

THE PRICE OF CHARLES V'S PROTECTION IN ITALY: THE EXAMPLE OF LUCCA

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Resumen

Los agentes imperiales, oficiales, embajadores y comandantes militares que representaban al emperador Carlos V en Italia, hicieron uso de su estado de Sacro Emperador romano y de los derechos que esto le daba a él y a ellos de intervenir en los estados italianos sobre los que él no regía directamente, para ayudar a establecer la hegemonía sobre Italia.

El ejemplo de Lucca, un estado pequeño que pidió la protección de Carlos como ciudad imperial, mientras resueltamente mantenía su independencia y trataba de evitar las demandas del emperador y de los agentes imperiales por las fuertes contribuciones financieras para el mantenimiento de la armada imperial en Italia, arroja luz sobre cómo esto fue hecho.

Abstract

The *agenti imperiali*, the officials, ambassadors and military commanders representing the Emperor Charles V in Italy, made use of his status as Holy Roman Emperor and of the claims this gave him and them to intervene in Italian states over which he did not rule directly, to aid in establishing Spanish hegemony over Italy. The example of Lucca, a small state that asked for Charles's protection as an Imperial city, while resolutely maintaining its independence and trying to fend off demands from the emperor and the *agenti imperiali* for heavy financial contributions to the maintenance of the Imperial army in Italy, casts light on how this was done.

Palabras clave

Italia – Lucca – Ciudad imperial – Libertad – Carlos V.

Key Words

Italy – Lucca – Imperial city – Liberty – Charles V.

When Charles V first saw the Tuscan city of Lucca in 1536, so contemporary chroniclers relate, he remarked that the city was not a small town as he had been told, but so strong that it would be very difficult to take it by force¹. The Emperor's comment might have been a cause of concern, as well as pride, to the Lucchese. They had been trying for the best part of two decades to convince Charles and his advisers, ambassadors, officials and commanders in Italy that Lucca was a small, weak and impoverished state, quite unable to pay the large contributions to support the Spanish and Imperial armies in Italy that were expected of a wealthy merchant city, one that repeatedly laid stress on its status as an Imperial city to claim the protection of the Emperor.

The subject of Charles V's relations with Italy was, until quite recently, one that was avoided, even regarded with distaste by Italian historians. Charles V laid on Italy the "Spanish yoke", the "leaden cape" that repressed political liberties and blighted the economy: this was the prevailing view of his significance in Italian history². Spanish historians writing of the relations between Spain and Italy have been concerned above all with the papacy. Fortunately, historians from Italy, Spain and elsewhere have begun to turn their attention to the period of Spanish dominance over the Italian peninsula, and seriously to question long-held assumptions. The spate of conferences and publications prompted by the commemoration of the quincentenary of Charles's birth in 1500, included important contributions that have begun to fill in the complex picture of this critical period of Italian history.

¹ M. BERENGO, *Nobili e mercanti nella Lucca del Cinquecento*, Turin, 1965, reprinted 1974, p. 265.

² C. SHAW, "Charles V and Italy", in C. SCOTT DIXON AND M. FUCHS (eds.), *The Histories of Emperor Charles V. Nationale Perspektiven von Persönlichkeit und Herrschaft*, Münster, 2005, pp. 115-33.

However extensively old views of sixteenth-century Italy are revised, there can be no question that Charles V and those who represented him and served him were among the most influential men who reconfigured the Italian state system and political life from Milan to Sicily, or that they were responsible for the establishment of Spanish hegemony over much of Italy³. To achieve this, they made use of Charles's status as Holy Roman Emperor, and of the claims this gave him and his representatives to intervene in states over which he did not rule in his right as heir to the dominions of the Crown of Aragon in Italy. One of the most-debated aspects of Charles V's reign has been the question of how he saw his role as emperor, and how his conception of that role shaped his policies. Much of the recent scholarly interest in Charles in relation to Italy has been on the image of the Emperor, and how this was expressed in ritual, literature and the visual arts. As yet there has been less attention paid to the question of how the 'agenti imperiali' (as they were often called in Italian sources), the ambassadors, officials and commanders who represented Charles in Italy, used his Imperial status to further his and their political and military aims, or of the extent to which they made conscious use of it to consolidate the power of the Spanish crown, rather than of the Empire, in Italy.

A study of Lucca, of the city's relations with Charles and the 'agenti imperiali' can contribute to our understanding of this significant question. The example of Lucca may not, perhaps, seem to furnish an obviously fruitful approach to these matters. It was a small republic, that maintained its independence, was not directly involved in the campaigns of the Italian wars, and kept as low a diplomatic profile as it could. Except for a brief period in the early 1530s, there was no Spanish or Imperial representative resident there. But this meant that when Lucca came under pressure – as the republic frequently was during the 1520s and early 1530s – to contribute to the maintenance of the Imperial forces in Italy, the discussion of the Lucchese with the *agenti imperiali* about the justification for these demands took place at the Imperial court, or

³ Although there can be dispute about the extent of that hegemony and whether Genoa, for example, or even papal Rome, should be seen as part of the Spanish Empire.

in Rome or in the camp of the army's commander, rather than in Lucca. The despatches of the envoys charged with arguing Lucca's case and reporting the responses of the Imperial representatives, or of Charles himself on the rare occasions when a Lucchese envoy was granted an audience with him, have been preserved in substantial numbers in the Archivio di Stato of Lucca. Among the wealth of sixteenth-century diplomatic correspondence preserved in Italian archives, Lucchese sources are usually overlooked, but they provide an unexpected source of interesting insights into the period when the battle between Charles V and King François I of France for dominance in Italy was at its most intense.

It was the Lucchese who laid claim to the protection of the Emperor for their republic as an Imperial city, not Charles and his councillors who insisted on it. In 1509, they had paid 9,000 ducats to Charles's predecessor and grandfather, Maximilian I, for confirmation of Imperial privileges granted to Lucca by Charles IV in 1369 after he had helped free the city from subjection to Pisa⁴. At a high point of his fortunes in Italy, laying siege to the Venetian subject city of Padua, but, as ever, short of money, Maximilian had sent envoys to Lucca to offer the confirmation of the city's Imperial privileges for a payment of 12,000 ducats; the Lucchese bargained the price down to 9,000⁵. No power to intervene directly in the government of the republic was claimed or conceded; no census or tribute was to be paid. Maximilian confirmed the citizens and *popolo* of the city of Lucca 'in perpetuum libertatem et universa et singula privilegia', he did not promise them protection from their enemies⁶.

Protection was what the Lucchese paid the French king Louis XII 30,000 *tornesi* for only six months later, or rather, they paid for confir-

⁴For a recent discussion of Lucca's status as an Imperial city, see S. ADORNI BRACCESI and G. SIMONETTI, "Lucca, repubblica e Città imperiale da Carlo IV di Boemia a Carlo V", in S. ADORNI BRACCESI and M. ASCHERI (eds.), *Politica e cultura nelle Repubbliche italiane dal Medioevo all'Età moderna. Firenze - Genova - Lucca - Siena - Venezia*, Rome, 2001, pp. 267-308.

⁵G. TOMMASI, *Sommario della Storia di Lucca*, Florence, 1847; reprinted Lucca, 1969, pp. 365-6.

⁶Lucca, Archivio di Stato, Anziani al tempo della Libertà [henceforth ASLucca, Anziani], Capitoli 20, ff. 322-31; quotation f. 329: 1 Sept. 1509.

mation of protection already agreed (and paid for) in 1502, in order to avert the ill-effects of rumours at the French court that the Lucchese had assisted an attempt by papal troops to overturn the French king's dominion over Genoa⁷. In confirming that 'susciperemus in nostram protectionem ... civitatem Lucensem', the king declared that neither he nor the Lucchese intended this to be in any way prejudicial to Lucca's status as an Imperial city⁸. The Lucchese had also invoked Louis's predecessor Charles VIII, as 'nostro unico defensore et protectore'⁹. It has to be said, however, that the Lucchese were prodigal in claims to the protection of Italian powers, native or ultramontane, republic, prince or pope. They were especially keen to be in the good graces of whoever held the duchy of Milan, and was hence not only their most powerful neighbour, but also could grant access to the trade routes to northern Europe that were vital for Lucchese merchants. Even the weak last Sforza duke, Francesco II, after he had been allowed by Charles V to regain his rule over Milan in 1529 was assured by the Lucchese that it was the protection of the dukes of Milan that had preserved the *libertà* of Lucca to that day; his return to the duchy meant that they could live secure¹⁰. Another enduring motive for wishing to be on good terms with the duke of Milan, whoever that might be, was to help Lucca fend off the designs, long nourished by the Florentines, to annex their neighbouring republic to round off their possessions in northern Tuscany. Whatever the regime in Florence, the Lucchese were always on the watch for signs that the Florentines might be planning to make a move. Yet this did not stop them at times invoking the republic of Florence, or the Medici family, as protectors. Our peace and *libertà* –which, they emphasized, we desire above everything else– consists largely in the protection and benevolence of the Florentines, a Lucchese envoy sent to Florence in 1480 was to say¹¹. Almost

⁷G. TOMMASI, *Sommario*, pp. 367-8.

⁸"preiudicium affere iuribus sacratissimi Romani imperii ... supra predictam civitatem Lucensem": ASLucca, Anziani, Capitoli 20, ff. 279-81; quotations ff. 279, 281: 6 Feb. 1510.

⁹ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 616, f. 415: instructions to Niccolo Tegrini and Paolo Federighi, ambassadors going to the king of France (Aug. 1495?).

¹⁰*Ibidem*, Reg. 618: instructions to (Cesare de' Nobili, Apr. 1531).

¹¹"essendosi visto per longha experientia che la pace et libertà nostra (che sopra ogni cosa da noi è bramata) consiste potissimum in la protectione et benivolentia della loro excellentie"

identical phrases were used fifty years later in the instructions given to envoys sent to Alessandro de' Medici, who had just been confirmed by Charles V as head of the Florentine state¹².

Such protestations were often no more than diplomatic niceties, ritual expressions of respect towards powers from whom Lucca perhaps hoped for some favour, or at least goodwill. In themselves, they need be no more meaningful than the customary phrases of the day in which one prince would declare himself the obedient son of another. Nevertheless, in some circumstances, the protection of one Italian power for another was considered to be more than a mere formality, that it might entail an obligation to provide effective diplomatic, even military, support. Formal public acknowledgement could be given to the relationship by the nomination in treaties or alliances of a list of cities and lords as “aderenti” or “raccomandati” of one or other of the signatory powers.

This well-established system of connections linking Italian states through degrees of dependency and subordination was upset when the ultramontane powers – the monarchs of France, of Aragon and Castille, and the Emperor – made Italy their battleground, and themselves became Italian powers, competing for territory. As Italian states invoked their protection, it became clear that they had a rather different conception of what this involved. As the system functioned in the fifteenth century between Italian states, protection did not have to be paid for. Indeed, the protector might well be expected to provide some form of subsidy to the subordinate power – money for pensions to influential individuals to ensure their support for the regime in place, for example, or *condotte*, military contracts that gave welcome additional income as well as troops to insecure *signori* in the Romagna¹³. By contrast, the ultramontane

(that is, the Signoria of Florence), *ibidem*, Reg. 616, ff. 8-9, quotation f. 8: instructions to Pietro Fatinelli going to Florence, 15 May 1480.

¹²“essendosi visto per longa experientia che la pace et libertà nostra, la conservation della quale da noi sopra ogni cosa desiderata, consiste potissimum in la benivolentia et protectione di Sua Excellentia et di quella Illustrissima casa”, *ibidem*, Reg. 618, ff. 71-4, quotation ff. 71-2: instructions to Cesare de' Nobili and Martino Buonvisi, going to Florence (Nov. 1531?).

¹³The intricacies of this system of subsidies and protection in fifteenth-century Italy can be fully appreciated through the edition of Lorenzo de' Medici's *Lettere* that is in progress,

powers expected those seeking their protection to pay for it¹⁴. Nor was it a privilege that they expected to sell cheaply— especially when those seeking protection were what were perceived as wealthy Italian merchant cities. Familiar with Italian merchants and bankers throughout Europe, who were often willingly or unwillingly a source of credit to ultramontane courts, princes and their officials could be forgiven for thinking that such communities could readily supply large sums of cash. They might genuinely struggle to comprehend why their requests, or demands, for money should be met by pleas of poverty, of inability to provide the sums demanded, or at least to provide them quickly; certainly they would feel justified in taking a sceptical view of such excuses. It could take them a long time to learn that while an Italian city might be rich, the government of that city might be on a tight budget, and that however wealthy individual merchants might be, it did not mean that the communal authorities of their home cities could turn to them at will for subsidies.

Lucca was one these cities. Particularly in France and Flanders, but also in Spain and England and elsewhere, the Lucchese were known as manufacturers and merchants of high-quality silk textiles, and as bankers. Repeatedly they found themselves confronted by demands for payment of sums far beyond the limits of their usual communal budget, at a time when the trade on which their city depended –the many workers who produced the cloth as well as the merchants who traded it– was suffering severe disruption because of the Italian Wars.

Apart from the question of how much the Lucchese could be expected to pay and, indeed, on what grounds they should be called on to pay anything at all, there were further reasons for differing conceptions of the nature of the relationship between Charles V and Lucca, in the uncertainty about the implications of Lucca's status as an Imperial city.

formerly under the general editorship of the late Nicolai Rubinstien and now under that of F.W. Kent.

¹⁴ For the effects of the takeover by the French of the duchy of Milan, which had been a lynchpin of this system in northern Italy, see C. SHAW, "The role of Milan in the Italian state system under Louis XII", in LETIZIA ARCANGELI (ed.), *Milano e Luigi XII. Ricerche sul primo dominio francese in Lombardia (1499-1512)*, Milan, 2002, pp. 25-37.

Lucca and other “Imperial cities” in Italy, such as Genoa or Siena or Verona, certainly did not have the same status as say, Augsburg. No Italian city was represented in Imperial diets, or came under the administration of the central financial or legal institutions of the Empire. What duties towards the Empire or the Emperor himself their status as Imperial cities might imply was by no means clear. It was certainly not considered to be incompatible with their *libertà*, a concept that could be invoked both by the cities and by the Emperor and his representatives. Frequently invoked the concept of *libertà* may have been, but it was very rarely explicated. It would be more than likely that the word and the concept carried different weight and different significance for the citizens of republics striving to preserve their political independence –one important sense of *libertà*– in an Italy that had become a battleground for the major European powers, than they would carry for the representatives of a ruler perceived from the beginning of his reign as the most powerful emperor for centuries.

Indications of these differing perceptions of the nature of Lucca’s relation to Charles were evident from the first exchange of courtesies between the Anziani, the main executive committee of the republic’s government, and the Spanish ambassador in Rome, soon to become known as the Imperial ambassador, Juan Manuel, after he had sent notification to them of Charles’s election. Thanking him for this, the Anziani wrote that they prayed God to give Charles long life ‘accio lo imperio sia governato sotto la prudentia di uno tanto et si investissimo Re, et noi possiamo fruire la libertà nostra sotto la sua felicissima protectione’¹⁵. They were right to think this, responded Manuel to their congratulations, passed on by the Lucchese bishop Silvestro Gigli, ‘se si existimano potere stare securi dela loro libertà ... vivendo la prefata Caesarea Maestà, per haverne quella in loco de obedientissimi et devotissimi subditi suoi, et delle quali è per havere peculiare cura et protectione’. The Anziani did not describe the Lucchese as subjects of Charles – they described them to Charles as his ‘obedientes filios et servos’: this was the diplomatic language of respect, not subjection¹⁶. They used the same language

¹⁵ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 540, f. 204: Anziani to Juan Manuel, 7 July 1519.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 523-5; quotation f. 525: Anziani to Charles V, 16 Sept. 1519.

when writing to the French governor of Milan, Odet de Foix, seigneur de Lautrec, in January 1520, assuring him that 'siamo semper stati et vogliamo essere boni servitori et figliuoli della corona di Francia'¹⁷. But when they were concerned to repudiate accusations of disloyalty to the emperor a few months later, the Anziani did describe the Lucchese as his 'fidelissimi subditi'; if when the king of France came in force to Italy, 'ci fusse stato necessario pigliare la protectione di Sua Maestà', they had never intended 'derogare juribus imperii, immo ne faremo semper spetial reservatione'¹⁸.

When the Lucchese decided to ask for the renewal of their privileges –which was not until a year after the election– they evidently hoped that this would be an easy and inexpensive procedure. Typically, rather than send a special envoy, they entrusted the matter to a citizen of Lucca resident in Flanders, near where Charles was then resident, Niccolo Buonvisi, and authorised him to spend up to 2,000 ducats¹⁹. But the emperor did not come to Bruges where Buonvisi was, and by January 1521 he still had nothing to report. He had not even been able to find out whether matters concerning the Empire 'si governa in corte per li medesimi consiglieri et governatori che si governano le altre cose delli altri regni et stati, hovero se hanno consiglio et governo aparte di quelli electori o altri grandi della Magna'²⁰. When war broke out in 1521 between Charles V and François I, the Lucchese did not want to get involved, but hedged their bets by sending an envoy, Cesare de' Nobili, to the Imperial court to negotiate the confirmation of their privileges and, at the same time, another envoy, Gianbattista Minutoli, to the French court to negotiate the confirmation of the protection of the king, 'come buoni et fidelissimi figlioli et servitori che siamo sempre stati et vogliamo essere della corona di Francia'²¹. The French were not very welcoming; the king wanted at least 15,000 ducats, his Treasurer said, and the Lucchese should agree to

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, ff. 535-6: Anziani to Lautrec, 1 Jan 1520.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, ff. 556-9; quotation, f. 558: Anziani to Niccolo Buonvisi, 6 June 1520.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, and ff. 570-2: Anziani to (Niccolo Buonvisi), 24 Sept. 1520.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, ff. 587-8: Niccolo Buonvisi to Anziani, 20 Jan. 1521, Bruges.

²¹ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 617, ff. 203-8; quotation f. 205: instructions Anziani to Gianbattista Minutoli, 28 July 1521.

this quickly, or they would not have the king's protection at any price²². The Lucchese also turned to the Venetians, asking for their protection too, and for their advice, because they had heard that the emperor, in his treaty with the Florentine pope Leo X, 'haver facto mercato della libertà nostra'²³.

Perhaps because the price was too high, the Lucchese did not buy the protection of François I, but word of their approach to the French did reach the Imperial court, and threatened to raise the cost of the renewal of their privileges. While the emperor was inclined to renew Lucca's privileges, the Imperial chancellor, Mercurino da Gattinara, told Cesare de' Nobili, he had heavy expenses on his hands, including the cost of the war in Italy that he had undertaken 'per reintegrar lo Imperio delle cose si li appartengano et ridurre le cose di Italia a uno pacifico stato, et fermarci per lo Imperio talmente il pede che li suoi amici et subiecti possino sotto sua protectione viver sicuri'. Lucca could now 'sperare senza suspecto alcuno godere la nostra libertà et vivere in la nostra quiete.' As Lucca would derive such 'gran comodo et benefitio' from Charles's campaigns, it was 'honesto et necessario' that, as 'buoni amici' of the emperor, they should help him meet these expenses, as they had helped Maximilian in the past. It had been said, Gattinara claimed, that the city of Lucca, 'bene agiatamente senza incommodo... (essendo molto richa et mercantie)', could provide at least 40,000 ducats. They had, he said, paid all that and much more to have the protection of Louis XII,

"et havendo pagato tal somma al Re di Francia per la sua salvaguardia, della quale non ne potevammo per ogni respecto fare il capitale che di questa, si per essere lui a noi mercenario, non pastore, non essendo nostro sovrano re come è lo Impero, si per essere questa Maestà di altra grandezza come bene intendavammo, sotto l'ombra del quale più scurtà et fermezza dello stato nostro ci si permette, si per essere Sua Maestà di una fede inviolabile, che più tosto perderia la corona, che acordato con noi ci manchasse del promisso."

Even after the French would have been expelled from Italy, there would be further expenses, he warned, and Charles would expect again

²² *Ibidem*, ff. 231-4: Gianbattista Minutoli to Anziani, 3 Sept. 1521, Lyons.

²³ *Ibidem*, ff. 353-5; quotation f. 354: instructions to Michele Poggio, 31 July 1521.

‘valersi delli amici suoi et delle cose suoi.’ Offers had been made to Charles, by parties Gattinara did not name, if he would agree to their having Lucca. Naturally, Cesare de’ Nobili assured Gattinara that the Lucchese could not afford anything like 40,000 ducats, nor had they paid that for the protection of the French; 9,000 ducats, the sum they had paid to Maximilian, was what they had in mind. And they were confident, he said, that they would have the protection of Charles, should Leo have any designs on them, and that Charles, ‘havendo facto et facendo tanta spesa in reintegrare lo Imperio delle cose suoi non vorria cominciare da noi alienarle’. Their offer was much lower than had been expected, Gattinara replied, and Charles and his council would find it hard to believe the Lucchese could not pay as much as they had been told²⁴. Further hints that the Lucchese might find it difficult to escape as lightly as they hoped if their privileges were to be renewed came from Gattinara, when he claimed that Charles had been offered 100,000 ducats to forgo the protection of Lucca, and warned that many clauses in the agreement with Maximilian would require revision²⁵.

The Imperial chancellor had not asserted the Lucchese had a duty, as Imperial subjects, to give financial support to Charles V’s campaigns. Charles would look to his friends for help was how the Lucchese envoy reported his remarks. It was the Lucchese envoy, according to his own account, who invoked the ties that should bind Lucca to the Empire, as he expressed disbelief that Charles would consider alienating an Imperial city. This was his response to the veiled threats by Gattinara that large sums had been offered to Charles not to extend his protection to Lucca. Gattinara was speaking in the familiar terms of Italian diplomacy and inter-state relations of “protection” and “friendship”, not the language of Imperial right. If Cesare de’ Nobili did not report his words verbatim, the envoy would surely have been attentive to his arguments and the terms he used to express them. Had Gattinara spoken in terms of Imperial law, de’ Nobili would have been sure to inform his government that he had done so.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, ff. 96-111; quotations ff. 97-8, 100, 105: Cesare de’ Nobili to Anziani, 8 Dec. 1521, Oudenarde.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, ff. 111-22: Cesare de’ Nobili to Anziani, 9 Dec. 1521, Oudenarde.

Back in Lucca, Gattinara's warnings did not affect the decisions that had already been made; the Anziani looked over the privileges Maximilian had granted and could not see anything requiring alteration, and they wanted to pay less, not more, than 9,000 ducats²⁶. If there were to be any difficulty in obtaining the confirmation of specific privileges, they instructed de' Nobili, 'basterebbe voi ottenessi la protection coniunctovi una declarazione come ... Sua Maestà Caesarea ci conferma tucti li privilegii concessoci per il suo Serenissimo predecessore modo qui iacent, senza fare altra particolare mentione di cosa alcuna'²⁷. Their confidence in insisting on the terms they wanted would have been increased by the death of Leo X on 1 December 1521; evidently news of the pope's death had not reached the Imperial court when Gattinara spoke to de' Nobili. Any clause in Charles's agreement with Leo, and with the Florentines under the pope's aegis, which conflicted with any of the privileges Maximilian had granted Lucca could no longer be such an obstacle; and Leo, the Lucchese suspected, was the most likely source of any offers to Charles to persuade him not to protect Lucca. But there was still the problem of what Charles and the council had been told about the riches of the Lucchese: 'che siamo homini che nel comune habbiamo 200m. scudi et in Aversa due(?) case de' nostri che pagherenno 100m. scudi senza quelle habbiamo a Londra, Lione et altrove, et che stando Sua Maestà forte noi faremo etc.'²⁸.

Charles himself, when he gave an audience to the Lucchese envoy, said that he had always regarded them as 'buoni Imperiali', but like his chancellor, did not assert that Lucca was bound, as an Imperial city, to aid the Emperor financially, only that those, like Lucca, who stood to benefit from his campaigns, should help to pay for them - 'che l'animo suo non è in Italia, salvo di perservare ogni homo nello stato suo, et che noi et li altri per l'utile ne siamo per consequire doveremmo sforsarci aiutare questa impresa.' His council had decided that either he should settle terms with the Lucchese himself when he came to Italy, or that

²⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 135-4: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili, 9 Jan. 1522.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, ff. 192-4, quotation f. 194: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili, 13 Feb. 1522.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, ff. 317-24, quotation f. 321: Cesare de' Nobili to Anziani, 6 Mar. 1522, Brussels.

it should be left to Juan Manuel, his ambassador in Rome²⁹. This was ominous. Juan Manuel was one of those who accused the Lucchese of being French partisans at heart, and he had written to the court –where his opinion on Italian affairs carried considerable weight– that negotiations with Lucca should be left to him, because he could drive a more profitable bargain. That it should be left in the air until Charles came to Italy in person was potentially even more worrying; de' Nobili believed that it could only mean that if the Imperial army was victorious in Lombardy, Lucca would be given over to them 'in preda', to compensate for their arrears of pay³⁰. If there was a danger of this, it was averted by the pressing need of Charles for ready money, and the Lucchese resigning themselves to paying up to 15,000 ducats³¹. This was the sum agreed, and the Imperial diploma confirming the privileges of Lucca issued on 1 May 1522³².

Immediately, Lucca was faced by new demands. The argument deployed by Charles V, one no doubt suggested to the young Emperor by his council, that since Lucca and other Italian states stood to benefit from the Imperial campaign in Italy they should help to defray the costs of the war, became the main argument used by the *agenti imperiali* in Italy to back up their demands for cash from the Lucchese. They did not argue that Charles, as Emperor, had the right to impose a tax on Lucca, but that he had a right to expect contributions from the city. The repeated demands that were made, and the form that the *agenti imperiali* and Charles V wanted the contributions to take –regular, fixed sums– made them analagous to a tax. At times they would have seemed even more akin to blackmail or extortion, because the demands were accompanied by threats of retribution, usually in the form of letting Imperial troops loose on Lucchese territory, if Lucca did not pay up. In response, the Lucchese pleaded their inability to pay - times were hard, their commer-

²⁹ *Ibidem*, ff. 342-9; quotation f. 343: Cesare de' Nobili to Anziani, 22 Mar. 1522, Brussels.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, ff. 358-69; quotation f. 360: Cesare de' Nobili to Anziani, (?7 Apr.) 1522, (Brussels?).

³¹ *Ibidem*, ff. 378-85: Cesare de' Nobili to Anziani, 15 Apr. 1522, Brussels; ff. 385-7: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili, 30 Apr. 1522.

³² BERENGO, *Nobili e mercanti*, p. 14.

ce disrupted, their territory so small that they could not feed their people and had to buy grain at prices inflated by war and shortages.

He had been told the Lucchese could easily pay 40,000 ducats, said the new Imperial viceroy of Naples, the Burgundian Charles de Lannoy, as he passed through Tuscany on his way to take up his post. They should demonstrate that they were ‘buoni Imperiali’ by helping the Emperor, who was obliged to keep up to 50,000 troops in Italy in order to expel the French; the Florentines, the Sienese, the Milanese, even the Genoese, despite the recent sack of their city, were paying, and so should they. In Lyons, he knew the Lucchese had given money to the king of France. They were already struggling to raise 15,000 ducats for the confirmation of their privileges, responded the Anziani. Any money lent to the French king in Lyons was a matter of business, and interest was being paid as for any other commercial loan³³.

In Rome, Juan Manuel was stipulating that Lucca should contribute 4,000 ducats a month for three months, to help keep the Imperial army together. The Emperor, he wrote, would not ask for this unless the need was pressing - he was asking as their prince, not as a tyrant:

“Sua Maestà non domandaria alle Magnificentie Vostre questa contributione, como mai per il passato le ha voluto gravare de cosa alchuna pichola o grande, se non vi fusse bisogno più che urgente, perche dove li tiranni [that is, the French] nullo jure hanno usurpato cotesta repubblica de più vexationi pecuniariae, Sua Maestà Cesarea come vero et buono principe intende procedere benignamente con le Magnificentie Vostre, senza volere intrare in altri termini benche justissimi³⁴.”

Not prepared to admit any excuses, Manuel quickly resorted to threats. If the Lucchese did not want to pay, they would regret it, he warned, and they would end up paying 30,000 ducats or more - ‘et poi che non volete essere buoni imperiali per amore, ve faro essere buoni

³³ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 540, ff. 1140-5: Anziani to Bartolomeo Arnolfini, 30 June 1522.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, ff.1162-4; quotation f.1164: Juan Manuel to Anziani, 6 July 1522, Rome.

Imperiali per forza'³⁵. The Emperor had ordered that 'la spesa delle guerre di Italia si supporti per le città di qua al beneficio delle quale si fa decta guerra, cioè Milano, Firenze, Genova, Siena et Lucha, et dalla prefata Maestà Cesarea'. The quotas had been assigned to each, and he had orders to exact them to pay the soldiers. For the months of June, July and August, Milan was to pay 80,000 ducats, Florence, 45,000, Genoa, 24,000, Siena 15,000 and Lucca 12,000. If the Lucchese did not want to pay he would be forced to order the soldiers to come to make them pay³⁶. Although Manuel claimed that he was acting under orders, in Rome it was thought he was acting on his own initiative: 'qua è opinione universale che queste exactioni che costui vuole fare qua, da queste città di Italia, sia senza saputa alcuna della Maestà Cesarea'³⁷.

Lucca did not pay the contribution Manuel claimed had been assigned to the city, and he continued to threaten reprisals, as the Anziani complained to the Italian commander of the Imperial army, Prospero Colonna, 'fino a dire ... farebbe in modo si direbbe "qui fu Lucha"'³⁸. Consulting the Emperor about whether he approved of Manuel's tactics, Prospero Colonna expressed his own reservations. Manuel was insisting on a military execution against Siena and Lucca, to exact their proportion of the expenses of the army, and on imposing a heavy fine. He had doubts about whether it was honourable to obtain money this way, Colonna wrote, and he had consulted the duke of Sessa (Luis de Cordoba, the new Imperial ambassador to Rome), who had condemned it³⁹.

The Lucchese paid 12,000 ducats, but once again were immediately faced with further demands. Gattinara told them that they would just have to be patient, and manage as best they could, but reassured them

³⁵ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 616, ff. 916-8; quotation f. 916: Baldassare Orsuccio, 9 Aug. 1522, Rome. Manuel was 'il più duro, obstinato et inexorable cervello che mai facesse natura' lamented the Lucchese envoy; he was a man of few words, but he wanted those words to be law, *Ibidem*, f. 917.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 913-6: Baldassare Orsuccio, 19 Aug. 1522, Rome.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, ff. 927-9; quotation f. 929: Baldassare Orsuccio, 15 Aug. 1522, Rome.

³⁸ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 541, ff. 307-9; quotation f. 307: Anziani to Prospero Colonna, 17 Oct. 1522.

³⁹ *Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain*, ed. G. A. BERGENROTH, Vol. II *Henry VIII, 1509-1525* (London, 1866), pp. 515-6: Prospero Colonna to Charles V, 24 Dec. 1522, Milan.

no force would be used; the Emperor wished the Imperial cities in Italy to agree to make certain contributions, but voluntarily:

“lo imperatore ha dato certa commissione et ordine al vicere di Napoli che siando facta movitiva o novità alcuna per la impresa de Italia, si facci fra le città imperiali certi ordini et compositioni unanimes et concordés che ogni homo possi contribuire a qualche pichola spesa, ma voluntarie et sponte per pace de Italia ... ma non sortendo novità alcuna, homo può stare certissimo non so habbi a fare alcuno pagamento”⁴⁰.

Before this report could reach them, the Lucchese had already responded to a letter from Charles V asking for a further subsidy for the Imperial army in Italy, by protesting that they had already paid out 27,000 ducats for him, that their city was ‘exhausta in publico et in particolare’, and asking that the Emperor should write to Lannoy and the duke of Sessa, ordering that ‘non ci ponghino più gravesse né taxe’⁴¹. Charles did order the duke of Sessa and Lannoy not to make any further demands on Lucca - apart from the agreement he wanted them to negotiate with the Italian states, Lucca included. He had sent them ‘podere bastante para tratar y asentar qualquier concerto que les pareciesse que convenga con los potentados de Italia y para prometterles reciprocamente que los tenemos en nuestra protection’, and he wanted them to press on with that⁴². At least in this letter to his Italian commander, Prospero Colonna, it should be noted, it was ‘los potentados de Italia’, not just the Imperial cities, who were designated as those who were to be corralled into paying for the army.

We have already paid more than our share of previous impositions, was the Lucchese response to the duke of Sessa’s approaches⁴³. His attitude was not entirely sympathetic, although he did seek to reassure

⁴⁰ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 541, ff. 431-6: Niccolo Cenami to Anziani, 10 May 1523, Valladolid.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, ff. 424-6; quotation f. 425: Anziani to Niccolo Cenami, 15 May 1523.

⁴² *Ibidem*, ff. 459-60; quotation, f. 459: Charles V to Prospero Colonna, 30 May 1523.

⁴³ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 540, ff. 1222-6: Anziani to Benedetto de’ Nobili and Bartolomeo Arnolfini, 15 May 1523.

them that neither Charles nor the *agenti imperiali* desired the ruin of any Italian state: ‘che la Cesarea Maestà, né tampoco lui né altro agente imperiale volevano disfare né minare patria alchuna di Ytalia, ma quelle conservare in lo proprio stato’. Charles could have done what he liked in Italy, especially during the period of *sede vacante*, the prolonged vacancy of the papal throne between the death of Leo and the election of Hadrian VI, ‘che si trovava signore di Roma, Milano et Genova, ma che quello che fa al presente le fa per conservare la libertà della Italia come si trova al presente, la quale bene firmata, come sperano in brevi tutte terre habbino a stare in la sua libertà et quiete da ogni exactione extranea’. Lucca should not hold back: it was Charles who had kept them safe from the Florentines and would continue to do so. Now Lucca

“ha da volere più tosto lo bene publico della libertà di tutta Ytalia, la quale non si potria al presente conservare, senza lo exercito grande ... monstrandomi che a lui li dispiaceva tutti nostri affanni, ma che non si poteva più et che le altre città hanno patientia, et che anchora noi dovemmo correre con le altre ...”

Lucca, the envoy replied, wanted to be ‘alli servitii di Sua Cesarea Maestà come qualsivoglia altra città di Italia ceteris paribus, ma che la impossibilità ci fa parlare tenendo certo che Sua Maestà non voglia da noi excepto il possibile, cum impossibilium nulla sit obligatio’. The ‘taxa’ imposed on Lucca had been disproportionate to the resources of the city, as compared with those of Florence or Siena. At this point the duke’s tone changed: he did not want to threaten them, he said, but ‘volendo loro essere nummerati fra quelli che desiderano conservare questa libertà di Italia, che bisogna che paghino, caso che no, che saranno tenuti per quello che sono et che ci fara altra provisione’⁴⁴. The duke continued to mingle threats and blandishments, saying that

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, ff. 1243-7; quotations ff. 1244-6: Benedetto de’ Nobili to Anziani, 22 May 1523, Rome.

“non voleva gravarvi come fece Giovanni Manuello che vi misse taxa XII m. ducati, ma che lui non voleva se non 6 m. o 7 m. ducati, et che questo non si faceva per volervi tenere in questa subventioni di pagamenti perche non sareste liberi, ma solo in questo frangente dove ne depende la quiete et pace et tranquillo vivere di tutta la Ytalia et in spetie di cotesta città”.

Florence had been asked for 40,000 ducats, Siena for 20,000; he thought Lucca had been treated generously in comparison; if the money had not been paid within fifteen days, by letters of exchange in Milan, the Lucchese should not be surprised if they suffered the same fate as Tortona, sacked by the Spanish troops because they had not been paid⁴⁵. Apparently, the Lucchese found another 5,000 ducats to appease the duke⁴⁶.

Charles's hopes of a “concierto” of Italian states to support his army were not realised, but this did not stop the duke of Sessa and the viceroy Lannoy claiming payments from Lucca on the pretext that these were due under the terms of the league against the French that Charles had concluded in July and August 1523 with Henry VIII of England, his own brother Ferdinand, and Venice, followed by Pope Hadrian, Milan, Florence and Genoa. Lucca had not joined this league and had no intention of joining any league, certainly not as a principal. Lannoy sent an envoy to Lucca to demand ‘che in tractenimento del Cesareo exercito dovessimo pagarli a conto del passato a ragione di ducati 5 m. il mese secondo la taxa a noi imposta in la lega facta’. Telling him that the duke of Sessa had already sent to them twice on the same business, the Lucchese read out to him letters from Charles V, presumably those ordering that no further demands should be made on Lucca. These did give the envoy pause, and he agreed that if they came to agreement with the duke of Sessa, it would be the same as if it was with the viceroy, although he asked for a

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, ff. 1248-50; quotation 1249: Benedetto de’Nobili to Anziani, 3 June 1523, Rome.

⁴⁶ By January 1524 they calculated that they had paid out 32,000 ducats: ASLUcca, Anziani, Reg. 541, ff. 777-81: Anziani to Lucchese ambassadors in Rome, 21 Jan. 1524.

letter to the viceroy to make it clear that he had not been bribed to leave the matter in suspense⁴⁷.

In Rome, the Lucchese ambassadors told the duke of Sessa that Lucca could not pay the sums being asked for, but would show willingness to serve the Emperor by straining to make a payment to help defray the costs of the army. The duke responded by stressing the great expenses Charles was undertaking,

“et non per sua propria utilità ma per la libertà et quiete de Italia, che si puo vedere, havendo li stati recepti missi in mano de’ patroni proprii come Milano, Genova, Firenze, Siena et simili, et che facendo Sua Maestà tanta spesa non per commodo proprio ma a beneficio di noi altri di Italia, era necessario et ragionevole dovessimo adiutare la impresa ultra vires, havendo poi ad havere una tranquilla et quiete pace in Italia, et che questa spesa non dovea durare molto”.

If the Lucchese did not want to be in the league, he would not press them further, but they should consider their position, and the state of affairs in Italy, carefully, and that if ‘la Maestà Cesarea ci levasse le mani di capo, che rifugio ci resta’. There were those offering tens of thousands of ducats to Charles to leave the Lucchese unprotected. Not the least of their obligations to the Emperor was his ‘havendoci con questa liga di suggietti factoci compagni’. But the little state of Lucca was not accustomed to enter into leagues ‘come principali, ma si bene nominata come accessoria et aderente’, the envoys protested. As they understood it, they were included in the league only as ‘buoni servitori della Maestà Cesarea et terra imperiale’. At this point in the discussion an envoy of the viceroy, Lodovico da Montealto, who had been sent to look for money in Florence, Siena and Rome, argued that if the government of Lucca could not find the money, individual Lucchese should, as he and other loyal subjects of the emperor had. He had been in Lucca, he added, and knew well that Lucca was richer than Florence or Genoa. The duke of Sessa agreed, adding that Lucchese bankers were in the

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, quotation, f. 778.

forefront everywhere, and Martino Buonvisi (one of the ambassadors) alone could sustain the expense of the whole Imperial army for a year. When the envoys argued that Lucca could not afford any monthly payments, but only at best a “gift” of 5,000 ducats, the duke replied that he did not want to force them to pay anything - he would leave them to negotiate with the viceroy, and they would soon see how different an experience that would be. Three out of four *agenti imperiali* in Italy considered the Lucchese to be ‘francesi’, he warned, and wanted to treat them as such; only he had taken their part. It was no good the Lucchese arguing they could not afford it; he knew they were very rich. Only a few hours before, someone at court had told him they could easily pay 50,000 ducats⁴⁸. Necessity was making the *imperiali* deaf to all appeals and pitiless, the ambassadors warned their government; they knew they were doing wrong to the Lucchese and wanted to impose burdens beyond the city’s strength to bear, but they would rather Lucca succumbed than that they themselves did⁴⁹. With difficulty, the Lucchese agreed to increase their offer to 8,000 ducats. This the duke of Sessa accepted as a gift to the emperor, not as a payment under their putative obligations to the league. The ambassadors wanted a written promise that this would be considered a quittance for all payments, present and future - the duke would only agree for the present and for the year to come⁵⁰. But for the next few years, the demands of the *agenti imperiali* on Lucca do seem to have abated.

Their troubles were far from over, however. The following winter they found themselves ‘inter Sillam et Caribdim’⁵¹. The French commander, the duke of Albany, in Tuscany with his troops, demanded 20,000 ducats and some artillery pieces from Lucca. If they refused, they would offend the king of France; if they agreed, they would offend the Emperor, and their trade in Flanders, Sicily, Naples and Spain would

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, ff. 783-9; quotation ff. 784-5: Cesare de’ Nobili, Michele Burlamacchi and Martino Buonvisi, 22 Jan. 1524, Rome.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, ff. 795-7: Cesare de’ Nobili, Michele Burlamacchi and Martino Buonvisi, 27 Jan. 1524, Rome.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, ff. 813-4: Cesare de’ Nobili, Michele Burlamacchi and Martino Buonvisi, 13 Feb. 1524, Rome.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, ff. 1015-17; quotation 1016: Anziani to Bartolomeo Arnolfini, 19 Jan. 1525.

suffer. Pleading that they could not give any artillery, they argued that the king had always recognised their relation to the Empire, ‘siando noi Cammera di Imperio in ogni salvaguardia et protectione ci ha facto la Cristianissima Maestà ci ha sempre reservato la clausula “salvo jure imperii” perche in ogni indignatione che pigliasse la Cesarea Maestà contra di noi ci potrebbe privare delli nostri privilegii della libertà et contractarci con altri’⁵². To avoid the pillaging of their territory, however, they had to hand over two pieces of artillery, and agreed to pay Albany 12,000 ducats. They had no choice but to pay him off, they pleaded to the duke of Sessa, to keep their city and territory safe; it did not mean they were not always ‘buoni Imperiali’⁵³. The duke was furious, and insisted they had done so willingly⁵⁴. But after the battle of Pavia and the capture of François I on 25 February 1525, the Lucchese suffered no retribution; their excuses that they had no choice but to give Albany what he demanded of them were apparently accepted in the end. In 1528, when the French were resurgent in Italy, they were told by an official in the service of the French commander, Lautrec, that they had to make clear whether they were “francesi” or “imperiali”, and if they were “francesi”, they had to demonstrate it by making regular monthly contributions as others were doing⁵⁵. The Lucchese, as always protested this was not possible for them, prompting a furious Lautrec to say he would not stand for a little town like Lucca holding aloof from the league supporting François; if within fifteen days they had not entered the league, he would declare them enemies, and do them all the damage he could, in Italy and in France⁵⁶. Fortunately for Lucca, Lautrec had more important matters in hand in the kingdom of Naples, and once again the city escaped unscathed.

The meeting of Charles V and Clement VII in Bologna in the winter of 1529-30 and the agreements made there with other Italian powers, have been generally seen as marking the definitive establishment of

⁵² *Ibidem*, quotation f. 1017.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, ff. 994-6; quotation f. 996: Anziani to Bartolomeo Arnolfini, 3 Jan. 1525.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, ff. 1006-10: Bartolomeo Arnolfini, 11 Jan. 1525, Rome.

⁵⁵ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 617, ff. 472-80: Pietro Angelo Guinigi, 10 Jan. 1528, Bologna.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 540-3: Pietro Angelo Guinigi, 29 Feb. 1528, ‘Tremoli di Puglia’.

Charles V as the dominant figure in Italy. While the French would go on contesting his dominion for decades, the Lucchese at least were no longer faced with demands they had to choose to side with the king of France or the Emperor. They might still approach other powers –even weak rulers such as Alessandro de' Medici or Francesco Sforza– using the language of those looking to others for protection, yet they had no real option but the protection of Charles V, although accusations that the Lucchese really favoured the French were occasionally made⁵⁷.

In 1532, there was some danger that allegiance to the emperor could become more like subjection, during the period of social unrest and political upheaval in Lucca known as the revolt of the Straccioni. In April 1531, there were protests by the silk weavers against measures to reduce production of cloth introduced in an attempt to confront the serious difficulties Lucchese merchants were experiencing in international markets. The measures were withdrawn, but the unrest continued, fuelled by dissatisfaction with the increasing domination of Lucca's government by a relatively restricted group of families. For about a year, their sway was challenged by an alliance of different social groups, and members of families hitherto unrepresented in Lucca's government were brought into the councils. So disturbed were some of the wealthier merchant families by these developments that they asked Charles to intervene. The appeal was sent indirectly via a papal nuncio passing through the city, who asked the Genoese admiral Andrea Doria on behalf of some of the 'principali' of Lucca to write to the Emperor. Doria intimated that the Lucchese 'principali' would rather that Charles sent a governor to Lucca and ordered the Marchese del Vasto, the commander of the Imperial troops in Italy, to bring his troops to the city. These would have been desperate measures indeed, if that was what the Lucchese who sent the message really had in mind. Did the message become exaggerated in transmission? In response to Doria's letter, Charles considered sending a representative to Lucca to impose order, and if that did not work, ordering del Vasto to go there with his army, but the phrases conveying these orders were cancelled from his draft letter to his commander⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ BERENGO, *Nobili e mercanti*, pp. 218-28.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 141-2.

Subsequently del Vasto sent an envoy to Lucca –on the orders of the Emperor he said– ‘pro habenda veritate administrationis et pacificationis’ of Lucca⁵⁹.

At that time there was already a Spanish official in Lucca, Juan Abril de Marzilla, who had originally been sent there to organise the provision of supplies to the Imperial army besieging Florence in 1529-30. After the surrender of Florence, he had stayed in Lucca on the orders of del Vasto, to keep an eye on the government⁶⁰. If the idea was that he should gradually insinuate himself into the role of governor of Lucca, he was not an ideal choice for a task that would have required considerable tact and diplomacy, qualities the arrogant and overbearing Marzilla conspicuously lacked. His popularity, certainly with the leading families of Lucca, was not increased by his attempts to meddle with the Straccioni to foment the unrest⁶¹. According to the Lucchese government, in a subsequent account of his role in these events, ‘Il signor Marsilio era molto interessato nelle nostre turbolenze et a quelle segretamente teneva mano ... e per mezzo loro lui aspirava a farsi capitano di questo popolo’⁶². When the Straccioni were finally suppressed in April 1532, some of the leaders took refuge in his house and were arrested there. In his protests he assumed an authority and a power to command the Lucchese that the government refused to recognize, when he came to them to

“protestare et comandare in nome della Cesarea Maestà che sotto pena di dugento milia ducati non debbiamo in modo alcuno metterli a tortura, ne parimente chiamare guardia alcuna di forestieri in la città nostra senza sua noticia. Il che a noi da admiratione assai per parerci modi fuori di ogni honestà, et del consueto suo, perche qui non tiene più luogo di Cesari, né mancho puote havere hauto commissione da dicto Cesari farci tal comandamento”⁶³.

⁵⁹ ASLUcca, Anziani, Colloqui, Reg. 7, ff. 3-4; quotation f. 4: 6 Mar. 1532.

⁶⁰ BERENGO, *Nobili e mercanti*, pp. 136-7.

⁶¹ GIAMPIERO CAROCCI, ‘La rivolta degli Straccioni in Lucca’, *Rivista storica italiana*, 63 (1951), pp. 33-4. The aversion he aroused casts further doubt on whether the message the ‘principali’ sent to Charles via the nuncio and Andrea Doria was not altered in transmission.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 34, note 1.

⁶³ ASLUcca, Anziani, Reg. 618, ff. 127-8; quotation, f. 128: Anziani to Girolamo Arnolfini, ?16 Apr. 1532. The ‘guardia di forestieri’ was a force of 100 infantry that an assembly of

Marzilla was in no position to insist, and backed down.

He left Lucca, but when Charles came to Italy for his second meeting in Bologna with Pope Clement, the suggestion was made that he might return in some official capacity. In March 1533, he sent some of his property to Lucca, signalling his intention to come back to stay. The Lucchese firmly rejected the idea. They had no need for any representative of the Emperor, who could command them directly with a simple letter⁶⁴. 'E quando facto ogni conato non si possi fare altro che non venghi uno, venghi ogni altro che Marsilio perche lui in modo alchuno non ce lo voglamo'⁶⁵.

In the face of such determined opposition, Charles did not insist on sending Marzilla or anyone else to represent him in Lucca. The proposition of sending Marzilla back may well have been raised at his own suggestion. It appears that in the early 1530s Charles and his officials were testing the boundaries of their power over the Imperial cities in Italy, trying to establish how far they could go in establishing direct rule over them without arousing unmanageable protest. Imperial garrisons were still holding the main fortresses of the Florentine state, and Charles had decided what role Alessandro de' Medici should have in the government; another Imperial garrison was based in Siena and the *agenti imperiali* were trying to reform the Sienese government; and Charles was floating the idea that the Genoese might declare themselves 'sudditi de lo imperio rimanendo republica', a proposal the Genoese firmly declined to make⁶⁶.

It is in this context, too, that the Emperor and his officials made their most determined attempt yet to impose on Lucca and other Italian states a system of regular financial contributions to the support of his armies, this time in the name of a league against François I, intended,

1,500 heads of households held on 9 April had decided should be brought to the city, BERENGO, *Nobili e mercanti*, p. 142.

⁶⁴ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 618, ff. 385-7: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili, 29 Mar. 1533.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, ff. 305-6: instructions to Martino Buonvisi and Girolamo Arnolfini, Lucchese ambassadors to Charles V, 5 Apr. 1533.

⁶⁶ A. PACINI, *La Genova di Andrea Doria nell'Impero di Carlo V*, Florence, 1999, pp. 283-304; quotation p. 284.

according to Cardinal Loaisa de Garcia, to force him to observe the terms of the treaties of Madrid and Cambrai that he had concluded with Charles, swearing not to interfere in the affairs of Italy⁶⁷. In Bologna, a commission of three representatives of the Emperor –Louis de Flandre, seigneur de Praët, Nicolas Perrenot de Granvelle, and Francisco de Los Cobos– and three representatives of the pope –Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici, Jacopo Salviati and Francesco Guicciardini– who had negotiated the terms of the league, decided on the amount of money that would be needed, and allocated contributions to various Italian powers who would be expected to join it. The envoys of these powers who were in Bologna were summoned separately to attend on the commission to be told what their contributions would be. Cesare de' Nobili was brought in after the Sienese envoys had left the room, and invited to sit down. Speaking on behalf of the commission, Cardinal de' Medici told him that the emperor and the pope

“nulla cosa più desiderando che la pace et quiete di Ytalia hanno concluso una legha, o vero una additione alla legha facta qui 3 anni, nella quale anno incluso tutta Ytalia, et noi come membro nobile d'essa. Et che per prepararsi contra a chi tal quiete volesse interrompere è necessario provvedere al principale ch'è il nervo della guerra. Et che per cio bisognano molte provigione et che a esse tutti li confederati concorrino”.

First, they had decided to gather together 120,000 scudi, to be deposited (he did not say where) to be ready for any ‘accidente di guerra’, and the Lucchese had been ‘taxati’ for the sum of 6,000 scudi. To keep the services of Swiss and German mercenary captains, 25,000 scudi a year would be needed; Lucca was to contribute to this pro rata. In time of war, they anticipated expenditure of 200,000 scudi a month; Lucca was to contribute to that too⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ ASLucca, Anziani, Reg. 618, ff. 292-8: Cesare de' Nobili and Matteo Gilio, 7 (?Feb.) 1533, Bologna.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, ff. 234-42; quotation 234-5: Cesare de' Nobili, 29 Jan. 1533, Bologna.

Charles was in fact forcing the league on a reluctant Clement, who no more wished to sign up to contribute to such levies than did any of the other Italian powers. Cardinal Garcia told the Lucchese envoy that the pope 'he venuto come forsato, gravandoli lo spendere et parendoli cosa troppa difficile'⁶⁹. None of the Imperial representatives on the commission were Italian, but the three Florentines representing the pope would have been well aware how outrageous this arrogant procedure would appear to the other Italian powers, who were supposed to be included in the league as principals. The Lucchese took their accustomed line, that they did not want to be included in the league as principals, and could not afford to make any regular contributions⁷⁰, but would resign themselves, if necessary, to make a single contribution, perhaps spread out over two years⁷¹. The Sieneese were prepared to make a single contribution of 4-5,000 scudi and pay for a hundred light horse in time of war (to be under the command of the Sieneese duke of Amalfi)⁷². The Genoese, who recognized they stood to benefit from a league to keep the French at bay, were prepared to make a contribution of up to 6-8,000 scudi to the war chest, provided that their share would be kept in Genoa to be available to them if needed, and any expenses they might incur for defence should be subtracted from any contributions due to the league⁷³. The duke of Ferrara, who had also been assigned a quota, said he had no intention of contributing to a league to defend others, when his own territory was under threat from the pope⁷⁴. On the whole, not the response Charles and his ministers had been hoping for, but one that they should perhaps have anticipated. They proceeded, despite the chorus of protests, to declare the league concluded on 27 February, but that did not put an end to the disputes. To obtain the ratification of the Genoese, Charles

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, ff. 292-8; quotation f. 295: Cesare de' Nobili and Atteo Gilio, 7 (?Feb) 1533, Bologna. See F. GUICCIARDINI, *Storia d'Italia*, Book XX, Chapter VI, for his account of this treaty and the commission.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, ff. 243-55: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili, 3 Feb. 1533.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, ff. 268-72: Anziani to Cesare de' Nobili and Matteo Gilio, (?mid Feb. 1533).

⁷² G. A. PECCI, *Memorie storico-critiche della Città di Siena* (original edition, Siena 1755-60; reprinted, Siena, 1997), 2 vols, II, Part 3, p. 67.

⁷³ PACINI, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, pp. 299-300.

⁷⁴ GUICCIARDINI, *Storia d'Italia*, Book XX, Chapter VI.

had to accept significant modifications of the terms relating to Genoa, including an undertaking that he would pay the monthly contribution of 3,000 scudi in time of war they had been assigned⁷⁵. No mention was made of Lucca in the clauses of the treaty concerning the levies⁷⁶. Charles wrote to say that they had been included as his *adherenti*, and that they had been assigned contributions of 5,000 scudi 'pro deposito', 250 scudi towards the annual payments for the captains and 1,000 scudi a month in time of war.

“Et quia huiusmodi foedus ad Italiae defensione otium et tranquillitatem conclusum est, et ob id potissimum ut omnes potentatus et Respublicae in bona pace et quiete conserventur, curabimus omnino pro nostra parte, vos et questam rempublicam, eiusque statum et libertatem manutenerere, defendere, ac protegere, non consentiendo illam a quopiam etiam in dicto foedere comprehenso indebito molestari aut perturbari...”⁷⁷.

For all the effort that had been put into setting up the league and the system of contributions, it never really became operative. With Venice refusing to join at all, and the pope soon negotiating the marriage of his niece Caterina de' Medici to Henri, the younger son of the French king, the vision of a phalanx of Italian states supporting Charles's efforts to exclude the French king from Italy proved nugatory.

The Italian states, even little Lucca, even if they might occasionally describe themselves as subjects of the Emperor, were not prepared to be treated as though they were. The Lucchese had to pay a high financial price to maintain their independence, their libertà. They may have exaggerated the difficulties the payments they made caused them; the fact that they generally did pay more than they wanted to may have reinforced the suspicion of the *agenti imperiali* who pressed them so hard that in fact they could afford more than they said. But in their estimation that the Lucchese could easily afford to pay 40,000 ducats, 50,000 ducats,

⁷⁵ PACINI, *La Genova di Andrea Doria*, pp. 300-4.

⁷⁶ ASLucca, Anziani, Capitoli 20, ff. 372-87.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, ff. 388-9: Charles V to Lucca, 24 Mar. 1533, Alessandria.

even more, the agents were probably also exaggerating. There were some indications that they knew they were asking too much, and they generally settled for less than their initial demands, and their exactions eased off in the later 1520s. Moreover, it was not just the amount of money being demanded of them that aroused the instinctive resistance of the Lucchese and others, it was the manner in which the demands were made. Even when they were not backed up by threats of reprisals, of letting the Imperial troops loose on their territory to extract the value of arrears of pay by force, the idea that the Italian states should make regular fixed contributions was one that they were not prepared to countenance. Such levies might be framed as obligations under the terms of a treaty or league intended to promote the common good of Italian states, but they looked uncomfortably like a tax being imposed on subjects of the Empire. Charles himself was tempted by such schemes, and not just for their financial advantage, and would have been content if they had worked. But the attitude he took to Lucca, his willingness to listen, eventually, to the protests of the Lucchese and to order his *agenti* in Italy not to oppress them or to make incessant demands on them, support the position of those who argue he was not inherently hostile to republics⁷⁸. Lucca's *libertà* was under greater threat from the schemes and ambitions and the desperate search for resources of the *agenti imperiali* in Italy, than from the Imperial ambitions of the Emperor Charles V.

⁷⁸ W. REINHARD, "'Governi stretti e tirannici": Las ciudades y la política del Emperador Carlos V. 1515-1556', in ALFRED KOHLER (ed.), *Carlos V./Karl V. 1500-2000*, Madrid, 2001, pp. 151-77.