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CARLO IV NELL'ITALIA DEL TRECENTO.  
IL "SAVIO SIGNORE" E LA RIFORMULAZIONE DEL POTERE IMPERIALE

a cura di Daniela Rando e Eva Schlotheuber  
con la collaborazione di Maria Pia Alberzoni e Miriam Tessera



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REASSESSING CHARLES IV'S IMPERIAL CORONATION  
JOURNEY AND THE ROLE OF PETRARCH

In her sweeping account of the fourteenth century in France, Barbara Tuchman famously characterised the period as the “calamitous” century<sup>1</sup>. One conflict in particular profoundly shaped this century: the dispute between the papacy and the Holy Roman Emperors over hegemony in Italy. In 1245 the power struggle came to a head in a spectacular fashion with the deposition and excommunication of the Staufer Frederick II, leading to the exile of the popes in Avignon. These two supreme authorities, the emperor and the pope, fought fiercely for a new balance of power in Europe. This was a virtually intractable conflict, flaring up as a proxy war in Italy, in particular, where the respective claims to power came into open conflict. Scholastic theologians such as Aegidius Romanus and William of Ockham and, for the first time, laymen such as Dante and Marsilius of Padua, responded with promising new theoretical models of society<sup>2</sup>.

Against this background, the peaceful imperial coronation of Charles IV in Rome in 1355 is something of a surprise. This was by no means a coincidence, on the contrary, Charles’ journey to Italy can thus be seen as

<sup>1</sup> B. TUCHMAN, *A Distant mirror, The Calamitous 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, New York 1978.

<sup>2</sup> J. MIETHKE, *Die Entwicklung politischer Theorie im Mittelalter*, in *Die sprachliche Formierung der Moderne: Spätmittelalter und Renaissance in Italien*, cur. O. HIDALGO - K. NONNENMACHER, Wiesbaden 2015, pp. 33-57; More recently see A. LEE, *Humanism and Empire: The Imperial Ideal in Fourteenth-Century Italy*, Oxford 2018; F. GODTHARDT, *Marsilius von Padua und der Romzug Ludwigs des Bayern. Politische Theorie und politisches Handeln*, Göttingen 2011 (Nova Mediaevalia, 6).

key to understanding this wider conflict. In the aftermath of the coronation, Petrarch had sharply criticised Charles' unseemly haste to be crowned in Rome and his precipitous return to Germany. In his view Charles did not lack the capability to rule like an emperor or to fight like his forbears, but simply the desire. Petrarch's criticism has strongly influenced how scholars have viewed these events<sup>3</sup>. «Take home», as Petrarch declared, «that crown of iron and the other of gold along with the empty name of empire (*sterile nomen imperii*); you may be called Roman emperor when in fact you are only King of Bohemia»<sup>4</sup>. Might we infer from this that the coronation failed to have a lasting historical impact<sup>5</sup>? But in fact the opposite is the case.

At first the power struggle was centred on the question of whether the emperor's authority was derived from that of the pope, or whether the two exercised sway over separate, but equal, spheres. This may be true but in essence the conflict concerned the imperial rights in Rome and the Papal States<sup>6</sup>. This question became urgent in a very concrete way in 1353, when the papal legate Aegidius Albornoz (1310-1367) successfully reconquered the Papal States and subjected the inhabitants to the Pope as their supreme temporal lord. Charles' approach, which involved the re-evaluation of the power relations in Italy and in Europe, was certainly a radical break compared to the politics of his predecessors. This had a lasting historical impact. The tangible results of this redistribution of power that emerged shortly afterwards were the first constitutions for the Holy Roman Empire

<sup>3</sup> FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 12 (Milan, June 1355), «Quando hoc, queso, fecisset avus tuus? aut genitor, qui etsi non imperator ipse esset, sola paterni imperii memoria tot urbium ius quesivit? [...] Quamvis ego tibi nec imperandi scientiam deesse crediderim nec bellandi: fons actionum omnium voluntas deest», *Le Familiari. Edizione Critica Libri XII-XIX*, ed. V. ROSSI, III, Firenze 1937 (Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca, XII), pp. 336-337; LEE, *Humanism and Empire* cit., pp. 89-92.

<sup>4</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 12: «Refers domum istud ferreum, illud aureum dyadema, simul ac sterile nomen Imperii. Imperator Romanorum vocitaberis Boemie rex solius», *Le Familiari*, III, pp. 336-337. The English translation is by A.S. BERNARDO, *Francesco Petrarca, Letters on Familiar Matters. Rerum familiarium libri I-VIII*, New York 1975, *Libri IX-XVI and Libri XVII-XXIV*, Baltimore 1982 and 1985; here *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 102.

<sup>5</sup> Anne Huijbers has argued this point about the tradition of the imperial idea, typically she gives less attention to Charles' coronation due to the brevity of his visit. A. HUIJBERS, *Res publica restituta?: Perceiving emperors in fourteenth century Rome*, «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge», 132/1 (2020), on line <https://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/6684> (6 maggio 2020).

<sup>6</sup> This contribution builds on the results of our study E. SCHLOTHEUBER - A. KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV. und der päpstliche Legat Aegidius Albornoz*, «Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters», 69/2 (2013), pp. 531-579.

and the Papal States, the Golden Bull of 1356<sup>7</sup>, and the Aegidian Constitutions of 1357<sup>8</sup>. Both had an impressive history, enduring until 1806 and 1816, respectively.

Also apart from Petrarch, contemporary opinion about Charles IV's coronation in Rome in May 1355 was quite ambivalent: was it even a 'proper' imperial coronation?<sup>9</sup> The doubts remained in later periods, such as the opinion of the influential humanist Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, later pope Pius II, who regarded Charles as: «A great emperor indeed, if he hadn't sought the fame of the Bohemian Kingdom more than the honour of the Roman empire»<sup>10</sup>. This negative assessment coloured later attitudes towards Charles' coronation, especially by historians focussed on national histories<sup>11</sup>. Compared with the determined struggle of his grandfather, Henry VII, over the honour of the Empire and the imperial rights in Italy<sup>12</sup>, Charles' trek over the Alps almost appears like a well-prepared business trip. Moreover, even though Charles was successful in being crowned as Holy Roman Emperor without bloodshed, he was nevertheless forced to leave Rome in haste on the very night of his coronation. In any event,

<sup>7</sup> *Die Goldene Bulle Kaiser Karls IV. vom Jahre 1356*, ed. W.D. FRITZ, in M.G.H., *Fontes iuris Germanici in usum scholarum separatim editi*, XI, Weimar 1972; *Die Goldene Bulle. Politik - Wahrnehmung - Rezeption*, cur. U. HOHENSEE - M. LAWO - M. LINDNER - M. MENZEL - O.B. RADER, II, Berlin 2009 (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berichte und Abhandlungen. Sonderband, 12).

<sup>8</sup> P. SELLA, *Costituzioni egidiane dell'anno MCCCCLVII*, Roma 1912; P. COLLIVA, *Il cardinale Albornoz, lo Stato della Chiesa, le "Constitutiones Aegidianae" (1353-1357). Con in appendice il testo volgare delle Costituzioni di Fano dal ms. Vat. Lat. 3939*, Bologna 1977 (Studia Albornotiana, 32).

<sup>9</sup> The evidence has been compiled by M. BAUCH, *Divina favente clementia: Auserwählung, Frömmigkeit und Heilsvermittlung in der Herrschaftspraxis Kaiser Karls IV.*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2015, pp. 148-149.

<sup>10</sup> Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini: «Clarus profecto imperator, nisi Bohemici regni gloriam magis quam Romani Imperii quesivisset». *Historia Bohemica. Gesamtwerk*, I, ed. J. HEJNIC - H. ROTHE, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2005 (Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Reihe B: Editionen), pp. 210-212. See PETOLETTI, p. 309.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see B. FREY, *Pater Bohemiae - Vitricus imperii: Böhmens Vater, Stiefvater des Reichs. Kaiser Karl IV. in der Geschichtsschreibung*, Bern 1978. The most recent work is the overview by R. KÜPPER, *Größter Tscheche aller Zeiten. Deutscher, großer Europäer? Das Bild Karls d. Gr. in der Gesschichtsschreibung und Öffentlichkeit*, in *Kaiser Karl IV. 1316-2016. Erste Bayerisch-Tschechische Landesausstellung, Ausstellungskatalog*, cur. J. FAJT - M. HÖRSCH, Prag 2016, pp. 267-276.

<sup>12</sup> For the imperial coronation of Henry VII see now K. GÖRICH, *Die Kaiserkrönung Heinrichs VII.: Tradition und Improvisation*, in *Rom 1312: die Kaiserkrönung Heinrichs VII. und die Folgen: die Luxemburger als Herrscherdynastie von gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung*, cur. P. THORAU - S. PENTH, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2016 (Beihefte zu J.F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, 40), pp. 75-111.

he failed to lay claim to the imperial rights in Rome, and so, as Petrarch caustically and disparagingly remarked, «he was content to be emperor in name only»<sup>13</sup>. Perhaps the best authority on the sources, Emil Werunsky, lamented this «deepest indignity of the Empire»<sup>14</sup>, while Ferdinand Seibt has appraised Charles' trip to Rome as an «unparalleled diplomatic triumph»<sup>15</sup>. More recently, Martin Bauch has considered Charles' journey to Rome primarily from the perspective of «the ostentatious piety and humility of the future emperor»<sup>16</sup>. Yet, even in spite of the fact that Charles was quite successful in fashioning himself as a «wise and devout ruler», the complex political situation in Italy couldn't be resolved by attestations of piety alone<sup>17</sup>. In contrast, as a result of the bitter struggle between the Papal Curia with Louis IV (known as the Bavarian), it seemed almost impossible for a Roman Emperor to regain a powerful hold in Italy, and the scope of imperial influence was perhaps more limited than ever. In this context, the question about which political ideas Charles actually pursued during his coronation journey assumes greater significance.

If we are to reassess Charles IV's imperial coronation and his policies towards the papacy and the Italian powers, we must examine the decisive events from the perspective both of the Holy Roman King or Empire as well as from that of the Italian powers, his rivals and other protagonists. We will therefore first look at the events in northern Italy and above all at the situation of the Visconti (1. *Between the Powers. Francesco Petrarch and the political situation in northern Italy*) and then turn to the kingdom of Sicily (2. *Niccolò Acciaiuoli's Networks and a 'Peace Plan' for Italy*). As a second step, we focus on the dynamics of events when Charles IV. finally decided to cross the Alps (3. *Charles' journey to Italy, the diplomatic*

<sup>13</sup> FRANCESCO PETRARCA, *Aufrufe zur Errettung Italiens und des Erdkreises. Ausgewählte Briefe Lateinisch - Deutsch*, ed. B. WIDMER, Basel 2001, p. 464 («nomen contentus imperii»). For the ideas related to the notion of the Roman Emperor in Italy, see HUIJBERS, *Res publica restituta* cit., pp. 1-3; M. CAVINO, *Imperator Romanorum triplici corona coronatur. Studi sull'incoronazione imperiale nella scienza giuridica italiana fra Tre e Cinquecento*, Milano 1991.

<sup>14</sup> E. WERUNSKY, *Geschichte Kaiser Karls IV. und seiner Zeit*, II, Innsbruck 1886, p. 575; WERUNSKY, *Der erste Römerzug Kaiser Karl IV. (1354-1355)*, Innsbruck 1878; E. WIDDER, *Itinerar und Politik: Studien zur Reiseherrschaft Karls IV. südlich der Alpen*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1993 (Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters. Beihefte zu J.F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, 10); K. KUBÍNOVÁ, *Imitatio Romae: Karl IV. a Řím*, Prague 2006.

<sup>15</sup> F. SEIBT, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa 1316-1378*, München 1978, p. 234.

<sup>16</sup> BAUCH, *Divina favente clemencia* cit., p. 149.

<sup>17</sup> E. SCHLOTHEUBER, *Der weise König. Herrschaftskonzeption und Vermittlungsstrategien Kaiser Karls IV. († 1378)*, «Hémecht: Zeitschrift für Luxemburger Geschichte», 63/3 (2011), pp. 265-279.

efforts of the Kingdom of Naples and the role of the papal legate Aegidius Albornoz). Finally we take up the question of why this imperial coronation was peaceful despite all the serious conflicts at the time and to what extent these events altered the balance of power in Italy (4. *The imperial coronation in Rome and a 'New World Order': The Golden Bull [1356] and the Constitutiones Aegidianae 1357*). Northern Italy, in particular, was a hotly contested region in the fourteenth century in which many competing powers jostled for position: on one hand the Pope and his most important allies, the kingdom of Naples and the wealthy city of Florence, and on the other the Ghibelline cities such as Pisa, Padua or Lucca. Another emerging force was the Visconti in Milan, who pursued their own agenda<sup>18</sup>. Genoa's powerful rival, the independent city state of Venice, also played a crucial role, as we will see.

Resolving the situation by force, as Charles' grandfather Henry VII had attempted to do, was out of the question for Charles, as he knew from his own experience that his opponents then would unite against him – making it a hopeless venture from the outset. He sought, therefore, to avoid military encounter as far as possible. Charles' strength clearly lay in his good familiarity with the political positions of his rivals and his deft, occasionally wily, method of negotiation. The Florentine chronicler Matteo Villani (1285-1363), writing in early 1355 observed Charles' tactics with astonishment: «In Italy no one opposed or distrusted him, even more so on account of his humble arrival and his wise practice to avoid being partisan and to not follow the counsel of the Ghibellines as his predecessors did. This was a wondrous thing, which no one had heard of for a long time»<sup>19</sup>. Matteo Villani's astonishment was certainly justified, and the noticeable change of atmosphere in Italy was anything but a coincidence.

The 1350s were the most decisive period for Charles' political aims, leading to a turning point in the relations between imperial and papal power in the Papal States and Italy. The Kingdom of Naples had played a decisive role in this conflict since early 1313 when Emperor Henry VII, immediately after his coronation in Rome, had sentenced King Robert of Naples to death in an imperial court for the crime of *lèse-majesté*<sup>20</sup>. After Henry died

<sup>18</sup> A. CADILI, *Giovanni Visconti: arcivescovo di Milano (1342-1354)*, Milano 2007.

<sup>19</sup> «E niuno contrario o sospetto a llui si trovò in Italia, per la umile venuta e savia practica che tenne, di non essere partefice e di non seguire il consiglio de' Ghibellini come i suoi antecessori, cosa maravigliosa e non udita addietro per molti tempi» (*Cronica di Matteo Villani con la continuazione di Filippo Villani*, ed. G. PORTA, I, Milano 1995, l. 5, c. 2, p. 610).

<sup>20</sup> M. HEIDEMANN, *Heinrich VII. (1308-1313): Kaiseridee im Spannungsfeld von staufischer Universalherrschaft und frühneuzeitlicher Partikularautonomie*, Warendorf 2008, pp. 228-230.

a short time later, Pope Clement V intervened in the conflict, as Robert's feudal lord and as imperial vicar. Clement annulled the imperial judgment through the papal bulls *Pastoralis cura* and *Romani principes*<sup>21</sup>. In Avignon, the papacy asserted that the pope functioned as the administrator of the empire, as *vicarius imperii*, when the imperial throne was vacant<sup>22</sup>.

That the Pope dared to claim to be the superior spiritual and secular power on earth, adopting the expression formulated by Boniface VIII in the bull *Unam sanctam*, so as to transform political practice and in effect to nullify a legal judgment of the emperor, struck like lightning<sup>23</sup>. The power struggle over the sovereignty of both authorities and their legitimate exercise of power intensified, while the dispute over the traditional imperial rights in Italy worsened after Emperor Louis IV was excommunicated by the Papal Curia. Dante Alighieri, then in exile from Florence, the city of his birth, responded to the papal claims threatening the free exercise of secular authority in his works. He composed the *Monarchia*, a political manifesto for the autonomy and independence of secular authority, and in his *Divine Comedy* he placed the popes in rows in hell<sup>24</sup>.

### 1. *Between the Powers. Francesco Petrarch and the political situation in northern Italy*

The relations between the Papal Curia and the Holy Roman Empire had steadily deteriorated since the death of Henry VII. The solemn excommunication of Louis IV in 1324 in Avignon was a crucial step towards an open clash. The Curia sought to break Louis' authority in Italy by any means available. Yet, despite his excommunication and damnation by the papacy, Louis could still install local rulers and exert considerable influen-

<sup>21</sup> *Pastoralis cura*, Clem. II, tit. XI c. 2, *Corpus iuris canonici*, II, ed. E. FRIEDBERG, Leipzig 1881, coll. 1151-1153; here col. 1153. *Romani principes*, Clem. II, tit. IX c. 1, *ibid.*, coll. 1147-1150.

<sup>22</sup> On this see F. BAETHGEN, *Der Anspruch des Papsttums auf das Reichsvikariat: Untersuchungen zur Theorie und Praxis der potestas indirecta in temporalibus*, in BAETHGEN, *Mediaevalia*, I, *Reichsgeschichte und Papstgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1960, pp. 110-185, here pp. 163-164.

<sup>23</sup> E. CONTE, *La bolla "Unam sanctam" e i fondamenti del potere papale fra diritto e teologia*, in *Bonifacio VIII, i Caetani e la storia del Lazio*. Atti del convegno di studi storici (Roma, Palazzo Caetani, 30 novembre 2000), cur. R. CEROCCHI, Roma 2004, pp. 43-64.

<sup>24</sup> C.L. LAURIELLO, *Church and State in Dante Alighieri's Monarchia*, Boston 2015; U. FALKEID, *The Avignon Papacy contested: An intellectual history from Dante to Catherine of Siena*, Cambridge 2017.



ce in the region. The commune of Todi in 1328 even elected Louis IV as podestà<sup>25</sup>. The Curia was alarmed. From the papacy's point of view Louis represented a considerable threat: his influence clearly showed that an energetic emperor, even one who was excommunicated, could exploit the power vacuum created in Italy after the Curia's move to Avignon to his advantage. In order to oust the excommunicated emperor Louis, the Curia supported the election of the rival candidate Charles of Luxembourg, son of John the Blind and Margrave of Moravia, as Holy Roman King. Pope Clement V obligated the candidate, who was reliant upon papal support, to fully uphold papal policy. When Charles came to Avignon in 1346, Clement made him vow solemnly to renounce any actual exercise of lordship in Rome and in the Papal States as the future Holy Roman Emperor, and in particular he prohibited the exercise of any jurisdiction in the territories directly or indirectly subject to Rome and the Curia<sup>26</sup>. This was an indispensable precondition for the pope because the papacy wanted to assume the power of secular lordship. But Charles' oath, as the candidate for the throne, was only a first step. The decisive question was whether Charles would keep his promise after his coronation as emperor and thus make the renunciation legally binding for his successors.

In 1346 Petrarch was at the Curia, where he observed Charles' reception, as he wrote to him many years later<sup>27</sup>. The great humanist was a sharp critic of papal efforts to revoke the power base of the Empire in Italy. In this regard he saw the contest between the pope and the emperor as a race against time. In 1351 and 1352 he wrote repeatedly to Charles IV, imploring him: «Rome summons her bridegroom, Italy summons her deliverer and desires to be trampled by your feet»<sup>28</sup>. Of course, he assumed that Charles, like his grandfather, would assert the imperial rights and dismiss

<sup>25</sup> L.R. FOTI, *The Day the Emperor became Podestà: Negotiating Legitimacy in a Fourteenth-Century Commune*, «Viator», 49 (2018), pp. 155-179.

<sup>26</sup> *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, VIII : (1345-1348), ed. K. ZEUMER - R. SALOMON, in M.G.H., *Leges*, IV, Hannoverae 1910-1926, nn. 9-13 (1346, April 22), pp. 11-27, here p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 4 (Milan, 25 February 1355), *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 318-320, here p. 319.

<sup>28</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* X, 1,27 (24 Febr. 1351): «Roma sponsum, sospitatore suum vocat Italia et tuis pedibus tangi cupit», in *Le Familiari. Edizione Critica*, II, *Libri V-XI*, ed. V. ROSSI, Firenze 1934 (Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca, XI), pp. 277-284, here p. 284; and *Fam.* XII, 1 (spring 1352), *Le Familiari* cit., III, 5, Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri IX-XVI*, p. 53. The letter concludes: «Vale, magnanime, Cesar, et propera!». For the intellectual context of the Italian humanists in which Petrarch's summons needs to be understood, see HUIJBERS, *Res publica restituta* cit., pp. 4-9.

papal claims to secular lordship<sup>29</sup>. This famous letter, an eloquent call to Charles to come to Italy as guarantor of the peace of the Roman world and of a renewed hegemonial power, arose out of quite specific circumstances. Archbishop Giovanni Visconti was already threatening Florence through his growing political pressure, for which he incurred the hatred of Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio. Boccaccio vividly remembered his conversation with his fellow poet, whom he had met in Padua in 1351: «And I know very well that you agreed with me at length and added that out of hate for *Egone* (Giovanni Visconti) you tried to move *Dafne* (Charles IV.) with long discourses to expel this disgraceful person and to assist Rome (*Amarillide*) to return to her former splendour once again»<sup>30</sup>. Charles IV was thus well advised not to be tempted to intervene by Petrarch's urgent appeals, in which the poet displayed his considerable rhetorical force.

By November 1353 the tone of Petrarch's letters was quite different: «opportunitissimum tempus erat» – the most favourable time had passed<sup>31</sup>. For by this time his fate, along with that of the political constellations in Italy, had taken a new turn. Not only had Archbishop Giovanni Visconti reached an agreement with the Guelph Tuscan communes in Sarzana early in 1353<sup>32</sup>, but Petrarch had entered the service of the Milanese archbishop Giovanni Visconti, an unforeseen move that exasperated his Florentine friends<sup>33</sup>. Pope Innocent VI, moreover, pre-empted Charles and sent the Spanish Cardinal Aegidius Albornoz as papal legate and General Vicar to

<sup>29</sup> In his famous letter, Petrarch uses literary echoes to allude to Dante's letter to Charles' grandfather Henry VII, in which Dante once greeted the future emperor in a lofty tone as the saviour of Italy, whose inheritance he, Charles, was thus obliged to support for the imperial rights: «[...] ex omnibus optimis ac sanctissimis curis tuis nulla gravior ut italicum orbem tranquilla pace componas»; PETRARCA, *Fam.* X, 1,13, *Le Familiari*, II, pp. 280-281; See also U. DOTTI, *Francesco Petrarca, Lettere all'imperatore: carteggio con la corte di Praga (1351-1364)*, Reggio Emilia 2008.

<sup>30</sup> See the letter of Giovanni Boccaccio to Petrarch; U. DOTTI, *Petrarca a Milano: Documenti Milanesi 1353-1354*, Milano 1972, pp. 51-56, 132-136, here p. 134: «Quibus et te multo sermone assensum prestitisse memini, atque superaddentem, ob odium in Egonem, longa verborum serie Daphinm pro viribus provocasse in deiectionem tam scelestium hominum et prisci decoris restaurationem».

<sup>31</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XVIII, 1,2 (November 1353): «[...] profecto et sententia verax et pura scribentis fides et, quod Romanus orbis totus attestabitur, agende rei opportunitissimum tempus erat», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 265; On the Visconti see F. COGNASSO, *I Visconti: storia di una famiglia*, Bologna 2016.

<sup>32</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 153.

<sup>33</sup> E.H. WILKINS, *Petrarch's Eight Years in Milan*, Cambridge 1958, pp. 53-60; cfr. R. FEDI, *Francesco Petrarca*, Firenze 1975 (new edition Milano 2002); U. DOTTI, *Vita di Petrarca*, Rome 1987.

Italy to recover the papal territories and rights<sup>34</sup>. The Curia, not the emperor, had taken the initiative.

A fundamental change in the balance of power occurred in autumn 1353. Venice had entered into an alliance with Peter IV of Aragón (d. 1387) in the war against Genoa<sup>35</sup>. Peter IV was the arch-enemy of the Kingdom of Naples and its feudal overlord, the Papacy, because he maintained his claim to the island of Sicily, on the basis of the legacy of Peter III of Aragón's wife Constance, the daughter of Manfred of Hohenstaufen. The victory of this alliance between Venice and Aragón over Genoa on 27 August 1353, however, resulted in Genoa subjecting the city and harbour as well as its entire territory from La Spezia to Monaco to the lordship of archbishop Giovanni Visconti. In the meantime, the archbishop had acquired, as we have seen, a 'top diplomat' in the eloquent and well-connected Petrarch, who was already present during the crucial negotiations between Giovanni Visconti with Genoa in September of that year<sup>36</sup>.

The concrete political dimension of Petrarch's activity usually is downplayed in the appreciation of his role and impact during this period<sup>37</sup>. Petrarch's conception of Empire, which has been studied intensively, is not my focus here<sup>38</sup>. Rather, I examine how his specific role was crucial in the concrete political power play. Yet our picture of the poet's activity is incomplete, especially if we accept his own self-fashioning. Through continuous references to antiquity, Petrarch portrayed himself as standing above the factions and acting as a quasi-independent voice of a timeless ideal, the unity of Italy. His public authority was underpinned by his claims to independence, along with the fictional assertion that he met the powerful

<sup>34</sup> SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 531-579.

<sup>35</sup> Petrarch sharply criticised this alliance with Aragón in a letter to Doge Andrea Dandolo; PETRARCA, *Fam.* XI, 8, 28) (22. May 1351): «Quanto autem cum dolore, nequid omnino tibi subtraham, audivisse me putas recens vobis cum Aragonie rege fedus initum? Ergo ne ab Italis ad Italos evertendos barbarorum regum poscuntur auxilia?», *Le Familiari* cit., II, pp. 346-347. See the contribution of Uwe Ludwig in this volume, pp. 438-472.

<sup>36</sup> On the letter by Francesco Petrarch to Guido Sette, Archdeacon of Genoa (Sep. 1353, *Fam.* XVII, 3,44) Petrarch describes Avignon as: «Superba Babilon corruit et turris illa famosa que celo minabatur, vix nunc per terram sparsa conspicitur», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 242.

<sup>37</sup> See most recently R. FEDI - J. LUCHINI, *Petrarca*, Firenze 2018, pp. 33-35.

<sup>38</sup> Scholars are in broad agreement on the point that the central project of humanism was in so far political, to instill virtue in rulers, see J. HANKINS, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge 2019; LEE, *Humanism and Empire* cit.; G. FERRAU, *Petrarca, la storia, la politica*, Messina 2006; W. KÖLMEL, *Petrarca und das Reich: Zum historisch-politischen Aspekt der "studia humanitatis"*, «Historisches Jahrbuch», 90 (1970), pp. 1-30.

on equal terms. As he expressed it in 1355, he lived «with the lords» and not «beneath them»<sup>39</sup>. This was of course not the whole story. Petrarch adopted the cause of the Visconti while in their service, just as Boccaccio had feared. Even if the archbishop could afford to make requests rather than issue demands, Petrarch was without question obliged to follow his directives. In January 1354 he apologized to his friend Giovanni Aghinolfo because he had to consider the request of his lord, Giovanni Visconti, to travel to Avignon to conduct negotiations, as a command<sup>40</sup>. Further, the influence of the Visconti's politics upon Petrarch's political attitude very likely became even more pronounced after the poet attained a position of trust quite quickly within the Visconti court<sup>41</sup>. On 26 November 1353 he was named godfather to Bernabò Visconti's first son Marco<sup>42</sup>. Petrarch's self-fashioning therefore requires careful historical contextualization<sup>43</sup>. In September 1353 his change of allegiance had also fundamentally altered his political options, and he no longer gambled on Charles or the Holy Roman Empire as the rightful power in Italy: «Some Romans prophesied the end of the Empire», he wrote to his long-time friend from student days and

<sup>39</sup> Petrarch gave a sharp rejoinder when Cardinal Jean de Caraman accused him of having been made into a slave of the Visconti: «Sed ut illos vel tyrannos falso dixeris, vel tyrannos vere dies longior factura sit, seu quod usque nunc contegit, detectura sit, quid ad me? Cum illis, non sub illis sum, et in illorum terris, non domibus habito. Nil comune cum ipsis est michi, preter commoda et honores, quibus me largiter, quantum patior, continuo prosequuntur; consilia et executiones rerum administratioque munerum publicorum committuntur aliis ad hec natis, michi autem nil penitus, nisi otium et silentium et securitas et libertas; hec cure, hec negotia mea sunt.» *Invectiva contra quendam magni status hominem sed nullius scientie aut virtutis*, ed. P.G. RICCI, Firenze 1949, p. 69).

<sup>40</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XVII, 6 (1 January 1354): «Parebo tamen ut qui iubenti nil penitus negare velim idque eo promptius, quoniam, ut proprie dixerim, non iubet sed ille rogat, fortunam suam quamvis altissimam humanitate illa notissima supergressus», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 252. See DOTI, *Petrarca a Milano* cit., p. 77: «In questo quadro ha dunque ben scarso rilievo che Petrarca si senta "tradito" dalla prepotente autorità dell'arcivescovo».

<sup>41</sup> In a letter to his friend Guido Sette (Milan, summer 1357) Petrarch described archbishop Giovanni Visconti as the «greatest of the Italians» («Italorum maximus»); PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 16, *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 340-347, here p. 343, and also in *Fam.* XVI, 11 (1353, to Francesco Nelli), *ibid.*, 205 («maximus iste Italus»). This revised judgment, the high opinion of the archbishop later remained unchanged.

<sup>42</sup> WILKINS, *Petrarch's Eight Years* cit., p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> A. LEE, *Petrarch and the Venetian-Genoese War of 1350-1355*, in *Authority and diplomacy from Dante to Shakespeare*, cur. J. POWELL - W.T. ROSSITER, Burlington 2013 (Transculturalisms, 1400-1700), pp. 39-56, focusses on the history of ideas and textual criticism of the letters, and analyses Petrarch's methods of argumentation as a timeless ideal. The historical context and role of Charles IV in this conflict remains misunderstood. This also holds true for the otherwise superb portrayal by WILKINS, *Petrarch's Eight Years* cit., pp. 43-45.

later archbishop of Genoa, Guido Sette, «whose real end we have yet to see but whose condition is worse than the end»<sup>44</sup>.

In view of the successful alliances brokered by Giovanni Visconti, the independent powers in northern Italy searched for suitable allies. Tellingly, Venice appealed to Charles IV for support. Charles had longstanding relationships with the *Signoria* in Venice, dating back to the struggle between Venice and Cangrande della Scala in the 1330s<sup>45</sup>. The Luxembourgian had established his own power base within the region, when in 1350 he adroitly made his half-brother Nicholas Patriarch of Aquileia<sup>46</sup>. In spring 1353 Charles started diplomatic preparations for his trip to Italy. On 30 May 1353 he took Marino Faliero into his service as his secretary, personal advisor and «dining companion» («commensalis domestica»). Faliero was Podestà of Padua and had served as a member of the Venetian Council of the Ten several times<sup>47</sup>. He was elected Doge of Venice in September 1354, but in 1355 was accused of treason and beheaded and condemned by a *damnatio memorie*<sup>48</sup>. On 12 October 1353 Charles also named Niccolò Foscari, a scion of an ancient Venetian patrician family, to his Council<sup>49</sup>. Niccolò Foscari and Marino Faliero were probably heavily involved in drawing up the alliance that was concluded officially on 19 March 1354 between the Venetian Republic and the Signorias of Padua, Ferrara and Imola with the Holy Roman King Charles against the archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Visconti. As a result, Charles and Venice mutually undertook not to enter into any separate peace with the Visconti.

Just how dangerous this alliance was for Milan is apparent by the immediate reaction of Giovanni Visconti. The archbishop had already decided to send Petrarch to the Curia in Avignon, where the emissaries of Genoa and Milan were negotiating with those from Aragón and Venice, to

<sup>44</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XVII, 3,43: «Quidam romani finem imperii vaticinati sunt, cuius nondum finem, sed peiorem fine statum cernimus», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 242; Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> See E. SCHLOTHEUBER, *Ein schwieriges Verhältnis: Karl IV. und Venedig*, in *Venedig als Bühne: Organisation, Inszenierung und Wahrnehmung europäischer Herrscherbesuche*, cur. R. SCHMITZ-ESSER - K. GÖRICH - J. JOHRENDT, Regensburg 2017 (Studi. Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Studienzentrums in Venedig N. F.), pp. 149-162.

<sup>46</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 127.

<sup>47</sup> Venezia, Archivio di Stato, *Misc. dipl. e privati*, n. 549 (Prague, 30 Mai 1353): «Te in consiliarium secretarium familiarem, commensalem domesticum dicesima septima de mensis eiusdem assumendum duximus [...]».

<sup>48</sup> G. RAVEGNANI, *Il traditore di Venezia: vita di Marino Falier doge*, Bari 2017.

<sup>49</sup> J.F. BÖHMER, *Regesta Imperii. VIII. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV. 1346-1378.*, cur. A. HUBER, Innsbruck 1877 (rist. Hildesheim 1968), n. 1624, p. 129.

determine the peace treaty<sup>50</sup>. At the end of 1353 the poet wrote with noticeable pride to his friend, Bernardo Anguissola, the podestà of Como, that he had been sent to restore the peace between the mightiest city states of Italy, likening his great assignment with rhetorical flair to the harshness of a winter journey over the Alps<sup>51</sup>. Yet for unknown reasons the negotiations with the Roman Curia took place without Petrarch and also concluded without a result, leading to another outbreak of war. Archbishop Giovanni Visconti now decided to send Petrarch on another diplomatic mission, this time to the Doge in Venice, to persuade the Signoria to dissolve the alliance. In early 1354 Petrarch gave a speech on behalf of the archbishop of Milan before the Council of Venice<sup>52</sup>. It was little surprise that he failed to convince the Council to break the alliance with Charles IV. Petrarch did not give up there, and in May 1354 he appealed to the Doge again by letter, likely either animated by or at the request of the archbishop. The poet, who only a short time earlier had called Charles IV to Italy with glowing words, now urgently issued a fierce warning against the involvement of the future emperor: «A slight breeze of new developments had approached from the north [i.e. Charles IV], which, though contrary to what I had in mind, blew in, confirming my fears; still, if you allow me to say so, these should not have diverted you from the gravity of the moment or caused you to overlook sounder advice. How long will we wretches seek foreign aid with which to strangle our fatherland and perpetrate public murder? ... With a clear voice I shall say what I feel: among all the errors of mortals, none is

<sup>50</sup> These negotiations in Avignon led to the alliance that was concluded eventually on 2 January 1355; see C. CIPOLLA, *Karl IV. in Mantua (1354-1355): Neue Documente aus dem Staatsarchive Venedig*, «Mitteilungen der österreichischen Geschichtsforschung», 3 (1882), pp. 438-445, here p. 445: «Informacio data per nobilem virum Zachariam Contareno super puncto, in quo erat in suo recessu de Avinione terminus negociorum regis cum ambaxatoribus archiepiscopi et Januensium in Romana curia».

<sup>51</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XVII, 6 (end of 1353): «Quantum preterea viarum rigor et brumalis terret asperitas, tantum perfectionis causa delectat, eo enim ad pacem inter potentissimos duos Italie populos reformandam, tam feliciter utinam quam libenter», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 252. See also *Fam.* XVII, 10 (1 January 1354, to Giovanni Aghinolfi of Arezzo), *ibid.*, pp. 257-263, concerning Giovanni's mission to travel to Avignon for the Visconti, WILKINS, *Petrarch's Eight Years* cit., pp. 50-53.

<sup>52</sup> DOTTI, *Petrarca a Milano* cit., document n. 15 («Orazione di Petrarca al consiglio ducale di Venezia»), p. 177: «Ut vero iam ad rem ipsam veniam, reverendissimus dominus noster, dominus archiepiscopus, amator pacis hos dominos meos et me pacificos nuntios ad vos misit, rem postulans non damnosam vel utilem sibi [...]»; DOTTI, *Vita* cit., p. 289.

more insane than the fact that we Italians so diligently bring to Italy those who would destroy her»<sup>53</sup>.

German scholarship has long been attracted to the force of Dante's letters to Henry VII and Petrarch's to Charles. «The Holy Roman Emperor», as Anne Huijbers states, «was considered the best guarantor and defender of the *res publica* under the condition that he would reign with the consent of the people»<sup>54</sup>. As an idea this holds true but who exactly were 'the people'? This assessment is only valid for the idea or the ideal of the exercise of imperial power, especially as the humanists conceived of it, as legitimized through the *populus romanus*. Within the complex concrete political power relations, however, the room for imperial manœuvre was becoming increasingly limited. The development of imperial power in northern Italy and Rome, therefore, probably wasn't a real political option, but was simply one of the cards that could be played as a counterweight to papal ambitions and to legitimise claims to power<sup>55</sup>.

## 2. Niccolò Acciaiuoli's Networks and a 'Peace Plan' for Italy

Without considering the perspective of Charles' rivals, that is the Guelph papal loyalists in Italy, we cannot fully comprehend later events. Traditionally, the King of Naples, who was closely tied to Florence and the Guelph communes in northern Italy, was considered the head of the Guelphs. This is why the letters of Niccolò Acciaiuoli (1310-1365), a native of Florence and Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Naples, provide such unique insight into the complex networks of these rulers<sup>56</sup>. He was,

<sup>53</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XVIII, 16,5: «Accesserat ab Aquilone quedam novarum rerum aura pertenuis; que licet adversus id quid intendebam flaret perfeceritque quod timui, pace sit dictum tua, tantam tamen avertere gravitatem ac saniora dissipare consilia non debebat. Quosque enim miseri in iugulos patrie et in publicam necem barbarica circumspiciemus auxilia? [...] Dicam clara voce quod sentio: inter omnes mortalium errores, quorum nullus est numerus, nichil insanius quam quod tanta diligentia tantoque dispendio italici homines Italie conducimus vastatores», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 303. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> HUIJBERS, *Res publica restituta* cit., p. 16.

<sup>55</sup> Only when the argument suited him did Petrarch promote the idea to the future emperor that the times and duties had not altered since the Rome of antiquity. P. PIUR, *Petrarcas Briefwechsel mit deutschen Zeitgenossen*, Berlin 1933 (*Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation*, 7), II, pp. 26-34 («mundus idem est qui fuit, idem sol, eadem elementa, virtus sola decrevit»); WILKINS, *Petrarch's Eight Years* cit., p. 44.

<sup>56</sup> Firenze, Bibliotheca Mediceo-Laurenziana, *Fondo Ashburnham*, Libri 1830. See *Il carteggio Acciaiuoli della Biblioteca Maedicea Laurenziana di Firenze*, ed. I.G. RAO, Rome

as Gene Bruckner put it, «the most outspoken advocate of a pan-Guelph policy in Italy [...], who sought to popularize the concept of a strong league of Guelph states, headed by the kingdom of Naples»<sup>57</sup>. What is even more valuable is that we now can draw on a letter recently discovered in the rare book collection of the Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (UPenn Ms. Coll 197, see the *Appendix*). Niccolò Acciaiuoli wrote the letter in his own hand on Christmas Day in 1354. The letter is part of a collection of 48 letters purchased by the Van Pelt Library in 1957 from the Acciaiuoli family's private collection<sup>58</sup>. This small collection of original letters must long have been separated from the remaining estate of the Acciaiuoli family, as by the nineteenth century they were no longer recorded in Bibliotheca Mediceo-Laurenziana in Florence, where the majority of the family's correspondence is preserved.

Niccolò Acciaiuoli directed the political affairs of Queen Giovanna of Naples and her husband Luigi of Tarent. Although writing in Italian and not Latin, he was an unusually literate layman and close friends with leading humanists such as Petrarch, Boccaccio<sup>59</sup> and Zanobi da Strada, who entered his service as secretary<sup>60</sup>. The fifteenth-century artist Andrea del

1996; editions of Niccolò Acciaiuoli's letters have been published by L. TANFANI, *Niccola Acciaiuoli*, Firenze 1863 (*Appendix Documenti*); É.G. LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>, reine de Naples, comtesse de Provence (1343-1382)*, III (*Le règne de Louis de Tarente*), Paris 1937, pp. 503-668. See also É.G. LÉONARD, *Acciaiuoli, Niccolò*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 1, Roma 1960, pp. 87-90; G.A. BRUCKER, *Florentine Politics and Society (1343-1378)*, Princeton 1962; and most recently F.P. TOCCO, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli: vita e politica in Italia alla metà del XIV secolo*, Roma 2001, (Nuovi studi storici, 52); and TOCCO, *Élites urbaine e finanze regie nella Sicilia aragonese*, in *Il governo dell'economia*, cur. L. TANZINI - S. TOGNETTI, Roma 2014, pp. 105-130.

<sup>57</sup> BRUCKER, *Florentine Politics* cit., pp. 145-156: he outlined this project, by which he hoped to crush the Visconti power and safeguard the papal position in Italy, in a letter to the signoria in 1351; see the edition by LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>* cit., II, pp. 483-485.

<sup>58</sup> See N. P. ZACOUR - R. HIRSCH, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Libraries of the University of Pennsylvania to 1800*, Philadelphia 1965, p. 154 (former signature Ms. Lea 28).

<sup>59</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio provides an interesting account of the Neapolitan court in 1362 and his bitter complaints about Niccolò Acciaiuoli. The authenticity of this letter to Francesco Nelli was long questioned, although it is now considered to be genuine; see *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, V/1 (*Lettere e epistole*), ed. V. BRANCA, Milano 1992, pp. 544-549, 558-573; É.G. LÉONARD, *Victimes de Pétrarque et de Boccace: Zanobi da Strada*, «Études italiennes», n. ser., 4 (1934), pp. 5-19; LÉONARD, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli: victime de Boccace*, in *Mélanges de philologie, d'histoire, et littérature offerts à Henri Hauvette*, cur. P. AL HAZARD - B. CROCE, Paris 1934, pp. 139-148; LÉONARD, *Un poète à la recherche d'un ami: Boccace et Naples*, Paris 1944.

<sup>60</sup> For the characterisation of Niccolò Acciaiuoli by Filippo Villani: «[...] di mediocre statura, petto ampio e largo, ampia faccia, lineamenti virili e membra convenientissimamente proporzionate, di bello aspetto, ed essendo senza lettere, di facondia meravigliosa», see *Le*



Castagno commemorated Acciaiuoli's influential status by including a portrait of him among the nine famous men and women whose images adorned the walls of the Villa Carducci (now in the Uffizi in Florence). Niccolò Acciaiuoli's image, appearing alongside Giovanni Boccaccio, Francesco Petrarca and Dante Alighieri, attests to the bond between this group of *Vomini famosi*. The Acciaiuoli family mausoleum in the *Certosa del Galluzzo*, the Carthusian monastery near Florence founded by Niccolò, imitates the tombs of the Angevin kings and signaled his grand political ambitions<sup>61</sup>.

Charles gained access to Italy through the alliance with Venice, although this was admittedly little more than an initial stepping stone. When in autumn 1354 Charles trekked over the Alps on the road to Rome, nobody could know how this enterprise would turn out. His grandfather's disputed imperial coronation which ended up in bloodshed was by then a distant 40 years ago, although it continued to throw a long shadow of mistrust over Charles' ambitions in Italy. In December 1364, in an apologetic retrospective on his life, Niccolò Acciaiuoli declared to Angelo Soderini: «When Charles, King of Bohemia, Emperor of the Romans, came to Rome for his imperial coronation, the whole kingdom trembled at his arrival, not least because of the deadly hatred that had broken out previously between Emperor Henry and King Robert, who was followed later by Charles' father, John, King of Bohemia. [The kingdom of Sicily trembled] also because a mighty company of German brigands [the Gran Compagnia] led by the Count of Landau, remained in the kingdom»<sup>62</sup>.

*Vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini*, in FILIPPO VILLANI, *Croniche di Giovanni, Matteo*, II, Trieste 1858, p. 452. He did not have a strong command of Latin, which the phrase «senza lettere» indicates. L. GARGAN, *I libri di Niccolò Acciaiuoli e la biblioteca della certosa di Firenze*, «Italia medioevale e umanistica», 53 (2012), pp. 39-89; TOCCO, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli* cit., pp. 302-308 (Zanobi da Strada); M. BAGLIO, «Avidulus glorie». *Zanobi da Strada tra Boccaccio e Petrarca*, «Italia medioevale e umanistica», 54 (2013), pp. 343-398.

<sup>61</sup> B. CASSIDY, *The tombs of the Acciaiuoli, in the Certosa del Galluzzo outside Florence*, in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, cur. J. LUXFORD, Turnhout 2008 (Medieval Church Studies, 14), pp. 323-353.

<sup>62</sup> TANFANI, *Nicola Acciaiuoli* cit., *Appendix Documenti XX*, pp. 211-234, here p. 217: «Ancora veniente Karlo Re di Boemia, Imperadore degli Romani a coronarsi a Roma, della cui venuta tutto la reame trepidava, massime per la odiosa e mortifera inimicizia istata infra lo' nperadore Henrico avo e lo Re Roberto e subsequenter collo Re di Boemia padre dello detto Carlo Imperadore, et perchè dentro allo Reame era una potente conpanea di predoni theotonici sotto lo ducato del conte Lando a vendo aderenza e altiudine da messer Luysi di Durazzo [...]». See also A. SAPORI, *Lettera di Niccolò Acciaiuoli a Niccolò Soderini*, in *Studi di storia economica medioevale*, Firenze 19553, pp. 133-153. E.G. LÉONARD, *La lettre auto-biographique du sénéchal Niccolò Acciaiuoli (1364)*, in *Formen der Selbstdarstellung*.

What was Charles to do? Petrarch also wondered, and in 1352 he wrote to his friend, abbot Peter of St Benigne, that Charles appeared to have no designs on the imperial crown or the title of emperor. In view of the fact that Charles had delayed his journey to Rome, Petrarch shrewdly conjectured: «I fear our Caesar may simply be satisfied with living out his life, that he may feel by his disdain of the crown destined for his sacred brow no concern for the empire or desire for greater glory. What is he doing and what is he thinking? (*Quid enim agit, seu quid cogitat?*) Surely if he is content with his Germany and the mere limbs of the empire, he has forsaken its head, Italy; he may be the German king, but he cannot be the Roman emperor»<sup>63</sup>.

Charles deliberately left his potential allies as well as his opponents in the dark about his political intentions and plans, a deft strategy that also created space for his political manoeuvring. Niccolò Acciaiuoli must have assumed that Charles would employ the feared mercenaries, the Gran Compagnia, led by the German Count Konrad of Landau<sup>64</sup>. The pro-Ghibelline Gran Compagnia had already been hired by the Anti-Visconti League and Konrad of Landau in fact set out for Milan in the autumn of 1354<sup>65</sup>. These fears were founded, as the Gran Compagnia supported Charles of Durazzo, a rival for the Neapolitan throne. They sought to overthrow his lord, Queen Giovanna of Naples, through military force, which naturally aroused great anxiety in the Kingdom of Naples. The Florentine humanist and poet Zanobi da Strada, who entered Niccolò Acciaiuoli's service in 1349, eloquently described the unfortunate state of affairs in the Kingdom of Naples in a letter dated 11 December 1354 to Niccolò's Cousin Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli, who managed the family's affairs in Florence: «We have a war within and because of our weakness we pretend not to notice it. Our people have little love for us. We fear the arrival of the Compagnia

*Festgabe für Fritz Neubert*, cur. G. REICHENKRON - J. COCTEAU - E. HAASE, Berlin 1956, pp. 229-239.

<sup>63</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XV, 5 (3 April 1352): «Gloriosum enim iter videbatur et labor mundi utilis, sed "fata obstant", ut poete verbo utar, vereorque ne Cesari nostro vivere sit satis et sacro vertici debitum dyadema despiciens, nec imperii curam nec clarioris fame sentiat appetitum. Quid enim agit, seu quid cogitat? Certe si Germania sua et membris imperii contentus, rerum caput linquit, Italiam, rex theutonicus poterit esse, romanus esse non poterit imperator», *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 144-146: 145. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri IX-XVI*, p. 263.

<sup>64</sup> S. SELZER, *Deutsche Söldner im Italien des Trecento*, Tübingen 2001 (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 98), p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> K.H. SCHÄFER, *Deutsche Ritter und Edelknechte in Italien*, Paderborn 1940 (Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiet der Geschichte, 25), IV, p. 217.

[of Landau]. We see the emperor approaching [...]. May God protect us, my friend». Zanobi had little confidence in, and serious doubts about, the reactions of those who were politically responsible: «We are not concerned about the attitude of the church. We do not fear the Compagnia. We're not bothered with the emperor. May God protect us»<sup>66</sup>.

The Grand Seneschal Niccolò Acciaiuoli commanded an extensive network of friends and information<sup>67</sup>. He had long recognised that the arrival of Charles IV would alter power relations for the Neapolitan kingdom and thus he had to be prepared. As early as 25 September 1354 he informed his cousin Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli about the negotiations between archbishop Giovanni Visconti and Charles. The secret negotiations between the two apparently were already well advanced: «As much I want to explain to you that the emperor on his own initiative will form an alliance with the lord [of Milan] to whom he promises the most unbelievable things. And the lord of Milan is keen to finalise the matter with him; he added that the king [of Naples, namely Luigi of Tarent] is the leader of the Guelph party and he himself [Visconti] is the head of the Ghibelline party, so that, as they work for a common cause, all of Italy will defend them, both the Signori as well as the princes, so that no one any longer will be able to speak of violent acts, by anyone, who might descend into Italy. And the King [of Naples] has spoken with the Pope about these matters and later, when he has received his answer, he will be better able to assess what is the wiser course of action. And in the meantime he gives fine responses to all sides»<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>re</sup>* cit., III, n. 20, p. 531: «Noi ancora avemo le guerre dentro et per la nostra cattivitate conviene infingere di non vederre. Noi avemo poco amore dalli I nostri. Noi temiamo la venuta della compagna. Noi sentiamo approssimare lo Imperadore. [...] Noi non ci curiamo della Chiesa. Noi non avemo paura di compagna. Non non curiamo di imperatore. Ben ci aiuterà Iddio». Interestingly, this letter indicates the short form of register entry typical of the chancery of Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli, which were not published in the edition by Léonard: «Pregiere dello `peradore / et di quello di Melano / allo re / Avento dello `peradore / sopra fatti di Piero; all'impotentia». Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, *Fondo Ashburnham-Libri* 1830, n. I, 137 (Arezzo, 25 September 1354).

<sup>67</sup> BRUCKER, *Florentine Politics* cit., pp. 146-147.

<sup>68</sup> LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>re</sup>* cit., III, n. 15, pp. 522-524: 523: «[...] Tanto ti vollio dichiarare que lo Inperatore affetta intrinsecamente congiungnersi con questo signore, promittendoli maravillie, e llo signore di Milano sollicita essere una cosa con isso, alligando que lo re è capo di parte guelfa e isso di parte ghibellina, si que, essendo issi una cosa insieme, tutta Ytalia terrà loro retro e sonne signori e maggiori, ne ssi poteria di poi dittare d'avvenimento di forze di nullo vivente que in Italia volesse disciendere. E sopra queste cose lo re ae conferito collo papa e di poi, avuta sua risposta, saperà mello eligiere quello que mello stimerà que debia consequire; e in questo mezzo dà belle risposte all'uno e al'altro». TOCCO,

If the Visconti as the head of the Ghibellines and the King of Naples as the traditional head of the Guelphs, succeeded in uniting the Italian powers behind them, then opposing powers in the future would have no place in Italy, neither the emperor nor Charles of Durazzo, the rival claimant to the Neapolitan throne. This 'peace plan', which can be seen as an attempt to motivate the Italian powers towards a common goal, is interesting in many respects. In view of the chaotic political situation all the parties involved wanted to leave their options open. Charles evidently had started negotiations with the archbishop, despite being part of the Anti-Visconti League with Venice and taking an oath on 19 March 1354 not to conclude any separate peace agreement. Meanwhile, Milan and Genoa exerted greater pressure on the Anti-Visconti League and in June of that year they attacked the important cities of Parma and Bologna. Charles was beseeched insistently by Venice and also his brother Nicholas, the Patriarch of Aquileia, to depart immediately and take action as a matter of urgency<sup>69</sup>.

Why did Charles hesitate? Widder assumes the conflict with the Habsburgs or the heat of summer but these are less than convincing reasons<sup>70</sup>. Charles' hesitation was tactical. He had decided from the outset not to depart for Italy before grounds for agreement between the most important powers, the Papal Curia and the Visconti, had been identified. Above all, he wanted to prevent becoming involved in a war and thereby being forced to take sides publicly. The Anti-Visconti League was only a means to an end for him, to establish a counterweight against the might of the Visconti, so as to create an optimal basis for negotiation between these powerful adversaries with minimal use of his own resources. Charles seems to have mastered the personal qualities required for such a delicate balancing act. He appeared to be trustworthy and mastered *dissimulatio*, the art of disguise, which enabled him to exert his influence broadly. Charles had previous success in applying these tactics tipping the scale in the balance in Italy<sup>71</sup>. In fact his envoys had been present in Milan already from the middle of June 1354<sup>72</sup>. So it was not, as is often assumed, the death of Archbishop Giovanni Visconti on 5 October 1354 that was the turning point that made

Niccolò Acciaiuoli cit., p. 201, misunderstands this position, as he accepts the negotiations between Charles and Luigi von Tarent.

<sup>69</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 157.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>71</sup> SCHLOTHEUBER, *Ein schwieriges Verhältnis* cit., pp. 158-160.

<sup>72</sup> F. COGNASSO, *Storia di Milano, V: La signoria dei Visconti (1310-1392)*, Milano 1955, p. 369.

Charles' journey to Rome possible and smoothed the way for him<sup>73</sup>. The basis for a settlement evidently had been laid out over the summer. Genoa's victory over Sapienza, supported by the Visconti, at the beginning of November 1354 finally persuaded Venice, too, to consider peace talks with the Visconti.

Petrarch probably received Charles' response to his first, incendiary, letter only in autumn of 1353 in Milan, after a long delay. Charles attributed his hesitation to the desperate condition of Italy and the difficulty in governing the Empire. He also revealed his political maxim to Petrarch in this letter: «Anything is better than war»<sup>74</sup>. In the current situation, as the upcoming agreement between the League and the Visconti was already in sight, this peaceful 'maxim' presented a good basis for negotiation for both sides<sup>75</sup>. Petrarch probably resumed his epistolary exchange with Charles IV in mid-October 1354, after the death of Giovanni Visconti and as the diplomatic threads had begun to unravel, when he «jumped to welcome [him] in his mind». In an ironic about-face compared to the misgivings he had expressed to abbot Peter of Benigne, Petrarch addressed Charles pointing him to his future path as «the king not of Bohemia, but of the world, now you are the Roman emperor, now you are truly Caesar»<sup>76</sup>. Petrarch presumably played an important role in the secret talks between Charles and archbishop Giovanni Visconti.

The emerging consensus between Charles and the Visconti substantially limited the scope for political action by the King of Naples and the Guelf communes such as Florence<sup>77</sup>. In spite of the fact that Niccolò Acciaiuoli was so well informed, his 'peace plan' came to nothing. Florence did not accept the Grand Seneschal's offer to forge a league of the Guelph states headed by the King of Naples, although Niccolò Acciaiuoli had implored the Commune of Florence to do so repeatedly. And so events took a different turn.

<sup>73</sup> See most recently WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 160.

<sup>74</sup> PIUR, *Petrarcas Briefwechsel* cit., pp. 12-15: «omnia nam prius temptanda quam ferum et medici volunt et Cesares didicerunt».

<sup>75</sup> DOTI, *Lettere all'imperatore* cit., pp. 43-60.

<sup>76</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX,1: «Iam mihi non Boemie sed mundi rex, iam romanus imperator, iam verus es Cesar», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 309. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 74.

<sup>77</sup> Not without reason did Matteo Villani assess Charles' stay in Milan as *cortese prigionie*; see *Cronica di Matteo Villani* cit., c. 39, p. 342: «[...] e in tutto fu in servaggio l'animo imperiale alla volontà de' tiranni, e l'aquila sottoposta alla vipera».

3. *Charles' journey to Italy, the diplomatic efforts of the Kingdom of Naples and the role of the papal legate Aegidius Albornoz*

In autumn 1354 Charles IV finally crossed the Alps with just 300 knights. He was only too aware of resentment towards the German troops and the grave misgivings that a potential further imperial coronation could result in war and bloodshed, as had happened before to Henry VII and Louis the Bavarian. "Germany strives to do no more than to arm rapacious soldiers (*stipendarios*)" Petrarch had complained bitterly, "to the ruin of the republic and to cause a constant rain of iron to fall upon our land"<sup>78</sup>. Charles, however, avoided being regarded as a conqueror.

During the critical situation in the autumn of 1354, when one part of the Gran Compagnia threatened the kingdom of Sicily and the other part was involved in the war against the Visconti, Niccolò Acciaiuoli decided to take the matter into his own hands. He travelled at the request of Queen Giovanna and King Luigi, at his own expense, as he later emphasised, to all of the major players – to Charles IV, to the Spanish Legate Aegidius Albornoz and to the Guelph communes and Tuscan lords – in an attempt to prevent the imminent and expected danger of the Holy Roman Emperor<sup>79</sup>. With God's aid, he continued in his memoir, Sicily avoided this danger and the threatening scenario involving the future Emperor of the Romans did not eventuate. Rather, Niccolò Acciaiuoli obtained from Charles, to his surprise, the promise of military assistance *against* the Gran Compagnia and to his great relief, Charles authorised a direct order to the Commander Konrad of Landau to leave the Kingdom of Naples immediately<sup>80</sup>.

Events then developed quickly. After the death of archbishop Giovanni Visconti his nephews Bernabò, Matteo and Galeazzo assumed power. Charles IV reached Udine in mid-October, where he appears to have per-

<sup>78</sup> PETRARCA, *Aufrufe* cit., p. 464 (*De vita solitaria* II,4, 3): «Germania nil aliud studet, quam stipendarios latrones in reipublice exitium armare et e suis nubibus in nostras terras iugem ferreum imbrem pluit».

<sup>79</sup> TANFANI, *Niccola Acciaiuoli* cit., *Appendix Documenti* XX, pp. 211-234: 217: «[...] e alle mie proprie spese e a me incomportabili per la horata compagnia che meco portai, assunsi d'andare per parte delli miei signori allo detto Imperadore, allo legato d'Ispanea e alli Guelfi Comuni e dominatori di Toscana per procurare di fare evitare i propinqui e sospettosi pericoli dello detto Imperadore».

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*: «Et finalmente fu piacere de Deu che non solamente furono levati li detti pericolosi e sì propinqui sospetti dello Imperadore, ma da lui obteni subsidio di gente d'arme e legati, li quali ipso mandòe alla detta companea con espressi imperiali comandamenti que debessono exire fore dello reame». Apparently he also had success with the Papal Legate Aegidius Albornoz, who also promised him support against the Gran Compagnia.

sonally paved the way for a peaceful settlement between the League and the Visconti. On 27 October Marino Faliero, who was by then Doge of Venice, appointed the procurators Marco Corner, Marino Grimani and Zaccaria Contarini to conduct the peace negotiations with Milan<sup>81</sup>. Charles received them at the official talks on 10 November in Mantua. Two days prior, on 8 November, the Gran Compagnia, which had been recruited for the conflict against the Visconti, was dismissed<sup>82</sup>. This military threat was now no longer required. Matteo Villani stressed that the king was responsible for this decision in order to avoid considerable expense for the League<sup>83</sup>. This was probably only a half truth, as the dismissal of the Gran Compagnia was likely a tactic used by Charles to tip the balance of the negotiations with the Visconti in his favour and thereby to reposition himself. During this time the Florentine envoys also reached Charles in Mantua<sup>84</sup>.

On 15 November 1354 Niccolò Acciaiuoli wrote to his relatives, Angelo Acciaiuoli, the chancellor of the kingdom of Naples, the influential Florentine bishop and to Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli, now that he was better informed about the intentions of the other parties, proposing two possible scenarios to them: If the emperor progressed on the path of God and the church with further good fortune, then the King of Naples could become mediator and guarantor of the pact between the emperor and the Guelph communes, that is he could assume a suitably important role. If the emperor and his cause did not progress well, then the King of Naples and the Guelph communes would, in any event, be prepared as allies<sup>85</sup>. This was precisely the question that confronted all involved: Would Charles, especially after his coronation as Emperor, uphold his agreement with the pope or would he assert the imperial rights due to his office as his grandfather had done, that is the secular rights in Rome and in the Papal States, thus breaking his oft-repeated oath to the pope?<sup>86</sup>

The Seneschal was well informed politically in all but one respect – Charles had decided to maintain control himself, leaving no scope for the King of Naples to act as «head of the Guelphs» at his side. Instead, he decided to undertake this role himself. To achieve this aim, Charles drew the Grand Seneschal Niccolò Acciaiuoli closer to him. On 21 December

<sup>81</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., pp. 164-165.

<sup>82</sup> COGNASSO, *Storia di Milano* cit., V, p. 368.

<sup>83</sup> *Cronica di Matteo Villani* cit., l. 4, cap. 29, p. 331: «[...] acciochè quelli della lega non portassono la gravezza del soldo della gran compagnia».

<sup>84</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 176.

<sup>85</sup> LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>re</sup>* cit., III, n. 16, pp. 524-526.

<sup>86</sup> HUIJBERS, *Res publica restituta* cit., p. 8.

Niccolò announced in a letter to Jacopo di Donato that «if not later other songs would be sung» as he was for sure a friend and ally of the emperor and would accompany him to Rome<sup>87</sup>. In autumn 1354 Niccolò Acciaiuoli repeatedly implored Florence and the Guelph communes that they absolutely had to unite so as to protect their rights and liberties from these upheavals. But his urgings fell on deaf ears, and Charles did not relinquish control again.

The approaching king of Luxembourg was feared not only in the Kingdom of Naples; Charles and his impending imperial coronation also arrived at an inopportune moment for the papal legate Aegidius Albornoz<sup>88</sup>. In 1354 the legate had already won the upper hand against the Ghibelline powers when Charles decided to leave for Italy. In the beginning of 1355 Albornoz was directed by Pope Innocent VI to crown Charles emperor in Rome as his papal representative<sup>89</sup>. The legate must have feared this direction more than anything else. As emperor, Charles could be the most significant threat to his politics of restitution, which in essence was based on the church being the sole temporal sovereign in Rome and the Papal States. The risk that Charles, once he held the title of emperor, would claim the hereditary rights over Rome and the Papal States, and play out his role as overlord as his grandfather has done was considerable. Albornoz decided to take this risk. Even if the pope demanded that the coronation proceed, he would not elevate Charles with his own hands to the status of a rival power and potentially his fiercest opponent<sup>90</sup>. Without his involvement, so the papal legate hoped, there possibly would be no imperial coronation.

As mentioned above, Charles consistently left other players in the dark about his political intentions for good reason. He adopted a calculated approach, although this did not mean that he didn't pursue his own political solution for the protracted conflict. Quite the opposite: for Charles himself was firm from the beginning that he wanted to achieve a new outcome for the distribution of power in the Papal States and in northern Italy in agree-

<sup>87</sup> LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>* cit., III, n. 21 (21 December 1354, Naples), p. 533: «Noi da qua, se di costà non si canteranno altre canzoni, saremo per cierto amici e conjunti collo Imperatore, e ipso assai essere bene intrinseco collo re e la Clesia».

<sup>88</sup> SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 540-552.

<sup>89</sup> The charter of appointment is published in *Diplomatario del Cardenal Gil de Albornoz, cancelleria pontificia (1351-1353)*, ed. E. SÁEZ SÁNCHEZ, Barcelona 1976 (Monumenta Albortiana), n. 214, pp. 206-213: here p. 208 (Avignon, 31 January 1355). *Constitutiones, XI (1354-1357)*, ed. W.D. FRITZ, in M.G.H., *Leges*, IV, Hannover 1978-1992, n. 349, pp. 187-188.

<sup>90</sup> SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 584-586.



ment with the pope. As a result, Charles repeatedly avoided responding to Petrarch's overtures. Charles was determined not to antagonize the papacy as a rival as his predecessors had done, even though his policy presented a tangible threat for the honor and the power of the Empire. Charles seems to have known very well that the papacy aimed primarily for sovereignty through temporal lordship over the Papal States as the precondition for its return to Rome. And he obviously had decided to make this concession even though these very rights comprised a substantial component of the Imperial dignity. The popes in exile in Avignon had to watch how other rival powers, like England and France, the princes of the Holy Roman Empire, Bohemia and Hungary, successfully and energetically extended their territorial power bases. Perhaps this is why the Curia regarded the recovery and submission of the Papal States as a matter of survival, which might explain the risky and aggressive papal politics during this period.

Charles IV was apparently aware that this was the essence of the conflict, and he responded accordingly. To renounce the imperial rights in Rome and in the Papal States was a bold and difficult move for him, as the emperor ought not to simply relinquish these traditional rights. He was duly bound to augment and not to diminish the prerogatives of the Empire. Charles, therefore, avoided any broad statements about the central point of disagreement concerning the relations between imperial and temporal power in Italy and, remarkably, met any such moves with pointed gestures of humility, as Martin Bauch's compilation shows<sup>91</sup>. These gestures of devotion cloaked a strategy that was not unproblematic for a Holy Roman King and Emperor, for, if successful, Charles' strategy would permanently alter the balance of power in Italy and the role of the emperor. The precondition for all his plans was to win the trust of the Guelph powers and their most prominent representatives in Italy, the Papal Curia, Florence, the Kingdom of Naples, for which the Grand Seneschal Niccolò Acciaiuoli managed affairs, along with the confidence of the papal legate Aegidius Albornoz. It is interesting in this respect that on 21 November 1354 Pope Innocent VI wrote to Charles, to inform him that he had instructed the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Aquileia and Grado to crown him with the iron crown of Lombardy, in case the traditional coronation by the archbishop of Milan was prevented<sup>92</sup>. The agreement between Charles and the Visconti was like balancing a tightrope, especially because he couldn't afford to lose the trust of the Guelph powers.

<sup>91</sup> BAUCH, *Divina favente clemencia* cit., pp. 136-148.

<sup>92</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 301, p. 168.

Only a few days later, on 25 December 1354, Niccolò, then in Rome, addressed a further letter, written in his own hand, to his cousin Angelo and to Jacopo di Donato, which is now in Philadelphia: «Before this letter reaches you», he begins, «the Roman King will probably have united with the lords of Milan. I do not know how they [that is the Guelph Communes] can best protect your liberties, especially in view of the fact that you did not form an alliance and you are not prepared for such a critical matter. Also if you [Florence] are not obliged to render homage to him [Charles], it would then be better if you were allied with the King [of Naples]»<sup>93</sup>. Niccolò continued: «If a war occurs between the king I mentioned and those [men] from Milan, the emperor will have to use a lot of money to subdue the powers who oppose him. The conquests of the great lords remind one of the hunt of the leopard (*la caccia del leopardo*), for if he is not able to catch his prey with the first three or four blows, he lets it go and withdraws. If the king mentioned cannot acquire the greater part that he needs within three or four months, then it will be too late for him this time. In Italy many people, who believe that this king is allied with the Communes named, also want to unite with him [...]». Niccolò Acciaiuoli ended his letter with the assertion that he could reclaim Sicily with the goodwill and assistance of the king, at least in as much as he had assured him.

Niccolò's assessment proved to be accurate. Charles' plan had unfolded well to this point. On 20 December he confirmed the Visconti brothers as imperial vicars<sup>94</sup> and on 30 December 1354 he was empowered by the Anti-Visconti League to mediate as judge in the conflict between Milan and Venice<sup>95</sup>. Thus far had Charles achieved his aim – to act as mediator between competing forces was exactly the role he had aspired to play in the complex political terrain in Italy! After the negotiations in Mantua had progressed successfully, Charles returned to Milan. He was crowned King with the Lombard crown there on Epiphany, 6 January 1355<sup>96</sup>. The coronation sermon was delivered by Gabrio Zamorei, a learned lawyer and

<sup>93</sup> For the edition see the *Appendix*.

<sup>94</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 295, p. 166, and again to Galeazzo Visconti, *ibid.*, n. 317, p. 174. For the award of the imperial vicariate Giovanni Visconti promised him a coronation with the Lombard crown in Monza and 50 000 gold florins. See WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 183.

<sup>95</sup> CIPOLLA, *Karl IV. in Mantua* cit., n. 1, pp. 440-442, here p. 441: «Predicti cum supradictis dominis ambaxatoribus et sindicis prefati domini ducis et communis Veneciarum unanimiter et in concordia nominibus supradictis consenserunt et consenciant regie maiestati hoc per suam clementiam volenti, quod ipse dominus rex possit tractare pacem et concordiam [...]». The second document edited here contains the demands of Venice, the third those of Aragón in relation to Genoa.

<sup>96</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., pp. 177-179.

close associate of Petrarch<sup>97</sup>. A ceasefire was concluded on 8 January and announced the following day, when Charles also informed the Doge Marino Faliero<sup>98</sup>.

In mid-December, when it was conceivable that a settlement would be reached, the king summoned Petrarch to him in Mantua. The poet told Zanobi da Strada about this meeting in a letter (27 December), from which we can presume that Niccolò Acciaiuoli had been present in Milan<sup>99</sup>. Petrarch reported on the meeting to his friend Lelio in an even more detailed manner<sup>100</sup>. Lelio, who shortly afterwards was accepted into Charles' service through the influence of Petrarch and his trusted advisor Neri Morando, had assumed, interestingly, that Petrarch had been «specially chosen to negotiate an Italic peace with the new Caesar, had happily met with success, and was not returning home to great glory after securing peace for the republic»<sup>101</sup>. Petrarch dismissed this assumption with the somewhat cryptic remark: «But although I was far unequal to the immense task, the kind opinion of the men sending the emissaries [Bernabò Visconti and his brothers], would have made me eager to accept the noble undertaking, had private reasons not conflicted with public wishes; about these it would be best to keep silence»<sup>102</sup>. His prominent political position at the Visconti court is clearly evident here. He let his friend know that he was close to

<sup>97</sup> PIUR, *Petrarcas Briefwechsel* cit., p. XXXVII. C. FARAGGIANA DI SARZANA, *Gabrio Zamorei: un funzionario visconteo amico del Petrarca*, «Studi petrarcheschi», n. ser., 1 (1984), pp. 227-243. See the contribution of Daniela RANDO in this volume pp. 499-502

<sup>98</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 332 (9 January 1355), pp. 180-182. The ceasefire was agreed between Venice, the Este, and the Visconti, Carrara, Cangrande della Scala and Gonzaga. The king of Aragón was excluded, although his envoys were present at the negotiations. See CIPOLLA, *Karl IV. in Mantua* cit., n. 1, p. 442.

<sup>99</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 1 (Milan, 27 December 1354) *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 310-311. Petrarch mentioned a *vir iste clarus*, who had brought Zanobi's letter with him to Milan – a designation that he usually used to refer to Niccolò Acciaiuoli. The characterisation of Charles here is interesting: «princeps ille mitissimus, lingua et moribus non minus italicus quam germanus».

<sup>100</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 2 (Milan, 27 December 1354), *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 311-318.

<sup>101</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.*, XIX, 3 (*Ad Lelium*, Milan, February 1355), *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 311-318, here p. 312: «Credidisti igitur nescio cui [...] me scilicet ad italicam pacem novo cum Cesare sancendam singulariter preelectum, feliciter rebus actis et pace rei publice quesita, magna cum gloria remeasse». Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 77.

<sup>102</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 3 (Milan, February 1355): «Quamvis autem tanto negotio longe impar, iudicio tamen benigniore mittentium gloriosum laborem effugere nequavissem, nisi publicis votis private quedam obstitissent cause, quas nunc siluisse prestiterit», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 313. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters*, *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 78.

these events. He met the king in person for the first time: «Omitting the usual amenities, we went on speaking and conversing in private from the torches' first lighting into the dead of night. In short, nothing is more pleasant than the prince's majesty, nothing more human»<sup>103</sup>. In these lengthy conversations Charles enquired about the work Petrarch was creating, *De viris illustribus*, at which Petrarch took the opportunity to present him with silver and gold coins from the Roman Emperors, to convince him of the worth of Roman imperial power<sup>104</sup>. The king probed the poet in detail about his life, which ended in a debate about the right way of living, the *vita activa* or the *vita contemplativa*. In conclusion, Petrarch continued, Charles made an offer to Petrarch to accompany him to Rome: «He desired to see that great city not only with his eyes but with mine, so to speak, and he also needed my presence in certain Tuscan cities about which he spoke so knowledgeably that you would have thought him an Italian in heart and mind»<sup>105</sup>. Charles, it seems, wanted to secure Petrarch's knowledge, his broad network and presumably also his diplomatic skills. Why did Petrarch reject this request?

Petrarch described the grounds for his refusal as «in part justifiable, in part dictated by necessity» («ex causis partim iustis partim necessariis»). It is quite plausible that this offer was not compatible with his service at the Milanese court, as Paul Piur has proposed<sup>106</sup>. Petrarch, moreover, probably harboured a suspicion that Charles' view of the imperial dignity (despite his attempts to convince him otherwise) was closer to that of the pope than to his own. So it was obvious that he would prefer not to witness the presumably delicate and problematic event of the coronation. If, after his coronation, Charles in fact definitively renounced his secular rights in Rome and in the Papal States, he would strengthen the position of the Curia in northern Italy quite considerably. This would likely weaken the position of the Visconti who distinguished themselves as guarantors of the imperial rights as Daniela Rando shows convincingly in this volume.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*; translation by BERNARDO, *Letters cit., Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 79.

<sup>104</sup> J. HELMRATH, *Transformationen antiker Kaisermünzen. Einige Thesen*, in *Translatio Nummorum, Römische Kaiser in der Renaissance*, cur. U. PETER - B. WEISSER, Mainz 2013 (Cyriacus, 3), pp. 301-318, see to Petrarca and Karl IV. pp. 304-307, p. 309.

<sup>105</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 3: «Finis is fuit ut [...] hoc ultimum precaretur ut secum Romam peterem; hanc enim fuisse primam causam me quietis avidum tam adverso tempore fatigandi; optare se tantam urbem non suis modo sed meis, ut ita dicam oculis videre; egere etiam se mei presentia in quibusdam Tuscie urbibus, de quibus ita locutus est, ut italicum hominem et italicum credere posses ingenium», *Le Familiari cit.*, III, p. 316. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters, Libri XVII-XXIV cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>106</sup> PIUR, *Petrarcas Briefwechsel cit.*, p. XXXVIII.

. Here we see how crucial it was for Charles to keep his political intentions hidden from others to ensure that he could maneuver between the powers. Until this point it might have been only a question of deep concern for Petrarch. He summarized his role in this decisive turn of affairs to Lelio thus: «I was not a minister but a lover of peace, not a seeker but a supporter and praiser of peace, I was not present at its beginning but at its end. Since a durable peace rests upon public solemnities, Caesar and Fate wished me to be present at the conclusion of the negotiations. Certainly, too, no greater tribute in matters of this kind has ever been paid to an Italian – to be summoned and requested by Caesar, to joke and dispute with Caesar»<sup>107</sup>.

#### 4. *The imperial coronation in Rome and a 'New World Order': The Golden Bull (1356) and the Constitutiones Aegidianae (1357)*

Charles' coronation with the iron crown of Lombardy and the agreement with the Visconti were crucial, but were only the first steps towards an imperial coronation. In contrast to his French cardinals, Pope Innocent VI had considerable interest in crowning the Luxembourg king as emperor. Only a legitimate emperor could confirm the disputed papal decrees *Romani principes* and *Pastoralis cura* as valid<sup>108</sup>. Confronted with Charles' success in Italy, Innocent VI now assembled a second coronation delegation, in which, as mentioned above, the role of crowning the emperor would fall to the Spanish legate Albornoz. An initial coronation delegation had already fallen through because two of the most powerful French cardinals had refused to elevate Charles as emperor in Italy<sup>109</sup>. Yet this second delegation also threatened to rupture, because Albornoz was unwilling to consecrate as emperor one of his own potential opponents, who could with every right then claim secular jurisdiction in Rome and the Papal States.

<sup>107</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.*, XIX, 3 (Milan, February 1355): «Non sequester pacis ego sed amator fui, neque petitor sed hortator et laudator, neque principio eius interfui sed fini; cum enim in conclusione tractatum publicis monumentis pacis firmitas fundaretur, interesse me Cesar et fortuna voluerunt. Profecto autem in hoc genere nulli italo plus tributum scio: vocari et rogari a Cesare, iocare et disputare cum Cesare», *Le Familiari* cit., III, p. 317. Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 81.

<sup>108</sup> *Pastoralis cura*, Clem. II, tit. XI c. 2, in *Corpus iuris canonici* cit., II, coll. 1151-1153, here col. 1153; *Romani principes*, Clem. II, tit. IX c. 1, in *ibid.*, coll. 1147-115. For detailed discussion of this point see SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 538-540; A. MAZON, *Essai historique sur le Vivarais pendant la guerre de cent ans (1337-1453)*, Tournon 1889, p. 98.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

Charles saw the refusal of the Spanish legate as a personal affront and a grave threat to his impending coronation. Only Aegidius Albornoz could represent the person of the pope as *Legatus a latere*. Now just one cardinal nominated by Innocent VI for the coronation, the bishop of Ostia, Pierre Bertrand de Colombier, was left standing!

The affair was on a knife's edge. Everything now hung on the Cardinal of Ostia. His companion, the cardinal's secretary and chronicler Johannes Porta di Annoniaco, described in detail the long-delayed departure of the cardinal from Avignon. Pierre Bertrand's fellow cardinals first sought to discourage him from departure. But he had longstanding relations with the Luxembourgers and was in the 1330s employed to negotiate the marriage of the daughter of King John the Blind, Guta, to the future king of France John the Good<sup>110</sup>. But when Bertrand was about to depart adverse winds made the journey increasingly difficult. In the end he decided to proceed on land from Port Maurice. Pierre Bertrand eventually arrived in Pisa on 12 March 1355 for an audience with the king. On this occasion Pierre Bertrand gave a sermon which, in view of the evident difficulties to find someone to perform the coronation, he dedicated appropriately to Isaiah 6,8: «I have heard the voice of the Lord: "Who shall I send? And which one of you will go?"»<sup>111</sup>. In his address to the king and his courtiers the cardinal unequivocally stressed the superiority of the papacy over all secular power. The imperial coronation was fully reserved to the pope, in whose hands were all power and all laws («in cuius manu sunt omnes potestates et omnia iura regnorum»)<sup>112</sup>. This expressed, in effect, the Church's full claim to power in the bull *Unam Sanctam*, which revoked the legitimacy for the autonomous exercise of secular power.

It is clear here that this sermon communicated, in broad terms, the crucial pre-conditions under which the Curia could envision an imperial coronation. Further, even if the papal claims, strictly speaking, threatened the sovereignty of imperial prerogatives, it seems that Charles did not object to these conditions. Thereby, he officially abandoned the position held by his grandfather, Henry VII. His concession may have been the precondition for a complete rehabilitation of the deceased, formerly excommunicated,

<sup>110</sup> JOHANNES PORTA, *Liber de coronatione Karoli IV. imperatoris*, ed. R. SALOMON, in M.G.H., *Res. Germ. in usum scholarum*, 35, Hannoverae 1913, c. 20, p. 55.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 29, p. 65 («Audivi vocem Domini dicentis: Quem mittam? Et quis ex vobis ibit?»).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 29, p. 65 («Collatio domini Petri de Columbario [...] super causa sui adventus ad imperatorem»). The sermon addressed the jurisdiction of the church in worldly affairs, which was the crux of the whole affair.

emperor from Luxembourg. In Pisa the Cardinal of Ostia, Pierre Bertrand, and Charles jointly celebrated the anniversary of his grandfather Henry VII, at which some twenty German and Italian clerics in pontifical robes recited prayers at the tomb of the emperor<sup>113</sup>. This was not only an act of piety<sup>114</sup>, but also much more: this act was a public demonstration of reconciliation between the Church and the first emperor from Luxembourg. This may have also been performed with an eye to the sharp criticism of William of Ockham, who had denied that Charles IV was qualified to receive the symbol of office as he was the “grandchild of an excommunicate”<sup>115</sup>.

On 24 January 1355 Niccolò Acciaiuoli wrote to Jacopo di Donato in Florence, informing him that the emperor was approaching Rome, while a great uprising was underway in the Kingdom of Naples, caused by the return of the Gran Compagnia<sup>116</sup>. Charles was then waiting in Pisa, where the envoys from Queen Giovanna and her husband Luigi of Tarent arrived on the same day to negotiate about their feuds with the empire<sup>117</sup>. The Neapolitans no longer had any room to move or in which to assume an in-

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 31, p. 70: «Et circa XX numero venerandi prelati tam Ytalici quam Germani, pontificalibus ornamentis amicti secundum Romane curie stilum circa feretrum orationes dixerunt singulariter unusquisque».

<sup>114</sup> BAUCH, *Divina favente clemencia* cit., pp. 132-133.

<sup>115</sup> *Unbekannte kirchenpolitische Streitschriften aus der Zeit Ludwigs des Bayern (1327-1354). Analysen und Texte*, ed. R. SCHOLZ, Hannover 1914, p. 357: «Set dominus Karolus est de genere rebellium ecclesie, quia dominus Heinricus, bone memorie Romanorum imperator, avus predicti domini Karoli, dedit sententiam contra dominum Robertum, Apulie regem, et dominus Clemens papa quintus suspendit predictam sententiam vocando dominum Heinricum Romanorum imperatorem periurum et excommunicatum». Albertino Mussato († 1329) also mentioned the death of Henry VII while under the ban of excommunication placed on him by the pope and drew a comparison with the cursing of Frederick II and his entire line: Albertino Mussato *Historia Augusta Henrici VII.: Caesaris et alia quae extant opera*, ed. L.A. MURATORI, in *R.I.S.*, 10, Romae 1727, , pp. 9-568, I, XVI, rubrica 8: «Cavenda nimis sacrosanctae matris ecclesie offensa chisticolis, cum et huius predecessorem fuderit apostolica sententia Fridericum, in quem cum prole tota, veluti fulmen iaculata, irreparabile tulit exitium».

<sup>116</sup> LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>* cit., III, m. 22, p. 535 (Niccolò to Jacopo di Donato on 24 January 1355): ««Avemo grande congiuratione dentro alo reame discoperta e quasi in tutto rebella vienene la Compagnia addosso. Lo Imperatore s'aprossima votivamente Roma».

<sup>117</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 339, pp. 185-185 (Pisa, 24. Jan. 1355, Charles IV to the brothers Gonzaga, imperial vicars of Manuta): «[...] pro parte regis super feudis, que a nobis et sacro tenet imperio, tractaturi»; LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>* cit., III, n. 22, p. 535. It is interesting to note that Zanobi da Strada considered the negotiations to be dangerous! An addition (post scriptum) to Zanobi da Strada's letter to Niccolò Acciaiuoli: «Li trattati sono pericolosi per quello reame e colla Compagna e collo Imperatore, benche llo Imperatore mostra troppo buona volontà inverso nostro signore [...]».

dependent position of power. Their envoys nevertheless probably tried to assert their claims. But Charles signalled his intentions shortly afterwards when he permitted the Visconti brothers Matteo, Galeazzo and Bernabò to make claims to the city of Ventimiglia and other regions in Piedmont against the claims of Queen Giovanna of Naples<sup>118</sup>. This move proved to be effective. On 1 February 1355 Giovanna, threatened on all sides, submitted herself and the Kingdom of Sicily to Charles and performed an oath of fealty to him on behalf of those regions that were subject nominally to the empire, that is the counties of Piedmont and Forcalquier, as well as the Margravate of Provence<sup>119</sup>. Charles was eventually successful, as the future emperor, in establishing himself as head of the Guelphs, in the end being supported by the most important Guelph forces like Naples and Florence. The Visconti, for their part, assumed the leadership of the Ghibelline party. This surprising political setting was the reason the coronation journey eventually proceeded without incident, which, as Matteo Villani later remarked, was a great wonder.

But one significant problem remained: the Spanish Legate Aegidius Albornoz. By the time Pierre Bertrand and Charles set out for Rome and reached Viterbo, a city which the papal legate had only recently reclaimed for the Papal States after a fierce struggle, the tension between the king and Albornoz had become obvious. The commander of the city, who had been installed by Albornoz, refused entrance to the King of the Romans while the bishop of Ostia, meanwhile, was received with due ceremonial reverence. Charles IV therefore spent the night in the house of Albornoz' most strident opponent, at the family seat of the lords of Vico, who were a long-established, traditional pro-Ghibelline noble family. The lord of Vico was, moreover, a member of the Gran Compagnia<sup>120</sup>. Did this move indicate a latent threat, that Charles might decide to change his mind and support the enemies of the church? In the end, this matter didn't come to open conflict. Accompanied by Niccolò Acciaiuoli and the poet Zanobi da Strada, and escorted by a Florentine Guard as a triumphant symbol of the reconciliation and submission of the Guelph powers, Charles finally reached Rome.

Charles evidently observed all the restrictions the pope imposed upon him<sup>121</sup>. On Easter Sunday, 5 April 1355, the bishop of Ostia, Pierre Ber-

<sup>118</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 343, p. 185.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 351, pp. 188-190.

<sup>120</sup> WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., p. 212.

<sup>121</sup> *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 380, pp. 200-202; n. 381, pp. 202-203; n. 382, pp. 203-204.

We can see how crucial this was when, on 31 January 1355, Pope Innocent VI requested that Charles renew his oath after the coronation; *Constitutiones* cit., XI, n. 349, p. 187.



trand, crowned Charles and his wife in a rushed but solemn and peaceful ceremony<sup>122</sup>, after which his first act was to elevate hundreds to the knighthood on the Monte Sant'Angelo<sup>123</sup>. Several customary rituals that were reserved to the pope were not performed, such as the emperor's symbolic service as *strator* and marshal<sup>124</sup>. Charles IV in fact then ratified as emperor all of the agreements made in 1346. In contrast to his grandfather and predecessors, after his coronation Charles also renounced all secular rights of lordship in Rome. He did not hold legal court, nor did he grant authority to anyone to exercise secular office. As the pope had obliged him not to remain in Rome longer than a day, Charles set forth at nightfall, during the coronation feast, departing the city with the empress and their entire entourage.

Despite all opposition and adversity the imperial coronation was conducted successfully. Charles' relationship with the legate Albornoz, though, still remained unresolved. In April 1355 Petrarch, who was well informed through Charles' entourage, wrote to his humanist friend Neri Morando: «As for the encounter between Caesar and the envoy, I am in agreement with what you foresee (*providentissime vaticinaris*), indeed I seem almost to behold how it will go; all these things against which I have often argued do not really upset me [...]. I am not so much troubled by the fact that the Legate's horse tried to rise up against the Caesar (*Legati sonipes in Caesarem calcitravit*), but that the minds rise up again against each other. And I know that no power tolerates another on equal terms»<sup>125</sup>. The rearing horse,

<sup>122</sup> The copy of the Pontificale romanum used by the Cardinal of Ostia in the ceremony, now preserved in Paris (BNF, *Lat.*, 15519) is digitized, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9067236f>. On this manuscript see M. ANDRIEU, *Le Pontifical Romain au Moyen-Âge*, Città del Vaticano 1965, II, pp. 91-92.

<sup>123</sup> WERUNSKY, *Römerzug* cit., pp. 172-188; P. HILSCH, *Die Krönungen Karls IV.*, in *Kaiser Karl IV. Staatsmann und Mäzen*, cur. F. SEIBT, Nürnberg-Köln 1978, pp. 108-111, 144-145; WIDDER, *Itinerar* cit., pp. 214-226. A detailed overview of the ceremony and Charles' journey through Rome is presented in K. KUBÍNOVÁ, *Rímska korunovace Karla IV.*, in *Lesk královského majestátu ve středověku. Festschrift František Kavka*, cur. L. BOBKOVÁ - M. HOLÁ, Prague 2005, pp. 47-60; KUBÍNOVÁ, *Imitatio Romae* cit., cap. 2.

<sup>124</sup> These duties, such as leading the Pope's horse by the reins (the duty of the *strator*) had been contested for centuries, remarkably were emphasised by Charles on his next visit to Rome when he performed them for Pope Urban V, who had returned to Rome with him. E. SCHLOTHEUBER, *Die Kaiserkrönung Karls IV. 1355 in Rom: ein diplomatisches Meisterstück*, in *Kaiser Karl IV. Die Böhmisches Länder und Europa*. Internationale Konferenz aus Anlass des 700. Jubiläums der Geburt Karls IV. (Prag 9 Mai 2016-12 Mai 2016), cur. D. BRÍZOVÁ - J. KUTHAN - J. PEROUTKOVÁ - S. SCHOLZ, Prague 2017, pp. 83-84.

<sup>125</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XX, 2 (Petrarch to Neri Morando, Milan, April? 1355): «Sane de Caesaris Legatique congressu, quod providentissime vaticinaris, amplector ac probo, et pene rem ipsam videor videre. Non quod omnia ista me moveant, contra que multa sepe disserui, sed ex preteritis ventura conicio. Itaque non tam tangor, quod Legati sonipes in

which the German editor of Petrarch's letters, Berthe Widmer, interpreted here as a bad omen, despite having no evidence for this occurring, was in fact Petrarch's metaphor for the public opposition of the legate to the imperial coronation. Johannes Porta relates that the emperor was furious at the legate's refusal: «Without the mediation of the Cardinal of Ostia the forementioned lord legate (Albornoz) would certainly not have remained the friend of the emperor, on this account, as the emperor and those close to him stood firm in their view that it would have been due to the legate if the event had failed and the emperor been betrayed and cheated of the crown, which was rightly his»<sup>126</sup>. The friction had explosive potential, especially when one considers that Henry VII had considered the attempt by Robert of Anjou to prevent his coronation as emperor as treason, as a *crimen laesae maiestatis*. Albornoz had gambled for high stakes and lost.

A great deal of diplomacy was required to bring about their meeting. When the legate entered Siena on 1 May 1355, Pierre Bertrand rode out to meet him before the city gates. At their first public encounter it was unmistakably clear that Pierre Bertrand, who had performed the imperial coronation, was indeed the lesser ranked envoy, although by this action a change in rank occurred: «One may observe the intelligence of the cardinal», the chronicler Johannes Porta emphasized, «for to honour the legate he wore in his presence not his red mantle, although he had worn it for the legate's arrival and after his departure». Rather, he chose for this occasion the «heavenly colour» («color celestinus»), namely blue<sup>127</sup>. The emperor followed shortly after the cardinal to greet the legate personally, and the two spiritual dignitaries permitted the emperor to ride between them on their return. Thus both cardinals, according to Johannes Porta, preempted one another in deference and waived the gesture of blessing, which was customarily due to the more powerful one, as they returned<sup>128</sup>. In this man-

Caesarem calcitrarit, quam quod calcitrare animos novi. Et scio, quod omnis potestas est consortis impatiens (Lucan. 1, 92)», *Aufrufe* cit., p. 455.

<sup>126</sup> «Et nisi concordiam ipsam pro speciali gratia petivisset, pro certo predictus dominus legatus imperatoris prefati non remansisset amicus pro eo, quod imperatoris animo et suorum iudicata iam erat opinio, quod per dictum legatum non stetit, quin opus et dispensa perierit et dictus imperator corona sibi debita privatus existeret et delusus», JOHANNES PORTA, *Liber de coronatione* cit., c. 56, p. 94.

<sup>127</sup> «Sed exeuntis huius discretionem advertas, quod in cappa sua rubeo colore non utitur, sed eam coloris induit celestini, ut legati venientis honori deferret, quamvis pro auctoritate sibi commissa ante adventum et post reditum legati predicti colore rubeo uteretur», *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*: «Simul itaque venientes predicti domini cardinales et imperator medius inter eos Senensem civitatem intrarunt et dicti domini cardinales iuxta doctrinam apostoli se ip-

ner they dissolved not only the disputed question of rank between them, but were able to demonstrate in public that the imperial and papal powers in Italy could come together peacefully. The negotiations between Charles and Albornoz now commenced in Siena. Albornoz' decision to cede Perugia, which had been gained by the Papacy, was in no small measure now accepted as an essential part of the negotiations about cooperation through which the Papacy had acquired, was now an essential part of the negotiations about cooperation on which Charles and the combative legate reached agreement<sup>129</sup>. In these negotiations, Charles once again renounced imperial power in Rome and in the Papal States by oath and also *de facto*<sup>130</sup>.

Milan and the Visconti were, one could argue, the "losers" in Charles' risky see-sawing politics. This might have been the reason why the Visconti brothers caused much difficulties when Charles had to re-enter their territories on his way back home. Petrarch must have had his fears confirmed, as his attempts at persuasion were futile. In June 1355, after the emperor had reconciled with the powerful legate Albornoz and thus strengthened his position as the Visconti's most dangerous opponent, Petrarch sent a letter to Charles as he was heading north, which expressed both his anger and disappointment: «Therefore, O Caesar, after gaining you have gained without labor and bloodshed what your grandfather and countless others had attained with so much bloodshed and toil – an unobstructed entrance to Rome, an easily obtained sceptre, an undisturbed and tranquil empire, a bloodless crown»<sup>131</sup>. He rubbed salt into the wound by mentioning that it had been the support of the Milanese that had at first made everything possible for him: «either through being ungrateful for so many gifts or being an inappropriate judge of events, you turn your back on it all and –

sos invicem prevenientes honore (Rom. 12,10) per viam equitantes nullatenus signaverunt». See also *ibid.*, note 4, for the meaning of *signare* (= *signum crucis efficere*), which was in each case the highest ranked («cuius maior est iurisdictio») title.

<sup>129</sup> *Cronica di Matteo Villani* cit., l. 5 c. 15, p. 629: "[...] e *ibid.* [i.e. Aegidius Albornoz to Siena] «coll'altro cardinale d'Ostia ch'aveva coronato lo'mperadore, furono a parlamentare co llui di fatti d'Italia ch'apartenieno a santa Chiesa [...]. In questo attendere lo'mperadore trattò co lloro di fatti di Perugia [...]».

<sup>130</sup> SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 548-552.

<sup>131</sup> PETRARCA, *Fam.* XIX, 12: «Ergo, tu, Cesar, quod avus tuus innumerique alii tanto sanguine quesierunt tantisque laboribus, sine labore adeptus et sanguine, complanatam apertamque Italiam, patens limen urbis Rome, sceptrum facile, imperturbatum ac pacificum Imperium, incruenta dyademata, vel tantorum ingratus munerum vel rerum non ydoneus extimator, et hec linquis et (o naturam mutare magnus labor) ad barbarica rursum regna revolveris?», *Le Familiari* cit., III, pp. 336-337: 336; Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 101.

how difficult to change nature! – again return to your barbaric kingdoms». Petrarch diplomatically left open the question whether this decision, which was detrimental for the Ghibelline supporters, was due to ingratitude or ignorance, although in any event he held that Charles had betrayed the inheritance of his grandfather and his father by this decision. Angered, he added: «no prince ever willingly abandoned a prospect so great, so glittering, so ripe, so honorable»<sup>132</sup>.

A few months after the coronation the emperor and the electors convened in Nuremberg to deliberate about the constitution of the empire. In the beginning of 1356, when the procedure for the royal election was codified in the ‘Golden Bull’, the papal right of approval of the elected king as well as its claims over the imperial vicars, for which the Curia had fought fiercely for so long, were yet to be considered<sup>133</sup>. A year later, in early 1357, the Spanish legate Albornoz arrived in Italy at the Parliament in Fano to promulgate the Aegidian Constitutions as the constitutive restructure of the Papal States<sup>134</sup>.

The emperor received as little mention as the governing authority in the *Constitutiones Aegidianae* as the pope did in the Golden Bull. Forty years of bitter conflict between the Curia and Henry VII and Louis the Bavarian had clearly shown the incompatibility of universally formulated claims. This controversy, which had proven so self-destructive for both powers, was suspended as it were for the time being. As a solution to this complex situation, Charles IV sought instead to work out the specific rights and responsibilities of the empire and the pope in geographical terms in Italy, the most contested region, even though they were bound with the definitive duty of the traditional imperial rights for the Papal States. After initial hesitation, the combative papal legate Albornoz also eventually agreed to this solution. As these first written constitutions endured for many centuries, there can be no doubt that Charles’ coronation journey had a huge and lasting historical impact.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 337: «[...] a nullo unquam principum tantam spem, tam floridam, tam maturam tamque honestam sponte desertam», Translation by BERNARDO, *Letters* cit., *Libri XVII-XXIV*, p. 101.

<sup>133</sup> B.U. HERGEMÖLLER, *Fürsten, Herren und Städte zu Nürnberg 1355/56. Die Entstehung der Goldenen Bulle Karls IV.*, Köln-Wien-Graz 1983, pp. 215-216; see also B. SCHNEIDMÜLLER, *Monarchische Ordnungen. Die Goldene Bulle von 1356 und die französischen Ordonnanzen von 1374*, in *Die Welt des Mittelalters. Erinnerungsorte eines Jahrtausends*, cur. J. FRIED - O. RADER, München 2011, pp. 324-335.

<sup>134</sup> COLLIVA, *Il cardinale* cit., p. 199; see also the detailed discussion on this by SCHLOTHEUBER - KISTNER, *Kaiser Karl IV.* cit., pp. 548-552.

No doubt remains therefore, that both Aegidius Albornoz as well as the Curia were fully aware that the legate's politics in these years and finally the publication of the *Constitutiones Aegidianae* essentially concerned imperial rights. When Charles and Albornoz met in early May 1355, the emperor reached an agreement based on the conditions formulated by Innocent VI, which amounted to the renunciation of the exercise of imperial power in those territories claimed by the Church and which Albornoz had already conquered. But it would have been very unlike Charles to have relinquished imperial rights – which in his eyes was indefensible – without something in return. Rather, he demanded a politics of papal non-intervention in the empire, that is the autonomous regulation of its central rights. This position was debated shortly afterwards at the next Imperial Diet in Nuremberg and they were codified in writing in his 'imperial law book' ("Unser kaiserliches Rechtbuch"). Henry of Diessenhofen, who was well acquainted with affairs in Avignon, interpreted Charles' strategy early on as a tacit recovery of the imperial rights, the *iura imperii*<sup>135</sup>. In the same way, therefore, that Charles had enabled a constitutive restructure of the Papal States through his tacit acceptance, so the Curia, too, should not object to the restructure of the imperial rights, as a push back against papal claims, as set out in the Golden Bull. And the Papacy did remain silent, in as much as Cardinal Talleyrand, who was present as the papal representative in Metz when the Golden Bull was promulgated, offered no word of protest.

<sup>135</sup> Henry of Diessenhofen, who was well acquainted with the relationships at the Curia in Avignon, understood Charles' "tactics" quite early as a 'tacit' recovery of the *iura imperii*: «[...] accelerans ad partes Italie volens iura imperii quasi tacite renovare», *Heinricus de Diessenhofen und andere Geschichtsquellen Deutschlands im späten Mittelalter*, ed. aus dem Nachlass von J.F. BÖHMER von A. HUBER, Stuttgart 1868 (rist. 1969) (Fontes rerum Germanicarum, 4), p. 55.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix I

Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, Van Pelt Library, UPenn Ms. Coll 197 (single leaf)

Permanent Link: <http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/medren/9924866373503681> [last access May 14, 2022]; Previous Signature: Ms. *Lea*, 28, 1

The correspondence in the Van Pelt Library was described by N.P. ZACOUR - R. HIRSCH, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Libraries of the University of Pennsylvania to 1800*, Philadelphia 1965, 154 (Ms. *Lea* 28).

The collection comprises 48 individual items (51 folios) as well as the correspondence of several members of the Acciaiuoli family over several generations. It was formerly part of the Florentine collection.

Further letters and documents by Niccolò Acciaiuoli can also be found today in the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, *Fondo Ashburnham-Libri* 1830. See *Il carteggio Acciaiuoli della Biblioteca Maedicea Laurenziana di Firenze*, ed. I.G. RAO, Roma 1996.

Editions of Niccolò Acciaiuoli's correspondence have been published by L. TANFANI, *Nicola Acciaiuoli*, Firenze 1863 (*Appendix Documenti*) and É.G. LÉONARD, *Histoire de Jeanne I<sup>ère</sup>, reine de Naples, comtesse de Provence (1343-1382)*, III: *Le règne de Louis de Tarente*, Paris 1937, pp. 503-668.

For studies of Niccolò Acciaiuoli, see most recently F.P. TOCCO, *Niccolò Acciaiuoli: vita e politica in Italia alla metà del XIV secolo*, Roma 2001 (Nuovi studi storici 52), and, by the same author, *Élites urbaine et finances régies nella Sicilia aragonese*, in *Il governo dell'economia*, cur. L. TANZINI - S. TOGNETTI, Roma 2014, pp. 105-130.

A letter written by Niccolò Acciaiuoli in his own hand to his cousin, Angelo Acciaiuoli, the bishop of Florence and chancellor of the Kingdom of Sicily, and to Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli and Giovanni Richi.

Written in Naples, 25th December 1354.

The letter concerns the situation in Italy after the arrival of Charles IV in northern Italy in the autumn of 1354. The author had visited the Holy Roman King (in Milano?), as well as the Spanish Legate Aegidius Albornoz, the city of Florence

and also the Visconti. He had just returned from this diplomatic trip, which he undertook on behalf of Queen Johanna of Sicily and at his own expense.

Domino meo, domino episcopo Florentino [*Angelo Acciaiuoli*]  
Regni Sicilie cancellario. Jacopo Donati de Acciolia  
Magnus senescallus [*Niccolò Acciaiuoli*]

Io penso que, avanti que abiate riceputo questa lictera, aparenti termini saranno presi infra lo re delli / Romani et li signioreggiatori di Milano, se prenderanno acordi. Non conosco que di costà possiate, ovvero / si sappia prendere li remedii et consilij, expedienti [a] cautamente conservaresi cotești comuni la loro / libertate vel quasi, considerando non ipsi essere uniti e provisi come tanta materia riciercheria. / Non pro tanto io iudico que, etiandio ipsi volendo obedire, saria optima cosa ipsi essere congiunti et / conligati con questo re, in però que milliori pacti et conditioni troverriano et plu fidata ciertitudine / d'integra osservantia averiano, lo re essendo mediatore et quasi assicuratore et peggio de li pacti / et conditioni que si faciessono, que se ipsi per loro sindachi con non troppo ordine volendosi catuno dimo- / strare lo plu volontaroso et grato, ciercassono le loro bisognie.

Afirmovi, que di qua si conoscie, / que nulla milliore cosa per questo signiore et per suo reame pote essere que remanendo cotești co- / muni in loro libertate vel quasi et a parte guelfa questo vel quasi. Dico io in caso, que pure / paresse per lo meno male dimostrare alcune reverentie a lo dicto re de li Romani.

Se guerra si nutrisse infra lo dicto re et quelli da Milano et li tractati infra cotešto comune et ipsi / procedessono, assai averia a ffare lo inperatore overo re de li Romani a potere tante forze / unite subgiugare ipsi nolenti, li conquisti de li grandi signiori sono come è la caccia / de lo leopardo, lo quale se non prende sua preda ne li primi suoi tre o quatro primi / repenti salti, interlassa la preda et ritorna a retro. Se lo dicto re infra III o IIII / mesi non averà expedito la plu grande parte de le sue bisognie votivamente / tardo le perfinerà per questa volta.

Assai sono in Ytalia di quelli que sentendo questo / re essere in lega unito con cotești comuni que volontieri saranno con issi connessi e me- / desimo poteriano occurrere casi que la Clesia diceria di quelle cose que a lo presente si tacie. / Paremi que non sia bene dicto, que plutosto lo re mandi li suoi ambasciatori di costà que voi di costà li man- / diate a ipssso. Ma di poi tutti insieme si poteriano in alcuno condecenete et ordinato / loco congregare, credo que g[ita] di costà ne sarà determinato ciò que fare se ne deve. Iddio / permicta di tutto consequire quello que lo mellio debia essere.

Paremi que lo avviso que tu Jacopo [*di Donato Acciaiuoli*] mi dichiarasti per la tua lictera di quella bisogna de lo Blanco<sup>136</sup> / sia bono et acuto et que doveria rasonabilmente ritornare con effecto in caso./

To infra VI di al plu tardo me ne torno in Pullia, inperoque già ò expedito quasi quello per que venni;/ et inviato a Palermo victualia assai, galee, gente et denari et ispero in Dio que / in questa estate conquisteremo lo restanti de la Sicilia Iddio operante; / et se per voi di costà non si farà milliori providentie que io extimi, ispero a cierto que ne la dicta recuperatione / et guerra averemo li favori et sussidii de lo dicto re de li romani aparentemente et / tutto quanto d'isso consequirà reputeremo que sia per lo nostro milliore./ Non s'intende ad altro que a sollicitare de procurare moneta per satisfare lo censo et in ciò io pono tutti / li miei istudij. Iscripta in Napoli la mattina di natale sunmo mane manu propria.

Paremi que voi messer lo cancelliero dobiate sovente iscrivere a messer Johanni vicedomini d'Arezzo; lo quale / per noi permance apresso de lo dicto inperatore overo re, et iscriveteli que io ve lo abia iscripto, et mandateli alcuno fido misso per lo quale ipso senza renitentia ne possa iscrivere dilatatamente.

sopra la venuta de l'o[m]peradore

tractado lega qui<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> *By a different scribe.*

<sup>136</sup> Blanco Bartolomei, see LEONARD, *Histoire* cit., III, n. XXI (21 December 1354, Niccolò Acciaiuoli to Jacopo di Donato Acciaiuoli).