – Papi, 1300/25.

⁸ Ippolito's official mission, as stated in his bull of appointment, was to fight the heresy in France, reconcile the country and defend Catholicism: B. Barbiche and S. de Dainville-Barbiche, 'Les légats *a latere* en France et leur facultés aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', *Archivium Historiae Pontificiae*, 23 (Rome, 1985), p. 159. But, from the instructions sent by the Roman Curia to the papal Nuncio Gualterio in May-August 1561, it is clear that the Pope's priorities were already set before Ippolito's arrival and that Ippolito had been involved in the decisions regarding France also before his departure: Šusta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, pp. 169-242.

⁹ In 1560, Ippolito II wrote to Alfonso II that 'a Nostro Signore et a tutta questa corte dispiace sommamente la cosa di questo concilio nazionale, come di quello che, oltre agli altri mali frutti che potrebbe produrre, è direttamente contra l'autorità di Sua Santità et contra la dignità di questa santa sede, et tanto più se ne sente gravata Sua Beatitudine quanto ella è più disposta alla celebrazione del concilio generale': ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XX.76 (28 September 1560). The Ferrarese ambassador reported that the Pope, at the public reading of the bull that called for the Council, had said that the first reason for the gathering was his intention to stop the French national council: ASMO, CDA, Roma, 66, 320.I.40 (30 September 1560).

¹⁰ The principal obstacle had been the definition of the new conciliar session, and whether it was to be considered a continuation of the 1551-1552 session or not. The first option implied that Luther's condemnation was still valid, as

Despite Catherine de' Medici's reassuring statements that nothing would be decided by the Gallican assembly, this pending menace strengthened Pius IV's will to gather all the bishops in Trent as soon as possible, and an important part of the Cardinal of Ferrara's mission to Paris was to secure French participation. Furthermore, the papal Legate had to do whatever lay within his power to gain the hesitant King of Navarre, Antoine de Bourbon, to the Catholic side. After the death of Francis II in December 1560, Navarre had joined the Queen Mother at the regency and he was believed to be the pivotal figure in French politics. As we will see, Ippolito committed himself to weave a complex diplomatic net between Rome, Paris and Madrid in order to obtain Navarre's public adherence to Catholicism. As a mean of persuasion, he exploited Navarre's old and well-known ambition to recover the lands of the Spanish Navarre that had been conquered by Ferdinand of Aragon in 1512.¹¹

Ippolito's appointment as papal Legate to France was the result of Pius IV's need for someone he could rely on to advise the princes and the Queen, someone whose authority was derived not only from the Vatican investiture but also (and especially) from his established reputation as a very good friend of the French crown. Ippolito's perfect courtly education, and his lifestyle – marked by the magnificence and the politeness held in high regard by all Renaissance princes – meant that he was comfortable in dealing with rulers – as he had been raised as a ruler himself. Pastor claimed that he had a reputation as a skilled diplomat;¹² and he had served the French crown as a diplomat in the reigns of Francis I and Henry II. But he had not been very successful, and he had never been directly involved in any Vatican mission of such importance. He was certainly neither a Contarini nor a Morone, the Cardinals who had dominated the recent history of dialogue with the Protestants. His great advantage in 1560, however, was his thirty-year long friendship with the Valois. In other words, the Pope seemed to recognise that the predominance of Catholicism in France had to be secured through the monarchy and the princes, who were driven by political concerns and dynastical consideration, and he consequently decided to send a politician to negotiate. The Pope's decision seemed to have been influenced by the fact

Philip II wanted. By contrast, the Emperor insisted on a 'new beginning' with the direct participation of some reformed ministers. On this topic, see, for example: H. Jedin and P. Prodi (eds), *Il Concilio di Trento come crocevia della politica europea* (Bologna, 1979), pp. 109-119.

¹¹ The King of Navarre had unsuccessfully tried to recover the Spanish Navarre by negotiating with both Charles V and Philip II. Sutherland argues that, as late as 1561, Navarre's 'priority was still compensation for Spanish Navarre' and that 'he saw in the politico-religious struggle one more means of extracting it': N. Sutherland, *Princes, Politics and Religion 1547-1589* (London, 1984), p. 66. For an analysis of the role of the King of Navarre in the French affairs, see also: M. Turchetti, *Concordia o tolleranza? François Baudouin (1520-1573) e i "moyenneurs"* (Geneva, 1984), pp. 201-208 and Sutherland, *Princes, Politics*, pp. 55-72.

¹² Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xvi, p. 163.

that, as we know, Ippolito d'Este had long been a favourite in the French court and that he was an Italian prince in his own right, two factors that, as we will see, gave him special leverage in dealing with the Valois court. As one of Ippolito d'Este's supporters would later write, on this occasion Pius IV had wisely chosen 'a Ulysses over an Ajax'¹³.

Intransigent behaviour had already proved unprofitable, as demonstrated by the animosity that arose between the Nuncio Sebastiano Gualterio, Bishop of Viterbo, and the Queen Mother Catherine de' Medici, who had suffered the Nuncio's endless and bitter recriminations on the bad state of religion in France.¹⁴ Aware of the declining reputation of the Nuncio, who was so close to the Spanish ambassador that he was suspected of being a spy,¹⁵ Cardinal Borromeo had recommended Gualterio to use milder manners and to follow 'a path of pleasantness', as the Pope did not want him to be too 'rigorous and polemic'.¹⁶ This failure in dealing with the Valois crown later induced Pius IV to replace Gualterio with Prospero Santa Croce and, at the same time, to delegate the supervision of the French diplomacy to Ippolito d'Este, who, as we have seen in his role as governor of Siena, generally sought compromise over conflict.¹⁷ It is thus clear that the Pope's intention was to treat the French kingdom as a patient in need of the most effective antidotes rather than as a subordinate to be returned to the right track by some show of strength – which was indeed the same strategy that the Pope was already applying to Germany through legate Giovanni Francesco Commendone.¹⁸ Whether this initial disposition of Pius IV was to change during the following months is a matter that will be discussed later.

¹³ ASV, Misc., Arm II, 125, p. 55; see also ASV, Misc., Arm II, 136. The text is addressed to Conte Alfonso Gonzaga di Novellara but it is not signed.

¹⁴ The Venetian ambassador in France, Michele Suriano, reported to the Doge that Catherine de' Medici had told him that Gualterio was 'evilly disposed, and endeavoured to influence her by menaces' (22 September 1561): *Despatches of Michele Suriano and Marc'Antonio Barbaro: Venetian Ambassador at the Court of France*, ed. A. H. Layard (Lymington, 1891), p. 44. In a later report, Suriano confirmed that 'la regina non poteva tollerare l'asprezza e la senestrezza del vescovo di Viterbo': *Relations des Ambassadeurs*, pp. 534-536. See also L. Romier, *Catholiques et Huguenots à la cour de Charles IX* (Paris, 1924), p. 228.

¹⁵ '[The French] erano fin arrivati a ritener i suoi corrieri, persuadendosi di ritrovar nelle lettere qualche trattato occulto col re Filippo': N. Avanzini, 'Gualtieri, Sebastiano', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 2003). See also Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xvi, pp. 168-169.

¹⁶ 25 May 1561: 'Il rigore e la querela non piace a Sua Santità [...], ancora chè, avendo preso la strada della piacevolezza per confirmare et guadagnare quelli animi, tutto ciò che si farebbe per altra via sarebbe a distruzione del già fatto': Šusta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, p. 187.

¹⁷ Gualterio was ordered to wait for Santa Croce's arrival (in October) before leaving France. In the meantime, he had to help the Cardinal of Ferrara by giving him any necessary information and devolving any final decision on him: *Correspondance des nonces en France. Lenzi et Gualterio*, p. 359. Pacifici, however, argues that the papal Nuncio was removed because he had opposed the Cardinal of Ferrara: Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, p. 301. For a brief summary of both Gualterio and Santa Croce's ecclesiastical and diplomatic careers, see: B. Barbiche, 'La nonciature de France aux XVI and XVII siècles: les nonces, leur entourage et leur cadre de vie', in A. Koller (ed), *Kurie und Politik. Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung* (Tübingen, 1998), p. 87.

¹⁸ E. Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi. La definizione dei poteri nella Chiesa postridentina* (Rome, 2007), pp. 188-190.

FROM THE COLLOQUY OF POISSY TO THE EDICT OF SAINT GERMAIN, 1561-1562

The Cardinal of Ferrara left Rome in July 1561 magnificently accompanied by a private choir and over 350 members of his household, an entourage which appeared lavish in comparison to the only 117 knights who had travelled with him on the occasion of his first visit to France in 1536.¹⁹ On this occasion, Ippolito's entourage included a large group ('magna caterva', as Calvin defined it)²⁰ of ecclesiastics whose duty was to support him during the religious debates, since the Legate, who had never been ordained to the priesthood, was not a champion of theological knowledge. Amongst them was the Jesuit General Diego Lainez, the successor of Loyola, a rigid defender of orthodoxy and faithful to the principles of the Catholic reformation.²¹ In addition, Ippolito was accompanied by Lainez's secretary, Juan Polanco, eight bishops, several further theologians, and a famous preacher, Angelo Giustiniani. After several weeks of travel, the Cardinal and his household crossed the border between France and Italy at the end of August and reached Saint Germain-en-Laye on 19 September, when the French clergy had already gathered in the Dominican convent of Poissy.²²

Pius IV's decision to send Ippolito d'Este to France had displeased the Queen Mother, who saw in his presence at Court an unnecessary foreign interference in French political affairs. According to the dispatch of the Venetian ambassador Michele Suriano to the Doge on 29 July, the Queen 'remarked [...] that she was greatly surprised and grieved that the Pope should mistrust her, and showed more confidence in the Cardinal of Ferrara'.²³ If the Pope had been banking on Ippolito's warm personal connections with the Valois monarchy, that calculation was about to be

¹⁹ Hollingsworth, *The Cardinal's Hat*, p. 63. The list of the men who took part in Ippolito's journey of 1561 is attached to a letter written to the Duke of Mantua on 2 July, published in appendix in Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 430-431.

²⁰ *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, iii, p. 148.

²¹ Pastor argues that Pius IV had decided to send Lainez with the Cardinal in order to counterbalance the 'political spirit' of the Legate with some proven and rigidly ecclesiastical advisors: Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xvi, p. 165. In the introduction to the published letters of Diego Lainez, however, it is stated that the Legate had asked the Pope for the Jesuit's company, as he was looking for a partner 'probitate, prudentia, integritate et doctrina commendatum': D. Laynez *Lainii monumenta epistolae et acta patris Jacobi Lainii...* (8 vols, Madrid, 1912-1918), vi, p. vii. This suggestion is supported by Lainez's secretary Polanco in July 1561, who wrote that 'ottenne Sua Signoria Reverendissima [the Cardinal of Ferrara] avanti la sua partita di Roma, da Sua Santità, di poter menar seco il Reverendo nostro Padre Maestro Iacomo Laynez': J. A. Polanco, *Polanci complementa epistolae et commentaria p. Joannis Alphonsi de Polanco...* (2 vols, Madrid, 1916-1917), ii, p. 627.

²² The French clergy was already in session in August, while the Protestant ministers, only officially invited in July, were beginning to arrive. The first session of the Colloquy took place on 9 September: D. Nugent, *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation: The Colloquy of Poissy* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 92-95; N. Valois, 'Les essais de conciliation religieuse au début du règne de Charles IX', *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France*, v. 31 (1945), pp. 248-255. The Cardinal's long journey is very well described in the letters by Annibal de Coudret, one of Lainez's assistants: Laynez, *Lainii monumenta*, vi, pp. 47-52.

²³ *Despatches of Michele Suriano*, p. 34.

proved wrong. The French kingdom had changed since Ippolito's last visit, more than ten years before, and Catherine de' Medici, who was playing a dangerous game between two factions in a country on the brink of civil war, was afraid that the presence of the Pope's emissary might affect her authority and her attempt to pacify the country by means of the religious assembly. She was not wrong, since – as we have seen – among the instructions Ippolito had been given was an order to prevent the French clergy from coming to any agreement on the reforms.²⁴

Ippolito himself seems to have felt moderately confident about his good reception at court; but some unpleasant news, sent in great secrecy by his niece Anna d'Este, reached him in September, as he was still on his way to Paris. Anna had urged a courier to meet her uncle and let him know that 'he will neither receive an accommodation in the Castle nor be admitted to the Secret Council, and his powers will not be recognised [...] for he comes as an emissary of the Pope'.²⁵ This information was partially corrected about ten days later, when one of Ippolito's servants came back from the court bringing the news that some lodgings in the castle had been made available to his lord.²⁶ But the compelling problem of Ippolito's faculties as a legate was far from coming to a resolution. Despite his good hopes,²⁷ the Chancellor Michel de l'Hôpital refused to accept Ippolito's powers upon his arrival, claiming that his faculties as a papal envoy were in contradiction to a decree of the Estates General recently made (January 1561). This decree, aimed to meet the monarchy's need for funds, deprived the Pope of his rights over the French annates, and his representatives of their right to claim them.²⁸ Furthermore, it stated that the French benefices were to be assigned by the bishops of each dioceses, whereas the legates had also power on this matter. Only in November (and after the promise of not making use of his authority on the annates) did the Cardinal of Ferrara finally manage to obtain the royal *placet*, but he had to wait until February 1562 to see his faculties registered by the Parlement.²⁹ He would later describe this

²⁴ Neither the Guises nor Cardinal Tournon were pleased by the Legate's presence, nor was the Spanish ambassador Chantonnay, since they all opposed Pius IV's politics of tolerance toward the heretics. Furthermore, the Cardinals of Lorraine, Tournon and D'Armagnac had already been appointed 'legati in Francia per le sollevationi de li heretici' and interpreted the new designation as a lack of trust on the Pope's part: ASMO, CDA, Roma, 66, 320.I.19 (17 July 1560); Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xvi, p. 171; Romier, *Catholiques et Huguenots*, p. 225; Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, p. 209.

²⁵ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.41 (6 September 1561).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1709.XXVI.42 (15 September 1561).

²⁷ 'Voglio tuttavia sperare che se consideraranno oltra i meriti de l'antica servitù mia con quella Corona, il buon zelo con che Nostro Signore mi ha mandato di qua, et la causa che mi ha fatto pigliar tanto incommodo, che non è stata altra che per servirli, non mi faranno così fatti affronti': *ibid.*

²⁸ On the *annate*, see p. 35 in this thesis.

²⁹ The Tuscan ambassador, on 12 November, wrote that the Queen could not win over the Chancellor and had decided to register the Legate's powers by herself: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 468. The Chancellor de l'Hôpital, forced to seal the Legate's official letters, had written on the top 'me non consentiente' to express his strong disagreement: P. de La Place, *Commentaires de l'estat de la religion et de la republique sous les rois...* (n. pl., 1565), pp. 234-235. On November 12, Ippolito d'Este wrote to the Legates at the Council of Trent that 'dopo molte et lunghe dispute [...]

modest success as something that ‘in different times would not have been considerable, for being so ordinary’.³⁰ The Legate was also welcomed coldly by the citizens of Paris: the Venetian ambassador stressed in one of his letters that nobody had asked for the Legate’s blessing, which was an established tradition, whilst Theodore Beza wrote happily to Calvin that, on the day after his arrival, ‘Ferrara is certainly much less happy than he thought he would be’. While entering the city, the member of Ippolito’s household who was carrying the cross had been mocked by the crowd (as a personal comment, Beza sarcastically added that from that moment the Cardinal had preferred to leave the cross at home or to keep it safe in his heart rather than expose his God to public derision).³¹ The contemporary writer La Place also reported that some servants laughed at Ippolito and his entourage, calling him ‘fox’, and that some injurious pamphlets about Alexander VI and Lucrezia Borgia (respectively, Ippolito’s grandfather and mother) were circulating across the city.³² The legate’s mission appeared under every respect to be more difficult than initially thought: not only did he find himself opposed by the Calvinist ministers, who were his ‘natural enemies’, but also coldly welcomed by a court who saw him as an intruder, viewed with suspicion by rigid Catholics who did not appreciate Pius IV’s politics of mediation and, on top of that, mocked by the Paris crowd. Compared to the welcome that Ippolito had had from Francis I, and the favour that Henry II had never stopped showing him, this cold reception highlighted that his role in France had changed, that his historic relationship with the Valois had lost ground, and that his representing the Pope in such a delicate moment exposed him to unfamiliar resentment. To gain ground within a context which appeared marked by an all-round hostility, the Cardinal exploited his most effective asset: courtesy.

Ippolito d’Este stayed in France until 22 April 1563, when the civil war had already begun, but the crucial months of his legation were those between his arrival in September 1561 and the first months of 1562, when the Edict of Saint Germain was issued and Antoine de Vendôme definitively took the side of Catholicism.³³ Historians have provided different accounts of the

aiutandomi sempre gagliardamente la regina et portando ogn’uno di questi grandi rispetto all’honor mio con credermi fermamente ch’io sia per usarne con li debiti rispetti, si è concluso che io potrò usare le prefate facultà liberamente come hanno fatto quelli che sono stati legati innanzi a me et come se questo editto non fosse stato fatto quanto a questa parte [...]. Delle annate spero si farà il medesimo a breve’: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, p. 292-293. Ippolito d’Este arrived in France with nine different bulls, seven of which detailed his powers as a legate (including that of Inquisitor) but the bulls needed to be registered by the local authorities. In Ippolito’s case, the Parlement of Paris never accepted all of his faculties and ratified only his generic powers as papal legate, as late as 6 February 1562: Barbiche and de Dainville-Barbiche, ‘Les légats *a latere*’, pp. 111; 127-128. See also Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, p. 180; A. Tallon, *La France et le Concile de Trente (1518-1563)* (Rome, 1997), pp. 286-288.

³⁰ BEM, Fondo Campori, 189 (the letter is not dated but it was written from St. Germain).

³¹ *Despatches of Michele Suriano*, p. 44; *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, iii, p. 166.

³² La Place, *Commentaires*, pp. 235-36.

³³ About those difficult months, Beza wrote on 4 October 1561 that ‘legatus hic valde friges, et supra quam possis

complicated events which followed during this short period of time. Consequently, the role played by the Cardinal of Ferrara has been either praised or criticised. If we seek to analyse the outcome of his legation, our conclusion will be quite simple: the Colloquy of Poissy and the subsequent attempts to reach a religious compromise failed completely, as the majority of the French prelates supported the Vatican's preference for postponing any religious concern to a General Council, and the Queen after many hesitations finally ordered the French bishops to go to Trent, appointing a lay ambassador who was known for being a good Catholic.³⁴ Furthermore, Antoine de Vendôme openly took the side of Catholicism, harshly quashing Calvin's hopes (who began from that moment to call him Julian the Apostate)³⁵ and tying the French crown more closely to Rome. In theory, therefore, the Cardinal's mission was a success for the papacy – although it might easily be argued that things would have been the same without his intervention. After all, the Colloquy of Poissy did not need his presence to fail miserably, and the Queen's decision to send the bishops to Trent was mainly a result of that failure.

However, whilst historiography had mainly focused on establishing whether the Colloquy of Poissy was a failure and, if so, what contributed to make it a failure, for the purposes of this work this episode is also interesting in terms of the different roles and powers that Ippolito d'Este was required to negotiate, especially in the light of his changed relationship with the French crown, the Este's diplomatic attempts to woo Philip II, and, as we will see, the changing politics of the Pope.

The fact that, despite Ippolito's apparent success, the Cardinal was overwhelmed by negative criticism from Rome makes the judgement more uncertain. Similar doubts were expressed by twentieth-century historians. Ippolito's biographer, Vincenzo Pacifici, used words of high praise in 1920 to describe the Cardinal's amiable manners, forbearance, and subtle skills, but described his mission at Poissy as an apparent success only, because it had not prevented the start of the French civil wars.³⁶ In his nearly contemporary work, Lucian Romier criticised Ippolito more harshly: his appointment is called a mistake, and Ippolito himself a long since extinguished star, one of the most frivolous and mediocre characters of his time, a man only supported by his vast presumption.³⁷ What Pacifici praised as humanistic spirit designed to establish harmony amongst the parties was for Romier nothing but a Machiavellian game, while the reports the Cardinal wrote

credere': *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, iii, p. 182. The Tuscan ambassador Tornabuoni also reported in October that 'il cardinale di Ferrara [è pentito] d'essere venuto qua': *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 466.

³⁴ Tallon, *La France et le Concile*, pp. 338-356.

³⁵ *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, iv, from 26 February onwards. On Calvin's efforts to influence the French religious situation, see DeCrue, *L'action politique de Calvin*, pp. 43-70.

³⁶ Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 305-307.

³⁷ Romier, *Catholiques et Huguenots*, pp. 223-224.

to Rome show a ‘fatuousness that disarms any critic’. The legate’s only achievement, in Romier’s opinion, was having been the first to identify clearly how important it was for the Church that the King of Navarre should side with the Catholics.³⁸ Fifty years after Romier, Donald Nugent resumed his criticism using almost the same words. He depicts Ippolito d’Este as ‘a case of mediocrity as much as moderation, a residue of the frivolous and decadent side of the Renaissance’, though he shows more indulgence toward the Cardinal’s strategy of moderation.³⁹ Overall, these critiques seem to be based on little more than an evaluation of the Legate’s personality and habits, without considering the constraints that limited his actions and determined the role he played during those months. In particular, deeper attention should be paid to the fact that, during the short period between the Legate’s appointment and the collapse into war, the Pope’s opinion of his Legate changed significantly, along with his increasing mistrust of the kind of diplomacy practised in France, in the Valois monarchy and in the French situation in general.

The removal of the papal Nuncio Gualterio, a result of his harsh opposition to Catherine de’ Medici – which had achieved nothing other than an increase in her diffidence and hesitancy – is a significant example of this ‘new’ approach of the Papacy to the problematic French situation: in the summer of 1561, Pius IV appeared disposed to negotiate with Paris from a more political and a less dogmatic point of view.⁴⁰ It was not an uncommon belief that the existing rivalries between the French princes were the principal reason behind the increasing tension that stirred Catherine’s kingdom, as observed, for example, by the Tuscan ambassador Tornabuoni: ‘It is well known that the religious cause is not backed by real zeal, but it is this way because of the Guise and the Bourbons, and with this weapon they try to defeat each other’.⁴¹ This explains the high value attributed by Rome to the conversion of the King of Navarre, as Catherine had appointed him lieutenant general of France in March 1561, and he would have been the legitimate candidate for the throne if the male Valois line had been extinguished. The means by which the Vatican tried to secure the King’s loyalty was not therefore based on religious arguments, but on a more prosaic material exchange (or, to use a sixteenth-century diplomatic expression, the offer of some tangible

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 226-227.

³⁹ Nugent, *Ecumenism*, p. 118.

⁴⁰ In this regard, it is noteworthy that when the papal Legate arrived at St. Germain and did not order the Catholic clergy to abandon Poissy and refuse any further debate, the first to be surprised were indeed the Calvinists. Calvin had been persuaded that after Ippolito d’Este’s arrival, the Catholics ‘palam omne certamen detrectabunt’, as he wrongly predicted to Beza on 10 September 1561: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, iii, p. 148.

⁴¹ 25 September 1561: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 464. The papal nuncio Prospero di Santa Croce believed that many converts had a personal interest for joining the Huguenots: ‘Son sicuro che fra sei mesi, e al più in un anno, in questo regno non vi sarà più un solo ugonotto, per che molti cercano più l’interesse loro proprio che la religione, et gli beneficii che i templi’ (17 January 1562): *Lettres du cardinal di Santa Croce écrites pendant sa nonciature en France...* (La Haye, 1717), p. 44.

signs of the Pope's good will). To achieve that goal, Pius IV could not have found a more dedicated man than Ippolito d'Este, as the Legate himself was deeply convinced that the first step to take in order to heal the country's religious illness had to be to gain its princes to Catholicism, and he regretted that the Church had not intervened earlier: 'If the illness has become so dangerous, for not having been treated when it began to affect the body, should it win over the noble parts, would it not become incurable?'.⁴² Once the princes had joined the Roman faith, they would impose the true religion in France ('If the King of Navarre wants us to do something for him, it is reasonable that he does the same for religion. I don't believe that he will find that either difficult or beyond his power').⁴³ This reflected a religious vision which was typically hierarchical and regarded the internal religious unity and the concordance of faith between the people and their sovereign as the best guarantees for the maintenance of the social order (the same belief had inspired some years before the *Cuius regio eius religio*, the religious division of the Empire based on the prescription that the subjects had to follow their sovereign's faith, whether Protestant or Catholic).

From the moment of his arrival at the French court, Ippolito d'Este had tried to win Navarre's support by promising him the Spanish Navarre or some other land as a compensation (such as the Kingdom of Sardinia), in a joint diplomatic effort with the Vatican and the Queen Mother (and backed by the Guise and the Spanish ambassador).⁴⁴ Philip II deeply mistrusted the King of Navarre (and the French crown as a whole) and had been often using the promise of restoring Spanish Navarre to manipulate him – and he most probably had no intention to honour his word. Nonetheless, when Monsieur d'Ausances returned from Madrid and reported that Philip II would reward Navarre with some land upon a tangible demonstration of political and religious loyalty coming from the King's side,⁴⁵ Navarre must have believed Philip's words to be true, because he stood up in the assembly to defend Catholicism and to speak against the Huguenots and the

⁴² 6 February 1562: *Négociations, ou lettres d'affaires ecclésiastiques et politiques...* ed. I. Baudoin (Paris, 1658), p. 46; see also *Miscellanea novo ordine digesta...*, ed S. Baluze et al. (4 vols, apud Vincentium Junctinium, 1761-1764), iv, p. 385.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ The Queen Mother had herself tried to persuade Philip II to satisfy Navarre's ambition: Sutherland, *Princes, Politics*, pp. 70-71. Pius IV had done the same, subtly suggesting Philip II 'think the matter through' before the upcoming Council of Trent deliberated in favour of Navarre. To persuade the King of Spain to back the Holy See and take into consideration the 'gran beneficio che può fare a la christianità con dare orecchie a questo negotio', the Pope went as far as to send Count Persico Broccardo to Madrid to tell Philip II that he was ready to crown him King of England and France and to endorse his election as the new Emperor after the death of Ferdinand I: Süsta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, pp. 190; 268-271; 280-281.

⁴⁵ As Lucrezio Tassoni, a member of Ippolito's household, wrote to Montemerlo, Ippolito's agent in Spain: 'Monsignor di Usanza portò da Sua Maestà Cattolica la ricompensa al Re di Navarra in qualche loco, purchè volesse favorir quelli della buona fede et catolici, et che quando non facesse questo che Sua Maestà Cattolica non poteva che aiutare a castigar gli heretici': BEM, Fondo Campori, Rangoni Fulvio – Copialettere, 189, 25 January 1562.

Edict of Saint Germain.⁴⁶ After months of negotiations, it is easy to understand how this long-awaited demonstration of support was for the Cardinal of Ferrara a major achievement. Therefore, the Legate did not miss the chance to remind the Pope that his policy of mediation had been successful. Given Bourbon's well-known fickleness, though, he also warned Pius IV to offer promptly some sign of the Vatican's benevolence, or the King might rejoin the Huguenots:

And His Holiness will recognise that I made no mistake when I believed that this prince would have thought that it was not wrong to listen to such a good deal. Under this circumstance, I prepare his mind the best way I can, showing him that this opportunity brings along great consequences; and that he must not miss it for any reason in the world (...). I do repeat that this deal is extremely important, committing us to persevere and avoid also, for his sake and for the general benefit, that he might conclude anything beneficial to these Novateurs [i.e. Huguenots]. However, as this prince has demonstrated to me that my reasons were really valuable to him; so I state that his intentions are not evil. (...) Therefore, under such a favourable circumstance, I would find the return of abbot Niquet [Ippolito's secretary, who had been sent to Rome] very helpful, since the King of Navarre and the Queen are awaiting with great impatience and ask me for news every day; and if he will carry with him another confirmation of His Holiness's intention on this business, it is certain that this will arrive in time to commit this prince to firmly remain in the right party; although I am not neglecting to hold him with every good hope and in every possible good way; and I want to believe that the aforementioned King is not to let this assembly promulgate anything of danger, in order not to sabotage himself with respect to the hope that he has been given.⁴⁷

Ippolito d'Este doubled his efforts to hold Navarre. At the same time, he continued to use what he saw as a personal success as a shield against the several recriminations which were addressed to him from the Vatican. The Legate was blamed in particular for having attended a Huguenot sermon, on Catherine de' Medici and Jeanne d'Albret's invitation, and for having delivered to Rome a request for the concession of the chalice to the laity. With respect to the first point, both Pastor and Pacifici, scholars more favourable to the Cardinal, believed that the unfortunate episode was due to 'the ingenuity of a true son of the Renaissance', justified by an excess of courtly deference and zeal.⁴⁸ Ippolito himself, when justifying his behaviour to his nephew the Duke of Ferrara and Cardinal Borromeo, insisted that it would be a *faux pas* to turn down the invitation he received from not just one but two Queens, especially considering the general mistrust that had marked his presence at the French court since the very beginning. But he also explained his decision as part of his strategy of moderation and appeasement:

I went there, and I do not regret it at all, because besides having pleased the Queen as she wished, I could better evaluate the little power of them, as the person who gave the sermon is considered by his supporters as one of the best preachers and he is indeed less than mediocre. (...) If god

⁴⁶ Sutherland, *Princes, Politics*, p. 70-71.

⁴⁷ 10 January 1562: *Négociations, ou lettres d'affaires*, pp. 5-6; see also *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, pp. 378-379.

⁴⁸ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xvi, pp. 174-175 and Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 302-306.

allows me, I could have gained from this episode as little a trust as to carry on with providing my advices, which I will now be able to give in a more open way whenever it is needed, and I could say I did not waste this opportunity even though nothing will come out of it, because I do think it is sufficient to have pleased the Queen Mother and to have let her see that if the things here are not to come to that peaceful end that she wishes, that will not occur because of our harshness but rather because of their [the Huguenots'] pertinacity.⁴⁹

As a return of courtesy, on the following Friday the two Queens had heard a sermon by Angelo Giustiniani, the Cardinal's preacher, but that neither lessened the scandal nor prevented Pius IV from bitterly complaining to his Legate, especially because while Ippolito claimed that Giustiniani's sermon had been praised by the Queens and all those who attended, others pointed out that the preacher had been mocked by the audience and the legate had conversed with the Queen and other ladies on religious matters in such terms as to concern even the ambassador of the Duke of Ferrara.⁵⁰

The scandal of the Huguenot sermon took place shortly after the forwarding of a request, on the behalf of the Queen Mother, to allow communion under both kinds in France, which had greatly displeased Pius IV and increased his resentment. When trying to understand what had changed in the Pope's inclination after the summer, one should first consider that the months before the civil war broke out were marked by an increasing mutual dissatisfaction between the Vatican and the French crown. The Pope might have been willing to discuss some liturgical concessions in order to overcome the rift within French Christianity, but he had no intention of giving up his powers as the spiritual head of the Catholic world and allowing a national assembly to take any decision on this matter, and certainly not an open confrontation with the Huguenots led by a lay sovereign. It was Rome which had to set the time and the place of discussion, and the General Council at Trent was the only authorized forum.⁵¹ The fact that Catherine insisted in

⁴⁹ ASMO, CS, 150 (20 November 1561). The same description (with minor variations) is in a letter that Ippolito sent to Cardinal Borromeo a few days before, on 12 November (in this version, Ippolito says that the sermon happened 'hoggi', today). ASV, Misc., Arm II, 131, pp. 30-32.

⁵⁰ Ippolito to the Duke of Ferrara on 20 November 1561: 'Essendo non solamente essa Regina di Navarra, ma il re suo marito, cardinale di Armignach, Sciatiglione, principe di Condè amiraglio et altri signori venuti a desinar meco et così doppo pranso tutti insieme andassimo ne la capella qui del castello con un gran concorso veramente di prelati et altre persone honorate, dove frate Angelo de l'ordine degl'Osservanti che ho con me fece la predica, la qual si conobbe che fu grata a molto etiam di quelli che erano stimati esserne abhorriti': ASMO, CS, 150 (20 November 1561). Quite different was the opinion of the Tuscan ambassador Tornabuoni, who reported that the audience had listened to Giustiniani 'con poca reverenza, perché vi fu sbeffeggiamento degli ascoltanti, né anco tanto coperti che non fussero conosciuti da tutti' (20 November 1561): *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 468. The resident Ferrarese ambassador Giulio Alvarotti wrote to Duke Alfonso II d'Este that 'La regina istessa desinò poi il venere seguente con sua signoria illustrissima [Ippolito d'Este] ma portò il suo piatto et fu di carne et il dopo disnar andò nella capella del castello alla predica d'un theologo, il Cardinale malintendendo, stette la sù ad alto ov'è l'organo con altre dame ove sterono ragionando con dicendo et fondando di maniera che chi non tocca con mano che qua si ride et burla di quelle cose della nostra religione sta in un grande errore, pure noi ci rimettiamo a chi la nega et intenda meglio di noi': ASMO, AE, Francia, 36, fo. 54v (24 November 1561).

⁵¹ The Pope had already manifested his point of view to the Queen in the summer before the Colloquy of Poissy, when he unsuccessfully tried to persuade her to 'renvoyer toutes les questions [...] à la decision du concile universel': Valois,

promoting assemblies where the Calvinists were heard and allowed to express their theological beliefs, without any clear declaration of loyalty from the Valois to the Catholic Church, only served to increase the Pope's mistrust. When the French ambassador to Rome, on 24 October 1562, addressed the Pope with the request of communion *sub utraque specie nomine totius ecclesiae Gallicanae*, or at least a temporary concession in view of the opening of the Council of Trent, Pius IV promised to discuss the request in the College of Cardinals but never did. Besides the opposition of the Spanish ambassador and, presumably, of some of the Cardinals, the news that no official resolution had been made at Poissy on the question of communion in both kinds, and that there was not unanimity amongst the clergy on this matter – contrary to what the French ambassador had claimed when presenting his request to Pius IV – no doubt helped to change the Pope's mind. Therefore, when a few weeks later Ippolito's secretary Niquet arrived in Rome and presented the same request, Pius IV felt betrayed by his legate, and he replied that since no majority at Poissy had approved such a resolution, the request coming from his legate seemed to him to be 'very extravagant'.⁵²

The Cardinal of Ferrara's point of view is explained in a letter he wrote in January 1562 to one of his own agents in Madrid, to provide a defence of his behaviour in front of Philip II, since the Spanish King was no less irritated than the Pope (and his ambassador Chantonny had often accused Ippolito of complicity with the heretics):

Monsieur de Chantonny, ambassador of the Catholic King to this court, had told me on behalf of and at the order of His Majesty that he heard about the request I forwarded to Rome for the concession of communion under both kinds, also kindly letting me know that, considering my position and my reputation, he was quite surprised. (...) The Queen insistently asked me if my powers allowed me to concede communion under both kinds, and since I replied that I could not, she pleaded me to write to His Holiness and beg him on her behalf to concede the communion, so that it could be used to comfort many people who greatly require it, because she hoped to keep them well inclined toward the good religion. I replied trying to persuade her with many good arguments to change her mind, but she did not (...). And the office of Niquet was to report to His Holiness that, even if he wanted to satisfy the Queen in this way, this should not have happened through a general concession. But I thought that it was not bad to give this power to the three cardinals, who represent together papal authority here, that is the Cardinal de Tournon and de Lorraine and me (...), the power to grant the chalice only to somebody who seemed to us to be moved by genuine devotion and when it could be done without scandal; this same authority has been already given to the bishops of Verona and Fano and to Paghino [Luigi Lippomano, Pietro Bertano and Sebastiano Pighino] when they were sent to Germany [in 1548].⁵³

'Les essais de conciliation', p. 240.

⁵² Letter from Pius IV to Ippolito d'Este, on 4 January 1562: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, p. 330.

⁵³ BEM, Fondo Campori, 189 (the letter is not dated, but it must have been written between 17 January 1562 and the end of the month).

It is undeniable that the Cardinal was playing with fire, and that in return for his initiative, he would collect severe criticisms from both the Spanish King and the increasingly dissatisfied Pius IV. Given that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Ippolito d'Este was trying, at the same time as his legation to Paris, to make up for the military support that the Este had offered to France during the last stage of the Italian wars, it is easy to understand why any criticism from Spain might have negative consequences not only for him as a legate but also for his whole family.

The Legate, however, was not the only Catholic prelate in France who believed that some reform of the liturgy would solve the Huguenot problem. The Queen Mother had not lied when telling the Pope that many ecclesiastics were persuaded of the necessity of agreeing the reforms: in December 1561, after the failure of the Colloquy of Poissy, five Calvinist ministers and five Catholic ecclesiastics named by the Queen had been summoned to define a common statement of belief around the Lord's Supper (known as the *petit colloque*).⁵⁴ In the same period of time, the Legate's apartments had hosted the editing of a long memorial addressed to the Pope, known as the 'Remonstrances faites au pape Pie IV de la part du roy Charles IX'.⁵⁵ The alleged author was the bishop of Valence, Jean de Monluc, who had already expressed his conciliatory view on the French religious division during the Colloquy of Poissy and stood amongst those who thought a liturgical reform was not only needed but recommendable. In the 'Remonstrances', he outlined a project to reunify the Church through some of the long-awaited liturgical reforms, such as communion under both kinds, the simplification of the rite of Baptism, the introduction of the Psalms in French during the Mass and a reduction in the use of sacred images. This series of concessions, in Monluc's opinion, were the only means of 'sweet persuasion' that could be adopted in a kingdom where a quarter of the population had already rejected Roman obedience, though they were not to be considered 'heretics' but only 'schismatics'.⁵⁶

The 'Remonstrances' were then sent to the Pope by Ippolito d'Este, upon Catherine de Medici's request, and circulated through the French Court, to the irritation and bewilderment of many on the Catholic side. The Pope himself was extremely displeased by the reading of the

⁵⁴ On this subject, see: Nugent, *Ecumenism*, p. 161-177. Nugent has also very appropriately defined the problem of the Eucharist during the Colloquy of Poissy as the 'apple of discord'.

⁵⁵ The text was published in L. De Condé, *Mémoires de Condé, ou recueil pour servir à l'histoire de France...* (2 vols, London, 1743), ii, p. 562-575.

⁵⁶ Valois, 'Les essais de conciliation', pp. 263-4; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 170-173; T. Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève. Des fidèles entre deux chaires en France au XVI siècle* (Paris, 2006), p. 200. On the discussion about the use of images and the 'position intermédiaire' of Monluc see also C. Occhipinti, 'Disputes françaises sur les images sacrées (1561-1562): le cardinal Hippolyte d'Este et les colloques religieux à la cour de Catherine de Médicis', *Seizième Siècle*, 11 (2015). On Monluc and his religious view, and especially on his role as a spokesman for the 'moderate Catholics', or "moyenneurs", see Turchetti, *Concordia o tolleranza?*, pp. 264-268 and Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*, pp. 194-208.

memorial, and Cardinal Borromeo wrote back to Ippolito that Pius IV believed Catherine's requests to be 'wicked' and 'impious'.⁵⁷ Monluc and the other Catholic ecclesiastics who had taken part in the restricted colloquy of St. Germain were prosecuted for heresy by the Holy Office, summoned to Rome in April 1563 and excommunicated on the grounds of contumacy in the following October (Cardinal Chatillon had already been excommunicated in March 1563). They were, besides the bishop of Valence, the theologian Jean Bouteillier and six further bishops.⁵⁸ The records of the consistory that deposed and excommunicated the French prelates show that Jean de Monluc, in 1563, was considered not just as a heretic but almost as a heresiarch, and that the main charges against him entailed almost everything that had been included in the 'Remonstrances'.⁵⁹ Several witnesses were also questioned by Inquisitor Ghislieri to collect proof of Ippolito d'Este's heresy, using his participation to that episode as evidence. Some of the witnesses recalled that the bishop of Valence had denied the sacrificial value of the Mass and expressed other heretical opinions during some private religious discussions that took place in Ippolito's lodgings in the palace of Saint Germain between Christmas 1561 and Lent 1562, in the presence of several Catholic ecclesiastics, who were all suspected of secretly professing Calvinism, and of Ippolito d'Este himself. According to one of those witnesses, on at least one occasion the Legate had had a 'very long conversation' with one of the 'heretics' and had been persuaded to accept all the liturgical requests put forward by the bishop of Valence in the 'Remonstrances'.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Valois, 'Les essais de conciliation', p. 264. The Spanish ambassador Chantonnay, for instance, wrote to monsieur De Tisnacq on 22 January 1562 that 'combien qu'il semble ce soit quelque Catholique complaignans la calamité du temps, si es-ce du dicté de l'Evesque de Valence, pour (sous prétexte de piété) sémer sa faulce Doctrine': Condé, *Mémoires de Condé*, ii, p.20. A copy of a 'reformation', most likely the 'Remonstrances', was sent by the English ambassador Throckmorton to Queen Elizabeth and described as quite resembling the Elizabethan religious reform: C. G. Bayne, *Anglo-Roman Relations 1558-1565* (Oxford, 1968), p. 136.

⁵⁸ Antonio Caracciolo, bishop of Troyes; Charles Guillart, bishop of Chartres; Claude Régin, bishop of Oloron; Jean Chaumont de Saint-Roman, bishop of Aix; Louis d'Albret, bishop of Lescar; Jean de Saint-Gelais, bishop of Uzès. See ASV, AC, Acta Misc., 34, fos. 184ss.

⁵⁹ These included the worship of images, the sacrificial value of the Mass, and communion under both kinds. He had also introduced in his diocese 'ritum baptismi pueros et orandi modum pro ut Calvinii' and the Psalms in French, so that 'non hereticus modo sed novorum auctor dogmatum inter hereticos habebatur': ASV, AC, Acta Misc., 34, fos. 185-186.

⁶⁰ 'In questo colloquio fu portato uno scritto quale già era stato dato alla regina, et in esso si conteneva molti articoli falsi, et molti credevano che quel scritto fosse stato composto dal sopradetto vescovo di Valenza, poichè lui non cessava di aludare el scritto [...]. Et si sparse una voce, fra tutti quelli che erano in quella sopradetta camera, che persuadeva il cardinale legato che accettasse la sopradetta scrittura con tutti gli articoli contenuti in essa': ACDF, SO, St. St., R4-d, fo. 573-v. Elena Bonora, who has studied the inquisitorial trials against the Huguenot bishops and cardinals, has stressed that this repressive initiative aimed, from a short-sighted perspective, to avoid the participation at the Council of clerics who were well disposed toward the Reformation. But, at the same time, it was setting the benchmark for a new 'inquisitorial paradigm' that would drive the Vatican foreign politics in the following years, as the work of the Church emissaries to the European 'dangerous zones' became subject to the oversight of the Roman Inquisition. Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 165-179, 196-207.

Despite these accusations, Ippolito d'Este was never summoned for questioning by the Inquisition. Nonetheless, the fact that his legation, which had started as the result of a political evaluation, was perceived by the end of November 1561 as excessively tolerant to the Huguenots (and almost as complicit with the heretics in 1563) demonstrates how the Church was gradually setting new standards in its foreign relations. Amongst Ippolito's colleagues in France, however, one person was already fully in support of Cardinal Ghislieri's approach to foreign politics: the Jesuit Diego Lainez, delivering a lecture on 26 September, argued against the legitimacy of the Colloquy and, invoking the Pope's superior authority, refused to take part in any open discussion with 'Satan's ministers' – whom he called 'monkeys' and 'foxes'.⁶¹ The Jesuit's letters are marked by an utterly negative opinion of the state of Catholicism and the loss of millions of French souls, but contain very few direct references to what was happening in St. Germain. Lainez's energies appear to have been more focused while he was in France on managing his Society's progress and visiting other Jesuits in Paris.⁶² Overall, this behaviour was the perfect counterbalance to the endless patience characterised by the Cardinal of Ferrara and his commitment to 'conform with the times'.⁶³ Lainez's 'intransigence confessionnelle' – at the other end of the religious spectrum compared to Monluc's idea of a larger, non-confessional Catholic Church⁶⁴ – was also an anticipation of the mentality which would dominate the Church's relations with the Protestants in the following years.

It is important, then, to stress how the expectations about religion in France were gradually diverging and how the communication gap between the Holy See and its political emissaries was widening. By the beginning of 1562, Pius IV's dissatisfaction entailed pretty much everything his legate had done: Ippolito's participation in the Huguenot sermon was 'not appropriate' and 'a public scandal'; the delayed departure of the French bishops to Trent 'seemed bizarre and based upon frivolous and weak reasons'; and the French catholics were 'disfavoured and victims of persecution'. About Ippolito's behaviour, the Pope also wrote that 'with regard to your way of

⁶¹ This was Lainez's only intervention during the Colloquy and focused on the Eucharist, coming after a lecture by the exiled Italian reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli on the same subject. The Jesuit talked for almost an hour, addressing himself directly to the Queen Mother on Ippolito's advice (who was absent). Both Lainez's secretary Juan Polanco, and Annibal de Coudret summarised the speech in two letters written the day after the session: Laynez, *Lainii monumenta*, vi, pp. 54-64. See also La Place, *Commentaires*, pp. 299-300.

⁶² The Society of Jesus was officially introduced to France in September 1561. Between December and February 1562 Lainez committed himself to preach in Paris (since, according to Polanco, his preaching had been scarcely appreciated in St. Germain) and to support the Jesuit College, communities and hospitals; he also obtained some financial endowments from Ippolito d'Este: Laynez, *Lainii monumenta*, vi, pp. 182-186.

⁶³ As expressed by the Cardinal in one of his letters, on 4 November 1561: *Négociations, ou lettres d'affaires*, p. 22; see also *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, p.378

⁶⁴ Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome ni Genève*, pp. 200-201.

behaving, it seems to us that this mild path of tolerance or of connivance cannot be good any more'.⁶⁵ What in the summer of 1561 was sought as a 'path of pleasantness', in January 1562 was seen as 'connivance'.

It is almost a paradox that the Legate had been more appreciated by the lay ambassadors in France than by his Roman superiors, although it is arguable that the reason behind the Vatican's discontent lay only in the Legate's naivety. The reports written by the papal Nuncio Santa Croce, a man with a strong professional background in diplomacy,⁶⁶ focus on the same topics presented in the Legate's letters: from the prominence assigned to Antoine de Bourbon's conversion to the evaluation of the Edict of St. Germain, which allowed the Huguenots to preach privately and was considered by both diplomats as a minor threat to the Catholic cause.⁶⁷ The Nuncio had indeed often praised the Legate: thanks to Ippolito's presence, he claimed, their side had certainly 'more gained than lost'. Furthermore,

If His Lordship leaves, there will be such a great damage to this cause that, in my opinion, even if His Lordship was in Constantinople we should still send to call him here. I do not know any person who has in this court the authority which His Lordship has, or his way to negotiate, and nobody who would know how to do it better.⁶⁸

The fact that Santa Croce was also criticised by the Vatican, so much so that he bitterly asked the Pope if one had to be a pessimist in order to get some credit, led him to suggest that contact with the 'French infection' was enough to be viewed with suspicion by the Vatican establishment, a rule that did not apply only to Ippolito d'Este.⁶⁹ Moreover, if we take Santa Croce's words as reliable,

⁶⁵ Letter from Pius IV to Ippolito d'Este, 4 January 1562: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, i, p. 330-331.

⁶⁶ On Santa Croce's diplomatic career, see Lestocquoy's introduction to *Correspondance de nonces en France. Prospero Santa Croce*, pp. 8-41.

⁶⁷ The Edict of St. Germain was issued on 17 January 1562 but only approved by the Parlements on 12 March 1562. It allowed the Huguenots to attend private worship (as long as it was set outside the city walls) but did not allow them to build churches; it was therefore more liberal than the previous edict of July 1561 which did not allow even private preaching (though that was never enforced). The 'mildness' of the new Edict raised the opposition of some of the Catholics and of the French Parlements, which refused to approve it for nearly two months in spite of the Queen's repeated requests. On the Edict, Santa Croce wrote to the Pope: 'Si dirà che questo è un Interim tacito, ma se ella sapesse quanta fatica si è pigliata da tutti i cattolici, e principalmente da Monsignor Illustrissimo Legato, a tener che non si passasse a qualche cosa di troppa importanza' (17 January 1562): *Lettres du cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 43. Ippolito d'Este observed that, considering that 'questi Ugonotti facevano ogni sforzo per fortificar tanto più la lor setta et n'havivano quasi ferma speranza', the new prescriptions of the Edict 's'havriano potuto desiderare poco più favorevoli per gli Catholici' (the letter is not dated, but it must have been written between 17 January 1562 and the end of the month): BEM, Fondo Campori, 189. On the Edict, see A. Tallon, 'Rome et les premiers edicts de tolerance d'après la correspondance du nonce Santa Croce', in M. Grandjean and B. Roussel (eds), *Coexister dans l'intolérance (1598)* (Geneva, 1998), pp. 39-351.

⁶⁸ 7 January 1562: *Lettres du cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 25; 17 January 1562: *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

⁶⁹ On 7 January 1562 Santa Croce wrote: 'Se questo modo di scrivere satisfarrà più, io l'osservaro tanto più volentieri, quanto che oltre la sodisfattione, sarà con manco fatica mia, poichè essendo in questi termini tutte le diligenze sono superflue e non accade pensarci più': *ibid.*, p. 22. On the same day: 'Ho ben più lettere che non vorria della mala

it seems that by January 1562 one of Ferrara's supporters was Michel de l'Hôpital, the Chancellor who had previously refused to approve his legatine powers.⁷⁰ De l'Hôpital, as well as the Queen Mother, and others amongst the Catholics ranks, were seeking the liturgical concessions in opposition to the rigid theology defended as much by the professors of the Sorbonne as by Jesuit Lainez (and, on the other side, by the Calvinists).⁷¹ It is undeniable that a man like Ippolito d'Este, who had greedily collected benefices in spite of the charge of simony, lacked the sincere pastoral interest of Jean de Monluc or the political ability of Michel de l'Hôpital; nevertheless, his behaviour during the legation displays a coherence in following a path of mediation. Certainly, this attitude was not the result of his private religious conviction; it is quite clear, though, that the Cardinal was driven by a genuine desire aimed to pacify the conflicts within Christianity, and that he was ready to defend his interpretation of the French political and religious situation against the recriminations that had been coming from the Vatican and from more radical Catholics.

Ippolito's view of the French situation remained steady even after all the criticism that had been coming from Rome in the previous months, and it is well summarised in a long letter written on 31 December 1561 to Cardinal Borromeo, the Cardinal nephew, where the legate insisted in defending his past actions and his point of view:

Since I do really know that the things which pertain to religion have a completely different nature from the things which pertain to the State, I also agree with His Holiness and I share his wise opinion that it is not recommendable to walk the same path when negotiating one or the other one [...]. But His Holiness really needs to understand that, had I found that the upheavals that

sodisfattione che si ha in Roma, del mio proceder preterito, presente et credo ancora futuro': *ibid.*, pag. 21; 'Se ho camminato con una via placida et quieta, non mi pare di meritare almeno quelle riprehensione che mi si scrive': *ibid.*, pag. 26; 'Bisogna considerar il Stato presente di questo Regno, et li humori che vi sono, i quali forse che di là non si intendano pienamente': *ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁰ 'Et dicoli di fermo che il Cancelliere disse l'altro giorno, con un che me l'ha riferito, che li romani non havevano inteso il caso loro, a lassar uscir di qua il legato': *ibid.*, p. 47. On Michel de l'Hôpital, see: Turchetti, *Concordia o tolleranza?*, pp. 227-232; S-H. Kim, *Michel de l'Hôpital. The Vision of a Reformist Chancellor During the French Religious Wars* (Kirksville, 1997), esp. pp. 1-5; L. Petris, 'Faith and Religious Policy in Michel de l'Hospital's Civic Evangelism', in K. Cameron, M. Greengrass and P. Roberts (eds), *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France* (Berne, 2000), pp. 129-142.

⁷¹ The position of the moderate Catholics during the Colloquy has been vastly discussed by historians, as well as the controversial role the Cardinal de Lorraine played amongst them. On the latter topic, for a precise summary of the different interpretations given by historians, see: Wanegffelen, *Ni Rome, ni Genève*, pp. 149-170. On Lorraine's position, see also S. Carroll, 'The Compromise of Charles Cardinal de Lorraine: New Evidence', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54/3 (2003), pp. 469-483. On moderate Catholics and the dichotomy of concord and toleration, see, for instance, M. Turchetti, 'Religious Concord and Political Tolerance in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century France', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22/1 (1991), pp. 15-25; O. Christin, 'From Repression to Toleration: French Royal Policy in the Face of Protestantism', in P. Benedict, G. Marnef, H. van Nierop and M. Venard (eds), *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585* (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 201-214; A. Tallon, 'Gallicanism and Religious Pluralism in France in the Sixteenth Century', in K. Cameron, M. Greengrass and P. Roberts (eds), *The Adventure of Religious Pluralism in Early Modern France* (Berne, 2000), pp. 15-30; *id.*, 'National Church, State Church and Universal Church: The Gallican Dilemma in Sixteenth-Century France', in L. Racaut and A. Ryrrie (eds), *Moderate Voices in the European Reformation* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 104-121.

are now going on in this kingdom arose from religion only, I would have not neglected to behave in a different manner and in a way that I reckon complies with His intention; but having found more and more that these things are not only mixed together but contaminated by private interests and that religion is just taken as a pretext to colour things up, I thought that one should try to handle a medicine as appropriate as it can possibly be and that the best way to pursue this was by paying attention to everyone and getting on good terms with everyone, as I thought this way I could more easily argue with them and persuade them [...]. I do not see why this sweet way of behaving should be abhorred so much, since through this we can hope to obtain those things that would otherwise be impossible; and may God bestow me with this grace only, that His Holiness could see how things would have gone if we had taken a path different from the one we are following now; since we have known the poor result, as I have already written, that the others have obtained with their harsh and bitter manners [...]. My only regret is that it seems that nobody is believed to be a good servant but those who lose the favour of the princes where they are staying, and that no one considers that these princes are very unhappy to see that those who are offending them are held in high esteem; and His Holiness has experienced this himself with the person of Vargas [the Spanish ambassador to Rome] and with the annoyance he was given when His Catholic Majesty was relying upon him, and He openly admitted that [Vargas] was neither doing well to his prince nor to the public [...].⁷² Those who like to say that there is no remedy to the things of this country, this really is as though a doctor, finding someone who has a great fever, despaired of their recovery and refused to treat them at all; and in this case it is certain that most would pass away, and in this same way if we will not help this kingdom, or try and give it those remedies that are appropriate and decide to abandon it instead, then we will have to be afraid of losing it; but I have a different opinion and I want to take it for certain, that if we will not abandon it then we will always be able to hope for its recovery [...]. I am used to go through such storms and I will easily go through this one as well, only being sorry that my actions are not judged well but rather blamed by everyone, in a time when I am putting all my efforts into being a trustworthy and thorough servant and postponing every other concern of mine [...]. But as they say that they have an opinion different from mine and that they would win if things were managed according to their view, may God want that, if the opposite occurred, they would lose just as much; for I do not believe that wisdom only consists in predicting the bad (because, had this been true, one would need to look at Nostradamus as a very wise man), but rather in properly understanding what is going on and in suggesting the appropriate remedies and measures, and these need not to be Plato's ideas but to suit the quality of the time and people.⁷³

Consequently, the cardinal blamed the Spanish ambassadors Chantonny and Vargas, as well as Santa Croce's predecessor Gualterio, for having negotiated in such a 'harsh and bitter' way. Their intolerant behaviour, in his opinion, had nothing but aggravated the French illness.⁷⁴ Ippolito's *realpolitik*, thus, could make a much better match with Jean de Monluc's sincere pastoral interest

⁷² Nor to Ippolito d'Este, as Vargas fiercely opposed his negotiations with the 'heretics' and harshly criticised the Cardinal's behavior in his correspondence with Philip II: *Papiers d'état du Cardinal de Granvelle d'après le manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Besançon*, ed. C. Weiss (9 vols, Paris, 1841-1852), vi, pp. 403-406. It is true, however, that Pius IV found ambassador Vargas annoying and had repeatedly asked Philip II to call him back to Madrid: Süsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 283.

⁷³ ASV, Misc., Arm II, 131, pp. 61ss. See also ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.48 (31 December 1561).

⁷⁴ On Gualterio, he wrote that 'poichè il predetto vescovo [Gualterio was bishop of Viterbo] par che habbia poste queste cose per tanto disperate, difficilmente possa poi procurare che si porgano loro quei rimedi che saria necessari'. On Chantonny: 'Da questo ambasciatore di sua maestà cattolica non ho anche ricevuto aiuto alcuno, dal qual me ne promettevo ben molto': *ibid.* The Venetian ambassador, Marcantonio Barbaro, wrote that Chantonny 'è proceduto esso ambasciatore con la regina e Navarra, con parole quasi sempre aspre e severe, minacciando di guerra dal canto del re e suo, e dicendo in faccia alle lor maestà parole assai gagliarde e pungenti [...] questo modo di procedere giovò poco, e fece esso ambasciatore tanto odioso [...] che a pena poteva esser alla corte dalla Regina e dalli altri grandi veduto': *Relations des ambassadeurs*, p. 88.

rather than with the diplomatic aggressiveness embodied by the Spanish emissaries. If the moderate Catholic prelates were seeking some liturgical concessions in order to gain their flock back to the Catholic bosom, the Cardinal of Ferrara aimed to put the religious division to an end by winning the French crown to Catholicism, as he regarded the Monarchy as the ultimate guarantor of a restored national unity. In order to do so, the concession of some liturgical reforms was part of the same strategy that encompassed supporting Vendôme's ambitions over Spanish Navarre.

That the original 'path of pleasantness' initially sought by Pius IV himself had gone too far and that the Vatican was reconsidering its foreign politics is demonstrated not only by the Inquisitorial trial which involved Ippolito d'Este in 1563, but also by the persistent echoes of his mission as a legate. In January 1562, after the issue of the Edict of Saint Germain, the Cardinal of Ferrara felt the need to write a long apology of his legation to Paris, which he addressed to the bishop of Caserta.⁷⁵ There, he reaffirmed that the only way of dealing with the heretical infection was to wear the clothes of a benevolent doctor, and that the French situation allowed no other way of negotiating than his own. The cardinal's apology must have had quite a quick public diffusion (although it is not clear from the text if this had been Ippolito's intention from the beginning),⁷⁶ because it was not left unheard. An anonymous figure from the Roman Curia wrote an articulated reply that partially reiterated the accusations which had haunted the legate throughout his French legation. This time, though, a much stronger accent was put on his general unfitness as a Vatican diplomat and on his misconduct, which had led him to take much greater care in pursuing his own benefits rather than the universal (i.e., Catholic) good.⁷⁷ As soon as 1577, when the dramatic events that had filled Ippolito's reports from France were still far from reaching a solution, the cardinal's apology was published in Venice and reprinted four years later.⁷⁸ In the following century, the cardinal's letters were translated into French from an unspecified 'manuscrit Italien' and dedicated to the Gallican clergy,⁷⁹ while Ippolito's apology was mentioned in a coeval work with a direct reference to the Venetian edition and stressing that the cardinal had been criticised for having attended a Huguenot sermon during the 'turbolentissimis temporibus' of his legation.⁸⁰ Both the

⁷⁵ ASV, Misc., Arm II, 125, pp. 20-47. Also printed in *Miscellanea novo ordine digesta...*, ed. S. Baluze et al. (4 vols, apud Vincentium Junctinium, 1761-1764), iv, pp. 437-438.

⁷⁶ A hint that Ippolito hoped his apology would have a public diffusion can be found in this sentence: 'Ho voluto scriverle tutto questo [...] perché se ne possa servire di più in testimonio dell'animo mio con chi le occorrerà': *ibid.*, p. 438.

⁷⁷ This text follows Ippolito's letter to the bishop of Caserta in ASV, Misc., Arm II, 125, p. 48ss.

⁷⁸ *Delle lettere di principi, le quali o si scrivono da principi...*, ed. G. Ruscelli (3 vols, Venice, 1562-1577), iii, fos. 256v-258v. The apology was included in the last of three volumes, published between 1564 and 1577 in Venice by Giordano Ziletti. A second Venetian edition followed in 1581.

⁷⁹ Printed in Paris in 1658: *Négociations, ou lettres d'affaires*.

⁸⁰ In qua legatione obeunda quamvis sibi magnam laudem comparaverit, non desuerunt, qui huic crimini darent, quod

letters and the apology addressed to the bishop of Caserta appear once again in an eighteenth-century *miscellanea*, proving that the controversial outcomes of Ippolito's legation were still rousing interest and curiosity.⁸¹

IPPOLITO'S LEGATION AFTER SAINT GERMAIN

Ippolito d'Este remained in France until 22 April 1563. As we have seen, the most critical moments of his legation culminated with the Edict of Saint Germain, in January 1562. During the remaining fifteen months, and after the outbreak of the civil war, his role at the French court shifted toward a more 'regular' performance of his duty as an emissary of the Holy See. The time of *colloquia* was over: Huguenots and Catholics were no longer facing each other in the religious arena but on the battlefield.⁸² As the French bishops left France to cross the Alps and join the Council of Trent, and Antoine of Navarre, now firmly professing Catholicism, took the leadership of the country at the side of Catherine de' Medici, Ippolito d'Este's main concerns became not only to ensure that the King would not change his mind and reconvert, but also to provide economic and military support to the French Crown in the fight against the powerful Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligny, the leaders of the Huguenot faction. After the struggle to have his credentials recognised, the Cardinal's position – and influence – at the French court seemed finally to be established. Catherine de' Medici held him as a trustworthy advisor and even invited him to join her restricted household when she moved with the King from Paris to Monceaux in March 1562. Now that her power and lineage were threatened by the war, the Queen Mother could not afford

damnatae sectae viri concioni interfuisset'. It is also worth noticing that Chacon, in an effort to justify Ippolito's controversial behaviour, makes reference to a learned conversation about tolerance and sovereigns that had occurred between the Cardinal and Marc-Antoine Muret (and that Muret had later written down). Quite surprisingly, Chacon asserts that Muret's account of this very generic and erudite conversation aimed to provide an explanation on 'eius [of Ippolito d'Este] cum Calviniano Beza de religionis controversiis colloquio': Chacon, *Vitae, et res gestae pontificum romanorum... usque ad Clementem IX* (4 vols, Rome, 1677), iii, column 650. For Muret's account of his conversation with Ippolito see Muret, *M. Antonii Mureti*, iii, p. 366.

⁸¹ *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, p. 438-439.

⁸² Catherine de' Medici's last attempt to organise a religious assembly took place in January 1562, when she summoned both Catholics and Huguenots to Saint Germain. The debate focused on the role of images but ended in a failure due to 'une dureté et obstination des ungs et des aultres, qui ont plutost combatu pour ne se laisser vaincre que disputé et conféré pour se soubzmettre à la vérité et à la raison', as the Queen wrote in a letter to Monsiur de Rennes on 16 February 1562: *Lettres de Catherine de Médicis*, ed. H. de La Ferriere (11 vols, Paris, 1880-1943), i, p. 276. See also Valois, 'Les essais de conciliation', pp. 265-274; Occhipinti, 'Disputes françaises'; Tallon, *La France et le Concile*, pp. 326-327. Ippolito d'Este wrote to Cardinal Borromeo on 17 January 1562 to let him know that the Queen Mother intended to organise a new religious colloquy and had strongly requested the legate's presence, even though he had objected that it would have been better to devolve every discussion to the Council of Trent: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 380. Since Ippolito could not convince the Queen Mother to give up her project, he took part in the colloquy of which he forwarded a long and thorough report to the Pope in February 1562: *ibid.*, pp. 385-388.

to dismiss the protection of Spain and the Vatican, as she needed their economic and military support to make up for the ruinous state of royal finances.⁸³ This rendered the political conjuncture more favourable to the Catholics, and hence to the papal legate Ippolito II d'Este.

Although Catholic hopes that the French monarchy would eventually clamp down on the Huguenots and deprive them of their freedom had been nullified by the issue of the Edict of Saint Germain, the relation between the Vatican and the Queen Mother slightly improved in the following months as a consequence of the long-awaited appointment of a lay ambassador to the Council of Trent. The appointee was that same Lansac who, as we have seen in the previous chapters, was the French ambassador to Rome, and who was regarded, in the Curia, as a good Catholic.⁸⁴ The firm defence of Catholicism undertaken, in the same period, by the King of Navarre also contributed to assuage the Pope.⁸⁵ We have already seen that the Cardinal of Ferrara was quick to take advantage of the King's conversion in order to shield himself against the recriminations that had been coming from Rome from the very beginning of his legation, and to ascribe this success to his much-criticised 'strategy of tolerance'. Despite this accomplishment – whose political importance had been recognised not only by the Cardinal but also by the Catholic hierarchies – the relationship between the Pope and his legate was so strained that on January the Cardinal was given licence to leave France, even though there was still much work to do to conclude the negotiations between Navarre, Philip II and the Vatican, and to persuade the French bishops to go to Trent. Not even someone who was so self-confident as to overlook the usual paths of diplomacy and pursue his own idea of 'negotiating' to the point of provoking a breach with the Papacy could fail to misinterpret this clear sign of the Pope's dissatisfaction. Not surprisingly, on 24 January 1562 Ippolito wrote a letter to his nephew Duke Alfonso II to express his resentment about a decision which he saw as unfair:

⁸³ On the economic side of the religious wars, see J. B. Wood, *The King's Army: Warfare, Soldiers, and Society During the Wars of Religion in France* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 275-300.

⁸⁴ Lansac was appointed at the end of February 1562. He left Rome on 11 March 1562 to go back to Paris and, from there, left for Trent on 14 April 1562: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 414; *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, p. 403. On 6 April 1562, Cardinal Borromeo wrote to Ippolito to let him know that 'la risoluzione che hanno presa di mandare monsignor di Lansac per ambasciatore al concilio è stata grata a Nostro Signore sì perchè da questo si può credere che vogliono far da vero, et sì ancora per la qualità del gentilhuomo; quale è sempre stato tenuto per catholicò': Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 428. See also Tallon, *La France et le Concile*, pp. 340-345.

⁸⁵ On 11 February 1562, Ippolito wrote to Cardinal Borromeo that the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre 'mi hanno comunicato a lungo [...] molte buone deliberazioni loro, mostrando l'uno, e l'altra in ogni cosa, buona e ferma affetione verso la religione cattolica; e la regina mostrando grande allegrezza della buona inclinazione che ha il Re di Navarra in questa parte, venne a dirmi in presenza sua queste proprie parole: che da qui in avanti ella non voleva esser scusata in queste cose della religione, se non anderanno bene; poichè ella aveva tanto bene il detto Re di Navarra disposto, et unico seco in questa volontà. Il che è con evidente inditio della difficoltà che era ad eseguire alcuna buona resolutione quando erano differenti d'opinione': *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, p. 387.

I most certainly did not like that licence, which the Pope gave me, to leave this place, entrusting it to my judgement, because from this I clearly see that His Holiness is too strongly convinced that this kingdom is closer to the downfall than it really is, and there is no better way of bringing it to ruin than to believe it so desperate.⁸⁶

A few days later, he sent his secretary Niquet to Rome to defend his behaviour, and the Pope subsequently reversed his decision. Whether this was the result of Niquet's mission or of the good news that was coming from the Papal Nuncio Santa Croce and Cardinal Tournon about the favourable disposition demonstrated by Navarre, which was at least partially due to Ippolito's relentless work of persuasion, it is hard to tell.⁸⁷ The Spanish ambassador to Rome Vargas, who had spent the previous four months trying to convince the Pope to remove Ippolito d'Este from Paris, attributed Pius IV's abrupt change of mind to both Niquet's plea in favour of his lord and Catherine de' Medici's support.⁸⁸ On 15 March 1562, Pius IV wrote to Ippolito in quite different terms from those of January:

We are every day more pleased with your good inclination and with the perseverance you display to put everything on the right track, [...] and be sure that we will strongly and warmly embrace the King of Navarre's cause, if he will carry on with what he has started [...]. As much as we thought, when we saw that things were getting worse day after day, that you should leave as soon as possible in order not to witness so much indignity, now that things have started to take the right direction, we think that you should not leave, and that you should exert as much pressure as you can in favour of the catholic religion, and you will not find it to be a tiresome endeavour now that we have the Queen Mother and the King of Navarre so positive and favourable, as they themselves promise.⁸⁹

The Pope's words were a moral renewal of Ippolito's diplomatic mandate after the storm he had gone through between November 1561 and January 1562. Supported by the Queen's appreciation and by the diplomatic victory that was Navarre's profession of Catholic faith, the Cardinal of Ferrara carried out the rest of his diplomatic mission without any new significant contentions with the Holy See. The outbreak of the civil war in France (traditionally marked by scholars by the

⁸⁶ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVII.5 (24 January 1562).

⁸⁷ The Cardinal of Ferrara had already received a reassuring letter from Cardinal Borromeo at the end of January 1562, that is before Niquet's arrival in Rome: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 386-388. The letters that Santa Croce and Tournon addressed to the Pope in January and February 1562 attested to the increasing good disposition demonstrated by the King of Navarre, who 'si è mostrato in ogni ragionamento molto catholico': *ibid.*, pp. 371; 382; 403. On 28 January, Cardinal Tournon had also written to Borromeo that Ippolito d'Este, after the scandal of the request of the communion *sub utraque specie*, 'ha dimostrato qualche segno di ricognitione et di mutamento [...] et si è dimostrato malcontento et di volontà di riunirsi con li signori catholici': *ibid.*, p. 372. Whether this was true or not, it certainly contributed to changing the Pope's mind.

⁸⁸ On 22 February 1562, Vargas wrote to Cardinal Granvelle that Catherine de' Medici had sent Lansac to Rome also to 'sostener Ferrara en la legacion [...]. El cardenal de Ferrara con lo que ha escripto en alabanca suya y con la venida de su Nicheto ha impetrado quedarse por aora en su legacion, que no puede ser cosa mas pernicioso'. He concluded, sadly: 'Ferrara se estará quanto quisiesse': *Papier du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vi, pp. 512-514.

⁸⁹ Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 413-414.

massacre of Vassy on 1 March 1562) and the subsequent militarisation of the country, split the French court apart; the Queen and the King left Paris, and the Prince of Condè took up arms against the Catholics.⁹⁰ In this new scenario of war, where ‘everything is upside-down’⁹¹ and ‘there is more need of hands than tongue’,⁹² there were certainly fewer occasions for the Cardinal of Ferrara to provoke a scandal in the Vatican palaces by employing his ‘worldly diplomacy’. This does not mean, however, that he was left with nothing to do.

The best evidence of the fluidity that characterised the figure of Ippolito and of the clash of interests that was the *leitmotiv* of his ecclesiastical career is provided by the collateral work he carried out over the year and a half of his French legation in order to defend his clan and – especially – his own interests. We have already seen that the conflict that arose between Ippolito d’Este and the Holy See went so far as to become a public scandal and that it almost cost the Cardinal an accusation of heresy. We have also seen that Ippolito felt compelled to write an apology for his legation, which was followed by a reply produced in the Vatican curia that insisted particularly on Ippolito’s shameful pursuing of his own private benefit during his time in France. This was a point that the Spanish ambassador Vargas had also often brought to the Pope’s attention, in the hope that Pius IV would call the Cardinal back to Italy and replace him with someone more suitable – from Vargas’s perspective, someone more inclined to back Philip II’s French politics and fight against the heretics. Vargas had depicted Ippolito as a man who ‘only cares about his personal interests and passions and always aims at the pontificate, so much that even now he negotiates as though it was vacant’.⁹³ The idea that the Cardinal of Ferrara was mainly working for his own benefit rather than for the Roman Church was reinforced by his very peculiar position as cardinal protector with huge economic interests in France and as member of an Italian ruling family with strong ties to the Valois monarchy.⁹⁴ This would not have been, *per se*, a good reason to distrust his commitment as a Vatican representative; but, in Paris, the Cardinal was quick to weave a network of relationships that allowed him to exploit his multifaceted powers to the utmost.

⁹⁰ On the first stage of the French civil wars, see, for example Roberts, *Peace and Authority*, pp. 13-38; Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 50-75.

⁹¹ Santa Croce to Cardinal Borromeo: *Lettere del Cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 94.

⁹² Ippolito d’Este to Cardinal Borromeo: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, iv, p. 405.

⁹³ *Papiers du Cardinal de Granvelle*, vi, p. 403. In his letters, Vargas often wrote that he feared that the Cardinal of Ferrara would eventually manage to trick the Pope with ‘encantamientos y entratenimientos’ and ‘sperancas y negociaciones’, in spite of the fact that ‘la perdicion de la Francia todos la veen, y quan à paso largo corre el sathanismo’: *ibid.*, vi, p. 405; 424 (7 November; 21 November 1561).

⁹⁴ To explain Ippolito d’Este’s tolerant behaviour towards the heretics, the Venetian ambassador to France, Marcantonio Barbaro, mentioned in his relation also ‘l’interesse proprio del cardinale, avendo egli in Francia più di quaranta mila scudi d’entrata, e dubitando di non perderla per quei tumulti di religione, quando si fosse separato il regno da Santa Chiesa’: *Relations des Ambassadeurs*, ii, p. 86.

From the letters he exchanged with his nephew, Duke Alfonso II, it is clear that Ippolito d'Este's political agenda had been arranged even before he set off to France. Furthermore, it seems that this agenda had been at least partially conceived in collaboration with his nephew, the son of Renée of France and Anna d'Este's brother, who, having succeeded his father to the Dukedom less than two years before, had much to expect in terms of political and economic support from the French monarchy. As we have seen, Ippolito had been away from France for a long time, and his old connections had weakened. In order to foster his personal and dynastic ambitions, therefore, he needed to reinforce his powerful alliances – something that can clearly be seen in the stops that the Cardinal decided to make while he was travelling to Paris in September 1561. Over the two weeks that preceded his official entrance to Saint Germain-en-Laye, Ippolito and his entourage stopped only twice: at Montargis, the residence of his sister-in-law Renée of France, and in Meudon, where Francis of Guise and Anna d'Este were staying at Charles de Lorraine's castle.⁹⁵ Renée was living a retired life in Montargis and did not have much influence on the royal court, although she still held a respected position due to her royal birth and had always been in contact with the Estense ambassador to Paris, Giulio Alvarotti, in order to promote the interests of her son Alfonso II.⁹⁶ The Guise family, on the other hand, were at the time the most influential French family and the head of the Catholic faction – the marriage of Anna d'Este, Alfonso's sister, into their clan had provided the Este with some formidable allies. In the year 1561, the House of Este was particularly eager to promote the ecclesiastical career of Alfonso's younger brother, Luigi d'Este, who, in compliance with the aristocratic rule of preserving the family assets, had been destined to the Church, like his uncle Ippolito II before him. The Este had already secured Luigi the diocese of Ferrara and obtained his promotion to the red hat in the consistory of 26 February 1561.⁹⁷ We will see in the next part how the Este managed to install Luigi at the highest ranks of the Catholic

⁹⁵ Ippolito to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.42 (15 September 1561).

⁹⁶ Renée's position within the French nobility was complicated by the fact that, in 1561, she was publicly known for having reformist sympathies. In a letter of 15 September 1561, Ippolito inserted a cyphered paragraph to let Alfonso know that he had found her 'risolutissima in questa nuova setta, et si duole che le par d'haver simulato pur troppo': *ibid.* In March 1561, the Estense ambassador Alvarotti had already written to Duke Alfonso that 'perché ella [Renée] parla di queste cose della fede, Monsignor di Guisa le ha detto una volta che per l'honor d'Iddio ella lasci predicare alli vescovi et alli curati et non s'impacci ella di queste cose che non toccano a lei. Un'altra volta le ha detto ch'essendo ella nata d'un così grande e savio re et christianissimo com'egli era, et parente stretta de tutti gl'altri christianissimi anch'essi, ch'ella continuava questi linguaggi che la mostrerà ben non esser del vero sangue loro [...]. Monsignor di Guisa et madama sua consorte [Anna d'Este] et il Cardinale di Loreno quando era in corte sentivano un grandissimo dispiacere di queste cose, et così ci hanno detto tutti più di una volta et separatamente l'uno dall'altro, et sappessimo anco pur da essi che la Regina parimenti se ne fastidisse infinitamente et par che tutti questi signori Chiatiglioni si siano molto intrinsecati co' essa lei': ASMO, AE, Francia, 36, fos. 43v-44r (20 March 1561).

⁹⁷ ASV, AC, Acta Vicecanc. 9, p. 74. The same consistory that appointed Ippolito II *legatus a latere*, on 2 June 1561, also confirmed Luigi as the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Ferrara, for which he had previously been granted a 'special exemption' due to his being a minor at the time of the conferral: *ibid.*, p. 86.

hierarchy and to confer him with his uncle's wealth and powers – cardinalate protectorship included – but for now it is sufficient to note that, from a perspective of familial and political reinforcement, Ippolito's legation to Paris was an unmissable opportunity and could not have occurred at a more propitious time.

Less than two weeks after his arrival at court, Ippolito managed to obtain the Queen Mother's approval to resign his diocese of Auch, in the South of France, in favour of his nephew Luigi, retaining the *regressus* and all the revenues of the diocese – except one thousand *scudi*, which were assigned to Luigi. Catherine de' Medici forwarded Ippolito's request to Rome, as Pius IV had to grant the legitimacy of the resignation in order to make it effective, and Ippolito wrote to his nephew Alfonso II to urge the Papal approval through his ambassadors.⁹⁸ In the sixties of the sixteenth century, with the Council of Trent already in session and the long-awaited reform of the Church once again on the table, persuading the Pope to approve blatantly nepotistic practice was not as straightforward as it used to be, and one needed to put as much pressure as possible on the Vatican hierarchies. Furthermore, the accumulation of residential sees and the abuses of the clergy were issues that were being debated not only at the Council of Trent but also in France,⁹⁹ and that the monarchy was using against the Vatican to claim more independence and authority over the French benefices. When chancellor Michel de l'Hôpital announced to the Papal nuncio Santa Croce that the Cardinal of Lorraine had decided to participate in the Council and would bring with him a long document listing all ecclesiastical abuses in France, he laughed and added that the first thing to do should have been to 'tear many abbeys from his Lordship [Cardinal Lorraine] and his Lordship the Legate'.¹⁰⁰

Ippolito and Alfonso both seemed to be aware of the difficulties that the resignation of Auch would entail – not only because it was a nepotistic manoeuvre and Luigi already held the diocese of Ferrara, but also and especially because the French monarchy was troubled with religious problems and was trying to limit the Pope's economic claims on the French benefices. As we have seen, this had largely contributed to the straining of the relation between Paris and Rome, and the fear that a strained relation would eventually take the form an irreparable political fracture explains

⁹⁸ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.43 (4 October 1561).

⁹⁹ In March 1563 Michel de l'Hôpital told Prospero Santa Croce that 'un terzo delli beneficii della Francia sono in questo termine, che uno che ha moglie domanda una abbatia alla Regina, et poi ne piglia possession sopra la testa o in nome di un pretazzolo, et lo nutrisce in casa dandoli un scudo al mese et tira il resto delle entrate del beneficio ecclesiastico': *Lettres du Cardinal di Santa Croce*, pp. 231-232.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

why Ippolito was so eager to obtain the Queen Mother's approval.¹⁰¹ That his relatives in Ferrara were equally concerned about Auch – and that the resignation had been clearly decided on a familial level – is proven by the fact that, in October 1561, Alfonso II wrote to Ippolito to remind him about it, to which Ippolito could reply a month later that the issue had already been taken care of.¹⁰² In December, Cardinal Borromeo wrote that the Pope had approved Ippolito's request, but this was probably not completely true as it took the Este two more years to obtain the official conferral of Auch to Luigi, in the consistory of 8 October 1563. The Pope had been finally persuaded by the mighty influence of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, in the meantime, had left France to take part in the conciliar debates at Trent and could personally reassure the bishops about the lawfulness of Luigi's succession to the benefice.¹⁰³

Not surprisingly, the scandalous resignation of Auch provided a powerful argument to those who were already criticising Ippolito's mild religious zeal, and it explains why one of the main accusations featured in the anonymous *j'accuse* was that the Papal legate had gone to France to take care of his own business rather than the Pope's. To claim the rightfulness of his actions, Ippolito wrote a resentful letter to Cardinal Borromeo, which also provides a perfect example of the way Italian princes and their relatives used to deal with and think of ecclesiastical properties:

About the slander of which I have been the recipient, which is that I take better care of my private affairs than of the public ones, I do not want to fail to let everyone know that this is so far from being true that I have never opened my mouth to remind this crown about all the several and important interests that I have with them; on the contrary, about the revenues of my benefices, which are indeed worth something, and which usually go exempted [from taxation], I did not say a word, but I content myself with paying them, in order not to mistake public with private. They will say that I have obtained the succession of Auch in favour of the cardinal my nephew. And what use is it for me? Or what benefit do I get from it? And is not that something that I could have obtained without being here? And should we go as far as to assume that the habit that is customary here for the great lords, to substitute uncles with nephews in their benefices,

¹⁰¹ As he himself explained in December 1561 to the Pope through his Roman agent: 'Quando mi mossi a parlare de la cosa de lo Arcivescovato d'Aux, lo feci pensando certo d'haver a rompere et conoscevo che s'io non havessi allora ottenuto questo punto, sarebbe stato impossibile in ogn'altro tempo'. And again, at the end of that month: 'né haverei anche mossa parola de la cosa d'Aux se non fusse stato come vo ho anche scritto il dubbio che hebbi non si havesse da venir a rottura': ASV, Misc., Arm II, 131, p. 40ss; 64ss. See also ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.45; 48 (4 December and 31 December 1561).

¹⁰² Alfonso II had written to his uncle that 'se si lascia passar questa occasione senza far qualche cosa a comodo suo [Luigi d'Este] de' i beneficii ch'ella ha in cotesto regno, Dio sa quando se ne potrà presenter un'altra si opportuna': ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.60 (16 October 1561). Ippolito agreed that the resignation of Auch was 'de la maggior importantia che ci fusse, perché de le altre cose confido che potremo più facilmente assicurarci': ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.44 (20 November 1561).

¹⁰³ The consistorial decision about the diocese of Auch caused nonetheless a scandal. Cardinal Borromeo wrote a letter to the Papal legates in Trent to explain and justify Pius IV's decision, which seemed to them to be in open contradiction with the spirit of the ecclesiastical reform: Trisco, 'Carlo Borromeo and the Council', pp. 62-63 and fn. 65 for Cardinal Morone's involvement in the polemic on Auch (although the diocese of Narbonne is erroneously attributed to Scipione Rebiba, Cardinal of Pisa, rather than to Cardinal Francesco Pisani, as shown at p. 60 in this thesis).

when they fall vacant and especially when [the nephews] are praiseworthy, has been violated and broken by him [Luigi]:¹⁰⁴

The resignation of the bishopric of Auch was however only the tip of the iceberg represented by Ippolito's efforts to preserve and enhance his own power. He also committed himself to acquire lesser benefices, another collateral activity that was to increase the Pope's lack of trust, as was the case when he obtained the abbey of Prémontré, motherhouse of the Premonstratensian Order, from Cardinal Pisani, and supported the petitions of the French lords who wanted the Pope to approve their own exchanges of benefices.¹⁰⁵ Ippolito's intense activity of self-promotion is also clear in his correspondence: while the Pope was lamenting that he had not received any news from his Legate – the first official report that he received from Paris was dated 4 November 1561 – and Ippolito's nephew Alfonso II was showing some signs of impatience,¹⁰⁶ the Cardinal was in close correspondence with his Roman agent, Francesco Maria Visconti, to whom he had entrusted all his business with the Roman curia.¹⁰⁷

Although Alfonso II had initially been left unaware of the successful transferral of Auch, the presence of his uncle Ippolito in France brought a significant change of fortune to the business between the Duchy of Ferrara and the Valois monarchy and to the work carried out by the Estense ambassador, Giulio Alvarotti. Giulio Alvarotti was an exceptional diplomat in many respects: he stayed in France for a remarkably long period of time (twenty consecutive years, from 1545 to 1565), throughout which he posted letters to Ferrara with an astonishing frequency – twice a week, on average, and consisting of several pages of writing.¹⁰⁸ Alvarotti was already in contact with Renée of France and Anna d'Este, but with the Cardinal of Ferrara's arrival at court, he gained not only a new ally but also and especially a political shortcut to access the French monarchy and hasten the usually long times of diplomacy.¹⁰⁹ Alfonso II's attention, in the years 1561 and 1562, was focused

¹⁰⁴ Ippolito to Cardinal Borromeo, 27 January 1562: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 382. For the reference to the taxation on benefices, see p. 28 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, Misc., Arm II, 131, p. 40ss. See also ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVI.45 (4 December 1561). Cardinal Pisani had been appointed *abbé commendataire* of Prémontré by the King of France in 1535. After Pisani's resignation, in 1562, Ippolito d'Este held the abbey until his death in 1572. On Prémontré, see pp. 64-65 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁶ A month after Ippolito had arrived in France, Alfonso II wrote that he had still received no news from his uncle. Alfonso II also had an agreement with Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga to exchange every week the news that they were receiving from France and Germany, and Gonzaga too was complaining that he had not heard anything from Paris after Ippolito's arrival at court: ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.61 (16 October 1561); ASMO, CDCPE, Vaticano – Cardinali: Ercole Gonzaga, 1380A/115 (30 October 1561).

¹⁰⁷ All the letters addressed to F. M. Visconti are collected in one manuscript: ASV, Misc. Arm. II, 131.

¹⁰⁸ Not surprisingly, Alvarotti's reports fill some 30 folders and 81 *fascicoli* at the State Archive of Modena. Alvarotti was sometimes flanked by other, less permanent Estense envoys: in the years 1560-1564, Alessandro Fieschi was with him.

¹⁰⁹ This was also true for the Papal Nuncio Santa Croce, who used to rely on the Cardinal of Ferrara whenever he was struggling to obtain a hearing or to arrange a meeting with a French lord: Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 437.

on economic matters: he was trying to obtain a pension of 48,000 francs from the Valois monarchy, the restitution of a loan made by his father Ercole II, and the confirmation of the right of possession of some lands that he had inherited from Renée of France.¹¹⁰ The restitution of the loan had to be postponed to better times (the monarchy was on the verge of bankruptcy and indebted to several French lords and foreign bankers for large amounts of money),¹¹¹ but, thanks to the support of Ippolito and the Duke of Guise, Alvarotti managed to obtain the pension and the payment of the revenues that were due to Alfonso for the lands he owned in Normandy and in Montargis.¹¹²

Ippolito's influence was more effective when he had to take up the defence of Alfonso II's political position rather than the defence of his economic interests. The honour of his own family was of course a matter that affected the Cardinal's personal political weight and therefore, for him, a much more compelling issue. In matters of honour, he also had much more freedom of action, given that the French bureaucracy had little power over issues that were usually addressed directly to the sovereign. This was the case when the Estense ambassador Alvarotti was involved in a quarrell over the right of precedence against the Medicean ambassador. To perform his duties, any ambassador needed to spend a good deal of time sitting in the waiting room of a powerful nobleman who could support his petitions or influence the outcome of an ongoing negotiation, especially when these entailed a monetary concession; in such cases, it was also recommended to strengthen the goodwill of the potential intermediaries by offering them a 'present'.¹¹³ Resident ambassadors were also expected to defend their lord's rank and dignity at every social occasion, and to act as a sort of 'political mirror'.¹¹⁴ This is the reason they often found themselves involved in harsh disputes with other ambassadors over their right of precedence, as the hierarchical disposition of diplomatic representatives at public events, such as religious processions or festive celebrations, did not have a merely symbolic value but also reflected the relationship between a lord and a monarchy and between that same lord and his peers.¹¹⁵ Florence and Ferrara had rivalled each other for about two

¹¹⁰ ASMO, CDA, Francia, 36, fos. 26; 12; 31 (9 February; 24 August; 14 October 1561).

¹¹¹ Ibid., fo. 45 (23 November 1560).

¹¹² ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.65.

¹¹³ As Renée of France once explained to Alvarotti: *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ For an analysis of the political and cultural role of ambassadors in the sixteenth century, see D. Frigo and A. Belton (eds), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy. The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1480-1800* (Cambridge, 2000). Contemporary treatises offered a theorisation of the qualities of the "good ambassador": D. Frigo, 'Virtù politiche e "pratica delle corti": l'immagine dell'ambasciatore tra Cinque e Seicento', in C. Continisio and C. Mozzarelli (eds), *Repubblica e virtù. Pensiero politico e monarchia cattolica fra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome, 1995), pp. 355-376

¹¹⁵ On the crucial importance that all European sovereigns attributed to the precedence, and on the campaign waged by the Spanish ambassadors to change the traditional rankings of the crowns in the second half of the XVI century see: M. A. Visceglia: 'Il cerimoniale come linguaggio del politico. Su alcuni conflitti di precedenza alla corte di Roma tra Cinquecento e Seicento', in C. Brice and M. A. Visceglia (eds), *Cérémonial et rituel à Rome (XVIe-XIXe siècle)* (Rome, 1997), pp. 117-176; M. J. Levin, 'A New World Order. The Spanish Campaign for Precedence in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6/3 (2002), pp. 233-264.

decades, each claiming superiority over the other and alleging royal patents or privileges conceded by foreign rulers to support their claims.¹¹⁶ If the right of precedence may appear as a political abstraction to the eyes of present-day observers, it was definitely not such to the eyes of sixteenth-century political players. Far from representing merely an aristocratic *querelle* with few real consequences, it was a matter that hugely affected diplomatic practice. When, in 1544, Cosimo de' Medici decided for the first time to send a resident ambassador to France, he learned that the Ferrarese representative had been given a privileged position over the Florentine one: rather than accepting that sign of diplomatic inferiority – with all its political implications – Cosimo called his ambassador back to Florence and did not send any other diplomat for the following two years.¹¹⁷

At the time of Ippolito's legation, both Alfonso II and Cosimo de' Medici were already seeking the French monarchy's support to boost their claims of precedence – and this subject was often discussed among the resident ambassadors to Paris¹¹⁸ – the *casus belli* occurred when Alvarotti heard from several people that he would be denied attendance at the feast of Saint Michael because the Queen Mother did not want to prevent the Florentine ambassador from participating, and the two diplomats could not be present at the same time as a consequence of the pending problem of precedence.¹¹⁹ Alerted by this rumour, Alvarotti immediately told Ippolito d'Este; the Cardinal replied that he could not believe that the Queen Mother would do something so disrespectful when he was staying at her court.¹²⁰ Given the privileged relations that traditionally existed between Paris and Ferrara, it is easy to understand why both Alvarotti and the Cardinal interpreted this rumour as a serious and dangerous political precedent – a rumour that, if true, could have undermined their household's position amongst the competing Italian powers. While a rapid inquiry made by Anna d'Este and the Duke of Guise had confirmed that the rumour was true, Alvarotti's peroration

¹¹⁶ The dispute apparently began in Italy in 1541, when Charles V placed the Duke of Este at his right and the Duke of Florence at his left. From that moment, the House of Este claimed their precedence over the Medici. The importance that both households attributed to precedence was such as to engage their respective chancelleries in the production of slanderous pamphlets and self-celebrating apologies, an activity that Ludovico Antonio Muratori condemned about 150 years later: Muratori, *Delle antichità estensi*, ii, pp. 392-393. For a summary (written in 1575) of the dispute over the precedence between Ferrara and Florence in the course of the Sixteenth century, see: *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti*, ed. E. Albèri, s. 2, ii, pp. 402-404. For other disputes over the precedence, see: D. Frigo, 'Guerra e diplomazia: gli stati padani nell'età di Carlo V', in M. Fantoni (ed), *Carlo V e l'Italia* (Rome, 2000), p. 44; Visceglia, 'Il cerimoniale come linguaggio politico', pp. 127-133.

¹¹⁷ The Florentine ambassador was Bernardo de' Medici, bishop of Forlì: *Négociations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ ASMO, CDA, Francia, 36, 13 August 1560.

¹¹⁹ The same problem occurred in March 1562, when Florence and Ferrara were about to send their representatives to the Council of Trent. Cardinal Gonzaga wisely suggested Alfonso II appoint a member of the clergy, because Cosimo had already chosen a layman as his ambassador. This way, the two diplomats would have been assigned a seat in different parts of the room, avoiding the problem of precedence: ASMO, CDCPE, Vaticano – Cardinali: Ercole Gonzaga, 1380A/115, 19 March 1562.

¹²⁰ ASMO, CDA, Francia, 36, fo. 45v (28 September 1561).

addressed to *monsignor* Potto, the Master of Ceremonies, failed to convince her to reverse her decision. Only the intervention of Ippolito, who personally talked to the Queen Mother over dinner and summoned the Duke of Guise to give her further evidence on the privileges that had always been granted to the Duke of Ferrara's envoys, succeeded in restoring Alvarotti's traditional rights and in granting him his usual seat during the ceremony.¹²¹

At the same time, something similar was happening in Spain, where, as we have seen, the Estense ambassador was trying to win Philip II over to Alfonso's cause – a difficult task given that the Duke of Florence was personally related to the powerful house of Toledo on his mother's side and that Cosimo had been allied with the Habsburgs for a long time. Thanks to the frequent letters that both the Estense ambassador and Ippolito's agent to Madrid were addressing to the Cardinal in Paris, Ippolito could complement – and often amend – Alfonso II's instructions to the Estense ambassador. As we have seen, the ambassador himself seemed to rely more upon Ippolito's advice than Alfonso's, and to consider the Cardinal as the ultimate protector of the household's prestige. The aggressive diplomatic strategy that Alfonso II was pursuing in Spain – which also entailed the diffusion of propaganda pamphlets¹²² – was about to prove ineffective, and the Cardinal feared the intervention of Pius IV, whose election had been warmly supported by Cosimo de' Medici and on whose preference between Ferrara and Florence there could hardly be any doubt.¹²³ The fact that the international situation was overall so unfavourable to the claims of the Duchy of Ferrara meant that everything that was happening in Paris acquired, by reflection, more importance, and that the preservation and enhancement of Ferrara's power had necessarily to pass through the French monarchy.

¹²¹ Ibid. Alfonso II wrote to Ippolito to thank him: ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.60 (16 October 1561).

¹²² Fulvio Rangoni wrote to the Cardinal that he believed it would be more appropriate to 'tacer poi le invettive et le accuse della casa de Medici, che non facevano al caso [...] nominandolo in voce poi pubblicamente pescatore di pane et mercantuccio': *ibid.* (1 May 1562). In March 1562, Alfonso had had news of an anonymous pamphlet that contained a 'nota d'infamia ai nostri maggiori', to which he had therefore decided 'to reply with my own': ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.65 (19 March 1562).

¹²³ In March 1561, Alfonso II had already entrusted his uncle, Don Francesco d'Este, with a mission to the Vatican, to express Alfonso's dissatisfaction about the disparity of the treatment reserved to him and Cosimo de' Medici: 'Tutti gli honori et ricevimenti regii fatti da Vostra Santità al Duca di Fiorenza [...] et quelli fatti al Signor Duca mio nepote molto inferiori, [...] delli quali il signor Duca si vorrà valer come di atti nuovamente fatti in cospetto del mondo': ASMO, CDA, Roma, 66, 321.1 (*Istruzione a voi Conte Hercole Tassoni*). Pius IV had subsequently asked the two dukes to submit their respective claims to the Vatican and to accept his own deliberation on the matter. Alfonso's complaints, however, put Ferrara in a diplomatic deadlock: the Pope asked Ferrara and Florence to submit their respective claims to the Vatican and to accept the Pope's deliberation on the precedence – an official request that was difficult to dismiss, but that was also coming from a Pope whom the Este knew partial to Florence. Whilst Alfonso II wrote to the Cardinal that he was 'ben risoluto a non rimettermi a quel giuditio', Ippolito warned his nephew about the tricky diplomatic situation in which the Pope's intervention had put them (perché 'si come s'ha d'aspettar molto poco favor da quella banda, così da l'altro canto penso che il non contentarla sarà per far restar Sua Santità mal sodisfatta'): ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XX.60 (15 October 1561); 150, 1709.XXVI.44 (20 November 1561).

Prospero Santa Croce and Ippolito d'Este's relationship with the French royal court changed when they became the intermediaries of the economic negotiation between Paris and Rome. Rather than trying to win over the monarchy to the Catholic cause, they were now sought after to sponsor the *avances* that the Queen Mother was making to the Vatican to obtain the money she needed. In April 1562, the Constable Montmorency asked Prospero Santa Croce to inquire whether the Pope was willing to pay 200.000 *scudi* to the French Kingdom, and not long after the Queen Mother approached Ippolito d'Este with the same request.¹²⁴ The Cardinal forwarded Catherine's call for help to Rome and provided another demonstration of the *realpolitik* spirit that, as we have seen, had always characterised his behaviour as a legate: he suggested to Pius IV that he accept the Queen Mother's request, not only to defend the survival of Catholicism in France, but also to be able to claim his credit back in future and demand the cancellation of the much-hated edicts of tolerance.¹²⁵ Upon Catherine de' Medici's request, on 29 April 1562 Ippolito's secretary abbot Niquet was dispatched to Rome to set the terms of the financial agreement between the French crown and the Vatican. When Niquet came back from his mission, more than a month later, Ippolito d'Este found himself once again in the very difficult position of being caught between the expectations and needs of the Vatican and the French monarchy. The Pope had agreed to pay France 200.000 *scudi*, but he had also listened to Ippolito's advice and decided to use this economic aid as a leverage to obtain what he had not been able to obtain thus far: a declaration of loyalty to the Roman Church, both religiously and politically. If Pius IV was keen to secure the predominance of Catholicism in France by supporting the Valois monarchy, he was also keen to secure the predominance of Catholicism within the Valois monarchy by requiring very precise political assurances before disbursing the money. Those assurances – which entailed much more than the mere abrogation of the edicts of tolerance – were: an official promise that the war would exclusively pursue the interest of Catholicism, the cancellation of the decree approved by the Estates General on the papal revenues, the cancellation of the edicts favourable to the Huguenots and the immediate removal of all 'suspected characters' from the court, in particular the chancellor Michel de l'Hôpital.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, the Pope arranged for 25,000 *scudi* in *lettere di cambio* to be withdrawn

¹²⁴ *Lettres du Cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 145.

¹²⁵ Ippolito to Cardinal Borromeo (27 April 1562): 'Oltre che obbligherà questo regno tuttavia più alla protezione della Sedia Apostolica, leverà l'occasione di metter mai più innanzi né editti né cose che diminuiscono l'autorità di quella': *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 407. On Rome's response to the edicts, see: Tallon, 'Rome et les premiers edits', p. 39.

¹²⁶ Sùsta, *Die Römische Curie*, ii, p. 463-465. On the removal of de l'Hôpital, Ippolito wrote to Alfonso II that the only way to obtain it would have been to put him on trial, and this was made difficult by the fact that the chancellor regularly attended mass, took confession and generally behaved as a good Catholic: ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVII.24 (15 June 1562). Pius IV's suspicion had probably been aroused by the news he had received in March from the papal nuncio

in Antwerp, instructing his legate to bestow them to the French crown only upon acceptance of all the conditions attached. The remaining sum would be paid over a period of three months, half of it being a 'gift' and half a loan to be paid back with interest. On 15 June, Ippolito d'Este informed the Queen Mother of Pius IV's conditions and she became so distressed that the Cardinal did not manage to get through the whole list.¹²⁷ On the same day, Ippolito wrote to his nephew Alfonso II that, in his opinion, the assurances requested by the Vatican were 'impossible to obtain'.¹²⁸

After 'many battles'¹²⁹ to persuade the French crown to comply with Pius IV's requests, in July the Cardinal of Ferrara decided to overcome this political impasse by exploiting the fluidity that his hybrid role of prince-legate offered him:

Because of the conditions put forward by His Holiness, I can now say that I have never found myself in such a state of perplexity and distress, as I see that I cannot satisfy both His Holiness's orders and the needs of princes of such a nature at the same time. I really hope that he can be sure that I have never been one of those who do not mind harming their masters in order to make themselves agreeable to the lords they are staying with [...]. I see that their need is so compelling that [...] I will not know how to deny them those 25,000 *scudi*, not because I intend to invalidate my aforementioned statement but because I think I could do something on my own, and His Holiness will not bear any obligation, as this will be done as though he had lent that money to me: if the money will be paid, and he will not think it a good choice, I will immediately pay him back, either in Antwerp or in any other place of his choice.¹³⁰

As he had preannounced, Ippolito d'Este paid the 25,000 *scudi* to the French court without receiving any of the required assurances.¹³¹ By doing so, he clearly trespassed the boundary of what was a legitimate code of conduct for a diplomatic envoy. There are few doubts that a more 'regular' diplomat could have hardly thought of doing the same, not only because it explicitly contradicted Pius IV's orders, but also because the amount of money involved in the transaction was so large that only a man from the highest ranks of society could have afforded to pay it from his own income. From this economic scenario, one can really see the fluidity of the Cardinal's role, and his inherent 'Frenchness': he was probably the first one to think of his political and economic welfare

Santa Croce about a meeting between de l'Hôpital and the brothers Cardinal Chatillon and Prince of Condé, two of the leaders of the Huguenot faction: *Lettres du Cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 91.

¹²⁷ *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 418. When the Cardinal of Ferrara reiterated his offer on the following day, the Queen Mother replied that there was no need to abrogate the edicts given that France was already at war against the Huguenots, that she could not reverse a decision made by the Estates General and that she refused to let the Pope instruct her on the way of selecting and employing her officials: *ibid.*, p. 423.

¹²⁸ ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXVII.24 (15 June 1562).

¹²⁹ 16 June 1562: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 424.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹³¹ After many negotiations, at the end of the year 1562 the Cardinal of Ferrara managed to obtain the abrogation of the edict on the annates. In January 1563, he could therefore forward to Rome a copy of the royal decree signed by the King that cancelled the 'prohibitioni fatte et imposte per il nostro detto editto et ordinationi d'Orleans': ASV, Misc., Arm. II, 13, pp. 464-466.

as strongly tied to the destiny of the French kingdom, given that his private fortune largely relied upon his French benefices (and some of them had already been destroyed during the first outbursts of military violence)¹³² and he was therefore personally interested in preserving the social order that was at stake because of the ongoing war. It is not surprising, then, that the French aristocracy seemed to have established a ‘peer-to-peer’ relationship with him and acknowledged his double role of papal emissary and ‘private citizen’ with major interests in the Kingdom. If this situation guaranteed the Cardinal many privileges and freedom of action, it also meant that it was particularly difficult to him to dismiss the Cardinal of Lorraine’s reiterated requests to pay the 25,000 *scudi* donated by the Pope, as Lorraine was not only France’s most powerful clergyman but, as the brother-in-law of his niece Anna d’Este, one of Ippolito’s most important points of reference at the French court (and, as we have seen, the person who had made possible Luigi d’Este’s appointment to the bishopric of Auch). This ambivalence is made clearer by another episode of an economic nature. As the French monarchy was desperately trying to raise the money necessary to fund the war, some of the greatest lords of the Kingdom were asked to contribute: both the King of Navarre and Cardinal Lorraine paid 20,000 francs, while other noblemen paid 10,000 francs each. Ippolito d’Este was the only non-French lord who took part in the fundraising and endowed the monarchy with 10,000 francs.¹³³ Furthermore, Ippolito’s outstanding position within the French ecclesiastical ranks had just been further improved by the death of Cardinal Tournon: because of the right of *regressus* that the Cardinal of Ferrara held on many of Tournon’s benefices (some as important as the bishopric of Lyon),¹³⁴ he suddenly gained 40,000 francs in income – and that was the money he used when he was requested to pay his 10,000 franc share to the French crown.¹³⁵

The management of the papal loan clearly shows that the Cardinal of Ferrara was ready to exploit the fluidity that his multi-faceted position allowed him, and he did it both consciously and

¹³² The Florentine ambassador Tornabuoni to Cosimo de Medici (5 May 1562): ‘A Blois hanno abbruciato una badia bellissima che era di Tournon, pervenuta al cardinale di Ferrara, con certi altri luoghi, che furono tutti guasti’: *Negotiations diplomatiques*, iii, p. 476.

¹³³ Ippolito d’Este to Cardinal Borromeo on 28-29 April 1562: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 408.

¹³⁴ Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, iii, p. 230.

¹³⁵ ‘Sperando di poter satisfare con queste entrate che mi sono accresciute per la morte del Cardinal di Tornone’: *Miscellanea novo ordine*, p. 408. Prospero Santa Croce wrote to Cardinal Borromeo on 29 April 1562 that ‘Monsignor Illustrissimo Legato per certi regressi guadagna quaranta mille franchi d’intrata’: *Lettres du Cardinal di Santa Croce*, p. 159. The Ferrarese ambassador Alvarotti estimated that Tournon’s death had benefited Ippolito with around 36,000-40,000 francs of extra income: ASMO, CDA, Francia, 37, fo. 25r (23 April 1562).

skilfully. As an actor who changes his costume whenever he needs to play a different role, Ippolito shifted from ‘prince’ to ‘legate’ and back, in order to pursue his own agenda of self-promotion and defend the privileges of the Este household. The Pope himself had acknowledged Ippolito’s polymorphous characteristics when he appointed him to the French legation, in the hope that Ippolito’s personal prestige and connections would make up for the imposition of a Papal envoy. Pius IV had also sanctioned Ippolito’s ambivalence when he had entrusted him with a secret negotiation between the Vatican and the Queen of England: given that Elizabeth refused to listen to any official Vatican diplomatic emissary, the Cardinal of Ferrara had been allowed to approach the Queen by letter as a member of a ruling family and not as a legate of the Pope, as Pius IV’s involvement had to remain secret.¹³⁶

As we have seen in this chapter, though, Ippolito’s powers turned to be a double-edged sword for the Vatican, as he could bank on his good relationship with the monarchy whenever he was being criticised by the Roman curia (and when the Pope blamed him for having attended the Huguenot sermon, Ippolito could reply that he had participated as a member of a ruling family and not as a legate of the Pope). Furthermore, the Cardinal had too many private interests with the French Crown to take the risk of displeasing the Queen Mother and the court (as the former Nuncio had done), even when the development of the political situation would have made it recommendable. If the Cardinal was willing to exploit all the freedom of action that his peculiar situation allowed him, it is also true that his position forced him to always consider the consequences of his actions from a perspective that encompassed all his clashing roles and polychrome obligations: this appears particularly evident in the case of the papal loan, when he exploited his personal power to dodge Pius IV’s instructions but was induced to do so by the heavy expectations of the house of Guise. The fact that Ippolito d’Este was at the same time the member of a ruling family, the Papal legate and a man with wide private interests in France meant that each of these identities reflected some of their political shadows on the others. We have seen that this plurality could be actively exploited by Ippolito d’Este to enhance his private fortune; however, precisely because his private fortune relied on so many factors, this same plurality could be exploited by others as a powerful means of persuasion.

¹³⁶ This episode, which does not seem to be very well known, is analysed in Bayne, *Anglo-Roman Relations*, pp. 133-158. On the diplomatic relation between England and the Holy See, see also Bartlett, ‘Papal Policy and the English Crown’, pp. 643-659.

PART III

1. LUIGI D'ESTE'S SUCCESSION

*Potrà in vita mia promettersi di me tutto quel che si possa d'amorevolissimo padre, et dopo di me esser sicuro di haver
tanto che si potrà tener contento*
Ippolito II d'Este¹

The last years of Ippolito d'Este's ecclesiastical career were mostly spent in his villa in Tivoli, a hillside town a few kilometres away from Rome that enjoyed a healthier climate and had become the cardinal's retreat. Compared to the events of the previous decades, Ippolito's elder years were fairly unremarkable. However, they overlapped with the beginning of his nephew's rise as one of the wealthiest cardinals of his time – mostly thanks to Ippolito's inheritance – and they are therefore worth describing from the perspective of a handover of power within a shared familial strategy.

Luigi d'Este, Ippolito's nephew and Ercole II's second-born son, had been destined to become a prince of the church for the same reason that had motivated, a few decades before, the family's efforts to gain Ippolito the red hat – that is to say, in order to inherit and later pass on the considerable number of benefices accumulated by the previous generation of ecclesiastics, and in order to have a spokesperson for the family's interests in the curia.² We have already seen in chapter II.2 'Serving the Family' that, in 1554, Duke Ercole II had obtained Luigi's succession to the bishopric of Ferrara – which was held by Cardinal Salviati, a friend of the Este – despite Luigi's

¹ 'He [Don Luigi d'Este] will be able to expect from me, during my life, everything one can expect from a much loving father, and, past me, he will be sure to have enough to be happy'. From a letter sent by the cardinal of Ferrara to his nephew, Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 150, 20 April 1560.

² The only existing extensive work on Luigi d'Este are Pacifici, 'Luigi d'Este' and G. Campori and A. Solerti, *Luigi, Lucrezia e Leonora d'Este* (Turin, 1888). A more up-to-date perspective (and a richer bibliography) is in P. Portone, 'Este, Luigi d'', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1993). Also useful is Chiappini, *Gli Estensi*, pp. 273-277. Luigi's life and relationships with some prominent artists of his time are considered in M. Bizzarrini, 'Marenzio and Cardinal Luigi d'Este', *Early Music*, 27/4 (1999), pp. 519-532; id., *Luca Marenzio. The Career of a Musician Between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation* (Aldershot, 1998), chap. 3; G. Campori, 'Gio. Battista della Porta e il Cardinale Luigi d'Este', *Atti e memorie delle RR deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi*, VI (1872), pp. 165-190.

young age and in competition with Ippolito's own hopes for that bishopric.³ The next and consequential step was to make sure that Luigi would be promoted to the cardinalate. After Ercole II's death in 1559, the effort to advance Luigi's position in the clergy was taken up by his uncle, Ippolito, who was certainly more knowledgeable about curial politics than the new duke, Alfonso II, and who could use his influence not just as a cardinal but also as one of the leaders of the French faction. Whilst, in the thirties, Ippolito's promotion had been delayed by the ongoing clash that was between Ferrara and the Vatican, this time the political conjuncture was certainly more favourable to the Este. According to Ippolito's own words, he and the Cardinal of Guise were immediately promised Luigi's promotion by the newly-elected Pius IV, as a reward for having supported him during the conclave.⁴ Opposition to this plan, however, came from Luigi himself, who was not keen to embrace an ecclesiastical career and was hoping to marry some rich French noblewoman instead. Luigi's rebellion against this plan that his family had set up for him went as far as to send an express courier from France – where he had been staying since 1558 – in which he required his brother and uncle to refrain from pursuing his cardinalate any further.⁵

The negotiation between Ippolito and Alfonso II, on one side, and the very recalcitrant Luigi, on the other, continued for a year. In this period, a stream of letters and emissaries from both Rome and Ferrara flowed to France in order to convince Luigi to abide by the family's will and to agree to do – as Ippolito put it – 'something that is of such importance for the service and the reputation of [...] all our house'.⁶ Ippolito d'Este ascribed his nephew's rebellion firstly to the disadvantageous terms of Ercole II's will, which, as was tradition, had left Luigi 'with no jurisdiction' in order to pass on his wealth and the dukedom to his first-born son, and, secondly, to Luigi's personality, 'which inclines more to the secular way than to the ecclesiastical one'.⁷ At the same time, however, the cardinal suspected the influence of Luigi's mother, Renée of France, whose Calvinist faith – as Ippolito feared – might have stirred in Luigi a dislike for the Roman clergy. The fact that Ippolito had heard rumours that his nephew had set eyes on a French lady

³ See chapter II.2 'Serving the family' in this thesis.

⁴ Three days after Pius IV's election, Ippolito d'Este wrote to Alfonso II about the outcome of his meeting with the new pontiff: 'Fra l'altre gratie di che noi supplicammo sua santità, la richiedemmo di dar il capello al signor Don Luigi nostro, il che ella ci promise molto prontamente. Vero è che ci disse che ne la prossima promotione non intendeva di comprender altri che i suoi nipoti, et che ne l'altre che farebbe di poi non mancherebbe d'honorare esso signore senza fallo': ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXIV.21 (28 December 1559). See also Ippolito's following letter: *ibid.*, 1709.XXIV.22 (4 January 1560).

⁵ As Ippolito wrote to Alfonso II: 'L'havermi esso signore con la lettera predetta espeditammi per corriere espresso posto le mani innanzi non solo con prohibirmi di farne opra, ma di obviar ogni volta che Vostra Eccellenza la procurasse, mi ha ritenuto di passar più oltre': ASMO, CS, 150, 1709.XXIV.28 (1 February 1560).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*; ASMO, CS, 150, 20 April 1560.

who was a cousin of the prince of Condé – who was a Protestant and who was generally believed to be the mind behind the Conspiracy of Amboise – alarmed him further and strengthened his conviction that Renée was supporting her son’s plan. More than the religious implications (Ippolito briefly commented on his nephew’s supposed Calvinist sympathy by merely saying that ‘it cannot bring him [Luigi] or our house anything good’), however, the cardinal of Ferrara feared a loss of reputation in the curia and the decrease of his family’s importance in Rome, to the advantage of other Italian dynasties.⁸

After much insistence on his family’s part, Luigi d’Este returned to Italy and was eventually made cardinal by Pius IV in the consistory of 26 February 1561. His acceptance of the red hat preceded only by a few months Ippolito’s mission to Paris as the papal legate. During his stay in France, Ippolito committed himself to obtain the transfer of his episcopal see of Auch to Luigi, which, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, was confirmed by the pope in October 1563. On that occasion, due to the legislation against the accumulation of benefices, Luigi had to resign the Este’s home bishopric of Ferrara in order to take up Auch. Ferrara remained nonetheless firmly within the duchy’s sphere of influence as Luigi was replaced by Alfonso Rossetti, one of Ercole II’s most trustworthy advisors and ambassadors.⁹ In the meantime, Ippolito also secured a royal brevet that granted Luigi the right to succeed him, after his death, to the abbey of Chaalis, one of the wealthiest benefices of France.¹⁰ Compared to the opportunities that were available to Luigi at the very beginning of his career, it was undeniable that the cardinal of Ferrara, as he himself wrote to Alfonso II, had undertaken ‘at a more mature age the same profession, with less income than what he [Luigi] will have, with no support, and with little hope’.¹¹ Whilst Ippolito d’Este had inherited from his uncle, the first cardinal Ippolito, the archdiocese of Milan and his benefices within the Estense duchy, it had been his own connection with France that ultimately built his fortune and provided him with an unprecedented portfolio of benefices, which Luigi could now hope to take up. From this perspective, Ippolito d’Este can be considered as the founder of his family’s ecclesiastical tradition, and Luigi’s career could only develop along the path that had been

⁸ All these considerations are contained in a series of letters that Ippolito sent to Alfonso II between February and April 1560: ASMO, CS, 150 (1 February, 15 February, 13 April and 20 April 1560).

⁹ Luigi reserved for himself all the revenues of Ferrara except 1.000 *scudi*, which were assigned to the new bishop Rossetti. The importance of keeping Ferrara within the family was such that when, soon after his promotion to the cardinalate, Luigi fell gravely ill, Ippolito and Alfonso were quick to send an envoy to Rome to ask for the pope’s special permission to transfer the bishopric to Ippolito in case of his nephew’s death – and with Ippolito’s promise that he would later resign either Ferrara or Auch (‘che fra sei mesi havessi a lasciare o questo o l’altro che mi trovo, che d’altro modo la cosa non havria potuto passare, anzi così la gratia sarebbe molto segnalata’): ASMO, CS, 150, 24 August 1561.

¹⁰ ASMO, CS, 409, 2056.XVI.1 (18 May 1561). On Chaalis, see chapter I.3 ‘A cardinal protector’s wealth’ in this thesis.

¹¹ Ippolito to Alfonso II: ASMO, CS, 150 (20 April 1560).

laid before him by his uncle: as in Ippolito’s case before him, the bulk of Luigi’s ecclesiastical properties was, from the very beginning, rooted in France rather than in Italy – as his choice of keeping Auch over Ferrara shows.

The transfer of the cardinal’s fortune to his nephew, however, did not go smoothly. Between 1567 and 1571, a clash rose between uncle and nephew regarding Ippolito’s French benefices. In 1566, Ippolito d’Este had obtained from the French monarchy, in consideration of his ‘old age and indisposition caused by his illness of gout’, the permission to name the cardinal who would succeed him to the post of cardinal protector whenever he decided to resign. Against all expectations, he did not name his nephew but Cardinal Vitelli, who was on very good terms with the French crown and who also held the post of cardinal camerlengo.¹² The reason for this decision is most likely to be found in Luigi’s attempt to ensure that his uncle’s benefices would be assigned to him after his death – something that he achieved through the issue of a royal brevet, but without Ippolito’s permission.¹³ After the death of Cardinal Vitelli, in 1568, Luigi eventually obtained a royal patent as ‘procureur et vicaire et coadiuteur’ to his uncle in the exercise of the protectorship, along with the right to succeed him in the position after his death.¹⁴ As the cardinal of Ferrara remained in charge as the cardinal protector until his death, in 1572, and as there is no record of any activity related to the episcopal appointments performed by Luigi, the patent of ‘vicar’ to the protectorship was most likely meant to seal Luigi’s future succession to the full position of protector rather than to provide a vice-protector or an assistant to the functions of the main post-holder.¹⁵ In 1571, Luigi undertook a journey to France where he was again granted royal permission to succeed to all of Ippolito’s French benefices. Subsequently, as Ippolito’s health was deteriorating and he was in Rome, the French monarchy sent a request to the pope to waive the clause *ad sedem apostolicam* to which Ippolito’s French benefices would have been otherwise subject, and to let the future appointments be decided by the monarchy (obviously in favour of Luigi).¹⁶

By the time Ippolito died, in 1572, some sort of reconciliation must have taken place between uncle and nephew, because the dying cardinal drafted a will in which he split his fortune

¹² ASMO, CS, 390, 2038.VI.30 (22 June 1566).

¹³ Luigi obtained a royal brevet from king Charles IX that allowed him to succeed to all his uncle’s benefices in the kingdom: ASMO, CS, 409, 2056.XVI.2 all. (16 August 1567). The fact that this had been obtained without Ippolito’s approval is mentioned in a series of letters that Alfonso II sent to the cardinal to try to reconcile him with Luigi: ASMO, CS, 85, 1655.XXI.53 (14 April 1567); *ibid.*, 1685.XXI.68 (15 November 1567). On the dispute between Ippolito and Luigi, see also Pacifici, *Ippolito II*, pp. 338-340.

¹⁴ ASMO, CS, 409, *Lettere del Re Carlo IX sopra la protezione di Francia* (11 January 1569).

¹⁵ The last ledger recording Ippolito’s earnings from his French ecclesiastical appointments is dated to 1570. Throughout his life, Luigi held very similar account books: the first to record the taxes that were due to him as the cardinal protector is dated 1572: ASMO, CS, 962; 1313.

¹⁶ ASMO, CS, 409, 11 October 1571.

equally between his nephews Alfonso II and Luigi d’Este. To the latter, Ippolito also bequeathed his villa in Tivoli and his Roman palace of Montecavallo, clearly with the intention of providing his successor in the curia with the best means to represent their family’s splendour in Rome. Ippolito’s concern that the Este would carry on the ecclesiastical tradition of which he had been the most accomplished expression, is well demonstrated by the fact that he also required that his Roman properties would be left, after Luigi’s death, to the next generation of Este cardinals.¹⁷

After Ippolito’s death, Luigi d’Este eventually succeeded to his uncle’s French benefices and to the protectorship of the monarchy *en cour de Rome*. His enviable position was well summarized by the Venetian ambassador to Ferrara, who, in 1575, wrote the following description of the cardinal d’Este:

[Luigi d’Este], who is the protector of that crown [the French crown], is much loved by the king, and he has in that kingdom more than sixty-thousand *scudi* of ecclesiastical revenues, given to him by the late king [...] He has about ninety-thousand *scudi* a year to spend, and he does spend them, and for this reason, and for his position and family, he is very much loved and appreciated in the Roman and in the French courts.¹⁸

If the Venetian diplomat’s estimate is to be believed, then Luigi d’Este was even richer than his uncle. Besides the bishopric of Auch and the abbey of Saint-Chinian, which his uncle had left him whilst he was still alive, Luigi also inherited the twelve abbeys that Ippolito held *in commendam* at the moment of his death, in 1572. By 1575, he held Saint-Chinian, the group of Ippolito’s twelve abbeys, and two more.¹⁹ Furthermore, after Ippolito’s death, Luigi received the administration of the diocese of Narbonne, on which he also held the *regressus*. Because Narbonne had fallen under the control of the Huguenots during the wars of religion, Luigi never formally took possession of it, but rented it out in the years from 1575 to 1579. He eventually resigned it in 1581 to François de Joyeuse, in exchange for 20.000 *livres* worth of ecclesiastical revenues to be extracted from ‘some peaceful and safe abbeys’ in the areas that were firmly under the control of the monarchy.²⁰ Not

¹⁷ ‘Sua Signoria Illustrissima lascia heredi per ugal portioni l’Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo signor Duca di Ferrara e l’Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo signor Cardinal da Este di tutti suoi beni [...] fuor che de Montecavallo e delle cose de Tivoli [...] le qual cose Sua Signoria Illustrissima lascia da vantaggio all’Illustrissimo signor Cardinal da Este, con questo che doppo la morte di Sua Signoria Illustrissima detti lochi [...] restino al Cardinal che si trovava allhora più propinquo alla casa da Este’: ASMO, CS, 390, 2038.VI.74; 75.

¹⁸ *Relazione degli ambasciatori veneti*, ed. Albèri, s.2, ii, p. 419.

¹⁹ The twelve abbeys that Luigi inherited from Ippolito were: Chaalis, Saint-Médard de Soissons, Longpont, Prémontré, Notre-Dame de Breteuil, Saint-Georges de Boscherville, Notre-Dame de Lyre, Saint-Laumer de Blois, Saint-Mesmin de Micy, Pontigny, Boulbonne, and ‘un’aultre petite abbaye de mil deux cent livres de revenu’: ASMO, CS, 410, *Abbayes appartenants à Mons. le Rev.me Cardinal de Ferrare*. A list of Luigi’s abbeys in 1575 is in *ibid.*, 410 (March 1575).

²⁰ ASMO, CS, 409, 2056.XVI.42-54; *ibid.*, 409, *Replica fatta...*; *ibid.*, 409, *Proposta fatta...*

only did Luigi eventually inherit all of his uncle’s French benefices, but, in 1576, he also obtained a brevet that transferred to him the payment of large sums of money that the French crown had owed to Ippolito d’Este since the fifties, in the form of some pensions that the monarchy had given him to make up for the loss of a few benefices. In order to cash in his uncle’s pending pensions, Luigi’s agents tracked back the history of Ippolito’s possessions in France and thoroughly calculated that the money that was owed still amounted to 120.000 *scudi*, and eventually engaged in a legal dispute with the French royal treasury.²¹

Because the wars of religion in France had occasionally affected lands and properties, Luigi’s agents also filed an incredible number of law suits aimed at restoring their lord’s rights over the territories and properties that used to be attached to the benefices that Luigi had inherited from Ippolito.²² Similarly, the cardinal’s agents claimed all the rents that were still pending from the years in which Ippolito was the archbishop of Narbonne. This very intense managerial activity, which one can follow through Luigi’s documents and which was mainly aimed at restoring the integrity of Luigi’s inheritance in France, signals that the modalities with which Luigi d’Este administrated his assets in France were dramatically different from those which his uncle had used before him. This activity also shows the ways in which the understanding and management of ‘ecclesiastical property’ was changing – even in the case of a pluralistic and princely cardinal like Luigi d’Este.

For the mechanisms through which Luigi pursued his financial interests demonstrate a much more sophisticated administrative energy than is visible in the managerial work of his uncle. Whilst Ippolito, in order to enhance or maintain his position in France, seems to have primarily sought the favour of the monarch as well as that of other powerful players within the French court (such as the Guise), Luigi appears to have reinforced this approach with a concerted use of the ‘more institutional’ channels offered by the French state. This is particularly evident in the case of Luigi’s claim to Ippolito’s pensions, in which the general vicar of Cardinal d’Este pointed out that part of the problem in receiving this money was in the fact that ‘the cardinal of Ferrara [...] never negotiated with this chamber [the French treasury], but only went through the King’s private council and the King’s brevets’.²³ Luigi agents, on the other hand, sought the enhancement of their

²¹ Luigi claimed the pension that had been due to Ippolito for the loss of Brescello during the Italian wars (in 1554), and those that had been promised him (and never fully paid) when the king had asked him to resign to other prelates his bishopric of Arles and his abbey of Saint Martin d’Ainay (in 1566). For the years 1572-1576, the cardinal d’Este claimed 60.000 *scudi*. For the years 1577-1581, he claimed 40.000 *scudi*, for a total amount of 120.000: ASMO, CS, 410, 2056.XVIII.9 (22 February 1584).

²² ASMO, CS, 409, 2056.XVI.31; *ibid.*, 409, 2056.XVI.31 all., *Distintione de processi di Parigi*.

²³ ASMO, CS, 410, 2056.XVIII.9.

lord’s finances through negotiations with both the personal figures of the monarchy and the local and central institutions and their representatives. This was pursued through a centralised and much more professionalised body of agents and secretaries that responded to a general vicar and a general treasurer, both stationed in Paris. This centralisation did not prevent – or indeed aid – an attention to the local dimension of Luigi’s French assets that functioned as another characteristic of the Cardinal’s management that, in comparison to Ippolito’s, constitutes a novelty: when Luigi’s general vicar left his post, in 1580, the instructions provided to his successor clearly stated that one of his main responsibilities was to take care to maintain a good relationship with the king’s local representatives (such as the royal bailiffs),²⁴ and we have already seen that the territorial and jurisdictional integrity of each benefice was defended through an intense legal activity that cost almost as much as Luigi’s living expenses for his entire household in Paris.²⁵

The transfer of wealth and assets from Ippolito to Luigi was motivated primarily by *raison d’etat*. As we have seen, however, Luigi’s succession to his uncle’s benefices did not fully take place within a shared familial strategy, as the clash between him and Ippolito spoilt the process during Ippolito’s last years and could only be completed after his death. Rather than behaving as united force, uncle and nephew emerged, for a period, as rivals in obtaining the French monarchy’s favour – Ippolito refusing to give way to Luigi’s rise and Luigi trying to take hold of Ippolito’s benefices without his approval. Whilst Ippolito’s ultimate yielding to Luigi of the benefices over which they were arguing suggests precisely the priority for Ippolito of the Este dynasty, it is interesting to consider how the properties which were the cause of their familial disagreements were not actually their property in any formal way. Rather, these disagreements, the rivalries that uncle and nephew were continually enacting, in Ippolito’s final years were always mediated by external powers – by the papacy and the French crown – who endowed them with this wealth and status in the first instance. The achievement of a continuity of lineage within the church property was sought, in the case of the Este, through the enhancement of their benefices in France and the exploitation of their personal relationships with the court and the aristocracy – something that was certainly an effective way of procuring wealth and power, but that, from a historical perspective, displays a significant degree of precariousness and instability. In fact, whilst we know of Italian families who became naturalised as French subjects, and who managed to maintain control over particular ecclesiastical benefices over generations, the Este’s wealth in France – although certainly larger – never resulted

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 410, 2056.XVII.4 (20 November 1580).

²⁵ From 1575 to 1580, Luigi spent 22.000 *scudi* to maintain his household. The expenses his general vicar faced to conduct his legal challenges amounted to 20.000 *scudi*: ASMO, CS, 410, 2056.XVII.31.

in their racination in the territory, and, as such, whilst the ecclesiastical vocation of the family persisted, their presence in France ended with Luigi.

CONCLUSIONS

We have examined the variety of roles that the Cardinal of Ferrara held throughout his career: princely cardinal with papal ambitions; representative of the French king both within the clergy, as cardinal protector, and in the context of a secular conflict, as governor of Siena; member of a ruling family; and, lastly, papal legate. None of these roles did Ippolito d'Este perform independently of the others. We have seen that the coexistence of different levels of allegiances complicated the exercise of the specific functions that were associated to each of these roles. Never, throughout Ippolito's career, do we see one role fully dominating the others: on the contrary, the changeability of the dynamics between these different functions and duties allowed a continuous renegotiation of the Cardinal's multi-faceted identities.

The role of "princely cardinal" entailed, in itself, a character of ambiguity: the double fidelity that this kind of figure owed to the two powers that they represented – Roman church and dynasty – and the fact that these might often become conflicted resulted in an inherent tension. The Vatican was a central political player and a state entity as much as any other territorial dominion, but also a diplomatic centre of European significance and, often, a provider of social promotion. For this reason, especially, Italian rulers and patrician families were keen to maintain a privileged channel of communication with the curia, through which to pursue their own enhancement, and to build networks of alliances through which they could influence Vatican decision-making. In the context of Ferrara, the fact that the papacy was both the original source of the duke's authority over part of his land and, according to the political agenda decided by each pope, also a player in the Italian conflicts made the need of a family representative in the curia instrumental to the preservation of the duchy's integrity.

The first part of this thesis seeks to analyse at Ippolito d'Este as a representative of the French monarchy in the Roman curia, a dimension that further complicated the conflict of interest that was inherent to the role of princely cardinal. Whilst the kingdom of France was the source of

Ippolito's ascent and safeguard of his ecclesiastical wealth, his post of cardinal protector of the crown contributed to the problematic element in his relationships with the Vatican by adding another allegiance external to the curia – which was, in the form of the protectorship, also a symptom of the growth and empowerment of national monarchies. Ippolito d'Este's tenure of the post can certainly be seen as transitional and, compared to the seventeenth-century developments in the institution of the protectorship, provisional: it was subject to the greater struggle that opposed the French monarchy and the Vatican in conflict over the right to manage the ecclesiastical property in the French kingdom. A role that was mainly honorific, then, in the course of a generation, became much more institutionalised and regimented (as we can see in the different way Luigi d'Este's protectorship worked), reflecting a separation of spheres of influence between the monarchy and the papacy that, until the end of the sixteenth century, was still amenable to a partial renegotiation.

Whilst the dispute between the Vatican and the King of France over Church properties in France never forced Ippolito d'Este to take one side rather than the other, his loyalty to the French crown became a factor of high instability when he took up the post of governor of Siena, in 1552. In this case, the situation of conflict involved all the powers that the cardinal somehow represented. Furthermore, it revealed the clash between the European alliances – which contributed to outline the geopolitical map of the small Italian states – and the network of local relationships between the Italian players, amongst which stood Ferrara. Ercole II's reluctance to associate his duchy with French military operations and to the Sienese conflict was ultimately matched by Ippolito's attempt to avoid an outburst of hostility in Tuscany – an occurrence that would have exposed himself and Ferrara to the unpredictability of war.

The working of the relationships inherent to the Este dynasty were thus deeply affected, in the fifties, by Ippolito's association with the French crown. We have seen how, behind the image of unity that was conveyed to the outside world, there lay tensions and rivalries between Ercole and Ippolito, and how the cardinal's pro-French stance could not only be a source of problems for Ferrara's advocated neutrality, but it could also be exploited by the Duke to the detriment of his brother's possessions in the duchy. After Cateau-Cambresis and Ercole II's death, however, the divergence of political identities that had characterised Ippolito's and Ercole's years was overcome in the context of a new setting for the Estense duchy and of the geopolitical situation. The fact that the Cardinal took charge of Alfonso II's diplomacy and steered it towards Spain signals that the French retreat from Italy and the death of Henry II had had more serious consequences for the Este than for other Italian states.

The Cardinal's legation to Poissy, in 1561, entailed – in theory – the predominance of the papal appointment, and, therefore, the allegiance to that power, over Ippolito's other interests. As much as Ippolito was supposed to be an emanation of French power at the time of his Sieneze governorship, the papal legation required him to adhere to the agenda set by the Vatican. But the private relationship that tied Ippolito to the Valois, and which had also been part of the considerations that had led to his appointment, overlapped and – eventually – overshadowed the cardinal's role as papal representative. The clash that rose with the Vatican soon after Ippolito's arrival in France manifested not only the increasing incommunicability between the Pope's pretension of universality and the monarchy's advocacy of its own authority over French religious issues, but also Ippolito's incapacity to perform the role of nuncio whilst re-establishing that privileged relationship with the French crown that was essential to the flourishing of the Estense duchy under Alfonso II's rule.

The recurrent element that links these chapters, then, is the contamination and interplay between different powers that were simultaneously represented by the Cardinal of Ferrara. Although this contamination developed in different ways in reaction to different contexts and needs, it worked, overall, to weaken rather than empower him, as the performance of each role in part at least to impair the others. The handover of benefices from Ippolito to his nephew, Luigi – an essential step in the context of a long-term familial strategy – reflects this ambiguous interplay too: for whilst Ippolito committed himself to obtain Luigi's succession to Auch, exploiting his presence at the French royal court, Luigi himself tried to take advantage of the Este's relationship with the Valois to sideline his uncle. The definitive succession of Luigi to his uncle's position, as we have seen, only took place after Ippolito's death. It is remarkable, in the context of the increasing opposition of the curia to the accumulation of benefices that had characterised Ippolito's career, that the Este managed to preserve Ippolito's large array of French benefices throughout Luigi's life – a further sign that Ippolito had behaved and had been perceived, during his life, as part of the French ecclesiastic elite.

Everything we have just said makes Ippolito d'Este quite a unique character in the sixteenth-century Italian context, and a figure who certainly cannot be seen only through the lens of a faltering adherence to the principle of the Catholic reformation. He was, however, also the product of a specific historical moment: the involvement of French power in Italy, which made the

mésalliance with the Este profitable for both sides and propelled Ippolito's ecclesiastical ascent. From a longer-term perspective, however, the basis on which Ippolito d'Este had performed his multi-faceted role and on which he had paved the way to his nephew's succession, were factors of instability rather than of stability: the personal connection that linked these great princes of the Church to the French royal monarchy never developed into a more organic presence of their kin into the French apparatus. Whilst we can find Italian families, such as the Gondi or the Bonsi families, over the course of time becoming fully naturalised French, who kept ecclesiastical benefices or episcopal sees under their own control for generations – therefore succeeding in building a local dimension of power – the Este never managed, or never wanted, to do so. In the seventeenth century, we find other Este cardinals in the Roman curia, one of them, Rinaldo, being, as his ancestors before him, the cardinal protector of the French crown. However, the strong connection between Ferrara and the Valois did not repeat itself during the age of the Bourbons.

This was a result of the and highly personalised nature of the power that Ippolito d'Este had accumulated in France during his lifetime rather than to the geopolitical changes in the Italian scenario that followed the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. In this sense, the death of Henry II had affected the cardinal and the Este more than the rise of the Spanish dominion over the peninsula. The particular condition of the French monarchy after the 1560s allowed, *in extremis*, a successful succession to Luigi d'Este: the factional strife and the weakening of the monarchy, however, limited the chances of Luigi's empowerment, as they multiplied the interlocutors. It is difficult to assess, in this context, the long-term influence of the family alliance between Este and Guise, which had been an 'invention' of Ippolito d'Este, accomplished through the marriage of Anna d'Este with the Duke of Guise. It is certain, on the one hand, that Ippolito's rise within the French clergy and nobility had been facilitated by this dynastic union; on the other, however, one could argue that it made the essence of the Estense presence in France even less structural, and partially subject to the agenda of a more powerful family. A consideration of the network of these 'international' alliances between interest-based groups and of the way their action overlapped, in a game of mutual influences, with the broader political agendas that they represented – Estense and Vatican, in the case of Ippolito d'Este – is essential in order to understand the dynamics that regulated the political and diplomatic life of European and Italian states.

From this perspective, Ippolito d'Este's case can be seen as the perfect prototype of a phenomenon that continued, with due differences, in the seventeenth century. As every prototype, however, it was quickly outdated by the changing historical conditions and by the competition of other Italian dynasties which had been able to adjust themselves more successfully to those changes.

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