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Abstract: The bestowal of a red hat can turn even the most humbly born cleric into an ecclesiastical prince, but whereas few cardinals of the modern era have been born princely, most of those created in the Renaissance period could claim to be of noble lineage and a few, from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, were the sons of ruling princes. Those who were born to fight were obliged to become those who prayed, but where did their allegiances lie when the states of Italy were at war with a belligerent pope such as Sixtus IV? The War of Ferrara (1482–4) presents an opportunity to survey the responses of cardinals from the ruling dynasties of Mantua, Milan, Montferrat, and Naples, together with their counterparts from the republics of Genoa, Siena, and Venice.

Key words: cardinals, Milan, Rome, Sixtus IV, Venice, war

Cardinals form an easily defined cohort that can be examined in terms of anything from social origins and educational experience to career patterns and causes of death, yet, as the present collection confirms, group studies of Renaissance cardinals are clearly outnumbered by those devoted to individual purpled persons. While it is true that isolating the career of one individual can serve to illustrate the greater whole, it comes at the expense of understanding how the Sacred College of Cardinals functioned as a group or, indeed, how it split into contending factions. The actions and interactions of that group are most apparent in the brief—or sometimes not so brief—intensity of a conclave, but any span of time could be selected in which to observe cardinals of different ages, geographical origins, and life experiences responding to the issues of the day. For the purposes of the present exercise cardinals are observed responding to the War of Ferrara (May 1482 - August 1484), a conflict that saw Pope Sixtus IV initially allied with Venice against Naples, Milan, and Florence, only to switch sides and become so determined to defeat Venice that he placed the republic under interdict.¹ There were thirty-four cardinals alive at the outbreak of hostilities and thirty-two at their conclusion, figures that conceal eight deaths and the creation of six new ecclesiastical princes, though only Élie de Bourdeille fell into both of those categories.² Thanks to the politicisation and Italianisation of the college by Sixtus and his immediate predecessors, Pius II and Paul II, the vast majority of cardinals came from states directly or indirectly involved in the war. Cardinals were supposed to have but one *patria*, Rome, but where did their loyalties really lie when their kinsmen or fellow-countrymen were at war with the pope? When a conflict of interests arose, what did it reveal about cardinals, individually and collectively?

¹ For detailed coverage see Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, ed. M. Mallett (Florence, 1998), vol. 7. Relevant subsidiary studies include M.E. Mallett, "Venice and the War of Ferrara, 1482-4", in *War, Culture and Society in Renaissance Venice*, eds D.S. Chambers, C.H. Clough, and M.E. Mallett (London and Rio Grande, 1993), 57-72, and M.E. Mallett, "Lorenzo de' Medici and the War of Ferrara", in *Lorenzo de' Medici: New Perspectives*, ed. B. Toscani (New York, 1994), 249-61.

² The other deaths were those of Georg Hessler, Guillaume d'Estouteville, Jean Rolin, Auxiàs Despuig, Ferry de Clugny, Francesco Gonzaga, and Teodoro Paleologo. Two of these cases have been examined in detail: D.S. Chambers, *A Renaissance Cardinal and his Worldly Goods: The Will and Inventory of Francesco Gonzaga (1444-1483)* (London, 1992); M.J. Gill, "Death and the Cardinal: The Two Bodies of Guillaume d'Estouteville", *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 2 (2001), 347-88.

The combatants were two sets of allied states. In July 1480 Ferrara joined the peninsula-spanning League of Naples, Milan, and Florence. This alliance was fed by roots of varying depths, from the shared interests of Florence's first citizen Cosimo de' Medici and the Milanese duke Francesco Sforza in the 1450s through to the Florentine-Neapolitan alliance concluded by Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo with King Ferrante in March 1480. Between times Ferrante's heir, Alfonso d'Aragona, Duke of Calabria, married Ippolita Maria Sforza, Alfonso's sister Eleonora married Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, and Ippolita's brother Ludovico seized the reins of their young nephew Gian Galeazzo's government in 1479. Deserted by her former allies Florence and Milan, the republic of Venice was in need of peninsular friends. Long-standing rivalry with Naples for dominance in the Adriatic meant that the only remaining option was Sixtus, whose state was most directly threatened by any expansionist moves from the southern kingdom. A papal-Venetian alliance went against the grain of recent history, but their interests now overlapped because the papacy's relations with neighbouring states were dictated by Sixtus's most powerful *nipote*, Girolamo Riario, a layman who hoped to extend his existing domain in the Romagna. From the Venetian perspective, an alliance with Sixtus was designed to control Riario's territorial ambitions. As there was no Venetian ambassador in Rome in 1479-80, every aspect of their agreement was negotiated by the Venetian cardinal Pietro Foscari.

Wedge between the Romagna and the Venetian Terraferma was the duchy of Ferrara, a papal vicariate. Duke Ercole's predecessors had reluctantly consented to a subservient economic relationship with Venice, policed by the resident Venetian *visdomino* in the city of Ferrara. They acquired a separate dispute with the republic over the Polesine—fertile territory between the Po and the Adige—which Venice gained as temporary surety for a loan and where Venetians settled as they did throughout the Terraferma. Ercole had good reason to feel threatened by the papal-Venetian alliance, but was no less emboldened by his membership of the League. In 1481 his subjects asserted themselves by trading in contraband salt, and the bishop of Ferrara's vicar sided with the people by excommunicating the *visdomino*. In Venice a group of younger patricians responded by calling for severe action against upstart Ferrara.

The war in 1482: Venice and the papacy against the League

Military preparations were completed in April 1482 when Roberto di Sanseverino signed a *condotta* as lieutenant general of the Venetian armies and Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, concluded one with the League. From 1 May Venetian forces made swift progress across the Polesine, securing strategic points along the north bank of the Po and forcing the League's commanders on to the defensive. As early as 2 May it was rumoured in Milan that one of those commanders, Federico Gonzaga of Mantua, was negotiating with the Venetians by means of his brother Rodolfo, who was fighting for the republic.³ Everything suggested that the campaign would be short and that Venice would be able to impose terms on Ferrara. That events proceeded differently was due to the papal alliance. In Sixtus the Venetians had saddled themselves with a weak ally whose state was vulnerable to Neapolitan invasion and whose capital was protected only by its ancient walls. News from Ferrara triggered just such an invasion: by early June the Duke of Calabria was in the vicinity of Rome. On 8 June the Venetian Senate reluctantly agreed to send Roberto Malatesta to assume command of the papal forces, thereby diminishing the chances of a quick victory in the north.⁴ A new alliance between Venice, Sixtus, and Genoa was poor compensation, the Ligurian republic being too beset by domestic turmoil to pose any serious threat to neighbouring Milan.⁵ Malatesta arrived in Rome on 23 July. Almost a month later his

³ Bernardo Rucellai to Lorenzo de' Medici, 2 May 1482, Archivio di Stato di Firenze [ASF], Mediceo avanti il Principato [MAP], 51, 132.

⁴ Archivio di Stato di Venezia [ASV], Senato, Deliberazioni segrete [Sen. Secr.], 30, 91-2.

⁵ An illustration of Genoa's turbulent domestic politics from the period of the Ferrarese war is provided by the city's archbishop, Cardinal Paolo Fregoso, ousting his nephew Battista in November 1483 to become doge for the third time.

considerably larger army attacked the Neapolitan camp in marshland south of Velletri. Although Malatesta's victory at Campomorto was decisive on the day, the wider campaign weakened his personal defences. In the worst of the summer heat Roberto di Sanseverino and Federico da Montefeltro also fell ill, reflecting the military stalemate over which they presided in the north. Roberto recovered, but Federico died on 10 September, the very day that Malatesta expired in Rome. In four months the military men had demonstrated how far war could be taken by a Venetian-papal alliance against Ferrara and its backers. In Lazio peace was first discussed when papal *condottieri* from the Orsini and Conti families made contact with the Duke of Calabria, indicating that they were prepared to enter Neapolitan employment, on condition that Ferrante made peace with the Pope. The negotiations were protracted, but the desire for peace was too great to prevent an immediate revival of hostilities. Peace between Sixtus and the League was duly signed on 12 December.⁶

Across the various theatres of war, this opening phase of the conflict was fought by the brothers, brothers-in-law, or cousins of more than a dozen cardinals. By way of illustration, at Campomorto Malatesta's second-in-command was Giacomo Conti, brother-in-law of the Neapolitan cardinal Oliviero Carafa. Their papal army attacked the camp of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, whose brother Giovanni was also a cardinal. Alfonso and Giovanni's brother-in-law Antonio Todeschini-Piccolomini, Duke of Amalfi, would have been in the camp had he not been sent away on a mission;⁷ he was the brother of the Sieneese cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini. In part this kinship network reflected the policies of Popes Pius, Paul, and Sixtus, the first of whom created one precedent when he married his nephew Antonio into the Neapolitan ruling dynasty and another when he bestowed a red hat on Francesco Gonzaga, the seventeen-year-old son of the Marquis of Mantua. Paul followed the Mantuan precedent when he promoted Teodoro Paleologo, the undistinguished brother of the Marquis of Montferrat; Sixtus took this politicisation of the Sacred College to its furthest extent in 1477 with the promotion of the twenty-one-year-old Neapolitan prince Giovanni d'Aragona, a move opposed by the existing cardinals, who doubted the young man's ability to act independently of his dynasty and its interests.

Between them, the League states had provided the Church with five of the cardinals then living and loomed large in the careers of at least another two. How these cardinals acted in 1482 was dictated by their precise social origins and coloured by their individual characters. This is seen most clearly with regard to the Neapolitans, who faced the most acute conflict of interests when Ferrante's forces invaded the Papal States. As its critics anticipated, Sixtus's most overt act of politicising the Sacred College did indeed result in the most extreme case of a cardinal identifying with the League and, at least implicitly, taking a stand against the papacy. Giovanni d'Aragona's departure from Rome at the onset of war confirmed that he had been nothing more than Ferrante's quasi-ambassadorial representative, and his subsequent mission to Puglia, to counter potential Venetian naval activities in the region, unequivocally exposed the secular prince beneath the clerical garb.⁸ By way of contrast, Cardinal Carafa was out of favour in his native Naples and, as indicated above, was related to one of the leading papal commanders: Rome had become his *patria* and he stayed there throughout the year. As the brother of a senior Neapolitan commander, the position of Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini was more delicate and required a more nuanced response, which he provided by busying himself with political arbitration in his Sieneese bishopric. Milan was the second-most powerful state on the League side and had strong connections with two cardinals. Although he originated in the Papal States, Stefano Nardini had been Archbishop of Milan since 1461; Giovanni Arcimboldi had begun his career in ducal service, and his brother Guidantonio remained an active Milanese diplomat throughout the Ferrarese war. Their promotions to the

⁶ For the text of which see Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, 481-98.

⁷ Trayato Candida to King Ferrante, 21 August 1482, Archivio di Stato di Milano [ASMi], Carteggio generale Visconteo-sforzesco, Potenze Estere [SPE], Napoli, 240.

⁸ Lorenzo Lanti in Rome to the Signoria di Siena, 30 May 1482, ASS, Concistoro [Conc.], 2048, 25; Branda Castiglioni to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 20 August 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 240; Giorgio Brognoli in Naples to Federico Gonzaga, 24 August 1482, Archivio di Stato di Mantova [ASMa], Archivio Gonzaga [AG], 806.

cardinalate dated from the period of Sixtus's initial favour towards the Sforza, but neither cardinal identified so closely with Milan as to be deflected from his papal responsibilities in 1482. Milan routinely employed the ruling families of Mantua and Montferrat as *condottieri*, bringing Cardinals Gonzaga and Paleologo into the League's orbit. Those two individuals responded very differently to the prospect of war, Paleologo fleeing from Rome while Gonzaga stayed put.⁹ The League's third-largest power, Florence, lacked a native-born cardinal, but was not short of red-hatted *amici*, among them Nardini and the veteran Guillaume d'Estouteville, a cardinal since 1439.

D'Estouteville and Rodrigo Borgia held the two most senior curial offices, being *camerlengo* and vice-chancellor respectively, and had no hesitation in rising above what was sure to be nothing more than a little local difficulty. In addition to d'Estouteville, three other French or Burgundian cardinals remained in Rome throughout 1482. Jean Balue had survived lengthy imprisonment by Louis XI and could hardly represent his former gaoler in Rome, where the king's agent Philibert Hugonet was regarded as a "friend" of Girolamo Riario but was otherwise emotionally detached from peninsular affairs because he and Ferry de Clugny were engaged in a microcosmic version of the protracted Franco-Burgundian rivalry. Besides Borgia there were two other Iberian cardinals. Like Borgia, Auxiàs Despuig was originally a subject of the crown of Aragon, so potentially had some loyalty towards the Aragonese kings of Naples, in whose realm he held the archbishopric of Monreale, though it may be noted that possession of another Neapolitan bishopric—Molfetta—was not enough to cause the Genoese-born cardinal Giovanni Battista Cibo to identify himself as a Neapolitan in this time of crisis. In 1482 Despuig also occupied the annually rotating position of *camerlengo* of the Sacred College, but on 19 May he relinquished his books and seals of office to Cardinal Arcimboldi and left for Foligno.¹⁰ Plague was given as the reason for his departure. The fact that he returned some weeks before Sixtus concluded peace with the League and survived only ten months thereafter suggests that his flight was not a diplomatic retreat. The other Iberian cardinal, Jorge Costa, Archbishop of Lisbon, was claimed as a "friend" by the republic of Florence, though he had done little more than pass through Pisa on his way to Rome in 1480.

In addition to the cardinals identified above, ten others were resident in Rome during the first half of 1482. Of these, four were *nipoti* of the reigning pope, three were Venetian patricians who had benefited from similar relationships to the previous pontiff, Paul II, and the eighth had been born under Venetian rule but made his name in Hungary.¹¹ The remaining two curial cardinals were from the Roman dynasties of Colonna and Savelli, each of which enjoyed the distinction of having produced a pope, even if that was in the early fifteenth and late thirteenth century respectively. In the matter of producing popes, their Orsini and Conti counterparts were even more illustrious, but happened not to have their own cardinal after the death of Cosimo Orsini five months before the outbreak of the Ferrarese war.

Although the military capabilities of many Orsini and some Colonna were securely tethered by papal *condotte*, last-minute bargaining in May 1482 meant that Virginio Orsini left Neapolitan service for that of Sixtus, while Cardinal Giovanni Colonna's brother Prospero was among those who went over to the League, receiving Virginio's confiscated fiefs of Albe and Tagliacozzo as a sign of Ferrante's favour. Sixtus thereupon confiscated Colonna and Savelli property as the price of their treachery, and did not stop at the laity. On 2 June Cardinals Colonna and Savelli, together with Savelli's brother Mariano, were arrested on suspicion of conspiring with the Neapolitan invaders and imprisoned in Castel S. Angelo. Their names are all too readily bracketed together, but there were marked distinctions between them: Giovanni Battista Savelli was a vastly experienced papal servant, whereas Giovanni Colonna was a young man of no distinction apart from his birth. A search of Savelli's residence revealed a large quantity of arms, which Sixtus

⁹ K. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi* (Münster, 1913), vol. 2, 44; Chambers, *A Renaissance Cardinal*, 35.

¹⁰ Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, vol. 2, 45.

¹¹ In order of seniority, the *nipoti* were Giuliano della Rovere, Girolamo Basso della Rovere, Domenico della Rovere, and Raffaele Sansoni-Riario; the Venetians were Marco Barbo, Giovanni Battista Zeno, and Giovanni Michiel; the Hungarian client was Gabriele Rangone.

interpreted as part of a plot to open Rome's gates to the Neapolitans, overthrow the regime, and assassinate himself and Riario.¹² A plot of that sort certainly existed, devised by the Colonna cousins Prospero and Lorenzo Oddone, but confirmation of Savelli's part in it had to wait until the Neapolitan *condottiere* Rossetto da Capua confessed as much—under torture—later in the summer.¹³

Inside the Vatican, liturgical life continued without interruption. Even as Neapolitan troops approached Rome in the opening weeks of the conflict the Venetian cardinal Marco Barbo presided at vespers for the vigil of Pentecost (25 May) and Philibert Hugonet was the celebrant at mass in St Peter's for Trinity, the very day on which Cardinals Savelli and Colonna were arrested.¹⁴

One curial activity over which cardinals exercised considerably greater personal choice than they did over liturgical responsibilities was that of sponsoring or "relating" candidates to major benefices. Eleven cardinals are known to have undertaken this task between January and April 1482, when the most prolific sponsors were Carafa, who dealt with Neapolitan promotions, Barbo, who protected English interests, and the Sistine *nipote* Raffaele Sansoni-Riario, who acquired a Breton connection.¹⁵ The outbreak of war witnessed a clear break in terms of both the geography and the personnel involved in these acts of patronage. As long as a number of the warring Italian states lacked diplomatic representation in Rome and thus the means to cultivate cardinals as sponsors, concistories were dominated by French business. This was divided between d'Estouteville, Hugonet, Balue, and the most senior of the papal *nipoti*, Giuliano della Rovere, who included among his clients Louis XI's doctor Angelo Catone, the new Archbishop of Vienne. Few Neapolitan benefices were filled during the months when Sixtus and Ferrante were at war, though Carafa was able to take matters into his own hands on 18 August, when he proposed the head of his household to the see of Rapolla. Only one Lombard bishopric, Parma, fell vacant during this season. No cardinals were involved in that case because Sixtus appointed his favourite Giovanni Giacomo Sclafenati *motu proprio*. Barbo was still in Rome on 14 August, but presumably left for Umbria before the end of the month, when Carafa proposed Giacomo Vallarosso to the bishopric of Capodistria in Barbo's province of Aquileia. That Carafa continued to act on behalf of the absent Barbo is indicated by his uncharacteristic sponsorship of an English case, that of John Dunster to the abbacy of St Augustine's, Canterbury, in November.

In other circumstances highly respected prelates such as Barbo and Carafa might have made ideal peacemakers, but Sixtus's participation in the war compromised the chances of any cardinals taking on that role. Throughout the spring and summer of 1482 only one cardinal promoted the cause of peace. This was Giuliano della Rovere, whose motivation derived from an intense rivalry with his cousin Girolamo Riario. In the months leading up to the conflict Riario wanted war, so Della Rovere argued for peace; Riario had been made a Venetian patrician, so Della Rovere favoured the League. In contrast to this negative relationship, the cardinal was considerably closer to his brothers Bartolomeo, who was Bishop of Ferrara, and Giovanni, a son-in-law of Federico da Montefeltro. Within weeks of hostilities commencing it was reported that Giuliano had been negotiating with Federico and with Ercole d'Este.¹⁶ That he made any progress at all was because Sixtus had already come to regret the Venetian alliance for which Riario was to blame. By 10 September the cardinal's envoy had reached Bologna, carrying papal authorisation for Federico

¹² Lorenzo Lanti in Rome to the Signoria of Siena, 5 June 1482, ASS, Conc., 2048, 35.

¹³ Alfonso d'Aragona in the camp at Grottaferrata to King Ferrante, 6 June 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 239; Sinolfo Ottieri in Rome to the Balia of Siena, 30 September 1482, ASS, Balia, 505, 99.

¹⁴ *Il diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra*, ed. E. Carusi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Città di Castello, 1904), vol. 23, no. 3, 100-1.

¹⁵ These and the following cases are all detailed in Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Camera Apostolica, *Obligaciones et Solutiones*, 83. On Barbo's English connection see Stella Fletcher, "Cardinal Marco Barbo as Protector of English Interests at the Roman Curia in the late Fifteenth Century", *Downside Review*, vol. 188 (January 2000), 27-44.

¹⁶ Antonio da Montecatini to Ercole d'Este, 12 June 1482, Archivio di Stato di Modena [ASMd], Archivio Segreto Estense [ASE], ambasciatori, Firenze, 3.

to negotiate a peace with the Venetians.¹⁷ At that point Della Rovere's hopes died with the Duke of Urbino, leaving only the irony that this was the man whose subsequent reputation was as the "Warrior Pope" Julius II.

More productive moves towards peace between Sixtus and the League were initiated by laymen in the southern theatre of war, where references to red hats were limited to speculation that Giacomo Conti might be won over to the League because Sixtus was said to have no intention of making his son a cardinal and a proposal that Ascanio Maria Sforza of Milan would be promoted as part of any agreement.¹⁸ Only after these overtures did any existing cardinals offer their mediatory services. Francesco Gonzaga's approach towards Ercole d'Este met with approval from Ferrante but was rejected by Ludovico Sforza, who was more inclined to favour a simultaneous move from Stefano Nardini.¹⁹ Nothing came of either initiative, but at least Gonzaga was better placed in Rome than Nardini was in Rimini to take advantage of any new developments. In late October two Spanish envoys, Joan Margarit i Pau, Bishop of Gerona, and Bartolomeo Verino, arrived in Rome. A committee of cardinals was created to discuss peace terms with them. According to Gonzaga, its membership consisted of d'Estouteville—who acted as host because he was too infirm to leave his palace--Borgia, Giuliano della Rovere, Costa, Sansoni-Riario, Clugny, and Gonzaga himself.²⁰ However impressive this list, their discussions stalled until the veteran Neapolitan ambassador Anello Arcamone returned to Rome in mid-November.²¹ In the meantime, Giuliano della Rovere assured Ercole d'Este that he would be sent as legate to Ferrara after the conclusion of peace.²² He deluded himself, because the peace that was signed on 12 December embodied the interests of Riario and his ally Virginio Orsini, meaning that Della Rovere was excluded from the final negotiations, and Cardinals Savelli and Colonna remained in Castel S. Angelo while other prisoners taken by the two sides were freed. Riario objected to the proposal of a hat for Ascanio Sforza, so nothing came of that either.²³

There was, however, one clear winner among the cardinals: Gonzaga, whose existing Bolognese legation was extended to cover the remaining war zone. Ercole d'Este's ambassador in Florence understood that the Mantuan was a good negotiator, providing he controlled his temper.²⁴ Fired with nothing short of crusading zeal, Gonzaga left Rome four days after the signing of peace, so was not among the fifteen cardinals who were said to have greeted the Duke of Calabria when he arrived in Rome later that month, en route to Ferrara.²⁵ Gonzaga was the brother of three *condottieri* and took a soldier's interest in war, inspecting fortifications, getting close to the action, and continuing to follow the course of military events even as his health deteriorated during the summer of 1483.²⁶ More immediately, it fell to the legate to represent Sixtus at the League's congress of war in February, ahead of the new campaigning season.

¹⁷ Zaccaria Saggi in Milan to Federico Gonzaga, 25 September 1482, ASMa, AG, 1627.

¹⁸ Ambassadors of the League to their princes, 14 September 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 240; Giovan Francesco Cagnola to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 14 November 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 241.

¹⁹ Branda Castiglioni to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 18 October 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 240; Zaccaria Saggi to Federico Gonzaga, 7 Nov 1482, ASMa, AG, 1627; Gian Galeazzo Sforza to Stefano Taverna, 26 Oct 1482, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 91.

²⁰ Francesco Gonzaga in Rome to Federico Gonzaga, 30 October 1482, ASMa, AG, 846.

²¹ Francesco Gonzaga in Rome to Federico Gonzaga, 18 November 1482, ASMa, AG, 846.

²² Gian Galeazzo Sforza to Branda Castiglioni, 16 December 1482, ASMi, SPE, Napoli, 241.

²³ Gian Galeazzo Sforza to the ambassadors of the League, 25 November 1482, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 91; Gian Galeazzo Sforza to Giovan Antonio Sangiorgio, 5 December 1482, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 92.

²⁴ Antonio da Montecatini to Ercole d'Este, 14 December 1482, ASMo, ASE, ambasciatori, Firenze, 3.

²⁵ *Il diario romano di Gaspare Pontani*, ed. D. Toni, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Città di Castello, 1907-8), vol. 3, no. 2, 22.

²⁶ D.S. Chambers, *Popes, Cardinals and War: The Military Church in Renaissance and Early Modern Europe* (London, 2006); D.S. Chambers, "Virtù militare del cardinal Francesco Gonzaga", repr. in D.S. Chambers, *Renaissance Cardinals and their Worldly Problems* (Aldershot, 1997).

The war in 1483-4: Venice isolated but defiant

The leaders of the newly expanded League agreed on a swift military initiative, but were overwhelmed by a chronic inability to pay for a campaign of any length. In the course of the year smaller states accused larger ones of failing to meet their financial and military obligations. Larger states such as Milan could pass the buck no further and, by December, the word was that Ludovico Sforza habitually went hunting in order to avoid being asked for money.²⁷ Relations between the allies were so fractious that the new Marquis of Montferrat, Bonifacio Paleologo, came close to signing a *condotta* with Venice because he was not made Milan's captain-general, while the legate's brother Federico Gonzaga made similar threats even though he had received the captaincy. On the other side, Venice hired René II, Duke of Lorraine, and put him in charge of the Ferrarese front, while Roberto di Sanseverino moved westwards for a more direct confrontation with Milan, but a decisive military breakthrough was not achieved in either area. The leaders of Florence, Milan, and Naples consequently desired a diplomatic route out of their military impasse, but were determined that any negotiations with Venice be undertaken without the others' knowledge, so achieved nothing. They were also thwarted by Sixtus, who refused to compromise, ordering the republic to restore its territorial acquisitions to Ferrara or risk punishment from Rome's temporal and spiritual arms.

Sixtus's change of allegiance in December 1482 allowed cardinals from League states to return to Rome and resume their careers after what had proved to be but a brief interruption. Attention therefore switched to the clear minority of Venetian cardinals. The dilemma they faced was, if anything, more acute than anything encountered in 1482 because cardinals connected to League states were simply more numerous and less easily isolated by Sixtus. Among the Venetians, Foscari had resided in his Paduan diocese since 1481. When the tide turned against the Veneto-papal alliance in the second half of 1482, Marco Barbo, Giovanni Michiel, and Giovanni Battista Zeno absented themselves from Rome. Barbo's secretary, Giovanni Lorenzi, remained there and kept his cardinal informed of developments. On 20 December he reported that Zeno and Michiel were back in Rome but did not attend that day's consistory, and were also absent when the Duke of Calabria entered Rome a few days later.²⁸ Another challenge was posed on 10 February when the new Florentine and Ferrarese ambassadors arrived in the city. This time the households of the Venetian cardinals were conspicuously absent from the welcoming party.²⁹ On the other side of the diplomatic coin Francesco Diedo, the Venetian ambassador, was obliged to leave Rome.³⁰ Breaking his northbound journey, he spent a day with Cardinal Barbo at the abbey of SS. Severo e Martirio, outside the walls of Orvieto, explaining the republic's policy regarding Ferrara and encouraging Barbo to act in the interests of his *patria*.³¹ Zeno and Michiel needed no such encouragement and argued in a public consistory that isolated Venice had much greater need of a legate than did factious Siena, to which Cardinal Cibo was being dispatched.³²

By 3 March the Signoria had consulted Venetian and Paduan experts on the technicalities of their case and issued a formal appeal to a general council of the Church.³³ That raised the stakes considerably: Sixtus threatened to impose an interdict on Venice. Barbo was sufficiently troubled by this prospect to acknowledge his love for his *patria*, but could not allow worldly considerations

²⁷ Zaccaria Saggi to Federico Gonzaga, 16 December 1483, ASMa, AG, 1628.

²⁸ *Il carteggio fra il Card. Marco Barbo e Giovanni Lorenzi (1481-1490)*, ed. P. Paschini (Vatican City, 1948), 63-4; M. Sanudo, *Le vite dei dogi (1474-1494)*, ed. Angela Caracciolo Aricò, vol. 1 (Rome and Padua, 1989), 327.

²⁹ Branda Castiglione and Antonio Trivulzio to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 11 February 1483, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 92.

³⁰ Diedo's dispatches from Rome have not survived, in stark contrast to those of the League ambassadors in 1483-4, which means that there is an imbalance between contemporary comments on the contributions of cardinals in the two phases of the conflict.

³¹ *Il carteggio*, 70-1.

³² Branda Castiglione and Antonio Trivulzio to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 19 February 1483, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 92.

³³ G. Dalla Santa, "Le appellazioni della Repubblica di Venezia dalle scomuniche di Sisto IV e Giulio II", *Nuovo archivio veneto* vol. 17 (1899), 216-42, includes the text of this appeal, together with that of 15 June.

to hinder his primary duty towards God and moved to the abbey of Monte Oliveto, south of Siena, with the intention of avoiding all correspondence during Holy Week.³⁴ It was presumably there that he received an instruction from the Venetian Senate, dated 17 March, ordering him to return to Rome to defend the republic.³⁵ So unsettled was he that he broke his previous resolve and sent a brief response to Doge Giovanni Mocenigo on Holy Thursday, following it with an instruction to Lorenzi on Good Friday to supplement what he imagined could be interpreted as a lukewarm message.³⁶

While Barbo prayed and agonised, his younger and very distant kinsmen Zeno and Michiel acted, requesting a papal audience for 24 March, the Monday of Holy Week. According to the Neapolitan envoy Traiano Bottone, they showed Sixtus their letters from the Signoria and argued that Venice had merely reintegrated territory that had formerly belonged to her. Bottone anticipated further discussion upon Barbo's reappearance, even though it was the will of all the non-Venetian cardinals that the bull of excommunication be published without delay.³⁷ In the version of events related by the Florentine ambassador, Zeno advanced a peace initiative of his own devising, according to which Venice would offer Faenza to Riario in the hope of persuading the Pope to consent to Venice keeping the Polesine. However, like Bottone, Pier Filippo Pandolfini had no illusion about the success of any scheme associated with either Zeno or Michiel.³⁸ In Milan the Mantuan orator Zaccaria Saggi reached the same conclusion: Michiel and Zeno were political lightweights, so unlikely to achieve anything. On the other hand, were Barbo and Foscari to build on these foundations, something might yet come of it.³⁹

Foscari completed his Holy Week observances in Padua and then began the journey towards Rome. On 3 April the Florentine Jacopo Guicciardini reported from Ferrara that Foscari had approached Cardinal Gonzaga with an assurance that Venice would make it worth the Marquis of Mantua's while to take part in peace negotiations. Guicciardini also understood that Barbo was returning to Rome: there could be no clearer sign that the Venetians were interested in a negotiated peace.⁴⁰ There was, however, widespread acceptance within the League that Venice would not relinquish the Polesine in any circumstances, as the legate confirmed when he stated that Ercole d'Este should be prepared to sacrifice the disputed territory.⁴¹

It was early May before Barbo arrived in Rome. According to the Milanese ambassadors, his defence of the republic began during a lengthy papal audience, after which there was no return to the subject of Veneto-papal relations until Saturday, 24 May, after the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost, when an extraordinary consistory was called to finalise the bull of interdict against Venice.⁴² According to the Milanese report, unidentified Venetian cardinals spoke energetically against the bull and accused Sixtus of instigating the war. Sanudo's later and better-known account enhances the drama by having the excommunication determined by Sixtus and a select group of seven cardinals known to share his opinion. He refers to the Pope's crude and iniquitous anti-Venetian arguments, and identifies Barbo as the republic's sole defender, the cardinal's patriotic speech emphasising Venice's long tradition of defending Christianity against the infidel and reminding his audience that Sixtus had positively encouraged military action against Ercole d'Este.⁴³

³⁴ *Il carteggio*, 74, 77-8.

³⁵ *Il carteggio*, 79.

³⁶ *Il carteggio*, 78-80.

³⁷ Traiano Bottone in Rome to Alfonso d'Aragona, 26 March 1483, ASMa, AG, 846.

³⁸ Pier Filippo Pandolfini in Rome to Lorenzo de' Medici, 29 March 1483, ASF, MAP, 51, 221; 2 April 1483, ASF, MAP, 53, 4.

³⁹ Zaccaria Saggi to Federico Gonzaga, 12 April 1483, ASMa, AG, 1628.

⁴⁰ Jacopo Guicciardini to Lorenzo de' Medici, 3 April 1483, ASF, MAP, 48, 308.

⁴¹ Jacopo Guicciardini to Lorenzo de' Medici, 24 April 1483, ASF, MAP, 48, 315.

⁴² Branda Castiglione and Antonio Trivulzio to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 5 May and 24 May 1483, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 93.

⁴³ Sanudo, *Le vite dei dogi*, II, Padua, 2001, 364.

If the consistory was called in order to reach a decision ahead of Foscari's reappearance it could not have been better timed, for he reached the city that same day. While Barbo, Michiel, Zeno, and the most ardent anti-Venetians were occupied at the Vatican, any cardinal who chose to greet Foscari at Porta del Popolo made a highly politicised statement in doing so. A quartet of them nevertheless took that risk.⁴⁴ Among the four, Rangone had the most logical motivation, identifying as a Venetian on account of his Veronese upbringing, regardless of the fact that he had been promoted to the cardinalate as the candidate of King Mátyás of Hungary. The most revealing case was that of Despuig, whose appearance confirms that his withdrawal from Rome in the spring of 1482 was not motivated by overt identification with the League. Arguably the most significant appearance was that of the frustrated peacemaker Giuliano della Rovere, who had recently adopted so low a profile that he sponsored no candidates to major benefices between December 1482 and September 1483. In a reversal of their positions twelve months earlier, Riario was now on the verge of going to war against his former Venetian allies, so Della Rovere reacted by sympathising with Venice. By 5 July word of an understanding between Della Rovere and the Venetian cardinals had even reached the Florentine ambassador in Ferrara, though no details were given.⁴⁵ Balue was the fourth of the cardinals who greeted Foscari, simply because he cleaved to Della Rovere as the man who had secured his liberation from Louis XI's prison.

Before any more cardinals could side with Venice, the interdict was published the next day, Trinity Sunday. Secular business resumed on Monday and Riario left for the war zone on the Tuesday, when Foscari made the Venetian case directly to Sixtus. The republic desired peace, he maintained, which could not be sought by means of ecclesiastical censures. He blamed Sixtus for starting the war, causing the League ambassadors to wonder at a cardinal calling into question the Pope's honour and good faith in so forthright a manner.⁴⁶ That same week brought the feast of Corpus Christi and, in contrast to the previous year, there was a liturgical dimension to the conflict. Instead of joining the other cardinals for vespers in the papal chapel on the vigil of the feast, Barbo, Zeno, Michiel, Foscari, and Rangone took collective action by boycotting the office.⁴⁷ Exhibiting what appears to have been characteristic enthusiasm, Zeno took the matter further. As Archpriest of St Peter's he generally presided in the basilica on alternate Sundays.⁴⁸ He was indeed there for Pentecost on 18 May, but did not reappear until 15 June, his absence on 1 June suggesting a unilateral continuation of the collective action taken at Corpus Christi. Given that a state of ecclesiastical war now existed between Venice and Rome to add to the military one, Barbo, Foscari, Michiel, and Zeno—but not the non-patrician Rangone—were instructed by Venice to leave the curia and reside in their dioceses.⁴⁹ As part of a wider Venetian strategy that included a second formal appeal against the interdict, Foscari had another meeting with the Pope on 12 June. Although Sixtus refused to lift the censures, there was a more positive discussion about how to ensure that any agreement between Venice and Ferrara might be observed. The meeting concluded with the cardinal requesting permission to leave Rome on account of the plague, a motive which could easily blend with the Venetian injunction.⁵⁰

If Foscari did leave Rome it was not for long. Riario had got as far as Forlì when he quarrelled so violently with Virginio Orsini that his new allies reckoned he would do more harm than good in the war zone and wanted him to return to Rome.⁵¹ This reaction helped to convince Riario of the League's imminent collapse and spurred Venetian attempts to revive the republic's former relations with him. The mediatory role previously allotted to Foscari was briefly held by

⁴⁴ Guidantonio Vespucci in Rome to the Dieci di Balia, 25 May 1483, ASF, Dieci di Balia [Dieci], [Carteggi], Responsive [Resp.], 25, 262.

⁴⁵ Jacopo Guicciardini to Lorenzo de' Medici, 5 July 1483, ASF, MAP, 48, 327.

⁴⁶ Ambassadors of the League to their princes, 30 May 1483, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 93.

⁴⁷ *Il diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi*, 118.

⁴⁸ As listed in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio Capitolo di S. Pietro, Turni 1 (1480-1497).

⁴⁹ ASV, Sen. Secr. 31, 27.

⁵⁰ Guidantonio Vespucci to the Dieci di Balia, 13 June 1483, ASF, Dieci, Resp., 28, 20.

⁵¹ Jacopo Guicciardini to Lorenzo de' Medici, 5 July 1483, ASF, MAP, 48, 327.

the prelate Benedetto Soranzo, who had meetings with Riario in Forlì before the latter left for Rome.⁵² The prospect of Riario's return prompted the Venetian authorities to revive correspondence with their tame cardinal.⁵³ By 11 November the Milanese orators were able to relate clear evidence of Foscari's attempt to lure Riario away from the League: in a conversation with the *nipote* he declared that he had no faith in any of the princes of the League and again blamed Sixtus for causing the war.⁵⁴ Three days after that report was written Barbo also returned to Rome.⁵⁵ With support from Zeno, Michiel, Rangone, Balue, and Giuliano della Rovere, they had the makings of a significant party at odds with papal policy, and that at a time when the number of curial cardinals had dwindled markedly.

During the 1470s Sixtus had been a generous bestower of red hats, but had created no cardinals after May 1480. The vicissitudes of war brought speculation about the identities of the next new cardinals, but also a genuine need for more curial cardinals to share the burden. Much responsibility rested on the youthful shoulders of the papal *nipote* Raffaele Sansoni-Riario, who succeeded d'Estouteville as *camerlengo* in January 1483 and was the point of contact for ambassadors during Girolamo Riario's subsequent five-month absence.⁵⁶ That summer Domencio della Rovere and Giovanni d'Aragona departed on legations to Savoy and Hungary respectively, the latter with a view to bringing his brother-in-law King Mátyás into an anti-Venetian coalition with the League. Numbers were further depleted by the deaths of Cardinals Despuig, Clugny, and Gonzaga between 3 September and 21 October. Taken together with the continued imprisonment of Savelli and Colonna, the ambiguous status of the Venetians, and the intermittent presence of Paleologo, by November Sixtus could call on the services of only a dozen cardinals, not all of whom supported his determination to pursue the war against Venice. For a pope who habitually increased his own power by dividing that of the Sacred College, he found himself in a position of unaccustomed weakness. The day after Barbo's return to Rome, Sixtus asserted himself by creating five new cardinals. This involved two balancing acts. First, the Spanish diplomat Joan Margarit was paired with Louis XI's confessor Élie de Bourdeille. More imaginatively, the promotions of Giovanni Battista Orsini—long the candidate of his kinsman Virginio—and the Orsini ally Giovanni Conti were neatly counterbalanced by the release of the two cardinals whose devotion to Naples was now a positive asset: Savelli and Colonna walked along the wall from Castel S. Angelo and straight into the consistory in which the new cardinals were being announced.⁵⁷ The fifth *neo-poporato*, Sclafenati, was the surrogate *nipote* who would share the curial burden. As he was not the official Milanese candidate, the Sforza interpreted his promotion as a snub.

This exercise in re-balancing the Sacred College—followed by a hat for Ascanio Sforza in March 1484, in the hope of dissuading Milan from breaking with the League—came in the context of a protracted attempt to find a negotiated peace by means of the least compromised of the curial cardinals. The Venetians were as much in need of peace as any of their adversaries and discussed peace terms with an agent of the venerable Portuguese prelate Jorge Costa as early as June 1483. In October they let it be known that they were interested in a peace negotiated by the cardinal.⁵⁸ Throughout the winter Costa remained in Rome and operated through Stefano Taleazzo, Archbishop of Bar/Antivari, who made two visits to Venice, but was obliged to assume a more active role when the ambitious Taleazzi appeared to be more favourable to Venice than his commission warranted.⁵⁹ Once it was established that the republic was prepared to submit its

⁵² See G. Dalla Santa, "Benedetto Soranzo, patrizio veneto, arcivescovo di Cipro, e Girolamo Riario", *Nuovo archivio veneto*, n.s., vol. 28 (1914), 308-87.

⁵³ ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, Registri misti, 21, 162.

⁵⁴ Antonio Trivulzio and Branda Castiglione to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 11 November 1483, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 94.

⁵⁵ *Il diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi*, 126.

⁵⁶ Antonio da Montecatini to Ercole d'Este, 31 May 1483, ASMo, ASE, ambasciatori, Firenze, 3

⁵⁷ *Il diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi*, 126.

⁵⁸ ASV, Sen. Secr., 31, 19; ambassadors of the League to their princes, 29 October 1483, ASF, Dieci, Resp., 29, 264; same to same, ASMi, SPE, Roma, 94; same to same, ASMo, ASE, ambasciatori, Roma, 3.

⁵⁹ Guidantonio Vespucci to the Dieci di Balia, 5 January 1484, ASF, Dieci, Resp, 27, 13-14.

differences with the League to papal arbitration, Costa was appointed as legate and left Rome on 29 March 1484.⁶⁰ Two former curial ambassadors, Zaccaria Barbaro and Federico Corner, were sent to negotiate with him at Cesena, ahead of a projected visit to Venice, but the weeks passed and no progress was made. Costa was recalled to Rome in June, protesting against the Venetians' bad faith.⁶¹ If Barbaro and Corner were stringing him along, it was because a deal with the Pope might have been useful, but one with war-weary Milan, was distinctly preferable. Among princes, magistrates, and military captains engaged in a war that no-one was capable of winning there was even less appetite for the conflict in 1484 than there had been the previous year. Roberto di Saseverino took the initiative by sending an envoy to the Milanese captain Gian Giacomo Trivulzio. An armistice ensued and all the major players apart from Sixtus were represented in peace negotiations at Bagnolo. The terms they signed on 7 August constituted a clear victory for Venice, which retained the Polesine and revived its former privileges in Ferrara.⁶²

It could be argued that Ludovico Sforza was driven towards peace in the summer of 1484 by the actions of two cardinals, but they were not those of his brother Ascanio or any of the others then in Italy. Following the death of Louis XI, Jean Balue had been sent as legate to France, his self-proclaimed mission being to act as an angel of peace between Charles VIII's regency government and rebel princes led by Louis, Duke of Orléans. It was not until July that Balue was permitted to meet Charles at Angers. In the meantime he treated with Orléans. Busying giddy French minds with foreign quarrels had long meant sending armies to fight for the Angevin cause against the Aragonese in Naples, but Louis happened to be the great-grandson of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and thus had a claim to the duchy of Milan to counter that of the Sforza. Balue's attempts to persuade Orléans to attack Milan were known to Cardinal Charles de Bourbon, who asked a member of the Florentine embassy in France to warn Ludovico of the scheme.⁶³ Milan was struggling to fight a war on one front, never mind two, so here was the catalyst for Ludovico's peace with Venice. Balue and Bourbon thereby achieved what had been beyond the more direct and concentrated efforts of either Della Rovere in 1482 or Costa in 1483-4.

The conflict condensed

No curial cardinals could remain entirely untouched by the military campaigns that constituted the War of Ferrara, even if their direct involvement was—like that of Guillaume d'Estouteville or Rodrigo Borgia—limited to committee work. However, when Sixtus went to war against the League it invited a sizeable minority of cardinals to choose between loyalty to the short-term policies of the current pope and the longer-standing bonds of birth and family. This exposed Giovanni d'Aragona as a prince of Naples and Teodoro Paleologo as similarly lacking in commitment to the Church, while Francesco Gonzaga enjoyed the luxury of having brothers fighting on both sides of the conflict, making him exceptionally well placed to take advantage of any peace initiatives. Those cardinals who were not members of ruling dynasties either continued to exercise their curial responsibilities without interruption (Giovanni Arcimboldi and Oliviero Carafa) or found ways of avoiding awkward situations (Auxiàs Despuig and Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini). Sixtus's volte-face in the winter of 1482–3 released Gonzaga for action in the war zone, where he arrived with a fiercely anti-Venetian attitude derived from his family's tradition of fighting for Milan against an expansionist power whose territory was found to the east, north, and west of his native Mantua, but it had even more profound implications for the Venetian cardinals

⁶⁰ Ambassadors of the League to the Dieci di Balia, 3 March 1484, ASF, Dieci, Resp., 27, 118-19; Johann Burchard, *Liber notarum ab anno MCCCCLXXXIII usque ad annum MDVI*, ed. E. Celani, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Città di Castello, 1907-42), vol. 32, no. 1, 9.

⁶¹ Stefano Taverna and Luffo Numai to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 12 June 1484, ASMi, SPE, Romagna, 1039.

⁶² See R. Cessi, "La Pace di Bagnolo dell'agosto 1484", *Annali triestini di diritto, economia e politica*, vol. 12 (1941), 277-356.

⁶³ Bartolomeo (Baccio) Ugolini to Ludovico Sforza (copy received by Lorenzo de' Medici), 30 July 1484, ASF, MAP, 39, 271.

because it led to the Pope unleashing his spiritual weapons against their state. The most respected among them, Marco Barbo, was sorely tested by these developments and, when he could avoid the issue no longer, was obliged by the course of recent events to defend Venice against papal censures. His fellow patricians Pietro Foscari, Giovanni Michiel, and Giovanni Battista Zeno needed no prompting to speak for Venice, Michiel and Zeno because it gave them the opportunity to prove their loyalty to the republic after years of controversy over their (alleged) involvement in a notorious breach of Venetian state security and dispute over their possession of Veneto bishoprics, and Foscari because he had been Venice's candidate for the hat as long as those disputes lasted and had proved himself a valuable agent of the republic in his earlier negotiations with Girolamo Riario.⁶⁴ The other cardinals who were most directly affected by the war were Giuliano della Rovere, Giovanni Battista Savelli, and Giovanni Colonna, though in all three cases the wider conflict developed around their existing rivalries, Della Rovere's with Riario, Savelli and Colonna's with the Orsini and their allies, again including Riario. The war was an opportunity for Della Rovere—one he failed to realise—and nothing more than an extension of an age-old conflict for Savelli and Colonna.

Savelli was the more dangerous of those two papal prisoners, but Colonna embodied a more distinctive feature of the Renaissance cardinalate: its relative youth. Another such feature was recruitment from the ruling dynasties of Italy and its neighbours, rather than from the most learned men of the day or the ranks of long-serving ecclesiastical administrators. The two phenomena tended to go hand-in-hand. Thus, in the early 1480s Cardinals d'Aragona, Colonna, Sansoni-Riario, and Sforza were still in their twenties and all except Sansoni-Riario were men of action. Together with Gonzaga—who died aged thirty-nine—and the more mature Paleologo, d'Aragona and Sforza were also of the highest birth in their respective states, and nothing exposed their social origins as clearly as their contributions to the war. By way of contrast, the peacemakers—self-appointed and otherwise—tended to be older than the average for cardinals of that period and/or from the “obscure” end of the social spectrum. The non-noble Balue was in his sixties, Costa well on the way to eighty and, for all the advantages of his position as a papal *nipote*, the somewhat younger Giuliano della Rovere never managed to shake off the label of humble birth.

If cardinals were obliged to respond to events controlled by their secular compatriots and were consistently frustrated as peacemakers, at least the War of Ferrara had a postscript in which they were the principal players. Sixtus's death on 12 August 1484 was said to have been caused by news of the terms conceded by Milan at Bagnolo. At a stroke, twenty-five cardinals had the opportunity to re-fight the war in miniature. On the League side they did so with a determination to counter the humiliation of Bagnolo by securing an outcome markedly less favourable to Venice. One of the keenest conclave-watchers, the Florentine Guidantonio Vespucci, singled out Marco Barbo as a particular threat to the League because he could count on all the Genoese and Venetian electors, some of the non-Italians, and even some cardinals from League states.⁶⁵ Barbo did indeed receive the most votes in the first ballot. A Venetian pope would have been the ultimate humiliation for the League but, just as their kinsman had failed to defeat the Venetians on the battlefield, so they had no agreed candidate capable of defeating Barbo in the conclave. This dilemma gave Giuliano della Rovere the opportunity to prove himself as the arbiter whose services had been rejected during the war, overcoming his personal admiration for Barbo in order to present Giovanni Battista Cibo, the Genoese bishop of a Neapolitan see, as a compromise candidate. Within a matter of hours, therefore, Venetians and Leaguers finally found a common cause: they had a pope.

⁶⁴ On the linked fortunes of these cardinals up to 1477, see Stella R. Fletcher, “The Making of a Fifteenth-Century Venetian Cardinal”, *Studi Veneziani*, vol. 31 (1996), 27-49.

⁶⁵ Guidantonio Vespucci to Lorenzo de' Medici, 21 August 1484, ASF, MAP, 39, 292.

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