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Chapter 2: Why Mass Murder Happened

Anger, as Seneca observed in the first century, was the worst plague of humanity: ‘Behold the most glorious cities whose foundations can scarcely be traced – anger cast them down. Behold solitudes stretching lonely for many miles without a single dweller – anger laid them to waste.’¹ In *The Etymologies*, an encyclopedic and widely read compilation of knowledge made in the seventh century, Isidore of Seville declared that ‘[a]n unjust war is one that is begun out of rage, and not for a lawful reason’.² It is little wonder then that contemporary observers of the Italian Wars often blamed anger or ‘fury’ for the eruptions of violence which laid waste to their towns. Modern historians have also focused on the ‘frustration’ and ‘blind aggression’, the ‘bitterness and anger’ of troops at the end of a long siege which might have contributed to the cause, course and extent of the massacre and sack of towns. As mentioned in the introduction, this hydraulic approach to violence suggests how troops frustrated by a long siege might be impelled to sack a city with frenzied and fatal violence, or why they might be spurred on to ‘indiscriminate violence’ by the ‘catharsis of passing through the killing ground of the breach and emerging unscathed’.³

But soldiers’ appetites and passions, as they would have been termed in the Renaissance, are only one part of the story of why mass murder happened. Anger and bloodlust did not operate in isolation from other factors, and their expression was conditioned and shaped by the structures of power from the prince downwards, as well as by the structures of military life, from supply and pay to the order and discipline expected before a besieged town. In this chapter, attention is paid to the calculation and appraisal, ideas and goals, structure and logic involved in acts which

observers were sometimes tempted to view simply as irrational outbursts of aggression.⁴

This overview therefore highlights the nature of princely assumptions about the close relationship between authority and violence, which were made clear in the literature of just war theory and other legal texts further explored in chapter 4. It also demonstrates how the conventions of the siege and sack, including the parley or negotiation, were deeply imbued with menace and terror and with customs of cruelty towards civilians. Finally, this account of why mass murder happened shows how military structures of the Renaissance armies entailed threat towards civilians and how, at certain times and in certain conditions of prolonged occupation, this could break out into calculated fury and violence.

1. Fury and Calculation

Contemporary accounts of violence during the Italian Wars often convey an impression of ferocity and anger which seems to have little in common with military discipline, negotiations for plunder or human morality, and are more akin to disorderly expressions of hatred and anger. For example, in his ‘solemn and highly polished’ history of the Italian Wars, *De bello Italico (On the Italian War)* (c.1507), the exiled Florentine humanist Bernardo Rucellai recounted the sack and massacre of the town of Gaeta, situated between the cities of Rome and Naples, which rebelled against the French in June 1495:

In fact from the outset the experienced French soldiers, knowing that the enemy troops were close by, formed a wedge as the situation and the place

required, ready to repel the assault, since only with such virtue lay the hope of salvation. Then, when that dread left their minds fear quickly turned to anger, to stir their spirits, to proclaim victory in their usual way, and to lead them in disarray against the inhabitants of the town. Some blocked the exits to streets, a few of which contained a great number; others rushed down from the heights, and then so many with all their force invaded everywhere terrorizing enemy non-combatants [*imbellem hostem*] with their resolution and terrible cries, making great insults accusing them of cowardice, they carried around heads on lances, lifting swords covered in blood in menacing acts towards the same heads. The battle was more miserable for the horror of civic destruction. It was fought in a narrow place. Everything echoed with discordant voices, groans, cries of women, laments of babies. The besieged were in an advantageous position and number, the French were superior in military valour, and the desire to plunder did not delay anyone.⁵

Lacking a commander the Gaetani were defeated and turned on each other, or fled in all directions, even into the midst of the enemy, in their extreme and disorientating fear. All were killed: good and bad, virtuous and vile, armed and unarmed, lay and religious (even while praying), old and young. Rucellai concluded: ‘There was rarely more cruel ferocity in the memory of man.’⁶

In fact, ‘fury’ was the most frequent contemporary explanation for the massacres of the Italian Wars decades before Francesco Guicciardini in his *History of Italy* condemned the ‘innate fury’ of the French which led them to burn down Monte San Giovanni in 1495.⁷ Indeed, the natural bellicosity of the French was an ancient topos.⁸ In his *History of Rome* Livy described the Gauls as being ‘consumed with

wrath (a passion which their race is powerless to control)' and shocking the Romans more with terror than with strength when they sacked Rome in 390 BC. According to Livy the audacious Romans were favoured by fortune and led by the dictator Marcus Furius Camillus who took advantage of the Gauls' lack of organisation in war to repulse them.⁹ Guicciardini's fellow Florentine Niccolò Machiavelli observed in *The Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livy* (written c.1513-17) that Livy had several times commented 'that the French are more than men at the beginning of the fight, and in the succeeding combat they come out less than women'. While the Romans combined fury with a military discipline that gave them victories, Machiavelli wrote, and the modern Italians had neither fury nor order, the French had ferocity but no order and so ultimately failed in combat.¹⁰

This French fury was sometimes invoked in a monitory way. In 1494 one chronicler described the warning given by Gaspare da Sanseverino, called the Boaster ('Fracasso') – a man of such military gruffness that Caterina Sforza reputedly suggested that he should be oiled and put away with his other arms during peacetime.¹¹ Gaspare met with the castellans of Mordano (in the territory of Caterina Sforza who had come out in favour of the Neapolitans) and 'commanded that they would make no treaty, because he came on behalf of his majesty the king of France and his league and begged that they give them the castles; and if not, then he had brought fourteen thousand persons to join battle.'¹² The castellans refused to surrender and so the Boaster warned:

My men, it is well known to us that you are all valiant men; however, take my advice – you ought not to wait for the French army because they are like rabid dogs and because they are bound by an agreement among us to go into battle.

As soon as you are conquered by them, everything will be put to fire and sack and forced at the sword's edge because we cannot restrain them for anything given that they who have not offered themselves to our chiefs in these past days have been conquered. So dear brothers the eternal God gives you good opportunity to plead a good case for all these miserable castles.'¹³

This warning was borne out by the subsequent sack and massacre at Mordano.

Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, who was based in the opposing Neapolitan camp, wrote to Piero de' Medici a few days after this event to confirm that 'the French were the first to enter [the town] and acted with some cruelty towards our own [Italians] so that this news has brought some dismay to the spirits of each one of these soldiers [in camp]'.¹⁴ The French, he related in another letter, not only fought to the death with the Lombard troops but 'killed I don't know how many women and children, even if a few, and they used such cruelties that they have revolted everyone, with the happy outcome that great and small have conceived a great hatred for the French.'¹⁵

Subsequent reports suggested that 'very many' French – perhaps 130, 150, or 300 – had drowned or burnt to death in Mordano and that the 'most evil words' were now passing between the French and Lombards in the French camp.¹⁶

This stereotype of French military fury was sometimes assigned to specific regions. For example, several commentators referring to Capua and other sacks and massacres singled out Gascon, Picard, and Norman infantry for blame. The Gascons were generally considered fine troops, perhaps because they were hardened and rendered battle ready by the location of Gascony on the troubled frontier with Spain.¹⁷ In his account of France written in *c.*1512 Machiavelli remarked that the Gascons were a little better than the run of French troops for this reason, but looking at their

behaviour in recent years he claimed that they had proved themselves to be more like thieves than valiant men, and were more suitable for defending and assaulting places than for open battle.¹⁸ It seems that the temporary bands of infantry raised for successive French campaigns in Italy and called adventurers ('aventuriers') were largely made up of Gascons, Picards, and Normans and associated with pillaging and other examples of poor discipline.¹⁹ The legions that fought in the Italian campaigns of 1536-7, created in France by an ordinance of 1534, were raised from a broader range of frontier and coastal provinces, but they also gained a reputation for indiscipline with Gascons leading one mutiny in 1536 against regulations prohibiting the pillaging of munition merchants.²⁰

However, for all these assumptions and accusations military violence could be purposive, planned, applied with calculation, and imbued with a sense of honour. In these respects the violence is comparable to Spanish mutinies during the war in the Flanders examined by Geoffrey Parker and to similar events in Lombardy and Sicily in the 1530s that led to violence against civilians, including mass murder.²¹ Thus, the historian Bernardo Rucellai also suggested that calculation and a sense of honour could drive military massacres. He attributed the massacre at Gaeta in 1495 to the defection of the town from French rule and he assigned to the French not only a natural ferocity but also endowed them with a sense of honour and a desire for vengeance which impelled and shaped their actions:

The French, after the victory over the townspeople, became cruel over them all more bitterly since their spirits were irritated by their defection and they thought it a duty to vindicate the injury received and at the same time the massacre of this most noble city would terrorize the others so that nobody

would dare to do anything similar. A naturally fierce people and mindful of their ancient virtue they did not tolerate that the honour of war be taken from them. In this way anger at the betrayal led to crimes of many sorts and they were sated only with blood. Nothing cruel, foul or abominable against men, women, or children was omitted; no differentiation was made between sacred and profane things, and nobody would have survived unless day had given way to night.²²

Rucellai wrote about the massacre at Monte San Giovanni by the French in 1494 with similar care. In his account, every adult except one was killed, and everything was put to fire and destroyed:

The most atrocious sort of cruelty occurred: babies ripped from the breasts of their parents and taken into slavery, parents killed under the eyes of their sons, wretched mothers dragged from the last embrace of their children, with silent sadness in the useless wait to be able to welcome the last breath, nuns terrorized and chased from their sanctuaries and slaughtered before their venerated saints, with mingled cries, laments, and groans throughout the town. But the French, by nature fierce and violent, think that it contributed to a victorious conclusion of the war by testing the obstinate spirit of the towns with savage destruction and strengthening the soldiers will to sack, since they were henceforth more ready to confront every danger.²³

Fury was here once again coupled with military expediency and exigency as soldiers tested their mettle in anticipation of the remainder of the campaign and starkly demonstrated to other Italian towns their ability to overcome resistance.

The artfully stylized representations of the massacre by historians, poets and artists with their roots in scriptural, classical and medieval texts and images will be analysed in much more detail in part IV. In the remainder of this chapter, though, the evidence of contemporary chronicles, dispatches, and letters by key players such as Charles VIII or Louis XII will form the basis for a reconstruction of the practices of warfare, and especially mass murder, during the Italian Wars. These sources, with their references to innate French fury for example, reveal the outlines of the rhetorical construction of the massacre; but they also provide a sense of its actual form. It seems as if the explanations for the violence of the French rehearsed by Rucellai and other historians often reflected the realities of organized and calculated military violence against civilians driven by a deliberate strategy of terror, the structures of negotiation, the desire for revenge or punishment, a thirst for plunder, and a sense of national or ethnic honour.

2. The Strategy of Terror

The strategic use of terror against garrisons and other relatively strong points was particularly marked during the first period of the French military presence in Italy up until around 1500. Indeed, the ‘destruction-and-subjugation dynamic’ in the form of the massacre of civilians has an established place in warfare.²⁴ Medieval terror should be distinguished from the modern sense of predominantly bottom up violence and understood as essentially ‘instrumental’, wielded by those at the top as well as at the

bottom or at the margins of society, and inspiring dread in individuals or groups of higher, lower, or equal status in order to obtain the desired end of imposing, protecting, or overthrowing social, religious, or political order.²⁵

Terror of this kind was a familiar, indeed central, element of medieval warfare and it often came into play when a garrison or town resisted an attacking army and had to be taken by force, when the parley or negotiations to create a new relationship between the two sides failed, or when an escalade or rapid scaling of the walls began. The strategic destruction of a garrison or town citadel in this way could neutralize it as a threat, but just as importantly it could serve as a warning and encourage other towns to surrender.²⁶ The strategy of exemplary or strategic terror in this way was familiar to French commanders. For example, during the 'mad war' with Brittany in 1488 Charles VIII's commander Louis II de La Trémoille had ordered the city of Rennes, subject to a rebellious duke, to surrender or face 'such a punishment that the memory of it will be an example to all the others.'²⁷

In this respect, the commander was an expression of princely authority. In medieval literature the king's anger was often presented as a licit display of passion, which could lead to a display of cruelty that reflected divine anger and the desire for justice.²⁸ Royal violence, such as the actual or threatened destruction of towns in the Low Countries in the course of the fifteenth century by the Burgundian dukes of the House of Valois, could be a means to assert control and sovereignty with the legitimation of Roman legal practices.²⁹

More prosaically, the logistics of supply and the mechanics of warfare in the Middle Ages also involved a considerable element of terror.³⁰ The poor or irregular payment of troops forced men to live off the land during the campaign and exploit townspeople, especially during winter quartering. During the Hundred Years' War

France's many towns, often well-fortified, necessitated siege warfare and slowed down the enemy forces, forcing them to live off the land, whether friendly or in enemy hands, and to impose hardships on the non-combatants within the walls.³¹ As the war developed into one of conquest during the fifteenth century English commanders might sometimes deplore soldierly indiscipline and the exploitation of peasants, and might attempt to regulate plunder and the treatment of peasants, but the lack of regular pay always undermined these efforts.³² It was this fact that led Christine de Pizan in *Le livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (*The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*) (c.1406, first printed in 1488) to urge princes to pay their troops adequately in order to prevent pillaging.³³

Clifford J. Rogers has argued that the devastation and massacres of the Hundred Years' War also had strategic value. The *chevauchées* or raids which inflicted violence on civilians and their property were a means of underlining the weakness of the Valois monarchy by demonstrating its failure to protect its people or to defeat the English in battle. The devastation of the countryside therefore went beyond the pillaging simply required to keep an army on the move (and may even have damaged supply lines) but such economic attrition harmed the French treasury. The English crown therefore accepted as strategically useful the activity of the *routiers* or rovers who relied on the violent extraction of 'protection money' or ransoms and truce payments, from local communities. The use of such violence against towns and townspeople by the army, *routiers*, and free companies could be viewed as a 'strategy of precedent' by which garrisons or inhabitants would be convinced that they were better off surrendering than fighting.³⁴

In 1494 the strategy was favoured by the military landscape Charles found on the Italian peninsula. As Philippe Contamine has noted: 'During the second half of the

fifteenth century garrisons had a tendency to multiply.³⁵ In France these garrison establishments were related to the rise of a more permanent army, the pressing need to defend extensive frontiers, and the desire to assert royal authority in waging war. Contamine has estimated that by the last quarter of the century the French monarchy maintained permanent forces of twenty to twenty-five thousand men, or perhaps 1% of the adult male population between 18 and 45 years of age.³⁶ The Venetian, Florentine, and Neapolitan states did not reach these levels of permanent forces but they established or fortified garrisons, citadels, and other strong points during the fifteenth century and maintained forces directly under their command (sometimes called *lanze spezzate*).³⁷ Therefore, once they had crossed the Alps the French had as objects for attack a series of targets closely associated with princely authority,³⁸ and the civilians who took advantage of these fortified places for protection, or who serviced the troops were considered little more than collateral damage.³⁹

As suggested in chapter 1 the French strategy of terror also made sense in the fragmented political landscape of Italy. First of all, the internal political divisions characteristic of many Italian towns could aid and exacerbate mass violence.⁴⁰ At Brescia in 1509 occupying French troops, encouraged by the so-called Gmbareschi (named after the prominent Gambarara family which was hostile to the rule of Venice), raided the city's munitions, opened the prison, and plundered the palace of the *podestà* or rector.⁴¹ The *popolo* were said to be loyal to Venice and the returning *podestà* told the Venetians that when the king of France appeared in the city nobody cried 'Franza' except seven or eight persons. The *podestà* also claimed that on his way out of the city men and women had blessed him from their balconies and showed great sadness and he placed all the blame for the loss of the city on the Gmbareschi who hated Venice.⁴² During the bloody sack three years later these old enmities and

vendettas were played out and every quarter apart from the Ghibelline neighbourhood known as the *cittadella* and some houses of the Gambaeschi was put to the sack.⁴³ Letters to Venice soon brought accounts of the Ghibellines in the *cittadella* enthusiastically chanting ‘Franza, Franza.’⁴⁴

Charles VIII and other princes greatly benefited from the broader pattern of shifting alliances and rivalries of the great powers on the peninsula including Milan, Florence, Venice and Naples, and could take advantage of the services of disgruntled exiles keen for regime change at home.⁴⁵ These princes also reaped rewards on a smaller scale from the unstable patchwork of signorial power, especially in the papal states and the Romagna.⁴⁶ The arrival of the French could therefore break open old wounds to their advantage, or encourage expedient changes of loyalty. Thus in 1494 the Ferrarese ambassador reported from Rome about the sense of panic spreading in the city as the French moved through the territories of the powerful Orsini and Colonna clans within the papal states, with rumours flying about to the effect that these powerful families had come to some agreement to plunder the lands around Rome.⁴⁷

The example of the sack and massacre of Fivizzano, a garrison on the frontier of Florentine territory, usefully illustrates many of the foregoing points. It was said in 1494 that Charles VIII could expect little resistance when he entered Florentine territory, which was traditionally favourable to the French. Indeed, one printed campaign bulletin of the time noted that ‘the towns have weak walls, lack openings [for artillery], boulevards, and ditches. Moreover, three parts and a half are pro-French.’⁴⁸ This was not entirely true and when the king and his army entered Florentine territory in October 1494 they were faced by the impressive strongholds of Sarzana and Pietrasanta. The Florentines had spent a great deal of their considerable

wealth fortifying these places to the extent that they would not fall easily under bombardment. Charles therefore simply turned his attention to Fivizzano where the strategy of terror and massacre was used effectively. The choice of ‘sacrificial victim’ in this instance was carefully calculated: Fivizzano had been seized by the Florentines from a branch of the Malaspina family, which was close to Ludovico Sforza, and it also formed a threatening bridgehead into the territory of a Ferrarese ally.⁴⁹

Francesco Guicciardini – not incidentally a Florentine – later presented the massacre at Fivizzano as a symbol of the new violence of war. It will be recalled that he claimed that the entire foreign garrison and many inhabitants were killed, ‘a thing unheard of and very frightening in Italy, which for a long time had been used to seeing wars staged with beautiful pomp and display, not unlike spectacles, rather than waged with bloodshed and dangers’.⁵⁰ Contemporary sources reveal a rather more complex picture. The Florentine diarist Piero Parenti noted that the sack and massacre at Fivizzano was the work of the inhabitants of neighbouring Fosdinuovo rather than the French.⁵¹ According to contemporary reports the marchese of Fosdinuovo, Gabriele Malaspina, and his associates wished to hold the territory for themselves and archival evidence indicates that Malaspina played a double game with all sides in the conflict in order to maximize his territorial advantage in the Lunigiana and ultimately, if briefly, to gain Fivizzano from Florence with the approval of Milan.⁵²

Moreover, Matteo Maria Boiardo, Estense governor in Reggio Emilia (and author of the chivalric romance *Orlando innamorato*), reported that both before and after its sack representatives of Fivizzano had come to him in the name of the commune asking to become subjects of the duke of Ferrara. He added that they were now obliged within fifteen days to pay the French ten thousand ducats for the release of twenty-four men held ransom and for the recovery of their possessions.⁵³ Boiardo

had at first advised these representatives that the duke's understanding ('bona intelligentia') with the Florentines and other powers prevented him from acting on this request, but when they came to see him after the sack they pointed out that the territory was no longer Florentine and that the duke could treat directly with the French king.⁵⁴ Boiardo now wrote to the duke of Ferrara, Ercole I d'Este, in rather tempting terms about this 'good place' ('bono loco') which could pay such a ransom and offer such a fine stronghold.⁵⁵

In addition, it should be observed that a month before the massacre at Fivizzano the second main column of the French forces proceeding southwards had already put Mordano to the fire and sword. As the assiduous observer of the wars Marin Sanudo remarked a few years later, the French at Mordano resolved to move on to other towns and act in the same way if they did not surrender.⁵⁶ Philippe de Commines, the leading French diplomat in Sanudo's home town of Venice during this period, also noted that the bombardment and sacking of the town caused its lady Caterina Sforza to join the French side, while the 'use of great guns' here gave the Italians 'new courage' and caused them to 'be desirous of change'.⁵⁷ The strategy helped to neutralize resistance to the invading forces in the Romagna.⁵⁸

The ferocity of Charles' troops at Mordano and Fivizzano in 1494 therefore helped him to avoid much further bloodshed in Florentine territory. Piero de' Medici, the de facto ruler of Florence after Lorenzo's death, agreed to surrender the fortresses of Sarzana, Pietrasanta, Pisa, and Livorno for the remainder of the French campaign.⁵⁹ The French then turned with similar effect against the stronghold of Monte San Giovanni, a feudal possession of the D'Avalos family on the road through the papal states on the way to the Neapolitan prize. Guillaume de Villeneuve, who was in the French army during the campaign, noted in his memoirs (written in captivity and

completed in 1497) that ‘for certain injuries and other great displeasures that they had done to the king, and because they declared themselves his enemy’ the king had the place bombarded. The king then ordered an assault, which was promptly executed by captains and warriors ‘who only asked to be able to acquire honour and serve their king and sovereign lord’. The bitterness with which the place was put to fire and blood, he wrote, was ‘to give an example to the others.’⁶⁰ Philippe de Commines later noted more specifically how the flight of the king of Aragon and opening of the way to Naples followed on from the bombardment, storm, and sack of this ‘strong place’.⁶¹ The capture of Monte San Giovanni (together with that of Monte Fortino) was highlighted in printed bulletins coming out of Naples in March 1495, with one pamphleteer claiming that this strong town was taken at the loss of seven hundred of the enemy ‘with great vigour and audacity by the king’s men’ and to the astonishment of ‘all the Italies’, especially Naples.⁶²

The French returned to this successful strategy of terror during their second campaign in Italy during 1499-1502. As Franco-Venetian preparations for war in the Duchy of Milan developed in 1499 there were signs that the military tactic of murderous ‘shock and awe’, which had proved effective for Charles VIII, would be redeployed by his successor Louis XII as he worked to make good his hereditary claim on Milan.⁶³ Francesco Gonzaga, the marquis of Mantua, who had lately returned from France told his brother that Louis ‘wished to come to the enterprise of Milan, and had told him of the way he wished to hold it, and desired to use with great cruelty the first territory he took by force so that the remainder would surrender.’⁶⁴ It is revealing in this respect that the standard employed by the French general La Trémoille during this campaign depicted a bloody sword of vengeance, a torch and a whip.⁶⁵

The experienced Milanese *condottiero* Gian Giacomo Trivulzio had greatest responsibility for implementing the French strategy of terror. One Venetian visitor to Trivulzio at the French fief of Asti reported in August 1499 that he had declared: ‘We shall go to Rocca d’Arazzo, and then take Annona, and finally Mortara, and every place that resists will be flattened’.⁶⁶ However, the Mantuan ambassador also reported Trivulzio as saying that he had orders from Louis to shame nobody and to leave in liberty all of the conquered places, and it was said that the king was displeased with Trivulzio’s demolition of three castles.⁶⁷ Around the same time it was reported that the French troops were treating ‘as friends’ those among whom they were encamped, and Trivulzio hanged one Frenchman who had kidnapped a woman. Perhaps Louis wished to make it clear that his hostility was directed towards Ludovico Sforza and not the people of the duchy – a strategy the Mantuan ambassador judged rather dangerous for the duke.⁶⁸

In any case, the experience of Italians in Rocca d’Arazzo, Annona, and elsewhere during this second campaign was as doleful as the first but these sacks and massacres helped to bring about the rapid surrender of Tortona, Alessandria, Pavia and Milan.⁶⁹ To the south the pope’s son Cesare Borgia led a large force of French, Swiss, Norman and Gascon infantry, as well as twenty pieces of French artillery, as he attempted to carve out a principality in the Romagna.⁷⁰ His lightning campaign against Imola, Forlì, Faenza, and Rimini combined bribery of castellans, the exploitation of local enmities and the use of fear and terror. Cesare Borgia’s cruel and tyrannical methods in Rimini, for example, were declared unknown for centuries and condemned by the Venetian Senate (at this time supporting the return of the Malatesta clan to rule that city) in an unsent letter to its ambassadors in Rome. The Senate noted that there had been ‘great slaughter [*strage*] and effusion of much blood of these poor

citizens' as a result of the actions of men entering there in the name of Cesare, and indeed it was reported by one chronicler that around 360 died.⁷¹ The 'terrors' used in Forli and Faenza were later said to have caused other cities to capitulate to Cesare Borgia whose reputation for cruelty was now firmly established.⁷²

Cesare and his men then joined with the French army to inflict a terrible devastation on the town of Capua in the ongoing campaign to take the kingdom of Naples. The diaries of many Italian contemporaries contain shocked reflections on the sack of Capua in 1501, in which thousands were thought to have perished.⁷³ The terrible example of Capua provided the same lesson to Italians and French alike. Girolamo Priuli in Venice saw the cruel sack and 'desolation' ('desolatione') of the city as a cause for fear not only in the kingdom of Naples but also throughout Italy. It was certain, he wrote, that no other city would wait for the ultramontane 'fury' ('impetto') but would immediately surrender.⁷⁴ Similarly, the French commander who took Capua reportedly led an emissary of the Neapolitan king through the city to show him the slaughters ('strage') and cruelties and said 'Go and tell Naples that tomorrow I will be there with a camp at the walls, and worse will befall them if they wait for the artillery [before surrendering].'⁷⁵ In fact, the Neapolitans were thrown into panic by the news of Capua and fled along the coast. King Federico ordered the surrender of the city and a large ransom was paid, but close watch was kept on the gates in case the adventurers ('adventureri') who had breached the walls of Capua attempted to do the same at Naples.⁷⁶

In general, the expediency of terror naturally struck princes and commanders forcefully and convincingly and it was often employed with palpable success. Moreover, any moral qualms were easily suppressed: in the wake of the sack of Prato in 1512 Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici – soon to be elected Pope Leo X – wrote to the

pope with rather chilling calculation that the Spanish had assaulted Prato with valour and had put the place to sack 'not without some cruelty in killing, which was the least that could be done ... The capture of Prato in such a sudden and cruel way, although it has displeased me, yet will have brought this benefit as an example and a terror to others.'⁷⁷

3. The Tactics of Negotiation

The strategy of terror, often attributed to the French but evidently useful to all armies, involved a series of negotiations which could easily fail and even lead to mass murder. Captains were frequently reminded by armchair warriors as well as by experienced fighting men that even when a truce had been arranged, as in the case of besieged cities, the enemy might still cause harm and break it before peace had been finalized.⁷⁸ The seasoned Gascon soldier Blaise de Monluc later warned that this was the moment to shore up defences since, as he put it proverbially: 'Between the pear and the cheese the passage is tried'. When word of surrender circulated, it was claimed, the besieged often looked to secure their money and arms while the besiegers, who saw the hope for booty disappear in the event of a negotiated capitulation, might set about a violent sack.⁷⁹

The process of negotiation with towns and garrisons involved a number of traditional stages.⁸⁰ The besieged were usually given an opportunity to surrender when a herald appeared before the town walls offering a treaty in their lord's name and outlining the unfortunate consequences of refusal. The formal siege then began with the firing of a cannon and the commander could negotiate terms or assault the city. In the latter case, the city being as it were 'guilty in defence' like Shakespeare's

Harfleur before Henry V's forces, the inhabitants would be given no quarter and the 'flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart, / in liberty of bloody hand [would] range with conscience wide as hell'.⁸¹ Alternatively, a suspension of hostilities might be negotiated and hostages exchanged and it was agreed that the town would be given up without plunder and violence if a relieving force did not arrive within a stated period to give battle.

In practice, the local commander and townspeople faced a difficult choice since their ruler might punish them for surrendering to an enemy force prematurely or, once the siege had begun, surrendering quicker than customs suggested – one month was stipulated in a French military contract of 1431.⁸² The surrender could be deemed an act of treason in great dishonour to the ruler. A surrender might even be made once the assault was underway, but by this stage it is unlikely that the terms would favour the commander of the town, or be considered at all honourable.

The breaking of the truce and the assault or storm of a town during a parley involving a defending commander and a clerical go-between was not uncommon and by convention it gave troops a free hand to plunder and inflict violence.⁸³ A commander could blame this failure of negotiation on the eagerness of the troops themselves, or it might be a deliberate means of enriching troops who would otherwise miss out on any fines imposed by the captain at surrender.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the escalade or storming of a town might occur when it had already given itself up peacefully and was not supposed to be plundered, or it might even be stormed during a truce when a period of plunder seems to have been allowed.⁸⁵

These events were usually announced by a cry, which signified the advance of troops and might be excused on the grounds of acting under the avowal of a party not covered by the truce.⁸⁶ Since the particular truce, like the safe-conduct, bound only

those under the authority of the commander who made it some troops could claim that spoil might legally be taken as they were still in a condition of war and not bound by the truce made by another commander.⁸⁷ The truce might still hold if the breach was contained, but in the event of an escalation of a town the truce was rendered void.⁸⁸

There are many examples of the breakdown of talks, the failure of pacts, and sudden escalades by troops that led to sacks and massacres of towns during the Italian Wars.⁸⁹ In a number of cases a town offered or paid protection money before a sack in order to secure itself. According to the Perugian chronicler Francesco Matarazzo the inhabitants of Foligno, terrified by the threat of sack, sent ambassadors to the ‘crypto-Jewish pope’ (‘lo marano pontefice’) Alexander VI offering money to ensure that the French troops were diverted from their collision course with their territory; an offer that was gratefully received by this ‘source of greed’ (‘*fons avaritiae*’).⁹⁰ Following the capture of Ludovico Sforza and the dispersal of his forces in April 1500 the French demanded indemnities from the cities which had betrayed them, including Milan where a feared sack soon materialized.⁹¹ This pattern of ‘demanding money with menaces’ was the form of protection which the French offered to many northern Italian powers during this period, and it doubtless stoked up resentment against them.⁹² In 1503 the town of Fano also attempted to avoid a sack by buying off one of Cesare Borgia’s commanders, but out of loyalty to their master the troops massacred the supposed followers of the disloyal *condottieri* whom Borgia had just had ruthlessly garotted at Senigallia.⁹³ In 1512 Swiss troops in occupation in Pavia refused to leave the city until they had been paid and the inhabitants were forced to raise the money for this purpose, while in the same year Bergamo avoided a French sack by agreeing to a fine of 60,000 ducats.⁹⁴ In the wake of victory in the battle outside Pavia in 1525 the Germans in the city refused to leave until they were paid, and a sack of

the city was threatened but only averted when the imperial commanders promised payment within fifteen days.⁹⁵

In other cases, the differences between the civilian population and the castellan or commander provided armies before the walls with an opportunity. The inhabitants of Imola, hopeful of tax exemptions and hostile towards their young lord and the regent Caterina Sforza refused to supply the citadel, forced the gates opened to the army of Cesare Borgia, and even fought on its side.⁹⁶ Around the same time badly paid troops in the Milanese strongholds of Rocca d'Arazzo and Annona rebelled and it was reported that the local inhabitants not only resented demands made on them to repair the fortifications but were reluctant, as at Imola, to bring the harvest into the fortresses.⁹⁷ Rocca d'Arazzo then fell quickly, reportedly by the betrayal of a Genoese castellan bribed with 800 ducats. The French subsequently put the place to sack, killing men, women, and children and eliminating its garrison of 500 soldiers.⁹⁸ In 1499 the inhabitants of Forlì surrendered to Cesare Borgia on the understanding that his troops would remain outside of the walls, but his troops entered the town and besieged the citadel where Caterina Sforza held out until it was taken early the following year.⁹⁹ As one eyewitness recalled this was not without 'our great woe, which was similar to the pains of hell' as cold and hungry troops sacked workshops, entered homes and ejected the inhabitants who sometimes resisted and tried to protect their daughters.¹⁰⁰ Many inhabitants jumped from the walls to escape, or took refuge in the citadel, and it was '[a] cruel and impious thing to hear the cries and laments because they were covered in mud like pigs and [other] animals.'¹⁰¹

In July 1496 during the conflict between Pisa and Florence the town of Ponte di Sacco was attacked by Florentines and under bombardment it was lost by the French and by Italian troops commanded by the duke of Urbino. A pact was agreed

‘wealth and persons excepted’ (‘salvo l’ avere e le persone’) in the usual phrase and fifty-four French were then shot dead in order to find the money they had supposedly swallowed. The Italians were stripped of their arms and money and then fled, while the whole area was put to the sack and the terms were not observed.¹⁰² Two weeks later the soldiers in neighbouring Palaia surrendered to the Florentines on the same terms (‘a patti, salvo l’ avere e le persone’) and in order to be secure ‘they wished for sureties in the Cascina, and in this way they left, but they were all mostly French; and the sureties were [obtained] because at Ponte di Sacco the assurance was not observed and they were almost all killed by the Florentines [even] with this assurance.’¹⁰³ This story, like the discovery of letter of August 1499 purportedly describing Florentine intentions to put rebellious Pisa to the sack, using cruelty, and giving up its women to the pleasure of the soldiers, may simply reflect the Pisan chronicler’s distrust of Florence, but it does also hint at the normal rules of warfare and the way in which they could be observed in the breach as much as the observance.¹⁰⁴ In fact Honoré Bouvet, the influential clerical theoretician of war, noted in *c.*1390 that safe-conducts only bound those under the authority of the man who gave it, and were often broken in his own day.¹⁰⁵

At Capua in 1501 a group of citizens asked for a ‘parlamento’ with the French after only a few days of fighting.¹⁰⁶ Capua capitulated, offering to pay no less than 60,000 ducats,¹⁰⁷ and six citizens were reportedly sent out crying ‘mercy’, probably in fear of a brutal sack. Contemporary reports of what turned into an infamous massacre suggest that there was some suspicion about a delay in the departure of the inhabitants or troops from the city and at this point in proceedings fearing betrayal ‘certain Gascons, Picards, and other infantry’ leapt through the breaches in the town walls created by the artillery crying ‘Sack! Sack!’ and prompting the defending troops to

cry in alarm ‘Arms! Arms!’ This cry spurred the French troops, who could not be restrained by their captains, into furious action.¹⁰⁸ The Perugian chronicler Francesco Matarazzo suggested that some of the inhabitants had opened a gate to the city but the French had ‘wished to make a good start and in coming in killed those who had betrayed their homeland’, before moving on to the rest of the inhabitants whom they slaughtered without pity or discrimination between sex or age.¹⁰⁹

Most devastatingly, in 1512 when Ravenna was menaced by victorious French troops the inhabitants decided to surrender with disastrous consequences.¹¹⁰ Local accounts suggest that the inhabitants of the city realized that they could not withstand the superior forces of the French and therefore sent representatives to conclude an agreement to provide supplies to the French. In the belief that an accord had been reached the city placed only a few guards on duty or, by another account, those Spanish patrolling the walls deliberately withdrew to the citadel, and when one of the city gates was opened in order to send food out to the camp, a large number of Gascons lodged in a nearby church went into battle mode. Seeing how weakly defended the gate was they entered incognito and spread throughout the city. On meeting some resistance the Gascons sacked the city, killing everyone and especially all of the peasants (‘masime tucto li contadino’).¹¹¹ A Servite friar on the scene described how the French delegate came before Ravenna early on Easter Monday and ‘in this way holding the place with their chatter the Gascons began to enter with such a storm that it seemed as if the infernal spirits were released’.¹¹² He estimated that in the ‘eternal massacre’ (‘eterno exterminio’) around two thousand countrypeople (‘villani’) died, five thousand citizens, and eight to ten thousand women. He himself was thrown from a bell tower before escaping the city.¹¹³

A critical factor in the case of the sack of Ravenna was the desperate need for food, and this difficulty of supplying large numbers of men also operated later the same year when the forces of the Holy League, determined to force Florence to oust the pro-French regime of Piero Soderini, threatened the neighbouring town of Prato. Rámon de Cardona, the viceroy and commander of the League's forces, arrived outside the town with few artillery pieces but many hungry troops. He reportedly declared to his army that if they wished to eat they must acquire it with the arms in their hands and enter the city where there was food.¹¹⁴ In a letter to the Ten in Florence the *podestà* of Prato, Battista Guicciardini, described how a herald sent by Cardona was told that the city had not received supplies sufficient to supply their army and that the army which had arrived was bigger than expected. The herald dismissed this response as a delaying tactic, alleged that the supplies would never be forthcoming, and promised that the army would arrive the next morning.¹¹⁵ The battering of the walls began two days later and lasted all night, and an assault through a breach of the walls led to the massacre of around 5,600 persons by common opinion, although one later estimate suggests that civilian casualties were low but that around half of the joint militia in Prato (amounting to around three thousand men) was wiped out.¹¹⁶

4. Revenge and Punishment

The violence which followed the failure of formal negotiations was often amplified by the desire to avenge perceived affronts to honour and to punish rebellion.

Sometimes soldiers acted to avenge a shame that they perceived to have been inflicted against their own nation,¹¹⁷ but often very minor incidents and insults are said to have

caused the failure of the parley or to have sparked an assault. Leone Cobelli, a chronicler based near Mordano, evoked Gallic fury in a telling detail – one of the French captains reacted angrily to the death of fellow countryman, a gentleman, as a result of the shot of one of the gunners in the castle there, and cried: ‘Onward, to sack! To sack!’¹¹⁸ A single fatal shot to the head of a French constable taken by a ‘fool’ (‘sciocco’) from the walls of Tremoleto during the parley in December 1496 led to its bloody sack by French who cried out: ‘Now it is our turn to wage a vendetta’.¹¹⁹ In July 1501 a large stone thrown by a woman from the walls of a castle near Ariete at Vitellozzo Vitelli while he was at the foot of the wall demanding supplies and deciding if the castle could fight led to his immediately going into battle and resulted in the deaths of over one hundred men and four women (the first of whom killed was the stone thrower).¹²⁰

The captain of the papal troops at the castle of Aquila in June 1499 sacked the place with ‘great cruelty’ (‘gran crudeltade’), killed seventy-six men on guard there, with all the young women spoiled and the ancient women sold. All of this occurred because the hostage the captain had received from the castle had been returned, and had then made an agreement with the commander of the castle. The commander declared that he wished to fight, fired off ‘certain mortar-pieces’ (‘certe spingarde’) and killed one of the captain’s nephews, among others.¹²¹ One chronicler in Parma noted that a castle near the city surrendered to the French by agreement (‘a patto’) in June 1500, but ‘they were used in bad faith’ since two well-born citizens were beheaded and twelve brought in carts to be hanged from some willow trees in twos and threes, except for one who was spared after his wife pled on his behalf. The chronicler attributed this behaviour, the sack of the castle (even its bells were stolen) and the rape of women, to ‘quella insegna’ – a Sforza banner replacing that of the

French – flown from the tower of the communal palace by a nobleman who was a supporter of Ludovico Sforza and an enemy of Parma.¹²² Finally, it was in retaliation for the killing of a German by the French that Como was sacked in December 1521 when fifteen or twenty Spaniards entered the city crying ‘Sack! Sack!’ The marquis of Pescara, who was meant to protect the inhabitants of Como, was unable to restrain them ‘and was ready to be hanged’ for such a disgrace.¹²³

More gravely, at Monte San Giovanni in 1495 the inhabitants behaved with great dishonour towards the king. As the Venetian patrician Domenico Malipiero (or possibly Pietro Dolfino) recorded: ‘King Charles, having arrived near Monte San Giovanni, ordered two heralds to tell those in the fortress to surrender; but they hanged the heralds and the king joined battle with them, ruined the place and caused the deaths of many.’¹²⁴ Marin Sanudo provided a longer account of the incident which specified that the heralds were not only hanged but had their noses and ears sliced off before being returned to the besiegers: ‘Which is a thing that never was customarily done to messengers.’¹²⁵ The sack which followed is described in horrifying detail. In Sanudo’s account it was a bloodbath in which only babies and a few women were spared, churches provided no refuge, and the corpses of those who had rushed into the piazza to beg for mercy on their knees and with their arms crossed piled up unburied. Seven hundred were killed, no less than 25,000 ducats of booty taken, and a hard lesson delivered: ‘The king was content that such cruelty was used, as much for what had happened [to the heralds] as for the example to other castles and places of the kingdom so that they might not wish to defend themselves but rather hand the keys over to him.’¹²⁶ Over a decade later the historian Sigismondo dei Conti da Foligno evoked Charles VIII’s reaction to the return of his messenger from Monte San Giovanni with his hands, nose and ears cut off and in doing so highlighted both the

behaviour to be expected of a king and the rules of military behaviour that had been offended: ‘Moved by the pitiful laments and by the mutilated appearance of a man dear to him, he threw aside his dinner, and swore that the violators of the *ius gentium* [Law of Nations] would, before he sat down again to dine, pay the penalty.’¹²⁷

Charles VIII himself noted that the local lord had refused supplies and passage to his army and had waged war on his friends, that the place was known for its strength, and that he was advised that it would cause him trouble if he did not reduce it to obedience ‘by friendship or by force.’¹²⁸ In a letter, which was soon printed in France, Charles wrote to his brother about the bombardment and successful assault on the renowned fortress which he witnessed: ‘At last, by the grace of God, by the said first assault it was taken at little cost to myself but at their expense, punishment, and as great loss for the people [and an example] to others who would wish to do the same in their encounter with me. And believe [me] that the trouble that they have given me to go see them has been dearly sold.’¹²⁹ It was, he wrote happily a few days later, ‘the most beautiful pleasure in the world, the like of which I have never seen.’¹³⁰

As these words suggest and as the historian Bernardo Rucellai, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, pointed out in his account of the massacre at Gaeta in 1495, the force used against a city which was deemed to transgress the laws of war or to be in rebellion could be severe. This was clearly spelled out in 1509 by the anonymous author of an unpublished ‘Panegirica’ for King Louis XII when he touched on the king’s quelling of the Genoese rebellion two years earlier:

To other victors, by the law of war, the city would have been destroyed, pillaged and burnt, with murder and homicides committed under the law of victory. You [i.e. Louis] bridled and checked victory, which is by nature

proud, insolent, bloody, ravishing and full of pride, and forced it to abide by your customs. Churches and the chastity of women and daughters were never more religiously guarded in peacetime than they were at your victory. No fire was seen unless as a sign of public joy, no sword was viewed after your victory unless sheathed, and none of the wealth of this great and flourishing city was hidden away. Everything was on display, every maiden accompanied by her mother, every wife with her husband's mother, [and] no banishments and no escapes.¹³¹

The 'law of war' and the 'law of victory' could have a very liberal interpretation indeed, as will be shown in part III, and while Genoa was spared a massacre in 1507 it would suffer at the hands of the Spanish fifteen years later.

In the same vein in 1509 the French king, mindful of the loyalty owed to him as the Milanese ruler, vanquished the Venetians at the remaining former Milanese possession of Peschiera and, having taken it by force ('per forza'), left not a man alive in the fortress except for the captain, the *podestà* and the *proveditore*.¹³² When the prisoners were led before the king they presented a hundred thousand ducats ransom, but the king declared: 'The devil if I never drink or eat before they are hanged and strangled.' The pleas of some men in his entourage were in vain and the men were hanged.¹³³ The effects of this act were rapid: 'Once the news was known in Venice and in their other towns of the defeat in battle and of the capture and execution of those in Peschiera, forty days afterwards all the inhabitants of the said towns, men and women, dressed in black' and handed over their keys to the king.¹³⁴ In France, even the author of the otherwise unstinting 'Panegirica' of Louis XII hesitated in his praise of the king when he came to describe the 'lake of blood' caused by the capture of

Peschiera that seemed to stand in contrast to the king's glorious and happy victories up until that moment.¹³⁵

It was a similar claim of right of possession and just punishment for rebellion that allowed Gaston de Foix to inflict a massacre on the city of Brescia in 1512. The French governor of Brescia learned of a conspiracy with the Venetians to regain their city, part of the mainland empire from 1426 until its capture by the French in 1509. The French king would not pardon such a 'rebellione' against his authority and the city was to be retaken and no life or goods to be spared.¹³⁶ Gaston de Foix acted on this intention and took the city by force, enacting a cruel vengeance ('crudel vendetta') for its rebellion according to a pro-French set of verses: 'The persecution was great and a number of the local inhabitants and strangers dead, and in the houses they were tortured and afflicted, and it was useless to cry for mercy or for pardon. No other land has ever been in such a state: the streets full of bodies and only the cries of "Sack! Iron! Death!" It would bring ancient Troy to your mind.'¹³⁷

As Gaston de Foix immediately wrote to the marquis of Mantua: 'Having made some attempt to recall this city to its original royal devotion, and after two days seeing that it wished in no way to retreat from its stubborn position, so it was taken by force in order to lose no more time'. Foix related how he entered the castle, joined with the French troops who had held out there during the Venetian occupation, and in rain and great danger due to artillery bombardment had descended into the city fighting constantly. With God's favour for a just cause, as he put it, Foix had taken Brescia after three hours' bitter fighting and had put it to the sack and taken significant prisoners, including the army commissioner Andrea Gritti.¹³⁸

In his account of the taking of Brescia, directed at his cousin Margaret of Austria, King Louis XII noted that the city had revolted against him and needed to

brought into obedience. He suggested that Gaston de Foix had done everything he could to avoid a pillage, but the inhabitants were obstinate and had refused to listen to reason and so consequently an assault had been launched.¹³⁹ By the grace of God, he continued, this assault was successful and they cut to pieces all the men of war and ‘a good number of peasants that they had put in the said town.’ This was good news and he hoped that it would bring about a ‘good end’ to the wars and a universal peace in Christendom, which was a desire close to his heart.¹⁴⁰

5. Plunder

The rewards of such sacks could be vast; one Frenchman estimated the booty from the sack of Brescia at 3 million *écus*, while the sack of Vico, near Sorrento in 1528 by forty men-at-arms gave them 1,200 *écus* apiece.¹⁴¹ It was said that some French were made so wealthy by the sack of Brescia that it supported them and their children all their lives.¹⁴² According to military theorists the desire for such plunder weakened military discipline. Typical is the general complaint of Girolamo Muzio, the author of *Il duello (The Duel)* (1550) and other works, in the preface to Lauro Gorgieri’s *Trattato della guerra, del soldato, del castellano, et come ha da essere uno general di essercito (Treatise on War, the Soldier, the Castellan, and on How to be the General of an Army)* (1555): ‘Truly our age has need of such a book as this given that the military profession is so corrupted and it is in need of a complete reformation.’¹⁴³ In particular, he blamed this state on the corrupting effect of money, which was freely given to those who ran after the drum without any consideration of their quality or condition, and which was the basis on which ranks were determined. Moreover, badly-paid soldiers were licentious and disobedient, the taxes raised for them a burden

on the people, and the householder no longer master where they lodged. He argued that whether they passed through friendly or hostile territory soldiers were thieves. Not only that, but these faults had gone uncorrected by those who were no less to be blamed, wars had been waged for base reasons ('per appetito') rather than for a just cause and had been declared illegitimately, while bad faith in truces and failure to follow the rules governing plunder and prisoners were also noted. The ancient, true and well regulated military discipline outlined in Gorgieri's book would offer a mirror to modern princes, captain and soldiers and lead them to reform themselves and lead the military profession back 'to the rule of its ancient devotion [*religione*].'¹⁴⁴

Such criticism needs to be treated with caution. In the first place, the sack, like its prelude the siege, followed a universally recognized set of rules.¹⁴⁵ One historian of violence against civilians during this period has attempted to put a slightly more dignified gloss on the whole matter, arguing that soldiers were not simply provoked and driven to irrational cruelty, and civilians were not simply passive victims of violence, and has likened their relationship to that of an army at a city gates bargaining over terms: 'It has become clear that violence was an instrument in negotiations over money that were directed under the threat of force.'¹⁴⁶ This is obvious in the case of ransoming and kidnapping and is a point that hardly needs to be laboured. But such forceful 'negotiation' was as much an outcome of chronic and structural problems of military pay, supply, and accommodation as it was a product of the desperate actions of criminals and other 'scum' washed up in the army 'crime machines' suggested by John Hale.¹⁴⁷

The pay of Swiss mercenaries and German landsknecht troops was good, around twice that earned by an agricultural labourer and comparable with the wages of a skilled artisan, but as inflation rose in the course of the century it may have lost

its value.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Swiss shoemakers and butcher's sons, or youths (some barely into their teens) struggling with debt, poverty, or other difficulties at home frequently sought wealth on campaign in Italy. As Peter Falk of Freiburg wrote home while on the march towards Milan and Pavia in 1512: 'Never have our comrades seen such splendid and wealthy encampments as these that we have had up until now in town and country. Everything that a man could desire has been found in sufficiency. The soldiers are full of money and marvelous things that belonged to the French and have been harvested everywhere ... We are so happy and in such good heart for which we thank the Lord God for eternity.'¹⁴⁹

It seems, though, that the French occupation of Italy could not be adequately financed by its possessions there: 'At best the Italian possessions assured an equilibrium between income and expenditure.'¹⁵⁰ This shortfall, the failure of sufficient funds to arrive from France, and the problematic practice of paying troops through their captains therefore increased the demands made on civilians, especially when the prices of goods and services on the road, including the cost of prostitutes, rose and caused the real value of a soldier's pay to depreciate.¹⁵¹ The experience of Spanish troops in Italy followed a similar pattern.¹⁵² The mercenary commanders, or *condottieri*, were awarded a right to plunder and ransoms according to the terms of their contract.¹⁵³ However, the ordinary soldier might receive little of the plunder or rewards obtained by his superiors, which probably explains some sacks, like that of Rome, which took place in the absence of a strong commander or, like that of Genoa in 1522, as a result of a fear that an agreement had been reached by another commander.¹⁵⁴ It also explains Pope Julius II's decision at the siege of Mirandola in 1511 to give in to the desire of the poor infantry ('*poveri fanti*') for a discretionary

sack ('a descrittione') rather than rely on distribution of a 'taglione' or fine paid to the commander, the duke of Urbino.¹⁵⁵

The problem was familiar to military men. In 1494 the commander Galeazzo Sanseverino reported to the duke of Milan a conversation with French archers and gentlemen outside the king's lodging in Florence about the fact that the Florentines were still in arms and the French 'avid for plunder' ('cupidi de preda'). The danger that a 'very great scandal with much loss of blood' would occur as a result of this tense situation led him to advise the king to keep the troops in the city in good order.¹⁵⁶ As he wrote a few days later the situation was not helped by the great want of victuals in the city as the French lived at the expense of the country, did not pay the price of the things taken, despite orders for them to do so (as in Lombardy), and were also resorting to theft.¹⁵⁷ Another chronicler described how troops of all nations crowded into Verona for their winter quarters in December 1509, enjoying reasonable food and putting the whole of the Veronese to plunder ('in preda'). Since the Germans were unpaid they sacked the piazza in Verona three times a day and they were so hungry that they were only interested in edible plunder.¹⁵⁸ Imperial troops, who left Vicenza by an accord with the Venetians the previous month, had clearly behaved little better for they found that while they were at arms on the piazza their recent payment of cloth was covered with excrement, urine, and hot water, and thrown into the street from the windows of their locked lodgings. The Vicentines shouted at them to go as the Venetians were coming.¹⁵⁹

The use of force in 'negotiations' undertaken during sacks of cities could successfully extract gold coins from civilians, but also a range of objects including religious paintings, worked wood ceilings and other carved or engraved items, parts of building facades, relics from Naples, bronze door panels from the castle at Naples,

humanist manuscripts, a Hebrew bible, the Sforza dinner service, and more than 13,000 *lire* worth of pawns held by the *monte di pietà* or lending bank in Ravenna.¹⁶⁰ A similar array of valuable items attracted the attentions of marauding French and Savoyard soldiers in Spanish Lombardy in 1636.¹⁶¹

The inventory of plunder taken at the sack of Prato in 1512 reveals that the Spanish on that occasion took a fairly representative sample of humble household goods ranging in condition from old, used and worn ('vecchio' or 'uso' and 'tristo') to new ('nuovo'), and were easily portable, could be consumed or used, or easily resold. Those robbed at Prato made claims for many pieces of cloth and a variety of clothing including women's dresses ('gammurra'), hooded garments ('cioppetta monachina'), and cloaks (such as the 'saltambarcha romagnuolo'), sleeves and linings.¹⁶² There were also claims submitted to the authorities for plundered grain and flour, basins and other vessels (some tin), hats, hoods, hangings, mattresses, candlesticks, tools, soap, chains, bells, knives, silver forks, leather work, including scabbards, a bronze mortar, a pair of spicer's balances, and part of a crossbow, and the carts and asses (and one horse) to transport it to market or to camp.¹⁶³

As Brian Sandberg has noted for the French Wars of Religion later in the century, and as Gregory Hanlon has found for seventeenth-century Lombardy, such goods could be pressed into use by soldiers and their followers or sold quickly in public auctions in town squares by sutlers, officers, and camp followers.¹⁶⁴ In a letter to Florence the orators in Prato advised that the Spanish should be given safe conducts to come to Florence to sell their booty otherwise, being constrained to leave it behind, they would burn it together with the town.¹⁶⁵ However, some Spaniards found in Florence selling goods stolen in the sack of Prato were killed, and

‘deservedly’ (‘e meritamente’) according to one chronicler.¹⁶⁶ Here were the laws of war (and defeat) as observed by civilians.

6. National or Ethnic Identities

These material needs and desires could be exacerbated by a highly-developed sense of Spanish *camarada*, French esprit de corps, or by the German landsknechts’ sense of self-importance fostered by their tight corporate identity and exhibited in arrogant behaviour towards civilians.¹⁶⁷ The breakdown into violence and looting of the normal and relatively restrained relationship of military demand and civilian supply could occur as a result of a broad range of socio-economic factors including differences in national identity and language, the lack of kinship bonds and length of occupation. Thus, it has been claimed that the highly multi-national armies of the Thirty Years’ War had much less compunction about casting off restraint to take what they needed or to seize valuable plunder with violence from those who shared none of these bonds.¹⁶⁸

Much the same might be said of the ‘ethnic mosaic’ which was the Army of Flanders on the eve of its round of brutal sacks and massacres in 1572, and of course of the armies of the Italian Wars.¹⁶⁹ Nationalist hostility was certainly widespread: in December 1529 in the wake of the fall of Barletta which was burnt to the ground by defending troops, the imperial general Hernando Marquis of Alarcón warned the emperor: ‘Italy is by its nature more cruel and vengeful as your majesty sees with time’. He went on to assert that Italy could not be dominated without force and when the contrary was used it was attributed to weakness of power or spirit. Therefore there

ought to be some reformation and measures taken to ensure security – such as good fortifications and the placing of troops in the captured places.¹⁷⁰

Of course, Guicciardini also identified the supposed natural ferocity of the French as an important factor behind the slaughter, while his contemporaries early on fingered the Swiss pike men as indiscriminate and harsh killers, as demonstrated at the battle of Rapallo in 1494.¹⁷¹ The reports of the behaviour of the Swiss – and possibly German landsknechts, who might include Swiss recruits – there and elsewhere conform to observations made by contemporaries about their doggedness, boldness and effectiveness in open battle, and explains why the French and other powers spent so much to hire them. These critical reports are also consonant with widespread complaints about the difficulty of disciplining them, their unreliability, and their focus on financial reward with a consequent tendency to pillage.¹⁷²

However, the story of why massacres happened suggests that mass murder was not a straightforward outcome of the increased use of Swiss troops, nor a result of natural French bellicosity, but could be a product of rivalries among commanders and companies which sometimes overlapped with national loyalties and which persisted within the markedly multi-national armies of the period.¹⁷³ These armies were highly international and in the list of payments of men-at-arms in Spanish service in Naples in 1508, 1509, and 1510 may be found a certain ‘Johan Marca de la Mirandola’ in Don Juan Cardona’s company.¹⁷⁴ The presence of Italian companies or individuals within the Spanish, French, or imperial forces therefore complicates the nationalist model, and while the majority of massacres were principally ascribed to Gascons or German and Swiss landsknechts this may reflect a bias in the (largely Italian) sources and as some contemporaries observed, Italians soon picked up these barbarian habits.

Of course, a number of different factors could operate at once as in the case of the Venetian outpost of Trevis (now Treviso) which was punished by sack, massacre, and a threat of demolition for its surrender to the French in May 1509. Indeed, it was reported in Ravenna that the Venetians there held a 'solemn ceremony' ('festa solenne') for the reacquisition of Trevis and 'for the greater happiness of its people burned a great number of its books of condemnation and other tax records'.¹⁷⁵ Contemporary reports, though, suggest that the devastation may also have been exacerbated by the need to provision the depleted forces of one of the mercenary companies employed by Venice and by a strategic calculation, akin to the destruction of suburbs undertaken by cities facing siege, that Trevis might provide a useful base for French incursions and should therefore be levelled.¹⁷⁶

There may also have been factors involved in the outbreak of violence which cannot be so readily traced in the existing sources: for example, reflecting on the extravagant atrocities inflicted on some civilians John Hale once remarked that it was tempting 'to see the rape of the town as another form of the peasants' revenge, so many of the men in armies being ... of peasant or village origin.'¹⁷⁷ Certainly, Marcello Alberini recalled that during the sack of Rome those who tried to leave the city were assaulted by the countryside people ('villani') who had an ancient hatred of the Romans.¹⁷⁸ Such thoughts probably passed through the minds of soldiers at some point in the wars, just as national, ethnic, or religious divisions and hatreds may have operated at times to precipitate and exacerbate the conflict.

It is also clear that just as anger, inebriation, and other irrational forces could prompt or prolong massacres,¹⁷⁹ so too such events might be the product of army discipline and structure, and even esprit de corps, with company commanders breaking truces or ignoring peace settlements to gain a financial advantage for their

men, and companies of soldiers bonded by their national origins and keen to prove themselves to each other organizing the entry and sack of towns. In his colloquy *Militis et Cartusiani (The Soldier and the Carthusian)* first printed in 1523 Erasmus had the Carthusian friar accuse the impoverished and maimed soldier of ‘enjoying a life of great wretchedness and sin’, with the soldier replying: ‘Having so many partners in wrongdoing distorted my sense of wrong.’¹⁸⁰

In sum, while soldiers might sometimes regret their cruel actions and contemporaries might blame their passions, failings, and sinfulness for their behavior, it seems clear that the violence of mass murder was often sanctioned by princely or military authorities. This hard expression of power, what Machiavelli later memorably called ‘pious cruelty’ or ‘honorable wickedness’, was a tried and tested strategy with a full panoply of justifications.¹⁸¹ It might be framed as a final resort, an expression of divine justice, or as a punishment and correction for human sin and rebellion, but the cold truth is that it involved the harsh treatment or murder of thousands of men, women, and children whose experiences are explored in the next chapter.

The experience of civilians during such events and ‘negotiations’ ranged from the wholly irrational and fearful to practical and organized efforts in defence by which they became, as one chronicler of the siege of Pavia in 1524-5 put it, ‘poor little citizen-soldiers’ (‘i poveretti cittadini soldati’).¹⁸² It is this range of experiences, which taken together provide a more complete and complex view of the nature of the massacre during the Italian Wars, that is presented in the next chapter. These experiences of massacre, like its causes, display many common features that have been identified with civilian experiences in other pre-modern and modern conflicts. In particular, certain groups like clerics, Jews and women, including prostitutes and

nuns, suffered difficulties both as a result of the actions of attacking soldiers but also as a consequence of civilian attacks. Finally, it is also apparent that the evidence for the involvement of women in military management and a range of warlike activities challenges traditional categories of civilian and combatant that were the focus for intense debate by just war theorists.

¹ Seneca, *De ira*, 111 (1.1.2).

² Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, 359 (18.1.2).

³ Parker, 'Early Modern Europe', 45; McGlynn, *By Sword*, 148-9 (although he is careful to emphasize calculation and premeditation in massacres in *ibid.* 138, 143, 186); D'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities*, 10. On the role of soldiers' 'mood' in determining the course of events after the surrender of a town see Hale, *War*, 194. The title of Lauro Martines' recent study of early modern war, one of the few to devote a chapter to sacks and massacres, is also telling: Martines, *Furies*, 55-81.

⁴ Stearns and Stearns, 'Emotionology'. For further discussion see ch. 6.

⁵ 'Nam Gallus vetus miles primo, existimans hostium copias in propinquo fore, cuneatim substitit pro re atque loco excepturus impetum, cum in una virtute salutis omnis spes consisteret; deinde, ubi illa formido mentibus discessit, verso repente in iram metu, acuere animos, suo more conclamare victoria ac, veluti rabie accensus, in oppidanos incomposite ruentes prorumpere: pars confertim obsistere ad exitus viarum, magnum numerum pauci substinere; pars superne decurrere, demum enixe undique invadere terrereque ipsa praesentia animi clamoreque horrisono imbellem hostem, insuper magna verborum contumelia ignaviam obiectare, gestare lanceis praefixa capita extollereque alte gladios imbutos sanguine, cervicibus ipsis minitantes. Fit proelium foedo excidio civili miserius. In angusto ferrum ac manus contulerant. Cuncta dissonis vocibus, permixto gemitu eiulatuque mulierum puerorumque

lamentantium personabant. Oppidanus hostis loco et numero, virtute Gallus superat, nec quemquam omnium praeda moratur.’ Rucellai, *De bello Italico*, 156. On Rucellai as a historian see Gilbert, *Machiavelli*, 203-18; Fonzio, *Letters*, 143 (quotation).

⁶ ‘Raro post hominum memoria crudelius saevitum.’ Rucellai, *De bello Italico*, 158.

⁷ Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, 72; Guicciardini, *Storia*, i. 105-06.

⁸ Denis, *Charles VIII*, 34-5.

⁹ Ibid. 35 n. 17; Livy, *History*, iii. 126-67 (5.37-49) (quotation at 127).

¹⁰ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 292-3 (3.36.1-2), probably recalling Livy, *History*, iv. 464, 465 (10.28), and possibly ibid. iii. 126, 127 (5.37.4). Note also Machiavelli’s comments about French (and German) avarice, pride, ferocity, and faithlessness in the past and present in his *Discourses*, 302-03 (3.43.1). In c.1519 Claude de Seyssel observed that the French were better at the start of a campaign than after a long slog: Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 164.

¹¹ Castiglione, *Libro*, 110-111 (1.17).

¹² ‘Arivato che lore fune, se fe’ inenti el prefati Frachasse et altre soi compagne; e qui chiamone le ritore del dite castelle, e li ie fe comandamente che lore non tresse per niente, ché lui veneva per parte dela Maistà del re de Ferancia e di tuta la sova lega a pregare che lore ie volese dare dite castelle: case che nòie, che l’era amanate cerca 14 milia persone per dare dita bataglia.’ Bernardi, *Cronache*, i/2. 17.

¹³ ‘Homine mei, nui sapemo bene che voi non doveriste aspetare tale esercite de quiste Franzose, perchè lore sone come si è li cane rabiati, perchè a lore toca la cura de darve dita bataglia per capitole fate infra nui. Sí che per queste se lore ve conquista, tute a foghe e sache ve meterane e forsa per lo file dela spada, perché nui non se potema inpazare per niente, perché lore si èno hoferte ali nostre mazore per

tute queste zorne d'averve conquistate. Si che, care fratele, lo eterno Idio ve dagha bona insperacione di piare el bom partite per tute queste povere castelle.' Ibid.

¹⁴ 'li franciosi furono li primi ad entrare drento et feciono qualche crudeltà alli nostri che questa nuova ha portata alli animi di qualchuno di questi soldati qualche sbigottimento.' Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo Avanti il Principato, filza 18, document 348, fol. 474r (printed in Dovizi, *Epistolario*, 1: 213).

¹⁵ 'et amazorono non so che donne et fanciulli, pur pochi, et usorono tante crudeltà che hanno pieno lo stomacho ad ognuno, et in tanto male è pure questo bene, che grande et picholo hanno posto grandissimo odio a' franzesi'. ASFi, Mediceo Avanti il Principato, filza 18, document 347, fol. 472r (printed in Dovizi, *Epistolario*, i. 218-19).

¹⁶ ASFi, Mediceo Avanti il Principato, filza 18, document 351, fol. 481r (printed in Dovizi, *Epistolario*, i. 222). Marin Sanudo was also careful to emphasize that the French (and not the Italians in French pay) were responsible for the atrocities and for burning down the town or its surrounding territory, with the consequent loss of goods. He also noted that the Italians 'were very unhappy because they were wronged by the French in every matter, especially in the matter of plunder' ('li Italiani erano nel suo campo molto mal contenti, et perché i erano tortizati da Franzesi in ogni cosa, *maxime* ne le prede'): Sanudo, *Spedizione*, 96. In similar fashion see Bernardi, *Cronache*, i/2. 19. For a report of three hundred fatalities and the noses of women cut off see Zambotti, *Diario*, 236. In Bologna it was reported that 1,500 had died in the defence of the town: Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII*, 286.

¹⁷ Potter, *Renaissance France*, 97-8, 109-10.

¹⁸ Machiavelli, *Ritracto*, 152.

¹⁹ Potter, *Renaissance France*, 107-10.

²⁰ Ibid. 112-15.

²¹ Parker, 'Mutiny'; Sherer, *Warriors*, ch. 3, esp. 132-5. Spanish troops in Verona in 1510 carefully and craftily identified and plundered pro-Venetian houses: Bembo, *History*, iii. 87.

²² 'Galli, devictis oppidanis, eo acrius in omnes saeviere quo magis, defectione irritatis animis, existimabant suas iniurias ultum iri, simul et nobilissimae urbis excidio reliquis terrori esse, nequid eiusmodi auderent facinus. Natura feroces ac pristinae virtutis memores, eripi sibi partum belli decus indignabantur. Ita ira perfidiae a promiscuo facinore cuiusque generis minime abstinuit, profusoque sanguine satiata est. Nihil crudele, foedum, abominandum in viros, mulieres, impuberes omissum; inter sacra profanaque discrimen nullum, nec superfuisset quisquam ni, praecipiti iam in occasum die, nox intervenisset.' Rucellai, *De bello Italico*, 158.

²³ 'In quo nullum taeterrimae crudelitatis genus praetermissum: parvi liberi de parentum sinu abrepti in servitutum, parentes in oculis filiorum trucidati, matres miserae a novissimo complexu liberorum exclusae, tacita pietate frustra expectantes ut filiorum extremum spiritum excipere sibi liceret, Vestales trepidae a penetralibus extractae, in conspectus gremioque deorum, quos ipsae colebant, trucidatae, fletus, lamentatio, gemitus tota urbe permixtus. At Gallus, natura ferox, vehemens, plurimum interesse putavit ad conficiendum bellum si obstinatum oppidanorum animum truculento excidio testaretur direptioneque sibi obstringeret militum voluntates, quo promptiores ad omnia pericula subeunda forent.' Ibid. 122.

²⁴ Semelin, 'Massacres', 88-9.

²⁵ Brown, 'Instrumental Terror'.

²⁶ McGlynn, *By Sword*, 182.

²⁷ ‘et au cas que de ce faire vous estes refusans, nous vous signifions de partir incontinent avec toute la puissance qui est ici pour aller devant vostre ville, et y sera faite telle punition qu’il en sera mémoire et exemple à tous autres.’ La Trémoille to the inhabitants of Rennes, Saint-Aubin du Cormier, 29 July [1488]: *Correspondance*, 244.

²⁸ Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*.

²⁹ Boone, ‘Destructions’. See also Settia, *Rapine*, 133-8.

³⁰ Vale, ‘Sir John’.

³¹ Wright, *Knights*.

³² Allmand, ‘War and the Non-combatant’, 166-70.

³³ Ibid. 178. See also Pizan, *Book*, 41 (1.14); Johnson, *Ideology, Reason*, 72-5.

³⁴ Rogers, ‘By Fire’, 56-63. See also Settia, *Rapine*, 37-40.

³⁵ Contamine, *War*, 165.

³⁶ Ibid. 169-71.

³⁷ Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 164-72; Mallett and Hale, *Military Organization*, 87-92; Hale, *War*, 132-3; Hale, ‘Early Development’.

³⁸ Pepper, ‘Siege Law’.

³⁹ For a contemporary French view of the utility of garrisons, including their role as refuges for townspeople and those in surrounding countryside see Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 117-18. On the intermingling or interdependence of soldiers and civilians in garrison towns and around fortresses see Hale, *War*, 135; Adams, ‘Architettura’, 122; and, in the eighteenth century, Loriga, *Soldats*, 41-58.

⁴⁰ Arcangeli, ‘Note’; Gentile, *Guelfi*; Casanova, ‘Riorganizzazione’. For the ferocious factional disputes in Parma in 1477 and 1482 that resemble the sacks and massacres

of the Italian Wars, including the desecration of holy objects, see anon., *Cronaca*, 6-8, 110.

⁴¹ Sanudo, viii. 302-03, 305.

⁴² Ibid. 416, 338; ix. 9-10, 327, 416; x. 28, 187, 291.

⁴³ Compare the Udine carnival massacre of 1511: Muir, *Mad Blood*.

⁴⁴ Sanudo, xiii. 498.

⁴⁵ Shaw, *Politics*, 172-202; Shaw, *Barons*.

⁴⁶ Of course, Italian powers could also benefit: note the offer made by Fano to pass into the subjection of Venice in Oct. 1503: Sanudo, *Diarii*, v. 227-8.

⁴⁷ ‘La terra tucta in suspitione e paura de non andare a sacco, dubitando non havere in un tracto Colonnese, Ursini e Franzosi, tucti per diversi rispetti d’accordo a robbare’. Negri, ‘Missioni’, 428. See Shaw, *Political Role*, 164-9, 180-182.

⁴⁸ ‘On dit qu’il n’y trouvera pas grande resistance, pour ce que les villes sont faibles de murailles, non percées et sans boulevards ni fossés. Et d’avantage, les trois parts et demy sont bons François.’ Anon., *Aucuns articles extrectz des lettres envoyees de l’ost de la guerre de Naples* (n.p., n.d. [Paris, c.1494]), in La Pilorgerie, *Campagne*, 83-90 (quotation at 88).

⁴⁹ Pellegrini, *Guerre*, 34 (‘vittima sacrificale’).

⁵⁰ Guicciardini, *History of Italy*, 56; Guicciardini, *Storia*, i. 81.

⁵¹ Parenti, *Storia*, i. 112.

⁵² Boiardo, *Opere*, 321; Guicciardini, *Storie*, 112. On Malaspina’s manouvres see Meli, *Gabriele*, 175-201. There are analogous cases elsewhere. In 1510 a chronicler in Fermo noted: ‘In questo tempo i Vissani, fecero di note, nelle ville di Monte Fortino, uccisione di homini, donne e fanciulli, preda d’animali e altre crudeltà che

non l'avrebbero fatto i Turchi.' Anon., 'Annali di Fermo', 246. See *ibid.* 234-5, 249 for further details of disputes with neighbours including the inhabitants of Vissa.

⁵³ Boiardo, *Opere*, 314, 315-16. According to one Pisan chronicler the women and old men gave themselves up by agreement ('dieronsi a patti') and a total ransom of eleven thousand lire was taken for ten prisoners taken by the camp towards Florence:

Portovenieri, 'Memoriale', 285.

⁵⁴ Boiardo, *Opere*, 312 (quotation), 316.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 314 (quotation). See also *ibid.* 312-13 ('et quando quello stato avesse andare in conquasso, non saria forse mal facto mettere el corre a covello'); *ibid.* 313; and *ibid.* 319-20 for his vaguely encouraging letter to the commune of Fivizzano.

⁵⁶ Sanudo, *Spedizione*, 96.

⁵⁷ Commynes, *Memoirs*, ii 133; Commynes, *Mémoires*, i. 547.

⁵⁸ Note the comments on the luck of Cesena to be spared a French sack in November 1494: Cobelli, *Cronache*, 365.

⁵⁹ Landucci, *Diario*, 70-71, 83, 86, 110; Bernardi, *Cronache*, i/2. 31. This was an unpopular decision in Florence: Vaglianti, *Storia*, 13-14.

⁶⁰ 'Pour certaines violences et autres grans deplaisirs qu'ils avoient fait au Roy, et aussy qu'ils se declarerent ses ennemys'; 'que aultre chose ne demandoient que d'acquerir honneur et faire service à leur Roy et souverain seigneur'; 'pour donner exemple aux autres'. Villeneuve, 'Mémoires', 259. The date of the completion of the work is given at *ibid.* 322.

⁶¹ Commynes, *Memoirs*, ii. 160; Commynes, *Mémoires*, i. 576-7. A similar view about the effects on other towns of the French slaughter of most of the townspeople of Monte San Giovanni (and Monte Fortino) was later expressed in Florio, *De bello Italico*, fol. 20v.

⁶² ‘En après au mont Saint-Jehan qui est terriblement forte ville et place, laquelle a este prinse à grant vigeur et hardiesse par les gens du Roy, et y fut tué de nos adversaires environ sept cens puissans hommes. Laquelle ville et place ainsi prinse, esbahist toutes les Italies, et par especial la ville et cyté de Naples.’ Charles VIII, *Lettres nouvellement envoyees de Napples dates du 20 jour de mars* (Paris, 1495), in *La Pilorgerie, Campagne*, 450-453 (quotation at 451).

⁶³ On Louis XII’s military preparations for this campaign, which he expected would last no more than three months, see Pélissier, *Louis XII*, i. 381-403.

⁶⁴ ‘Item, si ha slargato, vol venir a l’impresa di Milan [*sic*], et li ha ditto il modo vol venir, e vol la prima terra che prende per forza ruinar e usar gran crudeltà acciò il resto si renda’. Sanudo, ii. 721 (summary of a letter written by Zuam da Gonzaga dated 8 May 1499).

⁶⁵ Pélissier, *Louis XII*, ii. 178.

⁶⁶ ‘anderemo a la rocha di Araz, et poi presa a Anom, *demum* a Mortara, et li spianerò tutti li lochi si haverò resistentia ...’. Sanudo, ii. 1097 (indirectly reported speech of Trivulzio quoted in summary of letters written by Hironimo Liom, *podestà* and *capitano* of Crema, dated 18 Aug. 1499).

⁶⁷ Letter of 1 Aug. 1499, quoted in Pélissier, *Louis XII*, i. 504; Sanudo, ii. 1119.

⁶⁸ Pélissier, *Louis XII*, i. 504-05, 505 n. 1 (quotation). According to the report of the Venetian ambassador in Ferrara, who spoke to Gaspare Sanseverino: ‘[F]rancesi non fa danno alcun, ma li tratano come subditi soi.’ Sanudo, ii. 984-5.

⁶⁹ On Tortona see Pélissier, *Louis XII*, ii. 9-10; Sanudo, ii. 1150. For an account of the defense and surrender of Alessandria see Pélissier, *Louis XII*, ii. 12-24, 33-7. On French rule in Milan see Aubert, *Crisi*, 158-63; Meschini, *Francia*; Morone, *Lettere*.

⁷⁰ Lot, *Recherches*, 27-8.

⁷¹ Giustiniani, *Dispacci*, ii. 477 (3 Oct. 1503); anon., ‘Diario delle cose d’Urbino’, 446 (on fatalities).

⁷² Foresti, *Supplementum*, fol. 333v. On Cesare’s ruthlessness and cruelty see, for example, Landucci, *Diario*, 252; Machiavelli, *Prince*, 25-33 (ch. 7).

⁷³ The figure of 2,125 fatalities is given by a chronicler in Aversa, near Naples: Guarino, ‘Diario’, 239. ‘Around two thousand’ is suggested in Buonaccorsi, *Diario dall’anno*, 109, and also given in Parenti, *Storia*, ii. 465. Four thousand are mentioned in Cerretani, *Ricordi*, 27; 3,000 in Vaglianti, *Storia*, 138, and see his remarks on a wall being broken during the ‘accordo’ in *ibid.* 136-7. Five thousand fatalities are mentioned in anon., *Sacco di Capua*, and in anon., *Libro o vero cronicha*, sig. Biiv.

⁷⁴ Priuli, *Diarii*, ii. 159.

⁷⁵ ‘Va, e di’ a Napoli, che dimane sarò là con il campo a le mure di Napoli, e che pezo serà fato a lhorò, si aspectano le artilarie.’ Sanudo, *Diarii*, iv. 78.

⁷⁶ Notar Giacomo, *Cronica*, 241-2.

⁷⁷ ‘Hanno messo la terra a sacco non senza qualche crudelità de occisione, de la quale non si è possuto far meno ... La presa di Prato così subita et cruda, quantunque io ne habbia preso dispiacere, pure harà portato seco questo bene che sarà exemplo et terrore a li altri.’ Summary of letter dated near Prato, 29 Aug. 1512, in Sanudo, xv. 29.

⁷⁸ For example see, with several ancient examples adduced, Valturio, *De re militari*, 7.6 (unpaginated).

⁷⁹ ‘entre la poire et le froumage, on tante le gué’; ‘à vous donner un croc ingambe.’ De Monluc, *Commentaires*, i. 413-14. Compare Garimberto, *Capitano*, 354-9: ‘Quanto sia vero quell proverbio, che tra la pace, e la tregua non ci è confidenza alcuna.’

⁸⁰ For what follows see Keen, *Laws*, 119-33; Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 308-34.

⁸¹ Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, 68, 67 (III.iii.43, II.11-13).

⁸² Keen, *Laws*, 125-6. In 1512 the Brescians may have held back from surrendering to the French due to the possibility of reprisals from occupying Venetian forces: Pasero, *Francia*, 223.

⁸³ Bradbury, *Medieval Siege*, 317-24; Settia, *Rapine*, 77-182. A Franciscan friar sent to encourage the commander in Pavia to surrender in 1524-5 reportedly made appeals to his sense of honour and urged him to avoid a massacre and sack of the town. In response the commander threatened to hang the friar from a gallows by his belt and ordered him to return to the French camp with the message that he would rather endure a thousand deaths than betray his lord: Taegio, *Ossidione*, sigs Fv-Fiiiiir.

⁸⁴ On the conventions of siege warfare during the sixteenth century, as practiced by the French army see Potter, *Renaissance France*, 205-09.

⁸⁵ That knights were mistaken in considering this lawful is the view in Bonet, *Tree*, 189-90 (4.103).

⁸⁶ Keen, *Laws*, 111-14, 140.

⁸⁷ By one account, the Marchese of Pescara led his troops into Genoa to sack in 1522 just as the city was coming to an agreement with Prospero Colonna, the other commander on the scene: Giustiniani, *Castigatissimi annali*, fols CCLXXVr-CCLXXVlr.

⁸⁸ Keen, *Laws*, 206-17.

⁸⁹ One Spaniard in Rome suggested that the papal rejection of a herald from the imperial camp with requests for the peaceful entry of troops led to the sack of Rome in 1527: AGS, Estado, leg. 847, no. 180; *Calendar*, iii/2. 196.

⁹⁰ Matarazzo, 'Cronaca', 182-3. Compare Sallust, *War*, 191 (13.6).

⁹¹ Priuli, *Diarii*, i. 294-5, 300, 302, 304, 312-13. On the violent behaviour of French troops in Milan see Pélissier, *Louis XII*, ii. 256-66 (largely based on Sanudo); and Meschini, *Francia*. On the submission of Milan and French violence see Pélissier, *Louis XII*, ii. 267-82.

⁹² Mallett and Shaw, *Italian Wars*, 56. It was hardly new in warfare and the system of tributes (*appatis*) from those in France threatened with violence by troops during the Hundred Years' War is described in Keen, *Laws*, 82-3, 137-9, 251-3; Rogers, 'By Fire', 60; Wright, *Knights*, 50-53, 56-60, 74-9, 97-8.

⁹³ Anon., 'Diario delle cose d'Urbino', 447.

⁹⁴ Louis XII, *Lettres*, iii. 161; Sanudo, xiv. 9.

⁹⁵ Verri, 'Relazione', 220-221.

⁹⁶ Bernardi, *Cronache*, i/2. 240-43; Landucci, *Diario*, 204; Parenti, *Storia*, ii. 317; anon., *Diario Ferrarese*, 237; Dei Conti, *Storie*, ii. 209. For Leonardo da Vinci's architectural solutions of 1504 to the vulnerability of citadels to internal betrayal see Heydenreich, 'Military Architect', 160-161.

⁹⁷ Pélissier, *Louis XII*, i. 448, 449. See also *ibid.* 449 for the suggestion that the garrisons were paid with debased currency.

⁹⁸ Sanudo, ii. 1104, 1105, 1116. On the treachery of the Milanese castellan in 1499 see De Beatis, *Travel Journal*, 181.

⁹⁹ Priuli, *Diarii*, i. 243. On this incident see Machiavelli, *Art*, 145-6 (7.26-33). On the role of 'diverses partz' in aiding the capture of a town see Fourquevaux, *Instructions*, fols 83r-84r.

¹⁰⁰ 'le nostre gram guai, le quale fune simile ale pene del'inferne.' Bernardi, *Cronache*, i/2. 265. A detailed account of the taking of Forlì is provided in *ibid.* 245-86. In c.1516 the nobleman Philippe de Clèves recalled from his own experiences of

war how sieges held in winter or in bad weather could break up as poorly clothed troops, including Germans, mutinied against those better clothed and sought winter lodgings in towns. Even gentlemen and knights, who were better clothed, he wrote, grumbled about the rain and bad weather and lifted their sieges to retire to the garrison for winter. However, this was not such a great problem in warmer countries including Spain or Italy: Clèves, *Instruction*, 69-70.

¹⁰¹ ‘Cosa crudele e impia ad udire le strida e li lamenti ché erani infangati commo porci e animali.’ Fantaguzzi, *Caos*, i. 198-99 (quotation at 199). The autograph manuscript of this work is dated to 1520-21 but its copious and annalistic style leads me to believe that it was compiled contemporaneously with the events described.

¹⁰² Portovenieri, ‘Memoriale’, 320. An ‘accordo salve le persone e la roba’ in another case of 1501 is mentioned in Bianchi, *Cronaca*, 238-9; and a ‘pacto salvo robe e persone’ at Imola in 1499 and Forlì in 1500 is mentioned in Grumello, ‘Storia’, 38. The term ‘salvo l’ avere e persone’ is also found in Cerretani, *Ricordi*, 267 (for the surrender of a fortress in 1512). Noting the German surrender of Gorizia on these terms in 1508 Leonardo Amaseo specified that the soldiers there could leave with as many goods of their own (and not of the town) as they could carry on their backs: Amaseo, Amaseo, and Azio, *Diarii*, 28.

¹⁰³ ‘volseno statichi in Cascina, e così li ebbero, però erano tutti più Franciosi; e gli statichi fu perché al Ponte di Saco non fu loro osservata la fede, furono quasi tutti morti da Fiorentini sotto la fede.’ Portovenieri, ‘Memoriale’, 321.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 347-8.

¹⁰⁵ Bonet, *Tree*, 162, 190 (4.59, 105).

¹⁰⁶ Notar Giacomo, *Cronica*, 240.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Sanudo, iv. 76-8. For another example of the suggestion that the sack began while the Capuans were still coming to terms with the French see Vaglianti, *Storia*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ ‘e per volere fare bono principio, nello intrare amazzarono quelli che avevano tradita la loro patria, ciò quelli che avevano aperte le porte, *cum* grande vilipendio e crudeltà’. Matarazzo, ‘Cronaca’, 184.

¹¹⁰ Prato, ‘Storia’, 294-5. In Florence Bartolomeo Cerretani noted that under assault Ravenna ‘venne subito a compositione et capitolare’, but while it did this the Gascon infantry entered a breach previously opened in the walls by the artillery, with disastrous results. So many were killed and put to sack ‘con tantta e sì inaldita crudelttà che sare’ brutto al dirillo’, and there was no demonstration of ‘misericordia’: Cerretani, *Storia*, 428. See also Shaw, ‘Battaglia’.

¹¹¹ Bernardi, *Cronache*, ii. 360-361. For another, largely similar, eyewitness account see Sanudo, xiv. 151-4. In Cristoforo Fiorentino detto l’Altissimo, *La Rotta di Ravenna* (Florence, n.d. [first half of sixteenth century]) it is alleged that the French swore vendetta and promised to devastate Ravenna after the defenders made a feint towards surrender, opened a gate to the besieging troops, and then cried out war and killed them: *GOR*, ii. 456.

¹¹² ‘et cussì tenendo la terra in zanze, li guasconi cominciorno a venire dentro con tal tempesta che pareva che li spiriti infernali fossero scatenati.’ Letter dated 23 April 1512, in Sanudo, xiv. 154-7 (quotation at 155).

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 155-6.

¹¹⁴ ‘la povera citta tutta fu missa a saccho et ruinato et vituperata non havendo respecto ne a vergine, ne a moniche, ne a lochi sacri menando la falce ad ogniuno.’ Grumello, ‘Cronaca’, 164. On the desire for food and wealth see Landucci, *Diario*, 323; Cerretani, *Storia*, 439. For the suggestion that Prato was sacked because the

inhabitants poisoned or withheld food see Beliard, *Cronaca*, 30. Simone di Goro reported that Florence had disrupted the Spanish supplies from Bologna so that there was only one loaf of bread between three men leading the viceroy to call together the captains and declare that they would either die of hunger ‘e con vituperio’ or take the place by assault and that 100 ducats would go to the first person to enter the town, fifty to the second, and twenty-five ducats to the third, see Da Colle, ‘Narrazione’, 117. He adds that the water in the towns and places of the plain of Prato had been poisoned so that the viceroy, disdainfully, said that they would put the place to the sack killing all those over fifteen years of age: *ibid.* 117-18.

¹¹⁵ Guicciardini to Ten, Prato, 27 Aug. 1512: ‘Documenti’, 106.

¹¹⁶ Bayley, *War*, 273-4; Modesti, ‘Miserando Sacco’, 100-102. On 2 Oct. the chancellor of Prato put the number of dead at over five thousand: ‘Documenti’, 231.

¹¹⁷ For example, at Pavia in 1527 when the cruelty of the French sack was exacerbated by the memory of the shame against the nation represented by the capture of the French king there two years earlier: Nardi, *Istorie*, ii. 129-30.

¹¹⁸ ‘Horsu su, a sacco, a sacco.’ Quoted in Cobelli, *Cronache*, 358.

¹¹⁹ Landucci, *Diario*, 142.

¹²⁰ Tommaso di Silvestro, *Diario*, 167-8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 114.

¹²² ‘ma fu loro usata poca fede perchè 12 ne furon apiciati’. Smagliati, *Cronaca*, 73. See also *ibid.* 65, 70-72.

¹²³ ‘El Marqués está para se ahorcar por tan gran desgracya como ésta que le ha acaescydo syn culpa alguna, que ya tenya puesta guardja en las puertas y en la vaterya; pero no bastó’. Don Fernando Marín to King Charles I, Milan, 7 Dec. 1521: Marín, *Politica*, 174.

¹²⁴ ‘El Re Carlo zonto appresso Monte San Zuane, ha mandà a dir per do trombeti a quei della roca, che se renda; e loro ha fatto apicar i trombeti; e’ il Re ghe ha fatto dar la battaglia, e ha ruinà el luogo, e fatto morir tutti.’ Malipiero, ‘Annali’, 332. On the question of authorship see Neerfeld, *Historia*, 83-95.

¹²⁵ ‘che è cos ache *numquam* a messi si assueta di far’. Sanudo, *Spedizione*, 209.

¹²⁶ ‘Questa tal crudeltà el Re fo contento fusse usato, sì per la cossa fatta, *quam* a ciò sia exempio altri castelli e lochi dil Reame non si vogli defender, *imo* portarli le chiave.’ Ibid. 209-10 (quotation at 209). Women and children under the age of twelve years were spared according to anon., *Diario Ferrarese*, 141. See *ibid.* 142, for comments favourable to the French king. However, according to Cardinal Cesarini fifty women figured among the eight hundred fatalities: Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII*, 336 n. 485.

¹²⁷ ‘Miserabili eiulatu, et foedo aspectu hominis sibi cari commotus mensam proiecit, deumque testatus est, daturus, antequam iterum ederet, violatores iuris gentium poenas’. Dei Conti, *Storie*, ii. 103.

¹²⁸ ‘par amytié ou par force’. Charles VIII, *Lettres*, iv. 168. See also *ibid.* 166-9.

¹²⁹ ‘à la fin, graces à Dieu, dudict premier assault elle a esté emportée et prinse à mon petit dommaige et à leurs despens, pugnicion et grant perte pour le people [et l’exemple] des autres qui vouldroient faire le semblable à l’encontre de moy. Et croy que la peine qui’ilz m’ont donnée à les aller veoir leur a esté bien cher vendue.’ Ibid. 167; anon., *Prinse*, unpaginated. Quoted in Hale, *War*, 48.

¹³⁰ ‘et vous assure, mon frere, que je y veiz le plus bel esbat du monde, et ce que jamais n’avoye veu, et aussi bien et hardiment assaillir et combater qu’il est possible.’ Charles VIII, *Lettres*, iv. 169; anon., *Prinse*, unpaginated. See also Charles VIII, *Lettres*, iv. 173.

¹³¹ ‘Aux autres vaincqueurs, par droit de bataille, la cité eust esté destruite, pillée et bruslée, meurtrie, et omicides faitz de loy de victoire: vous avez, a la victoire, qui est, de sa nature, fiere, insolente, sanglante, ravisante et plaine d’orgueil, imposé frain et bride, et seul l’avez contraincte prandre vos meurs. La chasteté des femmes et filles n’a jamais esté plus sainctement gardée, en temps de paix, et es [sic] temples, qu’elle a esté en vostre victoire; nul feu n’a esté veu, si n’est en signe de publique joye, nulle espée après la victoire n’a esté regardée si n’est cache; nulles richesses, en si grande et opulente cite, n’ont esté mussées ou enfermées par craincte, tout a esté manifeste en public, nulle vièrges n’a esté, si n’est avec sa mere, nulle mariée, si n’est avec la mere de son mari, nulz banissemens et nulle fuite.’ Maulde, ‘Eloge’, 56.

¹³² Amaseo, Amaseo, and Azio, *Diarii*, 86. On the bloody and cruel capture of Peschiera see also Arluno, *De bello Veneto*, cols 76-8.

¹³³ ‘Le dyable, se boy nie menge jamais avant qu’ilz soient pendus et estranglés.’ Florange, *Mémoires*, i. 34-5 (quotation at 35). See also Sanudo, viii. 333.

¹³⁴ ‘Après que nouvelles furent sceus à Venizes et à leurs aultres villes de la perte de la bataille et de la prinse et execussion de ceulx de Pesquieres, quarante jours après tous les habitans des dictes villes, tant hommes que femmes, se vestirent de noires’. Florange, *Mémoires*, i. 35.

¹³⁵ ‘Jusque la s’estendit vostre dextre et vostre espée, et fut le lac rougi de sang; mais vostre gloire, vostre felicité et majesté passa oultre.’ Maulde, ‘Eloge’, 61.

¹³⁶ ‘non perdonando ad alchuno ne in la vitta ne mancho in la roba.’ Grumello, ‘Cronaca’, 145-7 (quotation at 147).

¹³⁷ El perseguitar [?] fu grande i morti assai / de quilli de la terra e forasteri / per le case gli dan martoro e guai / non val cridar merce perdon mesieri / non fu terra in simil stato mai / li corpi son per le strade e sentieri / sol si crida sacco ferro e moia /

immaginar ti poi lanticha troia'. Anon., *La rotta e presa fatta a bresa per li francesi* (n.p. [c.1512]), in *GOR*, ii. 411-14 (quotations at 411 and 413-14).

¹³⁸ Gaston de Foix to the marquis of Mantua, Brescia, 19 Feb. 1512: 'Havendo noi facto qualche experientia per revocare questa cita ad la pristina regia divotione et dapoì doi zorni, vedendo che in modo alchuno [non] voleva retrahere dal suo pertinace proposito, come forzato per non perder piu tempo'. ASMa, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 1446, fol. 254r. See also Pasero, *Francia*, 222; and Vissière, 'Lettere', 250, fig. 2.

¹³⁹ Nemours 'a mise toute la peine qu'il a peu de faire entendre à ceulx de la ditte ville leur affaire afin de la garder d'estre pillée, toutesfois ils ont esté obstinez et n'ont jamais voulu entendre à aucune raison'. Louis XII, *Lettres*, iii. 178.

¹⁴⁰ 'ung gros nombre de villains qu'ils avoient mis en laditte ville'. Ibid. 179.

¹⁴¹ Florange, *Mémoires*, i. 82 n. 3; Maille, *Tres ioyeuse plaisante et recreative hystoire*, fol. lxviir; Du Bellay and Du Bellay, *Mémoires*, ii. 71-2.

¹⁴² Florange, *Mémoires*, i. 82.

¹⁴³ 'Veramente ha bisogno il nostro seculo di un libro tale; percioche tanto è guasta la militia, che ella ha mestieri di una totale riformatione.' Gorgieri, *Trattato*, fol. 2r.

¹⁴⁴ 'alle regole della sua antica religione.' Ibid. fol. 2v. Note also similar remarks in Centorio, *Discorsi*, v. 221; Belli, *De re militari*, ii. 61-2, 192 (2.1.12; 7.4.1).

¹⁴⁵ Sherer, *Warriors*, ch. 4, esp. 160-166.

¹⁴⁶ Ulbricht, 'Experience', 103, 110 (quotation), 124-5. As André Gardot wrote in 1948: 'Cette operation du sac, en apparence dominée par une violence aveugle, obéit toutefois à ses règles propres.' Gardot, 'Droit', 457.

¹⁴⁷ Outram, 'Demographic Impact'; Asch, "'Wo der soldat'". On the diversity of the impact of war on civilians see Tallett, *War*, 148-67. For a cautious assessment of the

background and criminality of soldiers during this period see Hale, *War*, 83-9 (quotations at 87, 88). For a more considered analysis see Sherer, *Warriors*, ch. 1, esp. 22-3, 24-6, 40-48.

¹⁴⁸ Parrott, *Business*, 48, 60. See also Sherer, *Warriors*, 24-6. For a less rosy view of soldiers' pay and emoluments see Hale, *War*, 110-119. On early modern European conditions of service see *ibid.* 153-78.

¹⁴⁹ 'Mai prima i confederati avevano visto accampamenti sì splendidi e ricchi come quelli, che abbiamo avuto finora in città e campagna. Tutto ciò che l'uomo desidera, lo si trova a sufficienza. Per tale motivo i soldati sono pieni di soldi e di cose meravigliose, appartenute ai francesi e raccolte dappertutto ... Siamo così felici e stiamo così bene per cui il Signore Iddio sia ringraziato per l'eternità.' Translated into modern Italian and quoted in Esch, *Mercenari*, 5. On the social backgrounds, age and motives of the mercenaries who joined up see *ibid.* 20-28, 85-6. For a comment on the fear and expense suffered by the inhabitants of the Valtellina at the passage of the Swiss troops in 1512 see Del Merlo, 'Cronaca'.

¹⁵⁰ 'Au mieux les possessions italiennes ont dû assurer l'équilibre entre recettes et dépenses.' Hamon, 'Italie', 32 (quotation), 35.

¹⁵¹ Esch, *Mercenari*, 76, 79 n. 240; Mallett, *Mercenaries*, 133-5; Duc, 'Prezzo', 229-37. On the rise of grain prices caused by the passage of troops through the Valtellina in 1511 see Del Merlo, 'Cronaca'.

¹⁵² Sherer, *Warriors*, ch. 2, esp. 52-9, 68-78, 78-92.

¹⁵³ For example, see the *condotta* drawn up for Francesco Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, by Florence in June 1505 in Dumont, *Corps*, iv/1. 64.

¹⁵⁴ Alberini, *Sacco*, 269-70; Cortese, *Saccheggio*, 60.

¹⁵⁵ Sanudo, xi. 743-4, 761, 762. Note another use of this term in relation to the siege of Orvieto in 1497: Tommaso di Silvestro, *Diario*, 74.

¹⁵⁶ Galeazzo Sanseverino to duke of Milan, Florence, 21 Nov. 1494: ASMi, CVS, *potenze estere*, Firenze e Pisa, 940.

¹⁵⁷ Galeazzo Sanseverino to duke of Milan, Florence, 27 Nov. 1494: ASMi, CVS, *potenze estere*, Firenze e Pisa, 940.

¹⁵⁸ Buzzacarini, 244-5; Buzzaccarini, *Storia*, 97.

¹⁵⁹ Buzzacarini, 239; Buzzaccarini, *Storia*, 91. On 3 Oct. 1510, Alda Pia, countess of Gambara, wrote about a certain Fansio de Stala, probably a soldier in the service of her husband Gianfrancesco, who had fled from Verona having robbed the master of his lodging of sixteen pieces of cloth: ASBr, Archivio Gambara, busta 277, letter no. 199.

¹⁶⁰ ASBr, ASC, 1525, fol. 117r (an inventory of relics brought back from Naples by man who fought in army of Charles VIII, compiled in 1499); Da Porto, *Lettere*, 199-202; Bembo, *History*, i. 150, 151; Guidetti, *Ricordanze*, p. LXIV n. 267, 162, 162 n. 695; De Beatis, *Travel Journal*, 133; Sanudo, viii. 525; Maulde-La-Clavière, *Conquête*, 15; Muzzarelli, 'Per il "sollievo"', 290. At the sack of Volterra in 1472 the duke of Urbino, who had a scholarly streak, acquired twenty-seven ancient Hebrew bibles taken from the private library of a rabbi: Bardini, 'Lamenti', 660 n. 76; Sarzana, *Opere*, 489 n. 34; Da Bisticci, *Vespasiano*, 99-105. See also Settia, *Rapine*, 56-75 for medieval evidence of a similar range of plunder. For a more extravagant account of plunder at the sack of Rome in 1527 see Guicciardini, *Sack*, 112-13.

¹⁶¹ Hanlon, *Italy 1636*, 156-8.

¹⁶² ASPr, Archivio Comunale di Prato, 2549, fols 1v, 2r, 16v.

¹⁶³ ASPr, Archivio Comunale di Prato, 2549, fols 1r-53v. The balances and crossbow ‘tonieri’ are listed in *ibid.* fol. 42r, the bronze mortar in *ibid.* fol. 15v. Since these claims were drawn up in expectation of compensation or tax relief from the new regime in Florence there may have been some exaggeration of the amount and value of goods taken, if not outright false claims as was alleged in a note added to the claim submitted by the abbey of Classe after the sack of Ravenna: ASRa, Corporazioni religiose, Abbazia di Sant’Apollinare in Classe, 239, fols 42r-43v. See also Giuliani, *Libri*, 18-19.

¹⁶⁴ Sandberg, “‘Magazine’”; Hanlon, *Italy 1636*, 157. Note the auction at Udine in 1512: Da Porto, *Lettere*, 279.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Documenti’, 158. See also *ibid.* 165.

¹⁶⁶ Lapini, *Diario*, 83. See also Landucci, *Diario*, 326.

¹⁶⁷ Sherer, *Warriors*, 92-3, 239-49; Parrott, *Business*, 60-70.

¹⁶⁸ Outram, ‘Socio-Economic Relations’; Outram, ‘Demographic Impact’.

¹⁶⁹ Arnade, *Beggars*, 221.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Ytalia de su natura es muy cruel y vengativa como V.Mt. vera andando el tiempo’. Hernando Marquis of Alarcón to Charles V, Andria, 11 Dec. 1529: AGS, Estado, leg. 1454, nos. 184, 188 (summary). See also Bergenroth et al., *Calendar*, iv/1. 363-5.

¹⁷¹ For allegations of ruthless Swiss behaviour at the battle of Rapallo in 1494 towards soldiers and civilians, including the inhabitants of a hospital, which provoked reprisals see Senarega, *Commentaria*, 36, 37; Sanudo, *Spedizione*, 84; Giustiniani, *Castigatissimi annali*, fols CCXLIXv-CCLr (probably based on Senarega who is mentioned at *ibid.* fol. CCLVIIIv).

¹⁷² Potter, *Renaissance France*, 125-31; Hale, *War*, 157 (on Swiss), 131-43 (on landsknechts); Parrott, *Business*, 27-70; Redlich, *German Military Enterpriser*, i. 3-141; Kohler, *Suisses*; Esch, *Mercenari*; Baumann, *Lanzichenecchi*; Groebner, *Defaced*, 125-42.

¹⁷³ For a brief comment on the ways in which ‘patriotic pride affected morale’ in early modern armies see Hale, *War*, 176. See also *ibid.* 69-71. On Italians in the French army see Potter, *Renaissance France*, 146-51. Note the comments on the variety of foreigners in the French army in 1494-5 in Sanudo, *Spedizione*, 208. In 1519 Claude de Seyssel recommended that bands of soldiers of different nationalities should be billeted separately and should not mingle when plunder was distributed: Seyssel, *Monarchie*, 138-9.

¹⁷⁴ AGS, Estado, leg. 1004, no. 3.

¹⁷⁵ ‘per più contento del so popule fecene brusare gram numero de suoi libri de condanatione et altre lore suoe angharie, prometando al popule che stese di bona voia, che non pasarebe tropo tenpo che lore s’acatarebbe contento.’ Bernardi, *Cronache*, ii. 268-9 (quotation at 269).

¹⁷⁶ Arluno, *Bello*, col. 56; Amaseo, Amaseo, and Azio, *Diarii*, 71 (reporting that the Venetians planned to level [‘aspianar’] Trevis), 80; Sanudo, viii. 214; Grumello, ‘Cronaca’, 108-09; Maulde, ‘Eloge’, 59; Da Porto, *Lettere*, 47; Buzzaccarini, 168-9; Buzzaccarini, *Storia*, 27; anon., *La historia de tutte le guerre facte el facto darne fato in Geradada col nome de tutti li conduteri* (n.p., n.d.), in *GOR*, ii. 274.

¹⁷⁷ Hale, *War*, 196. On the other hand, a large proportion of Spanish recruits came from urban centres: Sherer, *Warriors*, 20.

¹⁷⁸ Alberini, *Sacco di Roma*, 279-80.

¹⁷⁹ On the enormous Gascon thirst for wine in Brescia in 1509 see Palazzo, 'Diario', 272.

¹⁸⁰ Erasmus, 'Soldier', 334. On peer pressure and 'group absolution' among soldiers see Grossman, *On Killing*, 149-55.

¹⁸¹ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 88 (ch. 21); Machiavelli, *Art*, 15 (1.62); Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 63 (1.27.1).

¹⁸² Verri, 'Relazione', 208.