

**Renaissance diplomacy in practice:
the case of Gregorio Casali, England's
ambassador to the papal court, 1525-33**

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Thesis presented for the award of PhD

I confirm that the work contained in this thesis is entirely my own.

**Catherine Fletcher
23 April 2008**

Abstract

THIS thesis investigates the day-to-day practice of Renaissance diplomacy through a case-study of Gregorio Casali, one of a number of Italians in the Roman diplomatic corps who served foreign princes, in Casali's case King Henry VIII of England. It outlines and analyses the key elements of the resident ambassador's role, shifting the focus of study from the traditional emphasis on official negotiations and such formal sites for the exercise of power to consider too informal relationships and arenas for diplomacy. Chapters consider the diplomat's role in Rome (the most developed diplomatic centre of its day); the relevance of family and friendship networks in Casali's career; the importance of hospitality and liberality in diplomatic life; gift-giving and 'bribery'. Drawing on recent scholarship relating to such issues as the house, household and gift-giving, the thesis situates Renaissance diplomacy in its broader social context. It thus contributes to the new trend among historians of diplomacy to adopt methods from social and cultural history, but, in applying the methodology of microhistory, takes this to a new level.

As well as raising new questions about the role of the resident ambassador and his interaction with other diplomatic and political actors, the case of Casali and his family draws attention to the important issue of the employment of foreigners in diplomatic service during this period, allowing a consideration of how loyalty was understood and allegiances were managed. The thesis argues that the literature to date has failed to acknowledge the variety of advantages that such men afforded to their employers. In identifying some key patterns of diplomatic practice during these years, this study aims to contribute some benchmarks against which historians can in future assess particular diplomatic missions, variations in the practice of different countries and changes in the structure and practice of diplomacy over time.

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It goes without saying that any errors are entirely my own.

Note on names, spelling and transcriptions

The spelling of names has, as far as possible, been standardised in line with the *Dictionary of National Biography* for English names and the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* for Italian names. Except in the case of monarchs for whom standard English names exist (Charles V, Francis I) I have avoided anglicising foreign names, so, for example, Gregorio Casali and Pietro Vanni are used in preference to Gregory Casale and Peter Vannes.

In quoting from printed collections, I have maintained the conventions of spelling and transcription employed by the editors. In transcriptions, original spelling has been maintained, punctuation has been modernised and abbreviations have been silently expanded, except where the meaning is obvious, as in Dⁿⁱ for Domini or R^{mi} for Reverendissimi. Square brackets have been used to indicate my suggestions in cases where there is damage to the manuscript. Except where stated, all translations are my own; when quoting directly or paraphrasing closely from a non-English source I have included the original language in a footnote.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the thesis:

ACdM	Archivio dei Casali di Monticelli d'Ongina
ASB	Archivio di Stato di Bologna
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASMn	Archivio di Stato di Mantova
ASMo	Archivio di Stato di Modena
ASR	Archivio di Stato di Roma
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
ASVe	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BL	British Library
BUB	Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna
Burnet	Gilbert Burnet, <i>History of the Reformation of the Church of England</i>
Contarini	Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, Codices Italiani VII, 1043 (=7616) Lettere di Gasparo Contarini (1528-1529)
<i>CSP Sp</i>	<i>Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers relating to the negotiations between England and Spain</i>
<i>CSP Ven</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English affairs existing in the archives and collections of Venice</i>
<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Dolet	Étienne Dolet, 'Étienne Dolet on the functions of the ambassador, 1541'
<i>L&P</i>	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i>
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
Mattingly	Garrett Mattingly, <i>Renaissance Diplomacy</i>
Molini	Giuseppe Molini (ed.), <i>Documenti di Storia Italiana</i>
Pocock	Nicholas Pocock (ed.), <i>Records of the Reformation: The Divorce 1527-1533</i>
Sanudo	Marin Sanudo, <i>I Diarii</i>
<i>St P</i>	<i>State Papers Published under the Authority of Her Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth</i>
Theiner	Augustinis Theiner, <i>Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum: Historiam Illustrantia</i>
TNA	The National Archives
Wall	Thomas Wall, <i>The Voyage of Sir Nicholas Carewe to the Emperor Charles V in the year 1529</i>
b.	busta
c.	carta (leaf)
f.	folio.

Full publication details of the works listed above are given in the bibliography. When referring to the *Letters and Papers* and *Calendars of State Papers*, I have given document numbers, except in the case of the unnumbered Chamber Accounts, where a page reference is given. When citing Sanudo's diaries, I have given column numbers. For ease of reference, I have cited the relevant *Letters and Papers* number alongside details of the manuscript and printed sources.

Introduction

Renaissance diplomacy in practice: the case of Gregorio Casali, England's ambassador to the papal court, 1525-33

Surrey [to Wolsey]: Item, you sent a large commission
To Gregory de Cassado, to conclude,
Without the King's will or the state's allowance,
A league between his highness and Ferrara.

William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *All Is True [Henry VIII]*
Act 3, Scene 2.¹

FOR almost eight years, Gregorio Casali was England's resident ambassador at the papal court. In that time, he saw the Sack of Rome and the English schism with the papacy. He died before his fortieth birthday, and if he is remembered at all it is with a passing name-check in a minor Shakespearean play and a handful of mentions in the standard works on Henry VIII and Wolsey. It is more than fifty years since George B. Parks wrote in *The English Traveler to Italy* that Casali 'deserves a biography', but to date his invitation has not been taken up.²

I first came across Casali and his role in English diplomacy in J. J. Scarisbrick's classic biography of Henry VIII.³ The idea that a foreigner could have acted as ambassador for the king of England seemed to this twenty-first century reader quite alien. What possible advantages could such a choice have brought? Surely it would have posed serious dangers of disloyalty? When I began to look into Casali's career, it rapidly became apparent that this was not the only question his employment raised. His extensive family network, exploited in the business of diplomacy, was a striking feature. So were the ways that his colleagues praised him: in terms of the liberality of his household and the honourable service he provided to the king. At first sight, however, the literature on early modern diplomacy offered little assistance in understanding these issues. Instead, it was dominated by the quest for diplomatic history's 'holy grail': the origins of modern diplomacy. One looked in

¹ *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: Norton, 1997), p. 3166.

² George B. Parks, *The English Traveler to Italy* vol. 1 The Middle Ages (to 1525) (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1954), p. 317.

³ J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971).

vain for an explanation of how the diplomatic system worked in practice, or an account of what a Renaissance ambassador did from day to day. Gregorio Casali, and his family, thus became the starting point for an investigation of these questions.

In an overview of Henry VIII's diplomacy, Gary M. Bell has commented:

While we know much about the major occurrences in international relations, we know far less about the people, processes and peregrinations of diplomacy.⁴

That is a fair summary, and Gregorio Casali is a case in point. Despite his role during the key years running up to the English schism with Rome, no dedicated study of Casali has been published, with the exception of Giovanni Sitoni's short 1731 genealogical volume, *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae*, and his entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*.⁵ Nor, beyond their *DBI* entries, is there any literature on his brothers Giambattista (employed as England's ambassador to Venice), Francesco (an ambassador for King John Zápolya of Hungary to Rome) or Paolo (a papal nuncio to England). The most extensive discussions of the family's role in English diplomacy are to be found in two sources: the unpublished DPhil thesis of D. S. Chambers, and the manuscript of Edward Surtz's *Henry VIII's Great Matter in Italy*, posthumously published in microfilm but never as a book.⁶ In neither case, however, is the role of Gregorio or his family central to the work: Chambers' focus is the English Cardinal Bainbridge, while Surtz considers the many Italian scholars and theologians involved in the 'divorce' case.⁷ Nor do the major works concerning Henry VIII's first divorce deal in any substantial way with the day-to-day workings of the diplomacy.⁸ One of the aims of this thesis, therefore, will be to shed

⁴ Gary M. Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history and the Henrician experience', in Robert L. Woods, Charles Hope Carlton, Mary L. Robertson, Joseph S. Block (eds), *State, sovereigns and society in early modern England: essays in honour of A. J. Slavin* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), pp. 25-43 (p. 27).

⁵ Giovanni Sitoni (John Seton), *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae, olim Cortonae principum, dein Bononiae, ac Placentiae patriciorum, et oppidi Monticellorum in diocesi burgi S. Domnini Marchionum, Chronogenealogica Monumenta* (1731). A. Prosperi, 'Casali, Gregorio', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960-).

⁶ D. S. Chambers, 'English representation at the court of Rome in the early Tudor period' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1961-62). Edward Surtz, *Henry VIII's Great Matter in Italy: An Introduction to Representative Italians in the King's Divorce, mainly 1527-1535* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1974).

⁷ Although Henry VIII was, strictly speaking, seeking a ruling that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was invalid, I have followed Bedouelle and Le Gal in using the word 'divorce' on the basis that in the common parlance of the period, and even in some canonical literature, it was frequently used to refer to a declaration of nullity. Guy Bedouelle and Patrick Le Gal, *Le 'divorce' du roi Henry VIII: études et documents* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 12.

⁸ Accounts of the divorce are given in J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1971), pp. 219-397 and Geoffrey de C. Parmiter, *The King's Great Matter: A Study of Anglo-Papal Relations*

new light on a significant figure whom scholars have unjustly neglected. It does not set out to revisit the events of the divorce, which are well known; rather, the thesis will use a case study of this Italian nobleman in the English diplomatic service to examine the everyday practice of diplomacy, its structures and its key agents. An initial reading of the English archive sources concerning Casali highlighted a number of areas for investigation: his family network, his household, his role in gift-giving and, of course, the important issue of the employment of foreigners as ambassadors. While the literature on diplomacy in general affords very limited consideration to such factors, each of them has attracted scholarly attention of late and the thesis will draw on this extensive recent literature to contextualise diplomatic activity in its broader social and cultural environment.

In order to understand Casali's role as Henry VIII's resident ambassador in Rome, it has been necessary to consider what Bell calls the 'processes and peregrinations of diplomacy' from new perspectives. In its adoption of methods from social and cultural history, this thesis responds to recent calls for a 'new diplomatic history' that sets out to investigate ambassadorial activity 'from below'.⁹ The precise nature of the 'new diplomatic history' is still being worked out, but studies over the past fifteen years have employed a variety of methodological approaches.¹⁰ In many cases, however, these works aim to illuminate not so much diplomatic practice as a variety of other issues relating to the early modern state and political culture. Indeed, the turn in diplomatic history was foreshadowed by developments in broader scholarship on politics and the state, and the increasing attention paid by historians to what Giorgio Chittolini has described as 'privatistic' political forces.¹¹

1527-34 (London, Longmans, Green, 1967); for Wolsey's role see Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1990), pp. 501-48. Several studies focus on specific aspects of the divorce: H. A. Kelly, *The Matrimonial Trials of Henry VIII* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976) looks at proceedings from the legal point of view; Edward Surtz and Virginia Murphy (eds), *The Divorce Tracts of Henry VIII* (Angers: Moreana, 1988) is an edition of contemporary texts written to justify it; Bedouelle and Le Gal, *Le 'divorce'* brings together some of the theological debate.

⁹ On the 'new diplomatic history' see John Watkins, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008), 1-14, the introduction to Daniela Frigo (ed.), *Ambasciatori e nunzi. Figure della diplomazia in età moderna*, (= *Cheiron* 30 (1998)), p. 7, and Lucien Bély, 'La naissance de la diplomatie moderne', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 3 (2007), 271-94 (p. 272).

¹⁰ For example, prosopography in Franca Leverotti, *Diplomazia e governo dello stato: I "famigli cavalcanti" di Francesco Sforza (1450-1466)* (Pisa: Gism-ETS, 1992) and biography in Toby Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy in the Court of Savoy: Political culture and the thirty years' war* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹¹ See the collected essays in Julius Kirshner (ed.), *The Origins of the State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Particularly relevant to this study, with

Among the first exponents of the ‘new diplomatic history’ was Paolo Margaroli, whose introduction to his study of fifteenth-century Milanese diplomacy identifies three principal strands of literature within the broad field of Renaissance diplomatic history.¹² The first employs diplomatic sources in order to reconstruct the ‘facts’. The second, typified by the approaches of Garrett Mattingly and Donald Queller, attempts to reconstruct the development of the ‘office’ of resident ambassador.¹³ The third focuses on the relationship between Renaissance humanism and diplomacy. Margaroli argues that none of these approaches offers an adequate explanation of the diplomacy of the new Sforza regime in Milan which is the focus of his case study, and nor, as this thesis will demonstrate, can they account for Casali’s career. It will likewise propose new methods of investigation, but whereas Margaroli sets out to reconstruct every Milanese diplomatic mission between 1450 and 1455, assessing their characteristics in the general context of the evolution of diplomatic forms and the equilibrium between the new and old Milanese regimes,¹⁴ this thesis offers instead a microhistorical approach to the study of diplomacy, emphasising the insights to be gained through attention to social and cultural factors. It will further argue that the classic studies of this subject are hamstrung by their failure to distinguish clearly between the diplomacy of republics and monarchies. This particular limitation can be divided into two sub-problems: a historiographical tendency to privilege the role of the Italian republics, and a methodological problem of elision between republican and princely diplomacy in discussion. This introduction will begin by discussing the relative merits of a focus on diplomatic practice and a focus on institutions and connect this debate to the problem of differentiating between royal and republican diplomacy. The second section will set out the current state of research on the development of resident diplomacy, examining recent critiques of the traditional ‘modernisation’ narrative. A third

extensive bibliography, is Giorgio Chittolini, ‘The “Private”, the “Public”, the State’, pp. 34-61 (pp. 40-41), although as will become clear, I think Chittolini’s hostility to microhistory is misplaced. For an excellent recent introduction to developments in the broader sphere of Renaissance political history, where new methodologies have likewise been adopted more readily, see John M. Najemy, ‘Politics and political thought’, Chapter 13 in Jonathan Woolfson (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 270-97.

¹² Paolo Margaroli, *Diplomazia e stati rinascimentali: Le ambascerie Sforzesche fino alla conclusione della Lega Italica (1450-1455)* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1992), pp. 7-8.

¹³ Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); Donald E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

¹⁴ Margaroli, *Diplomazia*, p. 10.

section will present the research methodology and the variety of sources that underpin the thesis.

THE decision to investigate the diplomatic practice and role of a resident ambassador rather ‘the resident ambassador’ as an institution follows Daniela Frigo’s argument in a wide-ranging and convincing article on the role of the ambassador in the early modern period that during the sixteenth century diplomacy should be regarded as a *prassi*, that is, a usual procedure, or a series of practices adopted as circumstances required.¹⁵ The opposition ‘practice’ versus ‘institution’ is the focus of a current historiographical debate about the establishment of permanent resident diplomacy among the Italian states (and beyond) during the fifteenth century. The classic account – that of Garrett Mattingly in his *Renaissance Diplomacy* – is that by the 1450s Naples, Venice, Florence and Milan:

Had established permanent embassies with each other... Thereafter only open war interrupted this reciprocal representation among the four.¹⁶

Riccardo Fubini, however, has described this assessment as ‘anachronistic, indeed unthinkable’.¹⁷ He argues that the lack of any clear juridical definition of the ambassador, and the ‘inherent lack of institutionality’ of resident embassies render the concept of ‘residentiality’ highly problematic.¹⁸ Fubini’s approach is the subject of some criticism on the part of Vincent Ilardi, who argues that such a focus on institutions is overly legalistic and that Fubini:

Fails to consider the slow and at times casual evolution of human institutions, which are often noticed and codified much later, after they have become more mature and ubiquitous. In fact, one could almost say that it is normal for practice to precede theory.¹⁹

¹⁵ Daniela Frigo, ‘Corte, onore e ragion di stato: il ruolo dell’ambasciatore in età moderna’, in Frigo (ed.), *Ambasciatori e nunzi. Figure della diplomazia in età moderna*, (= *Cheiron* 30 (1998)), pp. 13-55 (p. 47).

¹⁶ Mattingly, p. 95.

¹⁷ Riccardo Fubini, ‘Diplomacy and government in the Italian city-states of the fifteenth century (Florence and Venice)’, in Daniela Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 25-48 (p. 27).

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 27 and Riccardo Fubini, ‘La “résidentialité” de l’ambassadeur dans le mythe et dans la réalité: une enquête sur les origines’, in Lucien Bély (ed.) *L’invention de la diplomatie. Moyen âge-temps modernes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), pp. 27-35 (p. 29).

¹⁹ Vincent Ilardi, ‘The first permanent embassy outside Italy: the Milanese embassy at the French court, 1464-1483’, in Malcolm R. Thorp and Arthur J. Slavin (eds), *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of De Lamar Jensen* (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), pp. 1-18 (p. 2).

Ilardi concedes that Fubini's approach 'may have some validity' in relation to the republics of Florence and Venice, the focus of the latter's research, but argues that it does not apply in the case of Milan. He also argues for a distinction between the 'resident embassy' of no fixed duration and the 'permanent embassy': the latter being an office for which there was a presumption of continuity, that is, that when one ambassador left the post another would replace him. Garrett Mattingly, he argues, did not 'sufficiently elucidate' this point.²⁰

While the debate on 'permanent diplomacy' in fifteenth-century Italy remains open, the discussion between Ilardi and Fubini on the beginnings of resident diplomacy raises two important methodological questions pertinent to the present study.²¹ The first concerns the relative weight to be placed on institutions and practice in analysing the diplomacy of this period. The second concerns the differences between republican and royal diplomacy. The two questions are, however, intimately connected. As Daniela Frigo has argued in an important article, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries there was a 'marked distinction' between the ambassadors of princes and those of republics: in the principalities diplomacy lacked clear rules and instead relied on the reciprocal relationship of *fidelitas* from the ambassador and 'grace' from the prince.²² The republics, on the other hand, had much more formalised systems: their statute books contain numerous injunctions relating to the conduct of ambassadors.²³ In short, while it may be possible to study the relatively well-codified diplomatic institutions of the republics, that is at best problematic and at worst misleading for the principalities. The methodological implication is obvious: an analysis of royal diplomacy requires a study first and foremost of diplomatic practice. That said, there is a distinction to be made between my own use of the term 'practice' at the micro-level and its more general use in some of the literature on this subject, where it tends to be conceived in opposition to 'theory', or 'institutions', or both. While Frigo's edited collection

²⁰ Ilardi, 'First permanent embassy', p. 2.

²¹ A further contribution on the question of permanent diplomacy is to be found in Isabella Lazzarini's study of fifteenth-century Mantua, *Fra un principe e altri stati: Relazioni di potere e forme di servizio a Mantova nell'età di Ludovico Gonzaga* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1996), pp. 77-79. She concludes that long-term residents were not employed by Mantua in the fifteenth century, an observation cited approvingly in Daniela Frigo, "'Small states" and diplomacy: Mantua and Modena', in Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy*, pp. 147-75 (p. 151).

²² Frigo, 'Corte, onore e ragion di stato', p. 14.

²³ See, for example, the collections in Donald E. Queller, *Early Venetian Legislation on Ambassadors* (Geneva: Droz, 1966) and Giuseppe Vedovato, *Note sul diritto diplomatico della repubblica fiorentina* (Florence: Sansoni, 1946).

Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800 includes the word 'practice' in its title, one searches the essays in vain for a detailed account of the ambassador's day-to-day work. Furthermore, such diplomatic practice as is discussed is rarely grounded in a broader framework, whether social, cultural or economic.

To study royal diplomacy in Renaissance Italy, furthermore, involves an important break from traditional Anglo-American historiography, which has tended to privilege republican practice. This approach is typified by the work of the American historian Garrett Mattingly who in 1955, at the height of the Cold War, supplied his readers with a 'usable history' of Renaissance diplomacy in which the opposition of progressive republic versus illegitimate tyranny loomed large. His *Renaissance Diplomacy* is still the only comprehensive English-language study of its subject, despite widespread recognition of the problems resulting from its lack of scholarly apparatus (for which at least part of the blame should be attributed to publisher, rather than author).²⁴ Mattingly's central thesis is that fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy saw a 'modernisation' process in terms of inter-state relations, and that this was centrally driven by the city-states of Florence (in the fifteenth century) and subsequently Venice. At the heart of this process lay the development of resident diplomacy, which was intrinsically linked to the development of the 'modern state'. Mattingly's work sits in a long-standing American historiographical tendency which regarded the republican tradition of Renaissance Italy as an ancestor of modern American republicanism.²⁵ In his period, the political context of the Cold War was a defining factor: in 1949, Conyers Read, president of the American Historical Association, had emphasised the duty of historians to defend 'fundamental values' against the threat of totalitarianism through the responsible education of the public.²⁶ In relation to Renaissance studies, this played out in the exaltation of the

²⁴ An appreciation of Mattingly's work is to be found in J. H. Hexter, 'Garrett Mattingly, Historian', in C. H. Carter (ed.), *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garrett Mattingly* (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 13-28. In relation to *Renaissance Diplomacy*, Hexter recounts that Mattingly, who was keen that his work should not be confined to the academy, was determined to publish with a general publishing house, rather than a university press. In order to do so, he agreed to cut one-third of his text, and subsequently destroyed the original manuscript (pp. 16-17). I am grateful to Professor Christopher Black for drawing my attention to this point.

²⁵ An excellent discussion of this historiography is to be found in Anthony Molho, 'The Italian Renaissance, Made in the USA', in Molho and Gordon S. Wood (eds), *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 263-94.

²⁶ Conyers Read, 'The Social Responsibilities of the Historian', *American Historical Review* 55 (1950), 275-85 (p. 284).

Italian republics against the tyrannies.²⁷ It was against this backdrop that Mattingly made such assessments as:

It is creditable to the alertness and realism of the Venetian and Florentine ruling classes that they were as quick as they were to appreciate the advantages of the new device [that is, of resident diplomacy]... Had there been no constitutional republics in Italy, had all the major Italian states been ruled by tyrants, it seems likely that the transition from the semi-official agent to the fully accredited resident would have been much slower.²⁸

Marcello Fantoni, a leading scholar of the Italian courts of this period, has argued that there is a 'quantitative and qualitative imbalance' in Anglophone Renaissance history, resulting from Anglo-American historians' focus on the republican city-states at the expense of the princely courts.²⁹ Mattingly provides an excellent illustration of precisely that imbalance, but although it has been questioned more recently,³⁰ the persistent influence of his broader narrative should not be underestimated. As Riccardo Fubini has noted, M. S. Anderson's textbook account *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy* – published in 1993 – does not challenge it.³¹ Nor does the history of diplomatic immunity published in 1999 by Frey and Frey.³² A good illustration of the problem is to be found in Douglas Biow's recent book, which uncritically accepts the assumption of Venetian primacy, citing Mattingly's 'magisterial study' to claim that: 'Venice thus stands at the origins of Italian Renaissance diplomacy', although Tessa Beverley has offered a cogent critique of that suggestion.³³ The difficulties have been exacerbated by a tendency in some of

²⁷ Molho, 'Italian Renaissance', p. 279. Representative texts of this tendency include Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955) and Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965). Both Baron and Gilbert are acknowledged by Mattingly in the foreword to *Renaissance Diplomacy*.

²⁸ Mattingly, p. 76.

²⁹ Marcello Fantoni, 'Un Rinascimento a metà. Le corti italiane nella storiografia anglo-americana', *Cheiron* 27-28 (1997), 403-433.

³⁰ The work of Ilardi, Margaroli and Leverotti on Milan has been important in this regard, as has that of Lazzarini and Frigo on Mantua and Modena. Paul M. Dover has argued for the importance of Neapolitan innovation in his 'Royal diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d'Aragona (1458-1494) and his ambassadors', *Mediterranean Studies* 14 (2005), 57-94.

³¹ M. S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy, 1450-1919* (Harlow: Longman, 1993). Fubini, 'Diplomacy and government', p. 25 fn. 4.

³² Linda S. and Marsha L. Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999). Similar criticism may be made of Daniel Ménager, *Diplomatie et Théologie à la Renaissance* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001).

³³ Douglas Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries: Humanism and Professions in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 103. Tessa Beverley, 'Venetian ambassadors 1454-94: an Italian elite' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 1999).

the older literature to elide between discussions of royal and republican practice.³⁴ It would be wrong, however, to attribute the problems of Mattingly's work only to its Cold War context. As Joseph P. Huffman has pointed out in an excellent introduction to the broader historiography of diplomacy, 'the Anglo-American historiographical tradition was built around Whig notions of state building and modernization'.³⁵

Nonetheless, in recent years, there has been something of a reaction to the quest for the 'modern' in Renaissance diplomacy. Riccardo Fubini has described the 'outdatedness of the traditional approach' in terms of its focus on the resident ambassador as 'the key element in the transition from medieval to modern'.³⁶ In her study of the diplomacy of Mantua and Modena, Daniela Frigo has argued that the resident ambassadors employed by the rulers of these small states were not so much 'modern' as 'part of a network of relations that was feudal in character'.³⁷ In relation to English diplomacy, Gary M. Bell has weighed in with the conclusion that Henry VIII 'handled affairs in a most personal and "medieval" fashion'.³⁸ While this process of re-assessment is timely and welcome, there is a certain danger in replacing the maxim that Renaissance diplomacy was 'modern' with the maxim that it was 'medieval' (and, presumably, became 'modern' at some later stage). These concepts were not available to the people engaged in the diplomacy of the 1520s and it is questionable how useful they are to our analysis. It may be possible to say, for example, that certain diplomatic practices of this period look more 'feudal' than others, but the thesis will, in general, take the view that it is more important to situate them in the context of contemporary values and understandings than to impose what is bound to be an artificial line between medieval and modern diplomacy.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that the limited recent research on Tudor diplomacy has been dominated by a debate about precisely the point at which English practices were 'modernised'. Gary M. Bell has argued that prior to the reign of Elizabeth I diplomacy was largely the preserve of the 'talented amateur'.³⁹ However, that view

³⁴ Particularly problematic in this regard is Queller, *Office of Ambassador*.

³⁵ Joseph P. Huffman, *The Social Politics of Medieval Diplomacy: Anglo-German Relations (1066-1307)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 5-6.

³⁶ Fubini, 'Diplomacy and government', p. 25. See also, on this question, his 'L'ambasciatore nel XV secolo: Due trattati e una biografia (Bernard de Rosier, Ermolao Barbaro, Vespasiano da Bisticci)' *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen âge* 108 (1996), 645-65.

³⁷ Frigo, '"Small states" and diplomacy', p. 152.

³⁸ Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history', pp. 37-38.

³⁹ In his 'Elizabethan diplomacy: the subtle revolution', in Thorp and Slavin (eds), *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy*, pp. 267-88 (p. 272).

has been challenged by Luke MacMahon, who argues that most of the innovations attributed by Bell to Elizabeth can be ‘readily identified’ in Henrician diplomacy, and by Tracey Sowerby, whose analysis of Sir Richard Morison’s diplomatic career under Henry and Edward VI similarly casts doubt on Bell’s thesis and concludes with a call for further research.⁴⁰ This study of Casali will contribute to the debate about the extent to which Henrician diplomacy can be characterised as professional, but will also suggest that it is problematic to assume that English diplomatic practice became ‘modern’ in a straightforward, linear fashion, suggesting that greater attention should be paid to the disruptive impact of the schism with Rome on its development.

A SECOND important debate about the early stages of resident diplomacy concerns the relative power of resident and special ambassadors, and the study of the career of Gregorio Casali, a resident diplomat, will enable the thesis to contribute new insights relating to the significance of the resident’s role. The traditional view of the resident ambassador in the early sixteenth century was that he was the junior partner, and any serious negotiations were dealt with by special envoys. Writing in the 1930s, Betty Behrens summed it up: ‘the resident ambassador collected the news and the special ambassadors did the negotiating’. The resident was ‘invariably their inferior, and often little better than their servant’.⁴¹ Thirty years later, Paolo Prodi concurred: the resident was almost never entrusted with the conclusion of great political negotiations, for which a special ambassador would be sent. The latter would be able to convey his prince’s will more directly, and often more authoritatively, because the resident was ‘almost always a lower-ranking agent’.⁴² Subsequently, however, this view was questioned. John Ferguson’s investigation of English diplomacy in the first half of the fifteenth century revealed that the supposed medieval precedents for the hierarchy of diplomats in the fifteenth and sixteenth century were illusory: in reality,

⁴⁰ Luke MacMahon, ‘The ambassadors of Henry VIII: the personnel of English diplomacy, c.1500-c.1550’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kent, 1999), p. 280. Tracey A. Sowerby, “‘A brave knight and learned gentleman’: the careers of Sir Richard Morison (c. 1513-1556)”, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2005), pp. 20-21. Sowerby also questions Bell’s view in “‘All our books do be sent into other countreys and translated’: Henrician polemic in its international context’, *English Historical Review* 121 (2006), 1271-99 (pp. 1298-99).

⁴¹ Betty Behrens, ‘The office of the English resident ambassador: its evolution as illustrated by the career of Sir Thomas Spinelly, 1509-22’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, 16 (1933), 161-95 (pp. 163-64).

⁴² Paolo Prodi, *Diplomazia del Cinquecento: Istituzioni e prassi* (Bologna: Prof. Riccardo Pàtron, 1963), p. 57.

there were only two types of medieval envoy, those who had powers to negotiate and those who did not.⁴³ Charles Giry-Deloison has argued that this simple differentiation between ambassador and messenger remained applicable to Anglo-French diplomacy in the early sixteenth century.⁴⁴ While that may be true, it does not address the relative powers of resident and special ambassadors; on this point, however, David Potter has proposed a more subtle distinction:

Resident ambassadors, often cut off for some time from instructions, had the widest room for manoeuvre but sometimes did not have the political clout of the chamber diplomats and nobles sent out on special embassy.⁴⁵

Luke MacMahon has further qualified this point in relation to English diplomacy under Henry VIII, arguing that there was a relationship between the ‘quality of the men appointed to resident positions’ and their increasing responsibility for ‘the performance of highly sensitive tasks’.⁴⁶ In analysing Casali’s role in English diplomacy it has therefore been important to assess his ‘quality’, taking into account not only his personal abilities as an ambassador, but such factors as his social status and connections, his wealth and his relationships of trust in both England and Rome.

In terms of Italian diplomacy, Daniela Frigo has argued that while the distinction between resident and special ambassadors was relatively well-defined in the political literature of the period, the theory was not always followed through in practice, where the lines were less clear.⁴⁷ There were, she argues, grades of ambassador, and the extent to which they were entrusted with sensitive missions, or with full knowledge of their prince’s intentions, depended principally on the level of confidence that their masters placed in them. The interaction between special and resident ambassadors will be discussed in detail in Chapter One. It should, however, be noted here that given the rapid development of the diplomatic system over the

⁴³ John Ferguson, *English Diplomacy 1422-1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 148-49. On this point Ferguson’s polemic is aimed at both Behrens and Donald Queller. For some revisions to Ferguson’s account, and a critique of the ‘modernisation’ thesis based on a study of late medieval diplomacy see Edward L. Meek, ‘The conduct of diplomacy during the reign of Edward IV (1461-1483)’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2001), especially pp. 20-44.

⁴⁴ Charles Giry-Deloison, ‘Le personnel diplomatique au début du XVI^e siècle. L’exemple des relations franco-anglaises de l’avènement de Henry VII au Camp du Drap d’Or (1485-1520)’, *Journal des Savants* (July-December 1987), 205-53 (p. 208).

⁴⁵ David Potter, ‘Foreign policy’, in Diarmaid MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 101-33 (p. 105). Potter discusses the role of the ambassador in the context of Anglo-French diplomacy in much greater depth in Chapter Six of his ‘Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century: England and France, 1536-1550’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1973), pp. 272-343.

⁴⁶ MacMahon, ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Frigo, ‘Corte, onore e ragion di stato’, p. 36.

two-and-a-half centuries that Frigo's article discusses, some care needs to be taken with applying her conclusions across time. What may be clear at the end of the sixteenth century is not necessarily so well-defined at the beginning.

It is unfortunate that, to date, there has been little dialogue between scholars such as Frigo, working on Italian diplomacy, and those engaged in the Anglo-French studies cited above. There is clearly a considerable overlap in their conclusions and, given that by the end of the fifteenth century the European powers were regular participants in the Italian diplomatic system, some greater integration of the two literatures, considering the development of European diplomatic representation in Italy, is urgently needed. Michael Levin's recent book on the Spanish ambassadors in sixteenth-century Venice and Rome is fascinating political history, but is primarily an analysis of Spanish imperialism and its limitations and not of diplomatic practice.⁴⁸ Much work remains to be done, but it is to be hoped that this thesis will demonstrate the considerable advantages to be gained from a closer integration of the various literatures.

IN an entertaining memoir of his career, the twentieth-century Canadian diplomat Kenneth P. Kirkwood commented:

History is normally the account of great affairs of state; and most diplomats' memoirs and reminiscences deal in part with historical episodes and affairs of state in which they had some small and passing role. But, in the way of life, there are also the sidelines of diplomatic life, the trivial and the comic, the incidentals and diversions – though each may have some unapparent significance. Dining is of importance in diplomacy, and wining; and cocktails have taken the place of the important old coffee shops.⁴⁹

Like diplomats' memoirs and reminiscences, the traditional type of diplomatic history has been and remains concerned with 'great affairs'. However, I agree with Kirkwood that in the many sidelines of embassy life, it is possible to find details of importance. This is particularly true of the Renaissance, a period in which diplomacy was never an individual's sole occupation and, as the thesis will demonstrate, a distinction between 'public' and 'private' makes little sense. Kirkwood's emphasis on the significance of the apparently 'trivial' has a striking echo in the questions

⁴⁸ Michael J. Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁴⁹ Kenneth P. Kirkwood, *The Diplomat at Table: A Social and Anecdotal History Through the Looking-Glass* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), p. 3.

addressed by this thesis. It also reflects the methodological approach of microhistory, which is likewise concerned with the observation of ‘trifles’, and has been a substantial influence on my research.⁵⁰ As Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni have argued, the ‘reduced scale’ of microhistory enables a ‘reconstitution of “real life” unthinkable in other kinds of historiography’.⁵¹ By working at the level of small groups, the method permits a greater understanding of history as it was experienced by the individuals involved. That said, in focusing on a group of elite political actors, the Roman diplomatic corps, this thesis departs from the usual terrain of microhistory, which has principally been employed to study more marginal elements of society. Ginzburg, one of the leading exponents of the method, introduced the first edition of his best-known work, *The Cheese and the Worms*, by counterposing his new history to the old-fashioned focus on ‘great men’:

In the past historians could be accused of wanting to know only about ‘the great deeds of kings,’ but today this is certainly no longer true. More and more they are turning toward what their predecessors passed over in silence, discarded or simply ignored.⁵²

I would argue that this is a somewhat false – or at least dated – counterposition, and that the techniques of microhistory have much to offer to the historian trying to analyse and understand the political world of the past. The issues dealt with in this thesis at the micro-level – the role of family networks, of the household, of gift-giving – illustrate the culture in which ambassadors operated and the standards which governed their world in a way that bigger, more ‘broad-brush’ studies have not revealed. The method has the potential to provide a more nuanced understanding of

⁵⁰ See Edward Muir, ‘Introduction: observing trifles’, in Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. vii–xxviii, Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Clues: roots of an evidential paradigm’ in his *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990), pp. 96–125 and Giovanni Levi, ‘On microhistory’, in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 97–119. Some examples of microhistory include Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and marriage in Renaissance Florence* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986); Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring: Vendetta and factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Elizabeth S. Cohen, ‘Miscarriages of apothecary justice: un-separate spaces of work and family in early modern Rome’, *Renaissance Studies* 21 (2007), 480–504.

⁵¹ Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, ‘The name and the game: unequal exchange and the historiographic marketplace’, in Muir and Ruggiero, *Microhistory*, pp. 1–10 (p. 8).

⁵² Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi: Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), p. xi. Translation from *The Cheese and the Worms* trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. xiii.

the functioning of diplomacy than studies focusing on longer-term development and change permit.

The criticism most commonly aimed at microhistory relates to its representativeness. How can we know whether – in this case – Gregorio Casali is a typical, or an atypical Renaissance diplomat? Is it legitimate to draw general conclusions on the basis of a study of his career? As will become apparent, however, a focus on Casali in reality offers an insight not only into the work of an individual, but also into a web of relationships: Casali is studied here in relation to other diplomats, to his family members, and to a range of political actors. His career thus provides a window on an entire social world, enabling us to examine the habits and customs of this milieu.

In its methodological approach, this thesis makes a distinctive contribution to the ‘new diplomatic history’ discussed above, which may be illustrated by comparison with two studies representative of the tendency, those of Leverotti and Margaroli. Leverotti employs a prosopographical method to investigate a group of diplomats in the service of Francesco Sforza known as the ‘famuli equitantes’ (riding servants) during the period 1450-1466.⁵³ She argues that a focus on individuals is vital to understanding institutional developments in this period, and has particular relevance in the case of signorial diplomacy.⁵⁴ However, her emphasis is firmly on the ‘social history of institutions’ and on how developments in the particular institution under investigation can illuminate the process by which Sforza established a new ruling dynasty in Milan. She does not engage with questions of diplomatic culture, nor with the informal elements of diplomatic practice that will be considered in this thesis. Margaroli’s study similarly focuses on the role of diplomacy in the formation of the new Milanese regime, on a broader scale (examining every recorded embassy) but over a shorter period (1450-55) than that considered by Leverotti. While the book is extraordinarily rich in detail – we learnt who went where, who they met, and the aim of their mission – once again it does not attempt to examine the everyday culture and practice of diplomacy from the point of view of the actors themselves. Although both Leverotti and Margaroli consider relatively brief time periods, neither study can properly be said to take a microhistorical approach in the

⁵³ Franca Leverotti, *Diplomazia e governo dello stato: I “famigli cavalcanti” di Francesco Sforza (1450-1466)* (Pisa: Gisem-ETS, 1992).

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 10.

sense proposed by Ginzburg and Poni, because they do not attempt to evoke the ‘real life’ experienced by the ambassadors they discuss. Similar comments may be made in relation to much else written under the banner of ‘new diplomatic history’.

THE Italian provenance of microhistory has much to do with the wealth of archive sources available on the peninsula for all manner of studies. It is a similar richness of sources that has enabled the present study of a single career with a relatively limited time-scale. The thesis focuses principally on the years 1525 to 1533, when Gregorio Casali was England’s resident ambassador at the papal court, but it also considers his early career and the short subsequent period during which he remained an unofficial agent of the English (from 1533, the break of formal diplomatic relations between England and Rome, to his death in 1536). The very extensive documentation relating to these years, in relation to events following the capture of Francis I, king of France, in 1525, the Sack of Rome in 1527, and the negotiations over Henry VIII’s ‘divorce’ from Catherine of Aragon, provides substantial material for analysis. In researching the thesis, I have drawn on a wide range of source material in both England and Italy, a large part of it previously uncharted. As well as various printed collections of diplomatic documents, I have been able to consult archive material in London, Paris, Rome, Venice, Mantua, and a number of other Italian cities; that said, in the case of the Imperial archives practical constraints have meant that I have had to rely on printed sources and those transcripts available in the collections of the British Library which, unfortunately, do not include the Casali correspondence relating to Hungary that survives in Vienna.⁵⁵ There are, of course, a number of problems in the use of diplomatic correspondence as a source.⁵⁶ The ambassadors, aware of the importance of their mission, take care to portray themselves and their work in the best possible light; the surviving letters, furthermore, tend to be those written about political developments. The details they provide, however, of such things as entertainment or the role of servants, although marginal to the main content, can nonetheless be exploited to provide a picture of the everyday functioning of

⁵⁵ The Hungarian correspondence will be treated in a forthcoming doctoral thesis on diplomatic networks in eastern Europe by Megan Williams of Columbia University. I am grateful to Megan for discussing her findings with me. It is apparent that the Hungarian material tends to confirm rather than contradict the conclusions presented here.

⁵⁶ See for example the discussion in Osborne, *Dynasty and Diplomacy*, p. 11, which points out that ambassadors might have reasons for ‘spinning’ information, and the consideration of Venetian *relazioni* in Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 57-70.

diplomacy and its apparently minor figures. This process of ‘reading across’ the correspondence, as opposed to treating it in Rankean fashion as a source of information about events, has led to a variety of new insights.

A series of treatises on the office of ambassador, written in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as those of Ermolao Barbaro and Étienne Dolet, have been exploited in a number of studies to date, principally in an attempt to elucidate the development of that office.⁵⁷ In the context of this thesis, they have been a useful prescriptive source, and by reading ‘between the lines’ it has been possible to discern some of the authors’ preoccupations and anxieties about diplomacy. An important counterpoint to these better-known treatises has been Paride Grassi’s *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae*, which was written principally between 1505 and 1509, but worked on up until at least 1516, while its author was papal master-of-ceremonies.⁵⁸ While Grassi’s diary is relatively well-known as a historical source (though has never been published), this treatise has received little scholarly attention, except in relation to its comments on African ambassadors.⁵⁹ It has been highly valuable in the present study, furnishing vital keys for interpreting diplomatic conduct at the papal court, particularly in relation to questions of ceremony, precedence and gift-giving. We can reasonably suppose that this treatise was used well beyond the immediate years of its composition: we know, for example, from the diary of Grassi’s successor Biagio Martinelli that in a 1529 dispute over precedence between the ambassadors of Mantua and Monferrato he responded to a query from the Pope ‘according to our ceremonies and the annotations of my predecessors’.⁶⁰ This diary, covering the

⁵⁷ For an introduction to these treatises, see Betty Behrens, ‘Treatises on the ambassador written in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries’, *English Historical Review* 51 (1936), 616-627. A broader but very dated survey is in J. J. Jusserand, ‘The School for Ambassadors’, *American Historical Review* 27 (1922), 426-64. Some of the key documents are published in V. E. Hrabar, *De legatis et legationibus tractatus varii* (Dorpat, 1905). More recent analyses are to be found in Fubini, ‘L’ambasciatore nel XV secolo’, and Maurizio Bazzoli, ‘Ragion di stato e interessi degli stati. La trattatistica sull’ambasciatore dal XV al XVIII secolo’, *Nuova Rivista Storica* 86 (2002), 283-328. Some limitations of these studies are dealt with in Chapter Three of the thesis.

⁵⁸ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vaticani Latini 12270 is the only surviving sixteenth-century copy of the manuscript. It is in several hands, with additions by the author. There are also two seventeenth-century copies, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12409 and BAV, MS Barberini Latini 2452. A description of the manuscripts is contained in Marc Dykmans, ‘Paris de Grassi II’, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 99 (1985), 383-417 (pp. 400-03), the second part of a three-part biographical and bibliographical article on de Grassi, the other sections of which are ‘Paris de Grassi’, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 96 (1982), 407-482 and ‘Paris de Grassi III’, *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 100 (1986), 270-333.

⁵⁹ Most recently in Kate Lowe, ‘“Representing” Africa: Ambassadors and Princes from Christian Africa to Renaissance Italy and Portugal, 1402-1608’ in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th series, 17 (2007), 101-28 (p. 119).

⁶⁰ ‘Respondi secundum ceremonias nostras, et annotationes predecessorum meorum’. BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 92r. Similarly during a dispute between the English and Hungarian ambassadors,

period 1518-40, and similarly unpublished, has also been a useful source in terms of establishing the ceremonial elements of diplomatic practice during this period.⁶¹

The existence of significant material relating to the Casali family's affairs in the private archives of the Casali and Isolani-Lupari families, as well as the state archives of Bologna and Rome, has permitted a consideration of Gregorio Casali's diplomatic career within the broader social perspective of the activities of noble families during this period. A number of chronicles of Bologna, some published and some in manuscript in the Biblioteca Universitaria, have illuminated the history of the Casali family and their role in the city, as have documents in the library of the Convento di San Domenico, Bologna. Details of the material culture of diplomatic life have been gleaned both from these and from the rich source that is the herald Thomas Wall's contemporary account of the voyage of the ambassador Sir Nicholas Carew to the Emperor.⁶² While it is invariably difficult to find evidence for the illicit aspects of diplomatic activity, the personal archive of the cardinal of Ravenna, Benedetto Accolti, documents in some detail his underhand interactions with the English diplomats, as do the records of his trial for abuse of power. The fact that several of the cardinal's servants were questioned about their master's conduct provides a rare opportunity for the researcher to study the point of view of servants and agents involved in diplomatic practice, albeit as recorded by their interrogators. The employment of this variety of sources has enabled a fuller reconstruction of the ambassador's role than a reliance on the diplomatic correspondence and treaties alone would have permitted.

In order to set Gregorio Casali's career in context, the thesis will begin with an introduction to the functioning of the diplomatic corps in Rome, the 'theatre of the world'. While specific aspects of diplomacy at Rome (particularly the question of precedence) have been the subject of some scholarly discussion, no general analysis is available, and Chapter One is thus a first attempt to understand the structures and practices of diplomacy at the Curia, and the role there of the resident diplomat. It

Martinelli was sent by the Pope to see the Hungarian ambassador, to whom 'ostendi plures decisiones ceremoniarum et predecessorum meorum in officio per quae dabatur precedentia Angliae'; *ibid*, f. 87r.

⁶¹ BAV, MS Vatican Latini 12276: Biagio Martinelli da Cesena, *Diario 1518-1532*, and BAV, MS Barberini Latini 2799: Biagio Martinelli da Cesena, *Diario 1518-1540*.

⁶² Thomas Wall, *The Voyage of Sir Nicholas Carewe to the Emperor Charles V in the year 1529*, ed. R. J. Knecht (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959). Knecht dates the manuscript to within four years of the voyage, p. 2.

thereby sets the scene for subsequent discussion of how and where one particular resident carried out his work. Chapter Two highlights the importance of social networks and personal connections in the diplomacy of this period through a case-study of Gregorio Casali's career. It discusses Casali's family background and social status, his early career as a junior diplomat and in the military sphere, his identity as a 'cavalier', and the advancement that he and members of his family gained through their involvement in diplomacy. The considerable recent scholarship on the Italian nobility, their family strategies and ideas about 'nobility' and 'chivalry' is employed to contextualise these findings.

Chapter Three discusses the house, household and hospitality in diplomatic practice. Leading on from Chapter Two, which highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between 'private' family business and 'public' diplomatic business, this chapter continues to focus on the problematic distinction between official/unofficial and formal/informal through a consideration of the spaces in which diplomacy was practised, drawing on the latest research relating to the Renaissance home. It analyses the symbolic and instrumental functions of diplomatic hospitality, and the importance of splendour, as well as addressing practical questions about the ambassador's house and household, assessing how contemporary writings on the general question of household management can inform our understanding of diplomatic practice. Referring to discussions on the importance of liberality and hospitality, particularly in the works of Giovanni Pontano, both Chapters Three and Four ask how these were expressed in the context of diplomacy. Chapter Four investigates another key element in the working of diplomacy, gift-giving, analysing the different types of gift given by ambassadors in the context of the extensive theoretical debates about the gift economy in the early modern period. It examines the efforts made to regulate gift-giving, and the rhetoric used to situate gifts in the context of socially-accepted norms, focusing in particular on the question of what constituted 'corruption' in this period, and highlighting the ambiguities that could arise from the ambassador's dual persona as private individual and royal representative. Chapter Five returns to the role of Gregorio Casali and to a consideration of the employment of foreigners in diplomatic service during this period, a matter which has received only sketchy consideration in the literature. It assesses the specific advantages for princes in employing foreigners, emphasising that these went beyond such considerations as social networks and encompassed too

important possibilities for dissimulation and subterfuge; it also examines the risks of the system for both prince and ambassador. Finally, the chapter analyses the ways in which multiple relationships of allegiance were understood, and how the Casali family managed them both before and after the English schism with Rome.

In the fifty years since the publication of Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy*, there have been many developments in historical methodology. Diplomatic history, for many years not the most fashionable of academic sub-disciplines, has been slow to exploit them. Yet methods such as microhistory, drawing on cultural and anthropological approaches, have much to offer the study of even such things as the 'king's great matter' and the men it engaged. To understand the diplomatic practice of men like Casali, the development of the resident ambassador's role and how he functioned as a representative of his prince, the historian needs to try and establish how he – and others around him – understood his work.

Chapter One

“No actors or jesters to be present at Consistory”: the functioning of the diplomatic corps at Rome

WHEN the papal master-of-ceremonies Paride Grassi wrote that during diplomatic audiences no actors or jesters should be present at Consistory, his comment was more than a little ironic.¹ For much of the diplomatic ceremony at Rome was a matter of theatre: a means for the European princes to display their power and assert their precedence. It was heavily symbolic. When ambassadors acted out their roles on the grand liturgical occasions, as bearers of the papal canopy or train, or of water to wash the Pontiff's hands, they were playing the part of their princes in the 'theatre of the world'. Yet diplomatic representation at Rome also had a deeply practical side: ambassadors had vital daily business as negotiators and gatherers of information. Drawing on the wealth of information in Grassi's treatise on ambassadors, this chapter will discuss these symbolic and practical functions, and the balance between them. It will begin by considering the men who formed the diplomatic corps, the particular importance of lay ambassadors, and the role of resident ambassadors in relation to special envoys and cardinal protectors, throwing new light in particular on the role of the resident. It will question whether the literature to date has given an adequate account of the complexities of the resident's role, point to the ambiguities between 'special' and 'resident' ambassadors, and present some new observations on the functioning of the order of precedence. It will also begin to trace the attributes required in a good resident ambassador as distinct from his visiting counterpart, thus setting the scene for the subsequent chapters which will consider how one particular diplomat – Gregorio Casali – carried out his responsibilities. Grassi's treatise *De Oratoribus Curiae Romanae* will be an important source, providing new material to address these questions and acting as something of a counterpoint to the better-known writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, Ermolao Barbaro and Étienne Dolet on the ambassador's role.

Diplomatic representation at the papal court had become established, over a long period, as a consequence of European rulers' need for a mechanism to facilitate

¹ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 42r.

the transaction of church business through the complex structures of the Roman curia. New impetus was given to the process in the fifteenth century by two factors: the end of the Great Schism and the definitive establishment of a single papacy at Rome in 1449 under Nicholas V, and the developing system of diplomatic relations which had grown up between the Italian city-states.² An important side-effect of Rome's status as international centre of church business was that it became, in Garrett Mattingly's term, the continent's 'chief gossip shop'.³ Mattingly suggests that the Venetian ambassador Zacharius Bembo was possibly, in 1435, the first ambassador to be 'resident' at Rome, although at this early stage the boundary between 'resident' and 'special' was rather fluid and it is neither possible nor particularly useful to be definitive on this point.⁴ The popes initially resisted the presence of resident diplomats, and rules were imposed first by Martin V (1417-31) and subsequently by Pius II (1458-64) which effectively limited the tenure of any ambassador at the papal court to six months.⁵ By the end of the fifteenth century, however, the restrictions had rather withered away, and in 1490 Innocent VIII, despite threatening to do so, was in practice unable to enforce the six-month rule.⁶ By this point, Rome was clearly the centre of European diplomacy. As Paolo Prodi notes, in the decade 1490-1500 there were over 243 diplomats accredited to Rome,

² The collection of essays in Sergio Gensini (ed.), *Roma Capitale (1447-1527)* (Pisa: Pacini, 1994) offers a comprehensive portrait of Roman society in the period between the return of the popes and the Sack. The classic account by Pio Pecchiai, *Roma nel Cinquecento* (Bologna: Licinio Cappelli, 1948), is still a valuable source. On the papal court see Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), and Henry Dietrich Fernández, 'The patrimony of St Peter: The papal court at Rome c.1450-1700' in John Adamson (ed.), *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500-1750* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), pp. 141-63. There are further general accounts in P. A. Ramsey (ed.), *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1982), Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) and Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome 1500-1559: A Portrait of a Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Partner's study is, however, rather compromised by its lack of references.

³ Mattingly, p. 151.

⁴ *ibid*, p. 74.

⁵ Betty Behrens, 'Origins of the office of English resident ambassador in Rome', *English Historical Review* 49 (1934), 640-656 (p. 650). Peter Barber says that it was under Pius II that 'the earliest known rules for diplomats as a body of men, a "corps diplomatique", were drawn up' in his *Diplomacy: the world of the honest spy* (London: British Library, 1979), p. 19. Pius himself (Enea Silvio Piccolomini) had previously been an ambassador for the Holy Roman Emperor: on his 1447 mission see Pio Paschini, 'Ambasciate e ambasciatori a Roma dal quattro al cinquecento', in Ugo Ojetto (ed.), *Ambasciate e ambasciatori a Roma* (Milan: Bestetti e Tumminelli, 1927), pp. 47-74 (pp. 47-48).

⁶ Behrens, 'Origins', p. 651.

but just 161 to the Holy Roman Emperor and 135 to France.⁷ After 1494, and the beginning of the Italian wars, the political situation made the presence of foreign powers' ambassadors in Rome a matter of practical necessity. By this time, too, the rules of ceremony applying to ambassadors at court were close to being firmly settled, an indication of the papacy's acceptance that they were now a regular grouping within the court personnel.⁸

Rome, however, was not only the centre of church administration, but also the capital city of the Papal States, and thus a centre of significant temporal power. If its role as church headquarters had initially made it a centre for national agents of all stripes, by the early sixteenth century the combination of the popes' temporal ambitions and the Italian wars had added a new dimension to the diplomacy that took place there.⁹ Furthermore, during the papacy of Clement VII the papal court was effectively the centre of Medici power: the family was in exile from Florence.¹⁰ These complicating factors have to be borne in mind when considering the functioning of diplomacy at Rome during these years.

By the 1520s, the period of this case study, princes were expected to have an ambassador at Rome: to fail to do so would be dishonourable. An indication of contemporary attitudes is to be found in a letter of February 1528 from Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga to his brother, the marquis of Mantua. After the Sack of Rome in 1527, the papal court was in exile at Orvieto, and the cardinal wrote:

All the ambassadors who were posted to the Pope before the ruin of Rome have come [back] to court, but no-one knows yet whether you will be sending yours, however, I thought to reply to you that it will be much to your honour to send him immediately.¹¹

⁷ Paolo Prodi, *The Papal Prince. One Body and Two Souls: the Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe* trans. Susan Haskins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 165n, citing W. Höflechner, 'Anmerkungen zu Diplomatie und Gesandtschaftswesen am Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts', in *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 32 (1979), 1-23.

⁸ Paschini, 'Ambasciate e ambasciatori', p. 62.

⁹ On the changing nature of the papacy see Prodi, *Papal Prince*, pp. 38-48. On the Italian wars, an excellent recent account is Christine Shaw, 'The Papacy and the European powers', in Shaw (ed.), *Italy and the European Powers: The Impact of War, 1500-1530* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 107-26.

¹⁰ On Clement's family ambitions see Barbara McClung Hallman, 'The "Disastrous" Pontificate of Clement VII: Disastrous for Giulio de' Medici?', in Kenneth Gouwens and Sheryl E. Reiss (eds) *The Pontificate of Clement VII: history, politics, culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 29-40. McClung Hallman argues for a re-evaluation of the traditional historiographical view that Clement's papacy was a failure, pointing out that in terms of Medici family strategy it was not. For an alternative view see Maurizio Gattoni, *Clemente VII e la geo-politica dello stato pontificio* (Vatican City: ASV, 2002).

¹¹ 'In Corte sono venuti tutti l'ambasciatori che nanti la ruina di Roma erano presso N. S. ne anchora sintende che lei vi mandi il suo perho mi e parso replicarle che sera molto suo honore a mandarlo subito.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 876, c. 283r.

The use of the term ‘honour’ is notable, implying as it does that this was not merely a matter of strict practicality, that without an ambassador the marquis would lose out on information or negotiating clout, but rather that there were elements of duty, pride and status involved. Indeed, the repeated references to honour in diplomatic correspondence are no mere matter of courtesy but relate to a central concern in the antagonisms between Renaissance princes. Cesare Mozzarelli has argued that it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the ideas of ‘advantage’ (*utile*) and ‘state’ fully triumphed over those of ‘honour’ and ‘prince’.¹² In the English context, Peter Gwyn has argued that in the conduct of diplomacy Cardinal Wolsey believed it his duty to promote Henry VIII’s ‘greater glory’, while the idea of a competition for honour between Henry and Francis I underlies much of Glenn Richardson’s thesis on their relationship.¹³ The maintenance of the prince’s honour in turn became a task for his ambassadors, in both symbolic and practical terms. In Behrens’ phrase a king’s ambassador would ‘personify his dignity’.¹⁴ She might also have written ‘personify his honour’.

1. The resident diplomats at Rome

BEFORE turning to the variety of ways in which a resident ambassador would be tasked with upholding his master’s honour, this chapter will examine the diplomatic corps itself. It will consider first some contemporary descriptions of diplomatic representation in Rome, relating them to the debate about the relative importance of resident and special ambassadors. It will then discuss the members of the diplomatic corps, their relationships with cardinal-protectors, and finally the collective functioning that defined the diplomatic corps as a body rather than a group of individuals.

¹² Cesare Mozzarelli, ‘Onore, utile, principe, stato’, in Adriano Prosperi (ed.), *La Corte e il “Cortegiano”*, 2 vols (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), II 241-53.

¹³ Gwyn, *Wolsey*, p. 100. Glenn J. Richardson, ‘Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations during the Reign of Henry VIII’, (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1995). See also Mervyn James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honour (1485-1642)* Past and Present Supplement 3 (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978).

¹⁴ Behrens, ‘Treatises’, p. 620. On royal representation, see also David Starkey, ‘Representation through intimacy: A study in the symbolism of monarchy and Court office in early modern England’, in John Guy (ed.), *Tudor Monarchy* (New York: Arnold, 1997), pp. 42-78.

a. English representation in Rome

AS the Introduction explained, there is a considerable debate in the literature about the development of the 'resident' ambassador during this period. While it was traditionally assumed that the resident was junior to the special ambassador, more recent studies have questioned this analysis, arguing that the resident's relative freedom of manoeuvre in fact afforded him significant influence. A useful introduction to the way that contemporaries understood the role of the resident is to be found in a letter from the English special ambassadors Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox to King Henry VIII, praising the work of England's resident ambassador in Rome, Gregorio Casali:

It maye like Your Highnes also to be advertised, that we perceyve in Sir Gregory de Cassales, Your Graces Oratour here resident, soo moche hartie good wel to set forth and further Your Graces matier, aswel with the Popes Holynes, as also the Cardynalles, and other, among whom he is in suche credite and reputacion as we thinke noon other is conversaunt abowte the Popes Holynes, having at all tymes free accesse unto his person and secrete conferences with the same; as we thinke ourself bounde of dutie to signifie it unto Your Majestie, veryly thinking, that noon other coulde in this place doo better service unto Your Highnes thenne he doth, ne more to Your Graces honnour, keeping here a very sumptuous porte, and in the grett skarsete here, marvelous chargeable.¹⁵

The description here of Casali as an 'orator' does not signify a distinct status; this more Latinate term was, as Gary M. Bell has argued, largely interchangeable with 'ambassador'.¹⁶ Later the same year, instructions for a subsequent special embassy would refer to the special ambassadors Sir Francis Bryan and Pietro Vanni as the king's 'orateurs' and Casali as 'the kinges ambassadour ther resident'.¹⁷ The importance of this document, however, lies in its definition of Casali's strengths as a diplomat: his 'credit', 'reputation' and 'access'. These are the keys to understanding the resident ambassador's role at Rome. Special ambassadors could not easily acquire such qualities in the short term; they would rely on their resident colleagues for advice, contacts and know-how. The latter could consequently exercise considerable, but informal authority.

¹⁵ *L&P* IV 4118; *St P* VII 64. From Orvieto, 31 March 1528.

¹⁶ Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history', p. 35. It is notable that – writing in Italian – Gregorio Casali tends to use 'ambasciadore'; the Mantuan ambassador, Francesco Gonzaga, uses the terms 'orator' and 'ambasciatore' interchangeably; their Venetian counterpart Gasparo Contarini shows a strong preference for 'orator'. The authors of the contemporary treatises on diplomacy, writing in Latin, use the classical term 'legatus'.

¹⁷ *L&P* IV 4977; BL, Cotton MSS, Vitellius B VIII 163r.

Evidence from the papal court confirms, however, that special ambassadors were still frequently sent when there was important business to negotiate. The papal master-of-ceremonies Paride Grassi, in his treatise on the ambassadors of the Roman Curia, *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae*, explained the typical pattern of French diplomatic representation in Rome:

Viz. the Most Christian King of France, who always, or almost continuously, keeps one or two ambassadors at the Roman Curia for general and day-to-day matters, sends other, new ambassadors to pledge obedience, or for difficult and important matters which newly arise.¹⁸

The distinction Grassi makes between types of ambassador is undoubtedly conditioned by his role as master-of-ceremonies. The resident, who does not generally participate in the grand ceremonies of entry to Rome, is of little interest, relegated to dealing with 'general and day-to-day matters'; nor is the special ambassador dealing with 'difficult and important matters', who, as Grassi explains elsewhere, was exempt from the high ceremony which was expected from those ambassadors coming to pledge obedience.¹⁹ However, the idea that there were three principal types of ambassador: resident, special (urgent) and special (ceremonial) is largely borne out by the present case-study even if, as we will see, the resident is worthy of rather more consideration than the ceremonialist accords him.

English diplomacy functioned along similar lines to the French pattern described by Grassi.²⁰ From 1525, Gregorio Casali was the resident ambassador; sometimes with Girolamo Ghinucci, the bishop of Worcester, and sometimes without him.²¹ From 1529 until the schism, Casali was joined by another resident diplomat,

¹⁸ 'Videlicet Rex Christianissimum Franciae qui semper vel quasi continue solet tenere in Romana Curia unum aut duos Oratores pro generalibus, et occurrentibus in dies negotijs mittat alios Oratores novos pro obedientia prestanda vel rebus arduis et importantibus de novo emersis.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 28r.

¹⁹ 'Oratores excipiuntur quando veniunt pro magnis, et arduis negocijs.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 10r.

²⁰ There is a considerable literature on Anglo-French diplomacy in the first half of the sixteenth century, drawing attention to the parallels. See Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century', Richardson, 'Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations' and Charles Giry-Deloison. 'La naissance de la diplomatie moderne en France et en Angleterre au début du XVI^e siècle', *Nouvelle revue du seizième siècle* 5 (1987), 41-58 and 'Le personnel diplomatique'.

²¹ Casali and Ghinucci were both accredited as ambassadors to the Pope on 20 September 1525; they replaced John Clerk in that role. *L&P* IV 1649, 1650; Theiner, pp. 550-51; ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, 2380. Ghinucci was sent on embassy to the Holy Roman Emperor in Spain in late 1526, and was re-accredited to Rome on 5 October 1529 (Theiner, pp. 565-66, which also confirms Casali's continuing status as ambassador); Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990), p. 45 gives an approximate date of 23 November for the beginning of Ghinucci's embassy to Spain, but does not mention his return to Rome. Both Bell (p. 161), and MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', get the precise

William Benet.²² There was neither a new Pope nor a new king of England in the years under consideration, and consequently no ambassadors were sent to pledge obedience, but an example of a great ceremonial embassy is provided by that of Sir Nicholas Carew and Richard Sampson to the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor.²³ Finally, a series of special ambassadors, among them Gardiner and Fox, were sent to deal with the ‘difficult and important matter’ of the king’s marital status.²⁴ Yet Gardiner and Fox’s description of Casali’s ‘access’ and ‘reputation’ suggests that far from the latter being relegated to dealing simply with ‘day-to-day’ matters, he was an important asset to their work. This impression will be confirmed by the evidence presented here in subsequent chapters.

b. The members of the diplomatic corps

If access and contacts were the key characteristics of a good resident ambassador, it is hardly surprising that a number of the men who carried out diplomatic roles in Rome were Italian-born ‘semi-professional’ diplomats.²⁵ These men were employed by various European powers as ‘foreign state servants’, to borrow Christine Isom-Verhaaren’s phrase.²⁶ Maria F. Mellano has argued that the use of Italian agents at

dates of Casali’s residency wrong. MacMahon rightly corrects Bell in pointing out that Casali was not recalled when Ghinucci was sent on embassy to Spain, and that his embassy should be regarded as continuous from 1525; he is also right to correct Bell’s suggestion that Casali’s service ended in about 1540 (pp. 329-30). However, his citation of the last payment of Casali’s diets, in June 1538, as indicating the end of his service is misleading. This was money owed not to Casali directly, but to the Florentine authorities, who must have advanced it to him at some earlier date (*L&P* XVI 380, p. 193). Casali died in late 1536, and it is arguable that after August 1533 neither he nor Ghinucci was officially recognised as English ambassador to Rome: on this point see the discussion in Chapter Five, pp. 210-11.

²² Benet’s letter of accreditation was dated 22 May 1529. Theiner, p. 563.

²³ Casali and Ghinucci were also present in their capacity as England’s ambassadors to the Pope: see the diary of the master-of-ceremonies Biagio Martinelli: BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 123v. This source wrongly gives Ghinucci’s surname as ‘Grimani’, but his title ‘Episcopus Wigerniensis’ is clear.

²⁴ Details of the English special embassies to Rome are given in Appendix 1. For overviews see Bell, *Handlist*, updated and corrected in the appendix to MacMahon, ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’. On individual diplomats see Glyn Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: The Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 14-22; Andrew Allan Chibi, *Henry VIII’s Bishops: Diplomats, Administrators, Scholars and Shepherds* (Cambridge: Clarke, 2003); Susan Brigden, “‘The Shadow That You Know’: Sir Francis Bryan and Sir Thomas Wyatt at Court and in Embassy”, *Historical Journal* 39 (1996), 1-31; Brigden and Jonathan Woolfson, ‘Thomas Wyatt in Italy’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005), 464-511; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 48-53; the relevant entries in the *DNB* and *DBI*.

²⁵ The term ‘professional’ is to be used with some caution: as we will see in Chapter Two, the rewards that could accrue to an ambassador as a result of his service were not a straightforward matter. Chambers’ description of Gregorio Casali as ‘a type of courtier turned semi-professional diplomatist’, is a good explanation of the realities of the situation. ‘English representation’, p. 504.

²⁶ Christine Isom-Verhaaren, ‘Shifting identities: foreign state servants in France and the Ottoman empire’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 8 (2004), 109-134.

Rome by the English was a Tudor innovation, but in fact the employment of foreigners, and particularly Italians, in English diplomacy had a much longer pedigree.²⁷ For example, Pierre Chaplais cites the Genoese knight Niccolò Fieschi who arrived in England on embassy in 1336 and returned to his home city as an ambassador for Edward III.²⁸ Frey and Frey also refer to Fieschi, noting his role as Edward III's ambassador to Pope Benedict XII at Avignon in 1340, which directly contradicts the suggestion that non-English diplomats were not sent to the papal court before the Tudor period.²⁹ Likewise, local agents, albeit without ambassadorial status, had long been employed at Rome on church business.³⁰ As Chapter Five will discuss in more detail, it is generally agreed in the literature that in this period the relationship of service to a prince could over-ride ties based on ethnic or national origin. In terms of the Roman diplomatic corps of the 1520s, members falling into the category of foreign state servant included Casali, who represented the English, Andrea Borgo (in the Imperial diplomatic service), Giovanni Gioacchino (Jean-Joachim) da Passano (working for France), and Alberto Pio da Carpi, who had begun his diplomatic career in the Imperial service, then switched sides to work for the French.³¹ As Isom-Verhaaren has established, such changes of employer were not exceptional.³² England was, therefore, not unusual in engaging an Italian as ambassador in Rome. The employment of Italians was not, however, universal: the Imperial ambassador was Miguel Mai, a 'gentleman of Barcelona' who had studied law and humanities and, according to the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini,

²⁷ Maria Franca Mellano, *Rappresentanti italiani della corona inglese a Roma ai primi del Cinquecento* ([Rome]: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1970), p. 21.

²⁸ Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), pp. 172-74. Fieschi was not a one-off. Chaplais also cites the example of Thomas de la Croix (Tommasino della Croce) of Milan. A squire of the duke of Milan, della Croce was sent to England in 1405, subsequently returned as an envoy and proctor of Henry IV to negotiate a marriage alliance and then returned again to England as an envoy from Milan.

²⁹ Frey and Frey, *Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 75.

³⁰ See Behrens, 'Origins', p. 643.

³¹ Andrea Borgo or Burgo (1467-1533) was a member of a Cremonese merchant family. Initially in the service of Ludovico il Moro, duke of Milan, he joined the Imperial diplomatic service around 1500. See his entry in the *DBI*. Giovanni Gioacchino was the son of Niccolò Passano, who had been a lieutenant-general in the service of Pope Sixtus IV. He had been a commander of the papal galleys, and was a commander of infantry at the 1515 siege of Alessandria. Alberto Pio da Carpi (1475-1531) was for much of his life engaged in a contest with his cousin for control of the family lordship of Carpi, in which he enlisted the support of first the Holy Roman Emperor and subsequently the French. He was employed on diplomatic missions to Pope Leo X by the Emperor and to Pope Clement VII by the king of France during his respective alliances. Corrado Argegni, *Condottieri, Capitani, Tribuni*, *Enciclopedia biografica e bibliografica "italiana"* Serie XIX, 3 vols (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Italiano Bernardo Carlo Tosi, 1937), II 410 and 436.

³² Isom-Verhaaren, 'Shifting identities', p. 132.

had been *rettore* at the university of Padua.³³ He had had some naval experience and was subsequently an official at the Imperial court before being appointed ambassador.³⁴

Mai's naval background highlights another typical quality of the resident ambassador: prior military experience, which we see too in the cases of Giovanni Gioacchino and Gregorio Casali. The duke of Ferrara also employed a military man, the former *condottiere* Conte Roberto Boschetti, as his representative in Rome.³⁵ The particular value attached to soldier-diplomats will be discussed in Chapter Two.³⁶ This cluster of lay ambassadors at Rome was complemented by another grouping, of clerics who acted on behalf of particular national interests. The English crown had long used the bishopric of Worcester as a reward for its Italian diplomatic agents at the papal court: Silvestro Gigli, one incumbent, was resident ambassador until 1521, and Girolamo Ghinucci, who took over the post in 1522, was appointed as ambassador in 1525 alongside Casali.³⁷ As we will see, these churchmen were excluded from the places reserved for ambassadors at certain liturgical ceremonies. However, their importance more often lay in their legal training and theological knowledge, and it is notable that Casali, a lay diplomat, employed several clerics as secretaries and agents.³⁸

In terms of rank, the personnel of the Roman diplomatic corps can generally be characterised as noble or patrician, but it was not usual for very senior members of the aristocracy to reside as ambassadors in Rome. Such men did, from time to time, serve on special embassies: the dukes of Sessa and Albany and the viscount de Turenne are notable examples, and some of the issues posed by the duke of Albany's

³³ Contarini, f. 166r. Contarini had also studied at Padua, from 1501-09. E. G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome and Reform* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 8.

³⁴ See his entry (under Miquel May) in the *Diccionari Biogràfic* (Barcelona: Alberti, 1969). For a discussion of his 1529-32 mission to Rome see Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 45-53.

³⁵ Conte Roberto Boschetti (c. 1472-1529) had been a *condottiere* in the service of Pope Leo X, who made him governor of Urbino after he successfully expelled the ruling duke from that city. Argegni, *Condottieri*, I 106. He was still involved in military discussions between the papacy and Venice in 1526: see the letter of Gianmatteo Giberti to Uberto Gambara, LPL, MS 4434, ff. 26v-27r.

³⁶ The phrase 'soldier diplomat' is used in Potter, 'Foreign policy', p. 104.

³⁷ See Bell, *Handlist*, according to which Silvestro Gigli was an ambassador 1512-1521 (when he died). His uncle, Giovanni Gigli, had been appointed bishop of Worcester in 1497, a post which he held for only a year until his death, but had clearly had a diplomatic role earlier. Ghinucci became Auditor of the Camera in 1514: see Mandell Creighton, 'The Italian bishops of Worcester' in *Historical Essays and Reviews* (London: Longmans, Green, 1911), pp. 202-34 and his *DBI* entry. He was nuncio to England in 1518 and appointed bishop of Worcester on 26 September 1522 after Giulio de' Medici ceded the position.

³⁸ See the discussion of Casali's household in Chapter Three, pp. 138-39.

embassy will be discussed in more detail below. Venice sent high-ranking citizens to reside abroad, but Tessa Beverley has argued that as a result Venetian resident embassies tended to be relatively short-term. Individual patricians preferred to avoid long absences from domestic politics, and in turn the system helped to limit the development of overly close and potentially disloyal relationships at the host court.³⁹ While, then, it is possible to identify certain common traits among the group of diplomats in Rome, the choice of ambassador was also contingent on the particular circumstances of the prince or republic sending him. A fuller analysis of the personnel of the Roman diplomatic corps is outside the scope of this thesis, but would certainly be a worthy subject for future research.

c. Cardinal-protectors and ambassadors

In addition to the various types of ambassador outlined above, another important figure in the diplomacy of this period was the cardinal-protector. Alongside the development of the diplomatic corps at Rome, and the formalisation of the protocol which surrounded it, a system of national cardinal-protectors had grown up.⁴⁰ Like resident diplomats, they were initially controversial, and in 1425 Martin V forbade cardinals from accepting the protection of princes or other secular rulers.⁴¹ However, by the end of the fifteenth century the existence of the office, like that of resident ambassador at Rome, was an established fact. Wilkie gives a useful summary of the cardinal-protector's duties:

As one having the right to participate in the deliberations of Consistory, the cardinal protector's foremost responsibility was to refer the ruler's nominations to bishoprics and other benefices to which the right of papal provision was successfully claimed, and to see to the expedition of the bulls of provision. He was to defend national interests when these came into discussion in Consistory or elsewhere, and to assist ambassadors (*oratores*), procurators, solicitors, and other agents on business in Rome. This might involve accompanying them in audience with the pope or

³⁹ Tessa Beverley, 'Venetian ambassadors 1454-94: an Italian elite' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 1999), pp. 218-26.

⁴⁰ William E. Wilkie, *The Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 5. See also Marco Pellegrini, 'A turning-point in the history of the factional system in the sacred college: the power of Pope and Cardinals in the age of Alexander VI', in Signorotto and Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics*, pp. 8-30.

⁴¹ On the history of the office, see pp. 158-162 of Olivier Poncet, 'The Cardinal-Protectors of the Crowns in the Roman Curia during the first half of the seventeenth century: the case of France', in Signorotto and Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics*, pp. 158-76. The development of cardinal protectors is also discussed in Chambers, 'English representation', p. 33.

intervening privately with the pope or any of the curial officials such as the datary or the auditors of the Rota.⁴²

Wilkie cites the example of the close relationship between the English diplomatic representative Giovanni Gigli (and subsequently his nephew Silvestro) and the cardinal-protector Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini as a case in point.⁴³ However, given the somewhat *ad hoc* nature of English representation at Rome, the picture was not always so straightforward. During the tenure of Cardinal Bainbridge at Rome, for example, the dynamics of the arrangement were undoubtedly somewhat different. By the time of Gregorio Casali's appointment as ambassador in 1525, England's cardinal-protector was Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, later to prove less than helpful in the matter of Henry's marriage, and there is little evidence of a direct working relationship.⁴⁴ As we will see in Chapter Two, however, Campeggio seems to have acted as a patron for Casali earlier in the latter's career.

In any case, the existence of a cardinal-protector did not negate the need for a resident ambassador. While cardinals had the advantage of being able to intervene directly in discussions at Consistory, in a way which ambassadors normally did not, their relationships with foreign princes were notoriously ambivalent. As D. S. Chambers has argued, cardinals were as concerned with their own protection as with that of their patron.⁴⁵ Given Rome's position in this period as the hub of European politics, they could hardly avoid the need to forge relationships with foreign powers, but many did so with their own careers in mind.⁴⁶ A lay ambassador's relationship with his prince was different, in that he was not simultaneously tied to both royal service and church power-structures. In other words, he was less a 'servant to two masters' than the cardinal-protector. This point should not be over-stated: a lay ambassador like Casali would be very likely to have a brother or two seeking a bishopric. He might also have personal ambitions which would compromise his diplomatic work, and of course in the case of Rome there was always the complicating issue of Christian loyalty to the Pope as Vicar of Christ. Nonetheless,

⁴² Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, p. 6.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ Campeggio was appointed early in 1524, but his strong links to the Holy Roman Empire created political difficulties when the English subsequently allied with the French. *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴⁵ Chambers, 'English representation', p. 49.

⁴⁶ For an example of this process, see the account of Cardinal Soderini's accumulation of bishoprics and benefices in K. J. P. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini, 1453-1524* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 171-91.

the structural difficulties of ensuring a diplomat's faithful service seem to have been fewer than the difficulties of ensuring such service from cardinals. The combination of a capable cardinal-protector and lay ambassador, perhaps with a cleric accredited as ambassador too, was probably the most effective form of diplomatic representation in early sixteenth-century Rome.

d. The Roman diplomats as a "corps"

BEFORE we consider the specific functions of ambassadors at Rome, it is worth examining the key characteristics that justify regarding this group of diplomats as a body rather than a collection of individuals. First of all, and as we will see in more detail below, within the liturgical ritual of the Curia ambassadors acted collectively. The evidence of Paride Grassi's treatise *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae* is clear: they were regarded as a distinct grouping at court, and within the ceremonies particular roles were allocated to them. Furthermore, on a less formal level, there was evidently something of an entertaining circuit among the Roman diplomats and their broader social circle of cardinals and local nobility. The Mantuan ambassador, Francesco Gonzaga, describes how during a visit to Rome in 1526, Isabella d'Este Gonzaga and five other ladies attended a dinner hosted by Franceschino Cibo; the five gentlemen invited (perhaps to make up the numbers) were the respective diplomatic representatives of the Holy Roman Emperor, the kings of France and England, the duke of Ferrara and the marquis of Mantua.⁴⁷ Such occasions are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three; however, the fact of their existence suggests a certain social coherence to the group of diplomats at Rome.

There is also evidence for significant interaction between ambassadors at Rome on behalf of their respective princes. They worked together, swapped notes and lobbied each other. It was common for ambassadors to visit one another in order to exchange information and news. For example, in January 1528 the duke of Ferrara's agent at Rome, Roberto Boschetti, wrote:

I often go and visit the Cavalier Casali, who is at home with a bit of a cold; yesterday a courier arrived from his king; today I was there to find out whether he had anything pertinent to Your Excellency; he replied no,

⁴⁷ Alessandro Luzio, 'Isabella d'Este e il sacco di Roma' in *Archivio Storico Lombardo* ser. 4, vol. 10 (1908), 5-107 and 361-425 (p. 367).

and that the dispatch was only to congratulate the Pope on his liberty and to exhort him to declare himself, etc.⁴⁸

This was a little disingenuous on Casali's part, for Cardinal Wolsey's letter accompanying the dispatch was in no way only concerned with the offer of polite congratulations but also referred to the need to make progress on the annulment of Henry VIII's marriage.⁴⁹ However, the letter makes the important point that exchanges between members of the diplomatic corps could be as much about the dissemination of half-truths and *disinformation* as about the provision of *information*.

The existence of a resident diplomatic corps at the papal court also enabled the Pope to use one ambassador to put pressure on another, as was the case when the Venetians refused to return the towns of Ravenna and Cervia, which they had occupied during Clement's imprisonment. In 1528, the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini described how he was called in to see the Pope, and on his arrival found the ambassadors of France, England and Milan along with Cardinals Farnese and Ridolfi.⁵⁰ The presence of the allies was intended to put pressure on the Venetians, although as we will see in Chapter Five the latter had some success in undermining this effort. Although the Mantuan ambassador was not at the meeting, he heard enough about it to write a detailed letter, which implies a considerable exchange of information, most likely from the Venetian ambassador to whom he seems rather sympathetic:

Yesterday, the Pope called in the lord ambassadors of the League, that is France, England, Venice and Milan, who you can't tell one from the other. And at around 21 hours, His Holiness withdrew with their lordships, and the Most Reverends Farnese and Ridolfi too. They were together for more than two hours, and as I understand it the discussions were about the business of Ravenna and Cervia... The Venetian Ambassador, according to my reports, replied prudently, and with modesty.⁵¹

⁴⁸ 'Vado a vesitare spesso el Cavallero da Casale che sta in casa per un poco di fredore herj li venne un corero dal re suo hozi li sono stato per intendere se havea niente pertinente ala Ex. V. me ha risposto di non et chel spacio esollo per congratualarsi con N. S. dela sua liberta e per astrengerlo se declara etc.' ASMn, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32, c. 212i/11.

⁴⁹ *L&P* IV 3770; *St P* VII 42.

⁵⁰ Contarini, f. 7v. 7 June 1528.

⁵¹ 'Hierì N. S. fece convocare questi Signori Oratori della Lega cio è Francia, Inghilterra, Vinegia et Melano, che l'uno non sapeva dell'altro. Et circa le xxi hore S. Santità si ritirò co' loro Signore dove intervennero anche li Reverendissimi Farnese, e Ridolphi. Stettero insieme per spatio di più de due hore, et per quanto intendo li ragionamenti furono sopra le cose di Ravenna, et Cervia... L'Ambasciador Veneto, secondo mi è referto, s'è diportato nella risposta prudentemente, et con modestia...' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 285r. 8 June 1528.

In this case, the papal court (in exile in Orvieto) was effectively functioning as the headquarters of a military and political alliance. Nonetheless, while allies' ambassadors would work together more frequently, there are also examples of diplomatic encounters between the ambassadors of hostile powers within the ambit of the court. In particular, the formalities of court life might provide a useful space for such discussions. Contarini's correspondence offers one example: on 6 December 1528, he found himself in the chapel next to the Imperial ambassador Musetola, and asked him whether he had any letters from Naples. In turn, Musetola asked Contarini to bring to the Signoria's attention the case of a commander of the Order of St James named Beneto who had been captured by Venetian galleys, offering to return the favour should a similar case arise, 'as can happen in wartime'.⁵² At the time, the Venetians and the Holy Roman Empire were on opposing sides, and the evidence of Contarini's letter book is that he did not frequently see the Imperial ambassadors individually. The fate of Beneto is not known; however, this letter demonstrates that Rome – as the centre of European diplomacy – offered channels of communication through which hostile powers, via their ambassadors, might engage in such informal discussions.

It can, then, be established that by the early sixteenth century there was a recognisable diplomatic corps at Rome. This group included a number of Italian diplomats in the service of foreign princes, who would work alongside special envoys and cardinal-protectors. The resident ambassadors formed a network: representatives of friendly powers would see each other regularly, at home or at court. As the one centre to which all European powers sent representatives, Rome offered a unique space for the daily discussion of international issues.

2. The ritual functions of diplomatic representation

As we noted above, honour was a central element in the discourse of sixteenth-century diplomacy, and consequently a key role for the resident ambassador in Rome was the assertion and maintenance of his prince's honour in relation to that of rivals. This section of the chapter will consider how he did so during the liturgical

⁵² 'come pol accadere in la guerra'. Contarini, ff. 125v, 127v-128r.

ceremonies of the Curia and in relation to the order of precedence. It will also highlight the extent to which, behind the scenes, practices of dissimulation were institutionalised at the papal court, discussing the means by which the rules of precedence and ceremony could be circumvented.

a. The ceremonial role of the resident ambassador

THE liturgical ceremony of the papal court was constructed in such a way that the Christian princes could display their status on the Roman stage. If a prince happened to be present in person, he could, and would, take part himself.⁵³ In his absence, though, these ceremonial duties fell to his ambassador. Only lay diplomats were allowed to participate in these ceremonies: clerics who held the title of ambassador were excluded and, in the ceremonial context, took their place in the separate clerical order of precedence.⁵⁴ The most elaborate ceremony was reserved for special ambassadors who came to pledge the allegiance of their prince or republic to the Pope; however within the liturgical calendar there were a number of occasions on which the diplomatic corps at Rome played a collective role, for example on the Feast of the Purification, during the Easter celebrations and at the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Within these ceremonies, as the practical expression of which prince was more powerful, the order of precedence was very significant.⁵⁵

There were three regular ceremonial duties which were carried out by laymen at the papal mass, and in the absence of higher-ranking noblemen these normally fell to the ambassadors of foreign princes and to the Senator Urbis, Rome's most senior lay government official. These three duties were carrying the papal baldacchino or canopy, carrying the pope's train, and bringing water for the pope to wash his hands

⁵³ If a prince was present, his ambassador lost his status, and the prince acted for himself within the ceremonies. On this point, see Behrens, 'Origins', p. 647, fn. 3.

⁵⁴ For example, in the procession entering Consistory. See BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 58v.

⁵⁵ A useful introduction to papal ritual is to be found in Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 168-82. On diplomatic ceremonial and the order of precedence in general see William Roosen, 'Early modern diplomatic ceremonial: a systems approach', *Journal of Modern History* 52 (1980), 452-76. In relation to Rome in particular see Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'Il cerimoniale come linguaggio politico', in Visceglia and Catherine Brice (eds), *Cérémonial et rituel à Rome (XVIe-XIXe siècle)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997), pp. 117-76: this offers a useful discussion on conflicts relating to precedence, albeit focusing on the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with extensive bibliography. A detailed case-study of the mid-sixteenth-century struggle over precedence between Spain and France is in Michael J. Levin, 'A New World Order: The Spanish campaign for precedence in early modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History* 6 (2002), 233-64.

during mass.⁵⁶ There were eight occasions during the year on which the Pope would go to mass underneath the baldacchino: on Christmas Day, on the Feast of the Purification, on Palm Sunday, on the fifth and sixth days of Holy Week; on Easter Sunday, on the Feast of Corpus Christi and on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.⁵⁷ For example, on 6 April 1531, at the mass marking the Last Supper, the Pope was conveyed in his seat under the baldacchino carried by the orators.⁵⁸ Eight people were required to carry the papal canopy, so any one ambassador would have a reasonable chance of doing so during his residency, although if any princes or minor lords were present, they too could undertake this task, if they wished.⁵⁹

The second duty at mass allocated to a lay ambassador (in the absence of any duke or prince who wished to carry it out) was to carry the pope's *cauda* or train. There were fewer occasions on which an ambassador might aspire to this role, partly because it was required only when the pope went to mass on foot rather than in a litter, and partly because only one individual was required. This duty fell to the highest-ranking (*dignior*) ambassador present.⁶⁰ For example, on Easter Saturday, 8 April 1531, the English ambassador carried the train.⁶¹ The third task carried out by the ranking laymen in the papal chapel was to bring water for the pope to wash his hands. This happened on four occasions during mass, which gave even the ambassadors of smaller states a fair chance of getting in at fourth place at some point during their stay at Rome. The first ceremonial washing took place before the pope put on his vestments (*capiat paramenta*), the second before the offertory, the third after the offertory and the fourth after the purification. The water would be brought by the four most senior laymen in the papal chapel, including by a king or even the Emperor, should they be present. Contrary to the suggestion made by Donald Queller that 'it is not clear that there was any rank value in the order', they would do so in reverse order of precedence, that is, the representative of the lowest-ranking prince or republic would bring the first bowl of water.⁶² On Easter Sunday 1532, the water for

⁵⁶ On the detail of papal vestments see Luciano Orsini, *La Sacrestia Papale: Suppellettili e paramenti liturgici* (Milan: Edizioni San Paolo, 2000); Wharton Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum* (London: Rivingtons, 1868) is a useful source of English equivalents for the Latin terminology.

⁵⁷ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 193r-193v.

⁵⁸ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 155r.

⁵⁹ For the number see BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 193v.

⁶⁰ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 92v-93r.

⁶¹ 'Caudam portavit Orator Angliae.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 156r.

⁶² BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270 f. 95r. Queller, *Office of Ambassador*, p. 201.

the pope's hands was brought by the Venetian ambassador, the English ambassador, the Senator Urbis and by Mai, the Imperial ambassador, in that order.⁶³

On other occasions, ambassadors might undertake similar supporting roles, carrying palms on Palm Sunday, or, as on this occasion, candles:

On 2 February 1531, which was Thursday, on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary, His Holiness the Pope came into chapel, preceded by the crucifix and the cardinals. The English orator, the knight Casali, carried the train of the cope... Two large candles were given to the Venetian and Milanese orators. The Pope washed his hands [with water] which the duke of Albany brought, and then they processed; the ambassadors, with two soldiers of Saint Peter, carried the baldacchino.⁶⁴

The fact that clerics were specifically excluded from these duties must have been an incentive for princes serious about their image at Rome to ensure that they had at least one accredited lay ambassador at the papal court available to carry out these ceremonial roles. It is wrong to suggest, as MacMahon does, that clerics were the 'obvious choice for missions to the pope', although when diplomatic negotiations involved questions of law or theology (as in the case of Henry VIII's divorce) the need for their expertise was unquestionable.⁶⁵ In fact, practice at the papal court reflects the more general European transition in this period towards the appointment of lay resident ambassadors in preference to clerics.⁶⁶ This is well-illustrated by the ambiguity on the subject in the treatise on ambassadors by Étienne Dolet, who served as secretary to the French ambassador to Venice in 1528-29 and would have been a contemporary there of Gregorio Casali's brother Giambattista who, as we will see in Chapter Two, was English ambassador there from 1526 to 1535.⁶⁷ Dolet wrote that

⁶³ 'De aqua ad manos, orator Venetorum Primus, Orator Angliae secundus, Senator Urbis tertius, Quartus Maius Orator Imperatoris.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, ff. 172v-173r.

⁶⁴ 'Die 2 Februarij que fuit Jovis in festo Purificationis beatae Mariae Sanctissimus D. N. venit in capellam precedentibus cruce, et Cardinalibus caudam pluviæ portavit orator Angliae Eques de Casali... Duo magni cerei dati fuerunt Veneto, et Mediolanensis oratoribus. Papa lavit manus quam Dux Albanie portexit, et inde facta Processio, Oratores cum duobus militibus Sancti Petri portaverunt baldachinum.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 153r.

⁶⁵ MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', p. 150.

⁶⁶ On this point see Bell, *Handlist*, p. 12 and MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', p. 177. The latter argues that the changing duties of the ambassador as resident diplomacy developed led to the favouring of the nobility and gentry over clerics.

⁶⁷ Étienne Dolet, *De Officio Legati* (Lyons, 1541), published in translation as 'Étienne Dolet on the functions of the ambassador, 1541', ed. Jesse S. Reeves, *American Journal of International Law* 27 (1933), 80-95. All references are to this translation. Dolet was born in Orléans in 1509. He studied at the University of Padua and was recruited from there by a French ambassador to Venice, Jean de Langeac, bishop of Limoges. Dolet is better known for his work as a printer and religious radical than for his diplomacy: he printed vernacular New Testaments and was burnt for heresy in 1546. See

the clerical or secular status of a proposed ambassador made ‘no difference’: now that the nobility took the study of letters seriously the need to send clerics because of their superior learning was a thing of the past; he did, however, concede that ‘perhaps’ it would be more appropriate to send a secular ambassador to a secular court, and an ecclesiastical ambassador to an ecclesiastical one.⁶⁸ Yet the more important consideration at Rome was surely to ensure that whoever was employed as ambassador was well-versed in the ceremonial etiquette, and would not embarrass his prince with careless errors. The detailed advice that Grassi says should be given to ambassadors in advance of their first public audience suggests that many new arrivals were poorly prepared for the occasion.⁶⁹ Those members of the diplomatic corps like Casali, who had experience of and access to Roman noble circles, must have had a considerable advantage over newcomers.

b. Contesting the rules of precedence

ANOTHER duty that typically fell to the resident ambassador was to assert his prince’s position in the order of precedence and to guard against attempts by other diplomats to usurp that place for their own masters. Questions of precedence frequently aroused contention, particularly if an ambassador believed his prince’s honour had been slighted, and given the importance of honour in the conduct of international relations during this period, it should be no surprise that there are many such cases that might be cited. This incident in 1526 was described by the Mantuan ambassador Francesco Gonzaga:

It being Christmas day in the chapel, the Scottish ambassador went to sit in the ambassadors’ place; Portugal having carried the pope’s train then returned to sit down, but Scotland didn’t want to give up his place, saying that there, where he was, was his place, and that Portugal should sit beneath him if he wanted to sit down; Portugal refused to do it saying that his king preceded Scotland; they went on arguing for a bit until finally the master of ceremonies was called, who went to the pope to find out who should take precedence; His Holiness said that Portugal should be first; on seeing that Scotland got up and left the mass, saying he didn’t

Richard Copley Christie, *Étienne Dolet: The Martyr of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1880), still the only major English-language work on Dolet. In the introduction to his translation of the treatise (p. 81), Reeves suggests it was composed some years before its printing in 1541, perhaps during or shortly after Dolet’s time in Venice. This Reeves dates to 1528-29, a year or two earlier than Copley Christie.

⁶⁸ Dolet, pp. 83-84.

⁶⁹ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 39r-47v.

intend to put his king in that position, and Portugal remained in his place.⁷⁰

Such behaviour was not uncommon, and indeed was almost expected of ambassadors. Paride Grassi, in his *De Oratoribus*, advised new ambassadors at Rome to be prepared for such challenges, which, he said, were frequently seen between the French and the English (because the king of England claimed the crown of France).⁷¹ Part of the problem arose from the fact that there was not absolute certainty about the order of precedence. Even Grassi's treatise gave two different orders, with the note above the second '*alibi legitur*' – 'elsewhere, one reads'.⁷² If the master-of-ceremonies did not know after ten years' work on his treatise, then it can be said with a fair amount of certainty that nobody did, and that there was plenty of space for the type of challenge above, in which conflicts between princes could be dramatically played out in the space of the court. The malleability of the order of precedence is often underestimated by historians: for example, while Maria Antonietta Visceglia discusses some cases of conflict over precedence, notably those between France and Spain in the mid sixteenth century, the concept of an intrinsic flexibility in the order is not one she entertains.⁷³ Such flexibility was, however, very important to the functioning of diplomatic ceremony: for challenges over precedence to be worthwhile, there had to be at least a possibility that eventually the order would be amended.

Another factor that Visceglia misses in relation to the order of precedence is the relevance of the ambassador's *personal* status as well as the status of his prince. Roosen suggests that this came into play only in rare cases and ought to be set aside in the interests of establishing the general rules of ceremonial;⁷⁴ however an example

⁷⁰ 'Essendo il di de Natale in capella lo Ambassatore di Scotia a seder al loco dove stanno li oratori et havendo portato Portugal la coda al Papa et dappoi ritornato per sedere Scotia non li volse cedere dicendo che li dove stava era il loco suo et che si dovesse mettere di sotto lui sel volea sedere Portugallo recusando di farlo dicendo che'l suo Re precedea Scotia steteron per un pezzo in contentione finalmente fu chiamato il Maestro de Ceremonie qual ando al Papa et intender da S. Santita che dovea precedere la qual fece declaratione che Portugallo havesse ad essere primo vedendo Scozia cosi se levo et partitosi da la missa dicendo che non intendea di far questo caricho al suo Re et Portugallo resto al loco suo.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 873, c. 3r.

⁷¹ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 47r.

⁷² BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 98r-99r. One list begins with the Emperor, then the king of the Romans, king of France, king of Spain, king of Aragon, king of Portugal and king of England (who is 'in discord' – *discors* – with the preceding three). The other, marginal list, headed '*alibi legitur*' gives the king of the Romans, king of France, king of Castile and León, king of England, king of Aragon, king of Sicily and Jerusalem, king of Hungary and king of Portugal.

⁷³ Visceglia, 'Cerimoniale', p. 126.

⁷⁴ Roosen, 'Diplomatic ceremonial', p. 462.

from the papal court suggests that the rules of personal precedence could themselves be exploited in the appointment of diplomats. This is apparent in the diplomatic service of John Stewart, second duke of Albany. In June 1520, the duke had come to pledge obedience at the court of Pope Leo X as the ambassador of King James V of Scotland. However, the fact that he was both a duke and the infant king's regent complicated the rules of precedence. It would have been inappropriate to put him in the lowly position normally allocated to the king of Scotland's ambassador, given that he was in effect the heir to that kingdom, so he was allowed to sit with the cardinal-deacons at mass, although this concession was made also (according to the master-of-ceremonies Biagio Martinelli) 'by the grace of the Pope, because they are related'.⁷⁵ The significance of nepotism in diplomacy should not be underestimated. Ten years later, in 1530, the duke was appointed French ambassador to the Holy See, and this posed new problems. The king of France came third in the standard order of precedence, after the Holy Roman Emperor and the king of the Romans. However, dukes outranked ambassadors. When Clement VII called in his master-of-ceremonies, Biagio Martinelli, to discuss the appropriate placing for the duke in the papal chapel, Martinelli enquired whether the Pope wanted Albany to be considered as a duke or as the French ambassador.⁷⁶ The conclusion was that he should be treated as a duke (and a relative of the pope's besides), however it was agreed that nothing should be said about the fact that previously he had been elevated to sit with the cardinal-deacons, presumably in the hope that no-one would remember.⁷⁷ We subsequently see in November 1530 that the duke was responsible for carrying the papal train and at Christmas 1531 that the order in which the ambassadors brought water for washing the pope's hands was (by reverse precedence) Venice, England, Imperial, duke of Albany.⁷⁸ While there were surely more reasons for Albany's appointment as ambassador than outscoring the Imperialists in the order of precedence, not least his family ties to the Medici, it must have been a satisfying side-effect for the French to be 'top nation' in the ceremonial *teatrum mundi*.

While cases like Albany's may not have been common, the example makes the point that the personal status of a diplomat was not irrelevant. A high-ranking

⁷⁵ 'ex gratia Papae quia eius affinis.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, ff. 32r-32v. The duke's cousin and sister-in-law Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne was married to Lorenzo II de' Medici. See his entry in the *DNB*.

⁷⁶ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 151r.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, f. 151v.

⁷⁸ *ibid*, ff. 151v-152v.

ambassador could outflank the rules of the order of precedence; if he had a family connection to the pope all the better. Even an ambassador with friends among the cardinalate might receive a grander entrance than others considered his due. The Mantuan diplomat Francesco Gonzaga, describing the great fanfare which in 1526 accompanied the arrival of Domenico Venier, the new Venetian resident, commented that:

This looked like the type of ceremony used when great ambassadors make their entrance; although, as I understand it, it is usually used only when they come to pledge obedience to the Pope, on this occasion it was used to this end, I think thanks to the Most Reverend Cardinal Pisano, to do honour to his home city.⁷⁹

Furthermore, it mattered whether the ambassador was a layman or a cleric. It would be wrong to argue that the order of precedence was not important, or that the military and political power of his prince was not a central determinant of an ambassador's negotiating clout at Rome. However, the Albany case demonstrates how a militarily-weakened power (such as France in the mid-1520s) might attempt, at least at symbolic level, to strengthen its diplomatic hand.

c. Behind the scenes

THE order of precedence was not only relevant during ceremonies. Even the interviews which the Pope might hold on matters of importance with ambassadors were expected to be conducted in conformity with it. When the pope wished to ignore the rules, as he did in order to consult with the Imperial ambassadors before the duke of Albany about the duke of Savoy's demand for 200,000 ducats to defend himself from the Lutheran 'furore', he did so only at the risk of 'scandal'. The Ferrarese diplomat Antonio Romeo explained:

I learnt from Signor Andrea da Borgo that he and Signor Mayo were called in today by the Pope and gave their opinion, before the other ambassadors were called in, on the matter I describe below, and that they gave it first and separately from the others to avoid the scandals which could arise over precedence between them and the duke of Albany.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ 'Et pare questa par' che sia cerimonia che se usi quando intramo Ambasciatori grandi benché per quanto intendo non si suole fare, se non quando vengono ad prestare obedientia a Nostro Signore pur adesso è stato usato questo termino, penso per opera del Reverendissimo Cardinale Pisano, per fare questo honore alla patria sua.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 871, cc. 213v-214r.

⁸⁰ 'Dal Signor Andrea da Borgo ho inteso che esso & il Signor Mayo hoggi sono stati chiamati da N. S. & che hanno detto il parere suo prima che fussero chiamati li altri oratori in quel che diro di sotto & che lo dissero prima & appartatamente da li altri per evitare li scandali che potessero nascere per le precedentie fra essi & il Duca dalbania.' ASMo, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32,

It is not clear in that case whether the French ever discovered the transgression of protocol. Quick-witted ambassadors could, however, use the threat of ‘scandal’ to assert their right to a papal audience. In early 1529, having been obliged to wait several weeks for an audience during the Pope’s illness, the English diplomats Sir Francis Bryan and Pietro Vanni discovered that the Imperial ambassador had been allowed to see Clement. According to Contarini, the Pope was then obliged to permit the same access to the English:

After they found out that the Imperial ambassador had been admitted to make his reverence and kiss the Pope’s feet, the two English ambassadors tried again to do the same themselves, and so as not to demonstrate partiality, His Holiness gave them audience at 6, and they were told how much they should say; they went in, presented the letter and, a few general words spoken, left again.⁸¹

Whatever the realities of the Pope’s current political alliances, and however much the court might be aware of them, appearances and protocol were all-important.

The idea that Renaissance diplomats engaged in dissimulation is bordering on the commonplace.⁸² Machiavelli famously advised Raffaello Girolami:

And if, to be sure, sometimes you need to conceal a fact with words, do it in such a way that it does not become known, or, if it does become known, that you have a quick and ready defense.⁸³

Étienne Dolet wrote of the ambassador:

If he has some business to transact with the people of Venice or the Pope at Rome or other princes of Italy, inasmuch as they are past masters of pretense and dissimulation, he should likewise pretend and dissimulate, and should let his speech be greatly at variance with his thoughts.⁸⁴

However, the literature on diplomacy has not fully acknowledged the extent to which dissimulation was in fact institutionalised in court practices. For example, in a set of

c. 214iii/11. Antonio Romeo to duke of Ferrara. The letter is undated but an archive note suggests 15 August 1530.

⁸¹ ‘Li do Oratori di Anglia doppo che sepeno l’orator Cesareo esser sta adnesso ad far riverentia et basar li piedi del Pont. hanno anchor loro tentato lo istesso, talmente che per non dimonstrar partialita, Sua Sant. alli 6 li dete audientia, et fuli prescritto quanto dovesseno parlar, introron presentoron la lettera, et ditte poche parole general uscitenno.’ Contarini, f. 172v.

⁸² See the survey in J. R. Woodhouse, ‘Honourable dissimulation: Some Italian advice for the Renaissance diplomat’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 84 (1994), 25-50.

⁸³ Niccolò Machiavelli, ‘Advice to Raffaello Girolami when he went as ambassador to the Emperor’, in *The Chief Works and others* trans. Allan Gilbert, 3 vols (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965), I 116-119 (pp. 116-17). All references are to this translation. This letter containing advice for ambassadors was written in 1522. Gilbert suggests it reflects Machiavelli’s own practice as a Florentine diplomatic agent.

⁸⁴ Dolet, p. 88.

notes of advice to be given to new ambassadors by the master of ceremonies, Paride Grassi wrote:

Before they have their first audience with the pope, in the public Consistory, they should under no circumstances leave the house, even if they are invited by a prince, duke, cardinal or whosoever, nor allow any person at all to visit them publicly, not even the pope himself, *unless in private, or in disguise, or secretly at night, if need be.*⁸⁵

While on the one hand trying to impose the formalities, Grassi acknowledged that provided things *appeared* to proceed in line, the rules could be broken. In this sense, even while his treatise focuses on ceremony, it has a deeply pragmatic note, quite comparable to the advice of Machiavelli or Dolet. Both in the symbolic world of the court at Rome, and in its practical functions, pretence and dissimulation were part of day-to-day life. We will return to the discussion of dissimulation in Chapter Five.

3. The practical functions of the resident ambassador

CASALI'S predecessor as English resident ambassador in Rome, John Clerk, ran into trouble when a bull against the English royal interest was procured at the Curia. Expressing his displeasure, Henry VIII wrote:

That wee of specyall trust and confidence haud deputed yow, to be resident in that Court, as our Oratour not onelie to sollicite and execute all such Causes, and matters as we have and shall Committ unto you from tyme to tyme, but alsoe vigilantlie to attend and see, that nothing should be impetrated, or obteyned there preiudiciall or hurtfull to us, or to this Realme or derogatorie, to our dignitie Royall.⁸⁶

Although various theorists wrote in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on the question of a resident ambassador's duties, this letter offers a rare and possibly unique description of how they were understood by a monarch. In contrast to the frequent suggestion in the literature that the resident's key duty was information-gathering, it describes a much more active role for the ambassador, 'soliciting' and

⁸⁵ 'Primum antequam audientiam in Consistorio publico a Papa habuerint nequaquam extra domum etiam a Principe Duce Cardinali vel quoquam alio invitati exeant, nec penitus aliquem quicumque ille sit publice visitent nec ipsum denique Pontificem nisi privato vel transformato habitu, vel nocte clam ac secrete si opus erit.' BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 39v. My italics.

⁸⁶ BAV, MS Barberini Latini 3567, 'Lettere e negotiationi del Cardinale Volsey Inglese nella corte di Roma, in lingua inglese', f. 16v. The date of this letter is not clear, but Clerk was accredited from April 1521 to September 1522 and again from March 1523 to December 1525. Bell, *Handlist*, pp. 159-60.

‘executing’, seeing that nothing ‘prejudicial’ or ‘hurtful’ could be obtained. It is a description at odds with Mattingly’s suggestion that ‘in the formative period of permanent diplomacy it was, apparently, as political intelligence officers that the residents demonstrated their usefulness most decisively’ and with the more recent analyses of Frey and Frey, alluding to Machiavelli, that the resident’s ‘most important duty’ may have been ‘the gathering of information’, and Douglas Biow, who wrote that: ‘the business of the resident ambassador was to represent his government abroad and collect reliable and useful facts.’⁸⁷ Indeed, it suggests that Michael Mallett’s observation that in the latter half of the fifteenth century ‘information-gathering was only a part of diplomacy and by no means the sole function of the resident ambassador’ remained true well into the next century.⁸⁸

The tendency of the literature to emphasise this information-gathering function has two roots. In the case of Frey and Frey it results from an uncritical reading of Machiavelli’s ‘Advice to Raffaello Girolami’, a text that focuses on the importance for the ambassador of letter-writing, reporting and providing information. Machiavelli writes, for example: ‘Great honor also comes to an ambassador from the reports he writes to those who send him.’⁸⁹ His comments, however, are principally concerned with ensuring that the ambassador creates a positive impression back home by means of his reporting, and not with the intrinsic value of the reporting itself (there is no harm, Machiavelli suggests, in repeating the same material provided it is done eloquently).⁹⁰ Beyond its basic function, letter-writing was about creating the impression that the ambassador was wise, prudent and well-informed, and enabling him to avoid the pitfall of subsequently discovering that he had failed to pass on some potentially important detail. The other root of the emphasis on information-gathering is the tendency in the literature, discussed in the Introduction, to focus on the advent of ‘modern’ resident diplomacy, and it is indeed true that it is in the capacity of information-gatherer that the resident ambassador can be most easily distinguished from his special counterpart. This section of the chapter will aim to redress some of that bias with a fuller consideration of the various practical

⁸⁷ Mattingly, p. 104; Frey and Frey, *Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 147. Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, p. 102.

⁸⁸ Michael Mallett, ‘The emergence of permanent diplomacy in Renaissance Italy’, *DSP Discussion Papers* no. 56 (Leicester: Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 1999), p. 7.

⁸⁹ Machiavelli, ‘Advice’, p. 117.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 119.

functions of the resident ambassador at Rome, setting his role as provider of news in the context of his broader work.

a. Negotiation

A FUNDAMENTAL aspect of an ambassador's job was to negotiate on behalf of his prince, in line with his instructions. This was probably particularly true of Rome, where there was a considerable volume of business to be done through the curial structures, but it cannot have been irrelevant in other places where, for example, there were treaties to be agreed or difficulties relating to trade to be ironed out.⁹¹ The discussions around Henry VIII's divorce are a case in point. From the end of 1527 until the summer of 1529 much of the English ambassadors' work at Rome revolved around the repeated attempts to find a means by which the Pope could be persuaded to declare the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon invalid. As Francesco Gonzaga, the Mantuan ambassador, commented of Edward Fox and Stephen Gardiner's mission to Orvieto in early 1528:

In fact, these ambassadors, as far as I can gather, are here principally for the cause that I've already written about, for the dispensation of the king's marriage, although it's not admitted, and they manage the business most secretly.⁹²

Note, once again, the importance of dissimulation. On the following day Gonzaga noted that there were 'many difficulties to resolve' before the matter could be settled.⁹³ Those difficulties were, however, things that could – in theory at least – be resolved through a process of negotiation, and this was the principal role of these ambassadors. In this case, two special ambassadors had been sent from England with instructions for their mission. However, in their negotiations they worked with the resident, Casali:

The English ambassadors who are here, have been two or three times with the Pope, and nothing is known about their negotiations, His Holiness having given them secret audience, where no-one was present

⁹¹ On the routine duties of Spanish ambassadors in sixteenth-century Rome see Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 134-53.

⁹² 'Essi Oratori in effetto secondo posso comprendere sono qui principalmente per la causa che gia anche ho scritto per la dispensa del matrimonio del Re, pur non si confessa, è maneggiano la cosa secretissimamente.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 31v, 27 March 1528.

⁹³ 'Per quanto intendo vi sono di molte difficulta da asettare prima che se ne venga alo effetto.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 38r, 28 March 1528.

except himself and [the ambassadors], together with the Cavalier Casali.⁹⁴

The precise role which Casali played vis-à-vis the special ambassadors will be discussed further below. Although Henry VIII's divorce – for its dramatic outcome – may seem to be a particularly special case, dynastic alliance-building and therefore marriage-related negotiations were an important aspect of a sixteenth-century diplomat's role. Ambassadors in Rome had the particular task of obtaining the appropriate papal dispensations.⁹⁵ It is notable that in these same years, Clement VII granted Margaret Tudor a divorce from the Earl of Angus after negotiations in which the duke of Albany, ambassador for France, was heavily involved.⁹⁶

Even during the period of Henry VIII's matrimonial troubles, however, the normal day-to-day business of the English ambassadors at Rome did not cease. They were involved in negotiating, for example, the upgrading of certain abbeys to the status of bishoprics.⁹⁷ In doing so they lobbied not only the pope, but also the ambassadors of other powers, to ensure broader support for their project. Another letter from Gonzaga provides an example:

It occurred to me to let you know that these English ambassadors, on the basis of the letters which they lately received from their king, are asking the Pope that certain good abbeys, which are in that country, should be made into bishoprics, and certain of their possessors deprived: they say these possessors are ill-living types...⁹⁸

He went on to say that this seemed to him to be a praiseworthy thing, which would bring reputation and honour to the Holy See: presumably very much the tone the English ambassadors wanted him to take. The process of obtaining such papal bulls

⁹⁴ 'Gli ambasciatori d'Inghilterra che sono qui, sono stati per due o tre volte da Nostro Signore et della negociatione loro per anchora non s'intende altro, havendoli Sua Santita dato audienza secreta, dove non è intervenuto se non la persona di quella, et essi, insieme co'l cavaliere Casale.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 28r, 26 March 1528.

⁹⁵ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 144-45.

⁹⁶ This was in March 1527. See Margaret Tudor's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. For another example of a matrimonial issue in diplomacy see Francesco Gonzaga's reports of discussions about the marquis of Mantua's marriage: ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 151r, 1 May 1528.

⁹⁷ For the English ambassadors' role in expediting church business see (among many other examples): *L&P* IV 2879, 4905, 4932, 5638, 5649. Letters from Gianmatteo Giberti, the bishop of Verona, also document Casali's role in obtaining papal bulls for the establishment of Cardinal Wolsey's Oxford college. LPL, MS 4434, ff. 76r, 119r.

⁹⁸ 'Da poi la mia qui alligata di xxix del passato m'occorre significarle come questi oratori Inglesi, per le lettere che ultimamente tengono dal loro Re, ricercano da N. S. che certe buone Abbatie, che sono nel paese là, possino essere erette in vescovadi, et privatine alcuni possessori, quali asseriscono di mala vita... Et si consenterà, che le dette abbatie siano ridotte in vescovadi, sicome si dimanda, parendo cosa laudabile, et che apporti riputatione, et honore à la Sede Apostolica.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 878, c. 181r, 1 June 1529.

was, however, a long one. It required a detailed knowledge of the institutions of the Curia, along with an awareness of which palms to grease and, preferably, an already-established network of friends and associates who could assist. The resident ambassador of a country like England, which did not in general send resident diplomats to Italian states other than Rome or Venice, also had to be prepared to deal with English interests across the whole Italian peninsula. In 1527, Gregorio Casali was given commissions to both Ferrara and Mantua, to negotiate their entries into a League with England, France, Milan, Venice and the Papacy.⁹⁹ It is this commission to Ferrara to which Shakespeare and Fletcher refer.¹⁰⁰ Later that year he went to Florence, and in relation to military matters he kept up a regular correspondence with the Grand Master of France, Anne de Montmorency.¹⁰¹ His responsibilities in terms of negotiating and alliance-building thus extended well beyond Rome.

b. The extent of the resident's autonomy

It is well-established that ambassadors in early sixteenth-century Europe regularly had to take decisions without formal instructions from their prince. As Francesco Guicciardini acknowledged:

It is impossible to give ambassadors instructions so detailed as to cover every circumstance; rather discretion must teach them to accommodate themselves to the end generally being pursued.¹⁰²

Communications were simply not adequate for diplomats to wait when a matter was urgent: even in good circumstances, it took two weeks for a courier to travel from London to Rome.¹⁰³ As Christine Shaw has pointed out, in the event of a pope's death it would be extremely difficult for any ultramontane prince to receive the news and issue specific instructions to his agents in Rome on their intervention in the conclave: he would have to rely on 'good contingency plans', 'loyal cardinals' and

⁹⁹ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 45, unnumbered document of 26 August 1527; see also Wolsey's letter to the duke of Ferrara, ASMo, Archivio Estense, Principi Esteri, Cardinali b. 1435/189, unnumbered document of 27 August 1527.

¹⁰⁰ *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 3166.

¹⁰¹ Cecil Roth, 'England and the last Florentine Republic', *English Historical Review* 40 (1925), 174-195 (p. 175). On Casali's correspondence with Montmorency, see below, Chapter Five, pp. 205-07.

¹⁰² Francesco Guicciardini, *Maxims and Reflections of a Renaissance Statesman (Ricordi)* trans. Mario Domandi (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1970), p. 40.

¹⁰³ This was the approximate speed of the English couriers Alexander and Taddeo who carried messages between London and Rome during the final period of serious negotiations with Clement VII about Henry VIII's marriage between April and June 1529 prior to the advocacy of the case to Rome, derived from an analysis of their known arrival and departure dates. *L&P* IV 5530, *L&P* v pp. 311-12, *St P* VII 168.

‘an experienced ambassador with good contacts’.¹⁰⁴ Bell suggests that in such circumstances ‘the personalities of diplomats were crucial’, although to personality we should add such considerations as access to information, social connections and experience.¹⁰⁵ Michael Mallett has argued that even although ambassadors were obliged to seek new instructions should a ‘major policy issue’ arise, that nonetheless left space for ‘considerable personal initiative’.¹⁰⁶ On his own account, Gregorio Casali was given a significant degree of latitude to act without specific instructions provided he was faithful to the English interest. In a document responding to criticism from Richard Croke (the scholar involved in a semi-undercover mission to obtain university opinions in Henry’s favour) about his actions as English ambassador, he wrote:

I had no commission to do such things only as I myself should judge to be most necessary for the victory to be obtained. But I would ever keep myself syncere and faithful in all things.¹⁰⁷

The maintenance of a relationship of trust was consequently all-important.

The extent of an ambassador’s discretion to act outwith his instructions was a matter of no little concern to contemporary theorists. Giovanni Pontano had considered in his treatise on obedience whether it was permissible for a diplomat to act autonomously if circumstances suddenly changed. He came to no statement of principle, but concluded that because rulers’ attitudes on this point differed widely, being an ambassador was a difficult task.¹⁰⁸ Pontano (1426~9-1503), a well-known humanist, had had a long career in Neapolitan royal service, including as a diplomat, which culminated in his appointment as first secretary to Ferrante I in 1487. Machiavelli, in his ‘Advice to Raffaello Girolami’, reduced the question to a matter of personal morality, with only the passing comment:

How to carry out a commission faithfully is known to everybody who is good, but to carry it out adequately is the difficulty.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Shaw, ‘The papacy and the European powers’, pp. 124-25.

¹⁰⁵ Bell, ‘Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history’, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Mallett, ‘Emergence’, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ *L&P* VII 86; Pocock II 520.

¹⁰⁸ Giovanni Pontano, *Ioannis Ioviani Pontani Opera Omnia Soluta Oratione Composita* (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1518), pp. 37r-37v, cited with a partial translation in Carol Kidwell, *Pontano: Poet and Prime Minister* (London: Duckworth, 1991), p. 113, which puts the date of the treatise somewhere between 1464 and 1470. It was, however, available in the 1518 Aldine edition in the period under discussion in this study.

¹⁰⁹ Machiavelli, ‘Advice’, p. 116.

In contrast, Étienne Dolet was rather more concerned about the question of instructions and possible deviation from them. The ambassador, he said, should be given ‘frank, clear, and entirely unambiguous orders’, the ‘prudent performance’ of which would be his ‘whole duty’.¹¹⁰ However, he recognised that even the fullest of instructions could not cover every eventuality, and advised:

[When] a matter lying beyond the limits of your orders comes into discussion, see that you merely discuss it, and that you promise to furnish nothing until your king has been advised and his order or consent has been received... But it often happens that an occasion is so urgent that you can not wait for a reply. Wherefore, if anything which you see is greatly to your king’s advantage depends upon quick action, you will... conclude it as promptly as possible.¹¹¹

Given the need for an ambassador to make such decisions, Dolet concluded that the best course of action was to ensure the appointment of ‘a man of prudence and acumen’.¹¹² His assessment echoes that of the Venetian diplomat Ermolao Barbaro, who likewise emphasised ‘prudence’ as the yardstick to be applied by the diplomat in unexpected situations, although Barbaro was more cautious about the importance of consultation with the principal, stating that:

Above all, the ambassador should take care that he never speaks either for or against anyone, or of anything, with the Prince, unless the Senators have mandated it.¹¹³

The difference in approach can be attributed to the particular republican context of Barbaro’s writing: a mandate that had been the subject of a debate and vote in the Venetian Senate was probably less flexible than its royal counterpart. The references to prudence draw on Aristotle, but reflect too its particular Renaissance form, which

¹¹⁰ Dolet, pp. 85, 88.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 90.

¹¹³ ‘Ante omnia cavere debet legatus ne pro se neu pro aliquo aut de aliqua re cum Principe unquam loquatur, nisi Patres mandaverint,’ Ermolao Barbaro, ‘De Officio Legati’, ed. Vittore Branca in *Nuova Collezione di Testi Umanistici Inediti o Rari* XIV (Florence: Olschki, 1969), pp. 157-167 (p. 163). Barbaro was born in 1454 in Venice. His father and grandfather had served as ambassadors, and Ermolao held several diplomatic appointments: as ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor in 1486-87, to the duke of Milan in 1488 and to Rome in 1490. The date of the treatise is uncertain, but Barbaro died in 1493. Pio Paschini, *Tre illustri prelati del Rinascimento: Ermolao Barbaro, Adriano Castellesi, Giovanni Grimani* (= *Lateranum* new series 23 (1957)), pp. 11-39; on Barbaro’s background and the intellectual context of his work see also Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, pp. 104-05 and Vittorio Branca, ‘Ermolao Barbaro and late quattrocento Venetian humanism’, in J. R. Hale (ed.), *Renaissance Venice* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973), pp. 218-43.

emphasised the importance, as John Martin has put it, of ‘cultivating a certain ambiguity about one’s beliefs’.¹¹⁴

While it is not difficult to find examples of ambassadors acting on their own initiative in situations of urgency, and Chapter Five will consider one such instance in detail, it is relatively rare to find evidence of cases where diplomats did not carry out their instructions in other contexts. One such instance is, however, documented in a decipher of a letter from the English ambassadors in Rome, dated 30 September 1531. The names of the ambassadors are not given, but accredited at that time were Gregorio Casali, Girolamo Ghinucci and William Benet. They had been instructed, among other things, to present an appeal to a future General Council of the Church, but in the letter they explained that due to advice they had received from various doctors of law, they had not carried out this and various other elements of their mandate. They requested new instructions in the light of the information they sent, in particular two papal bulls prohibiting such appeals to a General Council.¹¹⁵ The letter illustrates a readiness on the part of the resident ambassadors to highlight what they perceived to be flaws in their instructions and to delay executing their orders if they believed that risked jeopardising their prince’s interests.

c. Relationships with special ambassadors

IN RELATION to visiting special ambassadors, a resident had many and sometimes onerous duties: he was often, in effect, the ‘fixer’. Gregorio Casali provided hospitality at his own houses and those of relatives, obtained safe-conducts and wrote letters of introduction, and was in a position to counsel more generally about the customs of a court which might be unfamiliar to visitors. For example, in October 1527, he wrote that he had advised the special ambassador William Knight, travelling through the dangerous territory of northern Italy, to wait at Parma or Piacenza, where he had sent letters of introduction so that Knight could stay with some of Casali’s noble relatives.¹¹⁶

A resident ambassador might also be required to translate on occasion. As Joycelyne Russell has pointed out, although Latin was an option for diplomatic

¹¹⁴ John Martin, ‘Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe’, *American Historical Review* 102 (1997), 1309-1342 (p. 1325); see also the discussion in his *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 32.

¹¹⁵ *L&P* IV app. 262; TNA, SP 1/59, ff. 189r-190r.

¹¹⁶ *L&P* IV 3497, BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B IX 177r.

discussions, at the Roman curia Italian was ‘the daily parlance, the one needful acquisition for those arriving over the Alps or across the sea’.¹¹⁷ The extent to which Casali would have been involved in translating for his colleagues is not easy to establish. Some of them would not have had problems. Pietro Vanni was himself Italian. William Knight had studied at Ferrara, Richard Sampson at Perugia and Siena, John Stokesley at Rome and William Benet at Bologna: all probably had some ability in the vernacular.¹¹⁸ Indeed, the extent of Italian education among the clerics in Henry VIII’s diplomatic corps as a whole is striking, and an issue that deserves more systematic attention.¹¹⁹ However, ability in Italian was far from universal: Francesco Gonzaga reported that neither Edward Fox nor Stephen Gardiner could speak Italian, only Latin.¹²⁰ Sir Francis Bryan did not have Latin; Sir Nicholas Carew’s skills in Latin and Italian are unknown, but there is no evidence that either had spent time in Italy.¹²¹ Both, however, knew French, which was an alternative option for discussion among courtiers where there was no common vernacular, as did Casali.¹²² Furthermore, there is no surviving correspondence from Casali in English, which raises questions about his ability in that language. Although he spent

¹¹⁷ Joycelyne G. Russell, *Diplomats at Work: Three Renaissance Studies* (Stroud: Sutton, 1992), p. 6.

¹¹⁸ For Knight, Sampson and Stokesley see their entries in the *DNB*; Benet’s university is listed as ‘unknown... probably Oxford’ in that source, but Edward Surtz has established that it was Bologna. *Henry VIII’s Great Matter in Italy*, p. 501, citing *L&P* IV 6157. It is very likely that Benet was the ‘Guglielmus anglicus’ who received doctorates in civil and canon law from Bologna on 19 May 1519 and 31 March 1520 respectively; he would have been a contemporary at that university of Gregorio Casali’s brother Giambattista. ASB, Studio Bolognese, Collegi Legali 28, ff. 84r, 85r; Collegi Legali 138, ff. 36r, 36v, 37r.

¹¹⁹ MacMahon, ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’, p. 81 gives a list of nine of Henry’s clerical envoys who were either natives or had studied in Italy; he does not, however, include the four identified here, who make for a combined total of thirteen out of the thirty-one clerical ambassadors with an Italian education. R. J. Mitchell, ‘English law students at Bologna in the fifteenth century’, *English Historical Review* 51 (1936), 270–87, draws attention to a number of Englishmen who followed study at that university with a diplomatic role, and Jonathan Woolfson’s biographical register of English students at the University of Padua likewise includes a number of individuals who would become prominent figures in diplomacy: see his *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1998).

¹²⁰ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 28r, 26 March 1528.

¹²¹ On Bryan’s lack of Latin see *L&P* V 548; BL, Add. MS 25114, f. 49v: ‘knowledge of the laten tonge whiche wantith in youe sir Fraunces’. See also their entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹²² On their abilities in French see MacMahon, ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’, p. 131. Russell points out that Pope Leo X ‘would have known and practised [French] during his exile from Florence’, and presumably his cousin Clement VII and their many relatives at the papal court would have done so too. *Diplomats at Work*, p. 11. Casali wrote to John Russell in French in December 1526, February 1527 and May 1527: see *L&P* IV 2720; TNA SP 1/40 f. 85r. *L&P* IV 2918; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B IX 72r. *L&P* IV 3089; BL Cotton MSS, Nero B VI 27r. *L&P* IV 3090; Vit. B IX 112r–113v. Casali and Russell spoke to the Ferrarese envoy Matteo Casella in a mixture of English, French and ‘a kind of Italian’. Brigden and Woolfson, ‘Thomas Wyatt’, p. 478, citing ASMo, Cancelleria, Ambasciatori, Roma, 31, letter of 11 February.

considerable periods of time in England, on his earlier visits we know that he stayed in an Italian merchant household and may have had limited occasion to use the vernacular.¹²³ It would seem likely, though, that from time to time Casali would have had a role in translating into Italian or at least conveying more fluently his colleagues' requests.

Similarly, while the source material makes it difficult to pin down precise points at which Casali might or might not have advised his colleagues on how to proceed, there is occasional evidence from the English diplomatic correspondence that he did so. For example, on their arrival in Orvieto Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox wrote to Wolsey that, as instructed, they had consulted with Casali on how to 'use and ordre ourselves at our accesse unto the pope's presence'.¹²⁴ When the three subsequently attempted to give Cardinal Pucci a gift of 2,000 crowns from the king, it is clear from the correspondence that Gregorio was the person advising what should be said to the cardinal.¹²⁵ He was also in a good position to facilitate informal diplomatic contacts: for example, in July 1529, it was Casali, and not the English resident William Benet or the special ambassador Pietro Vanni, who was informed by the influential papal secretary Jacopo Salviati that their collective pretence that the trial of Henry VIII's divorce had not begun in England was pointless:

Master Jacopo Salviati said freely to me, Gregorio, that we ought not to dissemble with him about the trial, because the Lord Campeggio had reported all the actions and plans of the King's Majesty.¹²⁶

Casali's long-standing connections at the Curia, to be discussed in Chapter Two, undoubtedly gave him an advantage as a figure to whom such delicate approach could be made. Finally, the importance of a resident's local knowledge should not be underestimated: it was vital for ambassadors to understand the customs of a court in order to be able to interpret events correctly, as Jacopo's son, Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, pointed out in a letter of December 1527. When the French king suddenly

¹²³ See below, Chapter Two, pp. 75-76. I am grateful to Philippa Jackson for her observation on this point.

¹²⁴ *L&P* IV 4119; Pocock I 90. BL, Harleian MS 419, f. 71r. Cited in MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', p. 43.

¹²⁵ In a joint letter to Wolsey, Casali, Gardiner and Fox wrote of their appeal to Pucci: 'This was spoken by the advice of me, sir Gregory.' *L&P* IV 4120; Pocock I 102. The problems with this gift are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, pp. 159-62.

¹²⁶ 'Dominus Jacobus Salviatus dixit mihi gregorio libere quod non oportet ut secum dissimulemus de processu nam Dominus Campegius omnes actiones et mentem Regiae Maestatis perscripserat.' Reported in a letter of Casali, Benet and Vanni to Wolsey, 9 July 1529. *L&P* IV 5762; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 201r. On Salviati's role at Rome during the papacy of Clement VII see Pierre Hurtubise, *Une Famille-Témoin: Les Salviati* (Vatican City: BAV, 1985), pp. 164-67.

decided to leave the court and spend a week alone at St Germain, suspicions were aroused among the diplomats present that he might be leaving to engage in secret negotiations with the Emperor. Salviati, the papal legate, dismissed the rumours, saying that neither he nor ‘many others who know the custom and style of the court’ had such doubts.¹²⁷ Such knowledge, along with social networks, contacts and access to the principal figures at court, was a key asset for the resident ambassador.

d. Ambassadors and Consistory

AMBASSADORS’ interactions with the College of Cardinals in the formal setting of Consistory were relatively limited in these years, according to the record of its meetings.¹²⁸ We see at the start of Clement VII’s papacy the expected pledges of obedience by ambassadors at Consistory.¹²⁹ Diplomats’ letters were sometimes read at Consistory, and this relates to their function as information-providers (to which we will return shortly). For example, in 1523, the Hungarian ambassador came to Consistory to read letters petitioning for aid against the Turkish invasion.¹³⁰ In 1526, letters from the Doge of Venice to his ambassador at Rome, Marco Venier, were read at Consistory.¹³¹ There were occasional attendances at Consistory by ambassadors; however the presentation, for example, of Henry VIII’s book against Luther by the ambassador John Clerk, in 1521, at which Clerk made a ‘fine oration’ was rather exceptional, taking place as it did at a special meeting of Consistory called for that purpose alone.¹³² Consistory was rather more the business meeting of the cardinals than a focus for diplomatic dealings, and the references in its records to ambassadors are sparse, with the glaring exception of the disputes in 1532 over Henry VIII’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon, at which the English and Imperial ambassadors were present.¹³³ Although Grassi says that newly-arrived ambassadors should come to Consistory, this appears to be a prescription only for those who come to pledge

¹²⁷ ‘a me non cade questo dubbio nella mente ne a molti altri che sanno il costume et il modo della Corte.’ ASV, Segr. Stato, Francia 1, f. 73v. Letter to Jacopo Salviati, 28 December 1527.

¹²⁸ See ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31.

¹²⁹ From the Venetians on 20 April 1523, the Florentines on 27 April and the Sienese on 5 June. ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, ff. 145r, 145v, 149v.

¹³⁰ ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, f. 148v.

¹³¹ ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, f. 200v.

¹³² ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, f. 130r. 2 October 1521. See also the discussion of this gift in Chapter Four, p. 167. *L&P* III 1654; Henry Ellis (ed.), *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 11 vols (London: Dawsons, 1969), 3rd series, I 262-69 (p. 263): ‘his Holynes said that he wold call a Consistory only for that purpose agaynst Wednysday next folowyng’.

¹³³ ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, ff. 259v, 260r, 261v. ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Vicecanc. 4, ff. 79r-91v.

obedience to the Pope.¹³⁴ The Consistory records and the diary of Grassi's successor Biagio Martinelli demonstrate that it did not apply to those newly-arrived as residents. In his study of the College of Cardinals, Marco Pellegrini has pointed out that real negotiation tended to take place away from Consistory:

Whenever controversies became particularly bitter, the pope himself preferred to speak directly to the diplomatic representatives of the powers concerned, assisted by a few trusted advisers. This led to a double procedure whereby real political negotiation took place at a private audience (*udienza*) between the pope and the resident *oratore*, while the public Consistory, to which ambassadors were admitted by right together with the cardinals, was a purely ceremonial occasion.¹³⁵

The private audience was not, however, the only alternative space for diplomatic interactions: as Chapters Three and Four of this thesis will show, contacts between ambassadors and cardinals still further away from the official environments of the Curia were highly significant in the practice of diplomacy.

e. Ambassadors as information-gatherers

AN important side-effect of Rome's status as centre of church business and the consequent concentration of diplomats in the city was that it became a centre for the exchange of news. During the period of the Italian wars, when the peninsula became the focus of continental politics, its physical location only reinforced that role. The resident ambassadors in Rome were thus responsible for collecting news, appraising it and distributing it. A fine image of the process is presented in a letter from Gregorio Casali and Girolamo Ghinucci, dated 7 February 1526 and written just as news of the Treaty of Madrid was becoming public:

As to the peace, or concord, between the Emperor and the king of France, there are the following indications: first, letters of January 28, from Lyons, say that it was publicly talked of there, and that Momorensi [Montmorency] was daily expected with the terms and conditions of peace. Letters of Jan. 29 say that he had arrived, and had brought the conclusion or concord of peace and the terms. It is said that the duke of Savoy wrote that he had letters from his agents at the Imperial court, who wrote that peace had been made; however, he did not give details. The duke of Suessa, the Imperial ambassador, says he has letters from Genoa, signifying that letters had come from Barcelona which announce that peace or concord has been made... The duke of Ferrara wrote to the

¹³⁴ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 61r-69v.

¹³⁵ Pellegrini, 'A turning-point in the history of the factional system', pp. 27-8.

Imperial ambassador here that he has letters from his agent in France announcing that peace has been made.¹³⁶

Casali and Ghinucci were obviously in a somewhat difficult position, for no-one in Rome appeared to know the details of the treaty for sure, but the letter illustrates the process of marshalling evidence and points too to the ambassador's role in appraising its reliability. As Machiavelli wrote in his advice to Raffaello Girolami:

Since some of the things you pick up may be true and some false but probable, you need to weigh them in your judgment.¹³⁷

When Casali himself dispatched an assessment of the balance of forces in Puglia to Wolsey, he emphasised that this had been obtained by sending someone well-qualified to investigate:

Three months past I sent to Puglia a man who is a close friend and very expert in military matters, named Pietro Chiaveluti, so that he could report to me as reliably as possible the state of both our and the Imperial forces, so that I could inform Your Most Reverend and Illustrious Lordship of it.¹³⁸

Such first-hand information was clearly preferable to that which might be obtained simply through contacts in the diplomatic corps. Furthermore, it was a commodity that could be exchanged with others, as this letter from the Ferrarese ambassador Antonio Romeo to the duke of Ferrara describes:

The French ambassador has letters from Barletta, and I have also seen from others that things at Puglia are going better every day for the French, and I have seen other reports written from there that conclude that... Monopoli will finally ruin the Imperialists... And the Cavalier Casali tells me that a servant of his brother's who has just come from Puglia, says that the aforesaid Imperialists have retreated from Monopoli.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ *L&P* IV 1957; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VIII 14r. Translation adapted from *L&P*.

¹³⁷ Machiavelli, 'Advice', p. 118.

¹³⁸ 'Ego tribus iam transactis mensibus misi in Appuliam virum mihi valde familiarem ac admodum rei militaris peritum, nomine Petrum chiavelutum, ut mihi certius referret, quo in statu tum nostrorum tum Caesarianorum illic res forent, ut de eo certa possem Dⁿⁱ V. R^{mae} ac Ill^{mae} significare.' *L&P* IV 5479; TNA, SP 1/53, ff. 232r-232v, 21 April 1529.

¹³⁹ 'L'orator francese ha lettere di Barletta & ancho ne ho visto d'altruj che quelle cose di Puglia ogni di vanno meglio a favor de francesi, & ho visto piu discorsi scritti di la che concludeno che... Monopoli sara lultima ruina de Imperialj... Et il cavalier Casale mi dice che un servitor d'un suo fratello ch'or vien di Puglia dice che li prefati Imperiali erano retirati da Monopoli.' ASMo, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32, c. 214ii/41, 19 June 1529. The brother would be Francesco, who was in the Venetian military service. A copy of a letter from Casali of 15 May 1529 in the English archives similarly documents the Imperialists' difficulties at Monopoli. *L&P* IV 5545; TNA, SP 1/54, f. 1r.

Gathering information was not sufficient: it had to be reliable. Personal and particularly family connections could be important in guaranteeing that. The provision of useful news would, diplomats hoped, lead to the receipt of similar information in return.

It is, unfortunately, not easy to give a definitive account of the regularity of Gregorio Casali's correspondence with Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. Just over two hundred letters from him, of which over two-thirds are single-authored while 58 are co-written with other ambassadors, remain in the English archives and range in date from February 1525 to November 1536. As one would expect, the dominant topics are first the war and its associated negotiations, whether over the formation of the Holy League or over peace, and second the negotiations over the annulment of Henry VIII's marriage. However, Casali's surviving correspondence with the marquis of Mantua points to the existence of many letters which are now lost from the English archives.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, many of the surviving English documents are in fact summary reports of Casali's letters in the hand of the king's Latin secretary Pietro Vanni.¹⁴¹ According to Joycelyne Russell, letters in Italian were translated into Latin for Wolsey's consumption, and it is possible that some of Vanni's Latin summaries were produced from Italian originals, a view given credibility by the survival of occasional Italian letters from Casali in the archives; others, however, were clearly deciphers from ciphered Latin originals.¹⁴² The existence of these summaries suggests that a second level of information-filtering was in operation at the English court, but leaves the issue of the full content of the originals open. Other questions remain about the frequency of this correspondence. On occasion there are sequences of letters which appear to have been written almost daily, much in the manner of Casali's Mantuan and Venetian colleagues at Rome, who certainly wrote that often.¹⁴³ However, reliable couriers to England did not leave Rome that frequently, and the postal service was at times

¹⁴⁰ For example, there is no complementary correspondence to the various letters surviving in the Archivio Gonzaga regarding the exchanges of racehorses and other hunt-related gifts between the Mantuan and English courts. For full references, see the discussion of these gifts in Chapter Four, pp. 169-70.

¹⁴¹ For example, *L&P* IV 2779, 2780, 2782, 2852 and 2853.

¹⁴² Russell, *Diplomats at Work*, p. 20. For example, *L&P* IV 1956; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VIII 22r-23r, is a ciphered Latin letter, with decipher, from Casali and Ghinucci to Wolsey. *L&P* IV 2509; TNA, SP 1/39, ff. 149r-150r, is a letter from Casali to Vanni in Italian, partly in cipher.

¹⁴³ For example, the run of letters from Casali alone, or Casali and John Russell, dated 23, 24, 26 and 27 February 1526. *L&P* IV 2910, 2912, 2918 and 2921.

seriously inadequate. In June 1528 the English ambassador to France, John Clerk, recommended to Wolsey that:

In soche a great matter as this is, the King of good reason shold have his postes to and from the Pope wekely running.¹⁴⁴

His comment strongly implies that the existing arrangements provided no such regular service. Even if the English ambassadors in Rome did write letters daily, they could not safely have sent them so often. Matters do not seem to have improved following Clerk's request, as is evident in the practice of courier-sharing. In May 1529, papal officials shared messengers with the English ambassadors when sending letters to Cardinal Salviati, the papal legate in France, explaining that this was preferable to sending them via Genoa.¹⁴⁵ However, it was subsequently discovered that the English ambassadors had opened the pope's letters to Salviati, and sent them to Venice for deciphering. Clearly their Venetian contact was not wholly reliable, for copies made their way back from Venice to Salviati and the English had to apologise.¹⁴⁶ The English, however, also took such risks: in May 1529 Stephen Gardiner and Pietro Vanni sent letters with the French chamberlain's secretary, and in June 1529 Gregorio Casali sent letters to France with a papal courier.¹⁴⁷

For all the caveats about over-privileging this element of the diplomat's work, the provision of news was undoubtedly an important aspect of Casali's role as English ambassador. Even after the break of diplomatic relations with Rome, when his own status was rather ambiguous, he was keen to assure Thomas Cromwell that despite his absence from Rome (he was on his way to convalesce at the baths in Lucca) he would ensure that news was regularly supplied:

I have left orders that I should be advised of all the news, whether from Africa or elsewhere, that comes to Rome, Florence or Venice, and I will have the means to advise your Lordship of it with diligence.¹⁴⁸

This letter, however, reflects Casali's position as a diplomat who was left at Rome with a watching brief, to 'do nothing'.¹⁴⁹ When there was no great business to attend

¹⁴⁴ *L&P* IV 4390; *St P* VII 84.

¹⁴⁵ *L&P* IV 5528; *Lettere di Principi*, ed. Girolamo Ruscelli, 3 vols (Venice: Ziletti, 1581), II 161v. *L&P* IV 5546; *Lettere di Principi* II 167v.

¹⁴⁶ *L&P* IV 5725; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 185r.

¹⁴⁷ *L&P* IV 5530; TNA, SP 1/53, f. 284r. *L&P* IV 5640; Vit. B XI 145r.

¹⁴⁸ 'Io ho lassato tal ordine, che tutte le nove, tanto de Affrica como de altre, che veniranno a Roma, a Fiorenza, et a Venetia, che io ne saro subito avisato et havero via de avisarne con diligentia vostra Signoria.' *L&P* VIII 1121; *St P* VII 621.

to, no doubt the provision of news became a more central element of an ambassador's role. However, even then there were contacts to be cultivated and networks to be maintained in order to obtain this news in the first place. One needs to beware of concluding that because ambassadors' letters are full of this sort of information that collecting it was necessarily the most important or most central part of their job.

On the contrary, any ambassador resident at Rome had three key roles: as a symbolic representative of his prince, as a practical negotiator, and as a supplier of news and information. To carry out all three of these tasks required considerable knowledge of the court, its etiquette and its personalities. In particular, it required a set of contacts, a level of access to the Pope, and a social network which individuals present on a short-term basis would struggle to achieve alone. Although the literature has tended to emphasise the role of the resident ambassador as a news-gatherer, it is, in any case, very easy for historians to establish that ambassadors' letters contained lots of 'news'. The more interesting question is how they managed to get that news, and from whom? What were the networks that sustained this information-gathering? We have already seen the ways in which members of the diplomatic corps exchanged information, and in the letter of the Ferrarese ambassador, we have had a hint at the role of family networks, which will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Two.

¹⁴⁹ According to Sanudo, the Venetian ambassador Marcantonio Venier reported in a letter of 14 August that Casali and Ghinucci had been ordered by Henry VIII to stay in Rome as his ambassadors, 'without negotiating anything'. *CSP Ven* IV 967; Sanudo LVIII col. 590. Casali's position after the schism is discussed further in Chapter Five, pp. 210-15.

Chapter Two

Diplomacy as a family business: the career of Gregorio Casali, Henry VIII's man in Rome 1525-36

AFTER eight years in the English diplomatic service, around early 1534, Gregorio Casali wrote:

Syth I began to serve the king I have spent and consumed of my father's goods more than 30 thousand ducats, insomuch that if I had not had much substance come to me of my wife's dowry, I should now have been in an evil case.¹

Casali had been appointed English ambassador to the papal court in September 1525. He was the only representative of the English crown to remain resident in Rome throughout the six years of negotiation over Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon (1527-33), and he continued with diplomatic duties right up until his death in 1536. As his lament suggests, this diplomatic career was not without its risks. So the question arises: why was such employment in the service of a foreign power desirable? What could it offer to individuals and their families, and what kind of people were seen as suitable for the job? This chapter will discuss in depth Gregorio Casali's background and social status, the collective involvement of his family in diplomacy and how this aided their social advancement, the rewards to which he as an ambassador aspired and the extent to which they materialised, taking into account too the potential risks to which his employment exposed him and his family. In doing so, it will consider further why, as we saw in Chapter One, Casali was perceived to have such 'credit, reputation and access' in Rome, offering an insight into the type of networks that supported the negotiating and news-gathering functions of the ambassador and assessing in particular the advantages derived by the English crown from the employment of a native Italian in an Italian court. The chapter will first look at the history of the Casali family in an attempt to assess their social aspirations and trace the origins of their relationships with England and the world of the Roman curia which would be so crucial to Gregorio's career. It will then turn to the early

¹ *L&P* VII 86; Pocock II 521. This English document, in the hand of the royal secretary Wriothesley, is probably a translation from a Latin or Italian original by Casali, now lost. Its date is unclear but must be later than the murder of Casali's old tutor Girolamo Previdelli on 13 November 1533; it is most likely that it was written when Casali was in England, between December 1533 and August 1534.

stages of that career, highlighting the types of experience and the skills which were thought in this period to make a good diplomat and considering Gregorio's self-fashioning as a 'cavalier'. The following section will assess the material benefits (and losses) that roles in diplomacy and employment by a foreign power could entail for the individuals and families so engaged; the final section introduces the potential problems of this type of personalised, family-based arrangement, a theme that will be developed further in Chapter Five with particular reference to foreign state servants.

More specifically, the chapter will illuminate the career of a significant figure who has been neglected, rather unjustly, in the literature. During his eight years as an ambassador, Gregorio Casali had a pivotal role in English affairs at Rome and in Italy more widely. He was not only the resident diplomat, the 'eyes and ears' at the papal court, the supplier of information, introductions, accommodation and finance, but was also the 'fixer' who made sure that the numerous special embassies of these years ran smoothly. In this work, he frequently used the services of his three brothers and two cousins, not to mention other family connections, agents and servants. It was not only Gregorio but – as Sir Francis Bryan put it in a letter to Henry VIII – the 'hole house of Cassale' who provided the crown with 'faythefull trusty and tru servyce'.² In short, the business of the Casali 'family firm' in these years was diplomacy, and particularly, but not exclusively, English diplomacy.

1. Family background and social status

THE Casali were a Bolognese merchant family.³ Andrea Casali, Gregorio's grandfather, had moved from Imola to Bologna in 1434. He became a citizen twenty years later, and is described in his citizenship document as a merchant.⁴ Andrea died in 1465, leaving his estate to be divided in equal parts between his three sons: Michele, Catellano and Francesco.⁵ Michele, who was probably the eldest, took over his father's business activities while still a minor, and his brother Francesco became

² *L&P* IV 5481; *St P* VII 168.

³ It should be pointed out that at the time of this case-study there were two Casali families with members in Rome. The prominent humanist Battista Casali was a member of the other Casali family; in older literature he is sometimes confused with Gregorio's brother Giambattista Casali.

⁴ ASB, Fondo Comune-Governo no. progressivo 429. Cittadinanze no. 30, dated 3 April 1454.

⁵ His testament, dated 13 October 1465, is in the Archivio Casali di Monticelli (henceforth ACdM), cassetta I (1420-1547); a note of its contents is in the Archivio Isolani-Lupari, Fondo Casali B18. It was registered by ser Petrus de Machiavellis, a Bolognese notary.

a merchant too.⁶ Although subsequent genealogies, such as those of Crescenzi Romani, Sitoni and Litta, would claim that the family was descended from the princes of Cortona, there is no evidence to suggest that Gregorio or others of his generation claimed such lineage, nor that Michele's generation did so.⁷ However, the Casali were undoubtedly upwardly-mobile, and probably the initial key to their social progression was Catellano's career at the Roman curia. Having gained his degree from the university of Bologna, in 1483 he became an apostolic protonotary and was active at the curia as an abbreviator; by the time of his death in 1501 he was a secretary to Pope Alexander VI.⁸ His brother Francesco, who had a bank, was a papal treasurer.⁹ It is very likely that it was these connections with the papal court which enabled Michele Casali in 1492 to contract a marriage with the young Antonina Caffarelli, member of a wealthy Roman noble family.¹⁰ At the time of the marriage, Michele must have been in his 40s, while Antonina could not have been more than 16, and may have been younger, a typical pattern in this period.¹¹

⁶ Michele and Francesco Casali are described as merchants in Archivio Isolani-Lupari, Fondo Casali B18, unnumbered document of 27 January 1471, which also notes that all three brothers were aged over twenty but under twenty-five. Other documents in the same series show Michele acting on his brothers' behalf in a variety of business transactions in the period immediately following their father's death, 1466 to 1470, which suggests he was the eldest.

⁷ Gio. Pietro de' Crescenzi Romani, *Corona della Nobiltà d'Italia* (Bologna: Tebaldini, 1642) p. 537; Sitoni, *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae*; Pompeo Litta, *Celebri Famiglie Italiane*, 11 vols (Milan and Turin, 1819-99), table 4, Casali di Cortona. On the tendency (from the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) among the Bolognese patriciate to claim imposing if improbable ancestries, see Mauro Carboni, *Il debito della città: Mercato del credito, fisco e società a Bologna fra Cinque e Seicento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995), p. 52.

⁸ He received a degree in canon law from the University of Bologna on 13 September 1473. *Il "Liber Secretus Iuris Pontificii" dell'Università di Bologna, 1451-1500* ed. Celestino Piana (Milan: Giuffrè, 1989), p. 73; the records in the Archivio Isolani-Lupari, Fondo Casali B18, suggest that he also graduated in civil law: a document dated 27 January 1471, describes Catellano as 'studens in iure civili', and a further document of 20 June 1474 describes him as 'decretorum doctoris', i.e. a doctor of laws (plural). Catellano became an apostolic protonotary in 1483, paying the sum of 3,000 florins as the price of the office. ASV, Camera Apostolica, Introitus et Exitus 509, f. 99. A note of his death on 18 January 1501 by the papal master-of-ceremonies Johann Burchard establishes his status at the curia. *Liber Notarum*, ed. Enrico Celani, 2 vols (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1906), II 265.

⁹ Francesco's post as papal treasurer is mentioned in the post-mortem inventory of his property, ACdM I, no. 8. His bank is mentioned in BUB, MS 4207, L. Montefani-Caprara, *Famiglie Bolognesi* vol. 24 (Carr-Casta), f. 106v.

¹⁰ They married on 11 April 1492. BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 11980, *Notizie delle famiglie romane cavate dalli instrumenti pubblici 1000-1500*, ff. 121r, 131v. This source gives two different figures for Antonina's dowry: either 1500 or 1800 gold ducats. For the Caffarelli family see Filippo Caffarelli, *I Caffarelli, Le Grandi Famiglie Romane XVIII* (Rome, 1959). In their study of notarial documents from the months following the Sack of Rome, Anna Esposito and Manuel Vaquero Piñeiro note that the Caffarelli were one of the families to offer loans to 'other aristocratic Roman families' which 'had suffered more unfortunate circumstances'. 'Rome during the Sack: Chronicles and Testimonies from an Occupied City', in Gouwens and Reiss (eds), *Pontificate of Clement VII*, pp. 125-42 (pp. 134-35).

¹¹ Michele would have been between 43 and 46 years old. His age is established by documents in the Archivio Isolani-Lupari, Fondo Casali B18: on 22 November 1466 he was over 18 but under 25; on

As Maria Antonietta Visceglia has argued, in this period a curial career was frequently the means by which non-Roman families succeeded in settling themselves in the city. The key factors she identifies in this process – marriage, the acquisition of a city residence and the shifting of financial or business interests to Rome – are all evident in the case of the Casali.¹² Similarly, Cesarina Casanova's study of social mobility in the papal states highlights the importance of offices such as papal treasurer in family advancement.¹³ The Casali were neither exceptional nor unusual in their 'family strategy', although it is important to note that as Benedetta Borello points out the expression 'family strategy' is not without its problems, implying as it does the existence of a plan and/or a strategist.¹⁴ Her conceptualisation of the family as a framework orienting individuals' choices and optimising the use of resources is useful for understanding how the Casali functioned. Specifically, we should not assume that the Casali had a long-term scheme for their social advancement, rather that on a more subtle level through collaboration they were able to obtain considerable advantages.

While Catellano pursued his curial career, his brothers continued with mercantile activity and property investments.¹⁵ A useful indication of the family's wealth is given in a document of 1497, when the brothers finally divided the property they had jointly inherited from their father. Besides substantial holdings of farm-land and residential property, they owned several contiguous houses in Via Castiglione, Bologna, one of which was currently used as a family home, and had a villa for the family's use in the Bolognese hills.¹⁶ In a description of 1511, their Bologna palazzo

27 January 1471 he was over 20 but under 25. Antonina's age can be estimated from the date of her parents' marriage: 1475.

¹² Maria Antonietta Visceglia (ed.), *La nobiltà romana in età moderna: Profili istituzionali e pratiche sociali* (Rome: Carocci, 2001), Introduction, p. xx. For background see also the essays in Gensini (ed.), *Roma Capitale*, in particular Pierre Hurtubise, 'L'implantation d'une famille florentine à Rome au début du XVI^e siècle: les Salviati', pp. 253-71; Anna Modigliani, "'Li nobili huomini di Roma': comportamenti economici e scelte professionali', pp. 345-72; and Anna Esposito, "'Li nobili huomini di Roma': strategie familiari tra città, curia e municipio', pp. 373-88. An excellent case-study of family strategy and career-building in Rome, albeit for a subsequent period (later 17th and early 18th centuries), is Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1990).

¹³ Cesarina Casanova, *Gentilhuomini Ecclesiastici: Ceti e mobilità sociale nelle legazioni pontificie (secc. XVI-XVIII)* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1999), p. 9.

¹⁴ Benedetta Borello, 'Strategie di insediamento in città: i Pamphilj a Roma nel primo Cinquecento', in Visceglia (ed.), *Nobiltà romana*, pp. 31-61 (p. 33).

¹⁵ For example, in 1475 Michele bought three houses from Elisabetta Pepoli for 3,000 lire. Giuseppe di Gio. Battista Guidicini, *Cose Notabili della Città di Bologna*, 4 vols (Bologna: Società Tipografica dei Compositori, 1870), III 242-43.

¹⁶ AcdM, I, no. 4, 16 October 1497. The villa suffered major damage in 1527, when it was burnt by Spanish soldiers. Sanudo XLIV col. 472.

was said to be ‘most beautiful’.¹⁷ (This property is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.) The family’s desire to make its mark is evident in the 1495 acquisition, by Francesco and Catellano Casali, of a chapel in the church of San Domenico in Bologna, where a series of family memorials still exist.¹⁸ The altarpiece depicting St Catherine, by Filippino Lippi, is dated 1501, and it is reasonable to suppose that this was commissioned by the family specifically for their new chapel.¹⁹ Catellano and Francesco died, respectively, in 1501 and 1502.²⁰ The surviving family members, however, continued to expand their property interests; according to Guidicini they purchased a further property adjacent to their city block from the Aldrovandino Fondazza for 2,000 lire in 1503.²¹

The fact that the chapel was acquired by Francesco and Catellano, and not by Michele, suggests that by 1495 he was firmly established in Rome.²² He certainly maintained business interests in Bologna, and of course kept a share of the family property there, however, he acquired substantial property holdings in Rome, and was buried there, in the church of San Girolamo della Carità, on his death in 1506.²³ The Casali family house in Rome was in the *riione* (district) of Regola, in the parish of San Andrea del Nazareth: in the post-mortem inventory of Michele’s property it was described as ‘a large house with halls, chambers, a kitchen, dining rooms, cellars, a garden, a stable and other parts’.²⁴ This inventory, the surviving copy of which is not

¹⁷ ‘Uno palazo de Chaxali bellissimo.’ Fileno dalla Tuata, *Istoria di Bologna: Origini-1521* ed. Bruno Fortunato, 3 vols (Bologna: Costa, 2005), II 618. The palazzo was demolished in the second half of the nineteenth century. For further details see the entry in Giampiero Cuppini, *I Palazzi Senatorii a Bologna: Architettura come immagine del potere* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1974), p. 293.

¹⁸ Biblioteca del Convento di San Domenico, Bologna, MS III.4000, Liber Consiliorum Conv. S. P. Dominici Bon. (primus) 1459-1648, f. 27v.

¹⁹ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Le Pitture di Bologna 1686* ed. Andrea Emiliani (Bologna: Alfa, 1969), pp. 227-28. I. B. Supino implies that the painting was indeed commissioned by the Casali but does not cite any documentary evidence: *L’arte nelle chiese di Bologna*, 2 vols (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1938), II 267.

²⁰ Their wills are in ACdM, I, dated 18 January 1501 and 20 July 1502. Francesco left £500 for the upkeep of the family chapel. Biblioteca del Convento di San Domenico, *Annali del Convento di San Domenico*, p. 740.

²¹ Guidicini, *Cose Notabili*, III 242.

²² This is corroborated by a note in ACdM, I, recording the existence of a notarial document, now lost, dated 6 June 1495 approving the *emphyteusis* (copyhold) by Catellano, Francesco and Michele of three *casette* in the parish of San Andrea del Nazareth, to last three generations.

²³ Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle Chiese e d’Altri Edificii di Roma*, 14 vols (Rome: Bencini, 1869-84), IV 246 gives his epitaph, and notes the presence of his tombstone on the walls of a room next to the sacristy.

²⁴ ‘Unam domum magnam cum salis, cameris, quoquina, tinellis, cantinis, orto, stabulo et alijs suis membris positum in Urbe et regione Arenula.’ ACdM, I, no. 10, f. 6r. The parish is identified in M. Armellini, ‘Un censimento della città di Roma sotto il pontificato di Leone X’, *Gli studi in Italia* IV (1881) vol. 2, 890-909 and V (1882) vol. 3, 69-84; 161-92; 321-55; 481-518 (p. 329). According to Armellini the census can be dated between July 1517 and November 1518.

complete, lists at least eight other houses in Rome, plus a vineyard, property outside the city in the district of San Lorenzo, and further property in Bologna and Imola.²⁵ Its description is broadly compatible with the details of the Casali property given in the Roman census of 1517, which describes three properties in the district of Santo Eustachio owned by Michele's heirs, and a further four, in Regola, owned by their mother Antonina, in addition to the family house.²⁶ One of the Regola houses listed in the census was occupied by 'Monseignor Casador', an Auditor of the Rota, which suggests it was of reasonable quality, and further highlights the family's close links with high-ranking papal civil servants, the type of connection that would be significant for Gregorio Casali's future diplomatic career. The district of Regola had long associations with England, and was the site of the English Hospital. Indeed, in January 1529, suffering financial problems, Gregorio Casali threatened to give up his own home and move into the 'proximum Hospitale'.²⁷ A few entries down from Casali in the 1526 census is listed a 'Dominico Bonvisina': he may well have been connected to the Bonvisi merchants in London who were involved in transmitting money for the ambassadors.²⁸ Insofar as there was a centre for the English in Rome in this period, it was Regola.

When Michele Casali died in 1506, his five sons and two daughters were entrusted to the care of four guardians. These included their mother and the high-ranking cardinal Raffaele Riario, as well as two long-standing family retainers, Alessandro Zambeccari, and Girolamo Crescenzi.²⁹ Crescenzi was described in Michele's testament as 'his personal and long-standing servant' while Zambeccari was described as a 'procurator of lawsuits in the Roman Curia'.³⁰ However, the importance of the testament is that it establishes the relationship between the family and Cardinal Riario; we know that at least one of the Casali brothers, Francesco,

²⁵ ACdM, I, no. 10, f. 6r.

²⁶ Armellini, 'Censimento', pp. 329-330, 345, 348.

²⁷ *L&P* IV 5221; TNA, SP 1/52, f. 177r. It is not absolutely certain that this is a reference to the English Hospital (there was another hospital in the area) however, given the English Hospital's history as a diplomatic residence it is the most probable candidate. On the Hospital's diplomatic role see Mellano, *Rappresentanti Italiani*, p. 18.

²⁸ *Descriptio Urbis: The Roman Census of 1527*, ed. Egmont Lee (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985), p. 92. The Bonvisi merchants are mentioned in this context in *L&P* IV 4960; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 162v.

²⁹ ACdM, I, no. 9. The sons were Girolamo, Giambattista, Gregorio, Paolo and Francesco; the daughters Giovanna and Giulia. The will also refers to the possibility of a posthumous birth, but as there is no further record of this child, it seems likely that he or she did not survive infancy. Girolamo died in his youth, sometime between December 1509 and January 1511. Unnumbered documents in ASB, Fondo Notarile, Paleotti Bonaventura, 1505-1512 establish these dates.

³⁰ 'Eius domestico et antiquo familiari'; 'D. Alexandri de Zambecharijs de Bononia in Romana Curia causarum procuratoris'. ACdM, I, no. 9.

would later enter Riario's household.³¹ Riario, the papal chamberlain, was one of the most important cardinals: he had been appointed in 1477 at the age of just 17 by Sixtus IV.³² On his death in 1521 one diarist described him as the 'doyen des cardinals', perhaps intended in its literal sense of age, it might equally be interpreted as 'elder statesman'.³³ It is likely that Riario knew Catellano Casali as early as 1478, when the artist Lysippus produced portrait medals of both men: one medal was cast with their respective portraits on either side.³⁴ There is further evidence for the relationship between Riario and the Casali in the fact that when the papal court visited Bologna in November 1506, the cardinal lodged in the Casali palazzo, and in the connection of the Riario family with Imola, where the Casali still had property.³⁵ There was a link on the maternal side too: the Caffarelli were among the families who bailed out Riario after he was accused of involvement in a conspiracy against Pope Leo X.³⁶

Michele's children were thus established with a set of very useful family connections and a certain, though by no means vast, quantity of property. The family had made its first move away from its mercantile background and into a position where Gregorio and his brothers would be able to pursue careers at the court of Rome. About the children's education we know little, except that their tutors included Girolamo Previdelli, who later became an important jurist in Bologna and provided a key legal opinion in favour of the annulment of Henry VIII's marriage: as we will see, every possible family connection was exploited in the course of the Casali diplomatic careers.³⁷ The family's continuing presence in Rome is

³¹ This is recorded on his memorial in the Chiesa di San Domenico, Bologna.

³² Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-Ecclesiastica*, 103 vols (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1840-61), LVII. Riario's early career and important role at the papal court can be followed in Christine Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

³³ BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 3552, Anonymous French diary, 1509-1540, f. 38v.

³⁴ G. F. Hill, 'The medallist Lysippus', *Burlington Magazine* 13, no. 65 (1908), 274-75, 277-81 and 284-86, (p. 279).

³⁵ BUB, MS 430, *Cronaca di Friano dell'Ubal dini Bolognese*, III 751v-752. Dalla Tuata, *Istoria*, II 489. In 1480, Girolamo Riario, Raffaele's mentor, decided to build a house in Imola. See Christoph Frommel, 'Raffaele Riario, committente della Cancelleria', in Arnold Esch and Christoph Luitpold Frommel (eds), *Arte, Committenza ed Economia a Roma e nelle Corti del Rinascimento 1420-1530* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), pp. 197-211 (p. 201).

³⁶ Caffarelli, *I Caffarelli*, p. 40. Whether there was, in fact, a conspiracy is questionable: see the discussion in Lowe, *Cardinal Soderini*, pp. 104-113.

³⁷ Previdelli taught at the university of Bologna in 1518-19 and again from 1524-25 to his death in 1533. He dedicated his first printed work, *Tractatus legalis de Peste* (Bologna: Ioanne Baptista Phaello, 1528), to Giambattista Casali. His advice on Henry's divorce, which includes prefatory and concluding dedications to Gregorio Casali, was published as *Consilium D. Hieronymi Previdelli, pro Invictiss. Rege Angliae, una cum responsione eiusdem ad consilium Domini Bernardi Reatini pro Illustrissima Regina editum* (Bologna: Ioannes Baptista Phaellus, 1531). On Previdelli see Bedouelle

documented in Roman notarial records and the census of 1517, and at least Giambattista and Francesco were brought up there.³⁸ However, it is not clear whether Gregorio and Paolo also lived in Rome. Certainly, the family's connection with Bologna did not disappear, and it is notable that later in his life, after a serious illness, it was to Bologna that Gregorio went to convalesce.³⁹ Indeed, whatever Michele Casali's intentions may have been, the Casali never settled permanently in Rome. This raises the interesting question of how common it was for families to be temporarily resident in Rome, perhaps for no more than a generation, and subsequently leave; and how common it was for those who were in Rome to retain a strong connection with their city of origin. Studies of Roman families, not surprisingly, tend to focus on those who stayed, for example, Benedetta Borello's article on the Pamphilj's settlement in Rome during the same period.⁴⁰ The example of the Casali demonstrates that Pamphilj-type permanent settlement was by no means the inevitable consequence of an initial relocation.

2. Gregorio's early career

It was Gregorio Casali's generation that broke decisively with the family's mercantile past. He acquired feudal property; his cousin Andrea became a senator in Bologna. Gregorio's diplomatic career was the decisive factor in that process. However, it was the network of relationships he had acquired through his mother's family and through connections like Cardinal Riario, and the knowledge he had of the social circles of the Roman Curia, which made that career possible. Although information about the early stages of Gregorio's life is limited, he is probably to be identified with the person described by Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio as 'one of our Bolognese gentlemen' in a letter to the marquis of Mantua of 10 November 1518.⁴¹

and Le Gal, *Le 'divorce'*, pp. 406-409; for a more detailed account of his career see Surtz, *Henry VIII's Great Matter in Italy*, pp. 514-66.

³⁸ ASR, Collegio Notai Capitolini, 1094. For Armellini, see above, note 26. Giambattista's Bolognese origins and Roman upbringing were noted by Sanudo: *CSP Ven* III 1207; Sanudo XL col. 718: 'Questo protonotario è di nation bolognese; ma nutrito a Roma.' For Francesco, see above, note 31.

³⁹ In the autumn of 1528. *L&P* IV 4918; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 130r. 'È venuto a Bologna per recuperare la sanita' *L&P* IV 4883; TNA, SP 1/50 f. 208r. *L&P* IV 4886; Vit. B x 135r. *L&P* IV 4956; Vit. B x 158r.

⁴⁰ Borello, 'Strategie di insediamento'.

⁴¹ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 578, c. 122r, 10 November 1518. 'Venendo a coteste parti un nostro gentilhomio Bolognese et uno Anglese homini di questa Maesta con lettere et commissioni de sua

Campeggio, himself from Bologna, spent the period from July 1518 to August 1519 in England as papal legate, and it is plausible that the young Gregorio went to London as part of the cardinal's entourage: he had certainly been in England before April 1519.⁴² Service as a junior member of such a legation would have provided Gregorio with a very useful apprenticeship in the business of diplomacy, and would have enabled him to establish relationships not only with members of the English court but also with the French diplomats and courtiers present for the conclusion of the Treaty of London in October 1518. The impression of a relationship of patronage with Campeggio is reinforced by the existence of a letter dated January 1521 from Campeggio to Cardinal Wolsey about the expediting of Gregorio's pensions.⁴³ It is also notable that the Casali family's old patron, Cardinal Riario, had had a close friendship with the English Cardinal Bainbridge, which may have been another source of connections with England, and furthermore that in the 1490s Bainbridge had studied at Bologna.⁴⁴ However, it is in 1519 that Gregorio is first recorded by name as an agent of Henry VIII.⁴⁵ He would have been between eighteen and twenty-two years old.⁴⁶ A letter from Alfonso d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, records Gregorio's visit to that city to buy war horses for the English king, describing him as the king's 'familiaris': servant, or intimate.⁴⁷ Even at this early stage, Gregorio's personal qualities were noted: the duke described him to Cardinal Wolsey as 'cautious and

nobil gratia.' Gregorio did indeed travel to the north of Italy around that time to buy horses for Henry VIII.

⁴² Campeggio was sent to England in April 1518 as one of four legates despatched at that time by Pope Leo X (the others went to France, Spain and Germany) on a mission to obtain a universal peace between the Christian princes. He arrived in England in July 1518 and stayed for over a year, receiving, among other gifts the 'English Palace', now the Palazzo Torlonia, in Rome. See the *DBI* and, for Wolsey's machinations surrounding his arrival, Gwyn, *Wolsey*, pp. 102-03. Gregorio's movements are established in a letter of 9 April 1519 from the duke of Ferrara to Cardinal Wolsey, which refers to Gregorio 'redeunte in Angliam'. *L&P* III 172; TNA, SP 1/18, f. 142.

⁴³ 20 January 1521. *L&P* III 1136; TNA, SP 1/21, f. 182.

⁴⁴ The relationship between Riario and Bainbridge is discussed in Chambers, 'English representation', pp. 361-62 and in the same author's *Cardinal Bainbridge in the Court of Rome 1509-14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 107. Chambers cites the comments of the Mantuan ambassador Gabionetta in this regard: see ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga, 861-62. On Bainbridge at Bologna Chambers cites Mitchell, 'English law students', p. 280.

⁴⁵ A letter of 9 April 1519 from the duke of Ferrara to Cardinal Wolsey refers to Gregorio returning to England: 'Redeunte in Angliam circumspecto ac sanem eleganti viro domino Gregorio bononiensi Regio familiari qui ferraria iter fecit.' *L&P* III 172; TNA, SP 1/18, f. 142.

⁴⁶ A document of 11 December 1519 concerning tutorship notes that both Gregorio and his brother Paolo were over eighteen but under twenty-five. ASB, Fondo Notarile, Pasi, Baiardi Priamo, filza 15, no. 212. The memorial in the family chapel, Chiesa di San Domenico, Bologna, records that Gregorio was under 40 at the time of his death in late December 1536. Gregorio's birth date is therefore likely to be somewhere between 1497 and 1501.

⁴⁷ 9 April 1519. *L&P* III 171; TNA, SP 1/18, f. 140.

most refined', surely a reflection of the Roman court circles in which he had grown up.⁴⁸

In August of 1519, Gregorio received an English knighthood, and was granted 200 gold crowns a year for life. The timing, just a few days before Campeggio's departure from England, corroborates the suggestion that Gregorio was a member of the cardinal's entourage.⁴⁹ The king's signed bill reads:

We in consideracion of the manyfolde vertues and commendable merites of our dere and welbiloved Sir Gregory de Casalis, being borne of the nobles of Rome, have erected and avaunced hym to the ordre of knighthode ffor the better and more honourable mayntenaunce wherof we have assigned to hym an yerely pension or annuite of two hundred crownes of golde.⁵⁰

The comment 'borne of the nobles of Rome' is particularly interesting. As we have seen, Gregorio's mother was indeed from a noble family, but his paternal family background was firmly merchant class. Whether Gregorio had made a point of never mentioning the old family business, or whether the phrase 'nobles of Rome' was thought to have a better ring for the letters patent to it we do not know. Nonetheless, the comment gives a hint at the type of identity which Gregorio had acquired, or had fashioned for himself, at the English court. As I will discuss below, however, his self-presentation in Italy was somewhat different.

In the course of the next five years, Gregorio travelled extensively between England and Italy. In January 1520, Fabrizio de Colonna wrote from Naples that he had received letters and a horse from Henry via Gregorio. Gregorio was, in turn, to take a horse back for the king.⁵¹ The Colonna, a major Roman baronial family, were related by marriage to the Caffarelli: we will see repeatedly how intrinsic such relationships were to the practice of diplomacy throughout Gregorio's career.⁵² During the same period, Gregorio and his brothers were consolidating their position at the court of Rome. In July 1520 they were the subject of complaint by the then English ambassador and bishop of Worcester, Silvestro Gigli, who accused them of

⁴⁸ 'Circumspecto ac sanem eleganti viro.' *L&P* III 172; TNA, SP 1/18, f. 142.

⁴⁹ Henry wrote to Pope Leo X on 18 August regarding Campeggio's recall. *L&P* III 427. Campeggio's departure is recorded in a letter of Wolsey dated 19 August 1519, *L&P* III 431 and he had arrived at Dover by 22 August, when he wrote thanking Henry and Wolsey for their kindness and gifts. *L&P* III 433, 434.

⁵⁰ 16 August 1519. *L&P* III 421; TNA, C82/479, unnumbered membrane.

⁵¹ 25 January 1520. *L&P* III 605; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B iv 28.

⁵² Ludovica Colonna was Gregorio's great-grandmother; his grandfather's cousin Lorenzo was married to Eugenia Colonna. Caffarelli, *I Caffarelli*, pp. 36-37.

manoeuvring against his promotion to the cardinalate.⁵³ The following month, Gregorio's younger brother Francesco was enrolled in the equestrian order of Pope Leo X: the start of an impressive military and diplomatic career.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Gregorio had been back in England, continuing to facilitate the exchange of horses, hawks and hounds between Henry and various Italian princes, notably the marquis of Mantua, Federico II Gonzaga.⁵⁵ The relationship between the Casali family and the Gonzaga will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five; however, it is worth noting at this stage that there is evidence of an early relationship between Gregorio's brother Giambattista and the marquis' brother, the future cardinal Ercole Gonzaga. In a letter of 22 September 1534, Gregorio wrote that they had been brought up together since youth and loved each other like brothers.⁵⁶ It can certainly be established that both Ercole and Giambattista were in Bologna during 1524 and 1525, for the period of Ercole's studies at the university there.⁵⁷ The good relations between both Casali brothers and Cardinal Gonzaga were noted in the 1520s by the Ferrarese diplomat Antonio Romeo and by the French secretary at the papal court Nicolas Raince, and in 1530 Gregorio obtained a position in the Gonzaga service for his nephew Ludovico Crescenzi.⁵⁸ Both early friendships and early informal diplomatic contacts thus contributed to Gregorio's later influence as an ambassador.

In April and May of 1523, Gregorio was in London.⁵⁹ According to Cinzia Sicca's research, he spent six and a half months that year staying at the London

⁵³ 12 July 1520, in a letter to Pietro Vanni. *L&P* III 909; TNA, SP 1/20, ff. 171-72.

⁵⁴ On 13 August 1520. Sitoni, *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae*, p. 22.

⁵⁵ *L&P* III 2808; TNA, SP 1/27, f. 24 and *L&P* III 2809; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B v 164r. This was a role that would continue right through Gregorio's diplomatic career: see below, Chapter Four, pp. 169-70.

⁵⁶ 'col cardinale di Mantova col quale si è allevato da pueritia et si amano fraternamente.' *Correspondance du Cardinal Jean du Bellay*, ed. Rémy Scheurer, 2 vols (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969), I 430. 'Pueritia', strictly speaking, lasted only until the seventeenth year, but in practice was applied past that age. See Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).

⁵⁷ On Ercole's presence in Bologna see A. Luzio, 'Ercole Gonzaga allo studio di Bologna', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 8 (1882), 374-86. I am grateful to Sarah Cockram for drawing this article to my attention. Giambattista wrote letters to the marquis and marchioness of Mantua from Bologna in 1524 and 1525: see ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1150, cc. 461, 463, 464; Archivio Gonzaga 1151, cc. 196, 198.

⁵⁸ 'È molto intrinseco del Reverendissimo di Mantoa.' Letter of 29 October 1528, ASMo, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32, c. 214i/33. 'le dit Chevalier suyvant la bonne disposition en quoy tousiours jay trouve monseigneur R.m. de manthoue, qui le tient fort de ses amys.' BNF, MS Français 3009, f. 17r, Nicolas Raince to Montmorency, 19 July 1528. On Ludovico see ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 879, c. 617r; Archivio Gonzaga 1153, c. 403r and c. 478r.

⁵⁹ The dates are established by *CSP Ven* III 661, 682; ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 578, cc. 131r, 134r.

house of the Florentine Bardi and Cavalcanti company, along with Gabrielo Cexano, the secretary of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (the future Pope Clement VII). That was one of 'repeated instances' in which he stayed there; once again we see his close connection with key figures at the papal court, who would in future prove useful diplomatic contacts.⁶⁰ Mercantile networks, such as those of Bardi and Cavalcanti, had an important role in the diplomacy of this period; although on the current evidence it is impossible to tell how extensive Gregorio's own involvement in such commerce might have been, we do know that in June 1524, he was granted a licence 'to retain, for six years from the last importation and exportation, customs on merchandise imported or exported by him during two years after 1 Jan 15 Hen VIII to the amount of 2,000l', which would suggest that he did engage in some trading activities.⁶¹

In the late summer and autumn of 1523, according to Steven Gunn, Gregorio was involved in raising troops for the duke of Suffolk's march on Paris.⁶² At the end of June 1524, Cardinal Wolsey wrote to the English ambassador Richard Pace, then in France and concerned with the war, that Gregorio was being sent to join him. Describing Casali as the king's 'speciall and faithfull servant', Wolsey wrote that:

He is well expert in the manner of the warrs of those contreyes, having also many frendes, who yf nede were, woold and might at time convenyent serve the Kinges Grace in any of his warrs, by the bringing and procuring of the sayd Sir Gregory.⁶³

Both the military expertise, which I will discuss further below, and the 'many friends', were important assets for Gregorio in establishing himself in a diplomatic career. Between August 1524 and February 1525 he appears to have been something of a high-level messenger (or low-level shuttle diplomat), employing his connections at Bologna to obtain cavalry, being despatched back to England to lobby Henry for

⁶⁰ Cinzia M. Sicca, 'Consumption and trade of art between Italy and England in the first half of the sixteenth century: the London house of the Bardi and Cavalcanti company', *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002), 163-201 (p. 172). In 1527, Gregorio sent on to England letters from Cexano with news of the war. *L&P* IV 2891; TNA, SP 1/41, f. 38v. See also the discussion of this house in Chapter Three, below, pp. 120-21.

⁶¹ That is, on goods imported or exported for two years after 1 January 1525. *L&P* IV 464; TNA, C82/547, m. 54. Sicca points out in relation to a similar licence granted to the Bardi and Cavalcanti company that this did not mean the customs was waived, rather deferred. 'Pawns of international finance and politics: Florentine sculptors at the court of Henry VIII', *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006), 1-34 (p. 14).

⁶² S. J. Gunn, 'The duke of Suffolk's march on Paris in 1523', *English Historical Review* 101 (1986), 596-634 (p. 599, n. 5).

⁶³ *L&P* IV 456; *St P* VI 316-17.

more money and in turn sent to the duke of Bourbon at the Imperial camp, then travelling to Spain, back to London and then to Italy.⁶⁴ In September 1524 Wolsey entrusted Casali with the task of obtaining ‘perfect knowledge’ of the duke of Bourbon’s military progress, on the basis of which the English would decide whether or not to advance into France.⁶⁵ He was evidently thought competent to make such sensitive assessments, and must have been a considerable asset to the English in their intervention in the Italian war.

Meanwhile, Gregorio’s older brother Giambattista, whose career is discussed in more detail below, had joined the family business of diplomacy. On 5 January 1525 he was appointed a papal nuncio to England; a choice in which Gregorio’s existing links with England were, as we will see, a factor. Over the course of the next months, Gregorio continued to shuttle between London and Rome. In February 1525 he was sent by Henry to lobby the Pope and Venice for support for the Imperial cause, and with orders to pay 50,000 ducats which the king had in Rome.⁶⁶ Although his journey to Venice was abandoned, his mission to Rome seems to have met with considerable success. John Clerk, the ambassador, described it thus:

I assure your grace he hathe be[*ha*]vyd hyme selfe her verye well grettlye to the kynges [...] and the pope is and manye other grett meneis syngular[...] contentation and by cause he is won off ther own, they do beleiff hyme in declaryng the kynges highnes vertus an[*d*] actis, myche more [*than they would*] doo a stranger... he is lyke to bryng youe soche tydynges, as in myne opinion your grace will lyke as well, as ever ye lykyd anye.⁶⁷

This explicit acknowledgement of the advantages of employing an Italian (and not only an Italian, but one of the pope’s own subjects) will be a focus for discussion in Chapter Five.

Gregorio was, almost immediately, back on the road to England. This time, not only was he taking back information for Henry – not least the details of the French king’s capture at Pavia and the reaction from Rome – but he also had the job of communicating the ‘pope’s mind’ about the crisis to the papal nuncios in England,

⁶⁴ On the foreign policy of these years see G. W. Bernard, *War, Taxation and Rebellion in Early Tudor England: Henry VIII, Wolsey and the Amicable Grant of 1525* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), pp. 3-52.

⁶⁵ *L&P* IV 615; *St P* IV 121, cited in Bernard, *War, Taxation and Rebellion*, p. 23.

⁶⁶ *CSP Sp* II 713, 718. *CSP Ven* III 935, 937.

⁶⁷ *L&P* IV 1131; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VII 65r-65v. 28 February 1525. The right-hand edge of the manuscript is mutilated, as is the space in which I have suggested the words ‘than they would’ in line with the abstract in the *Letters and Papers*.

one of whom, of course, was his brother Giambattista.⁶⁸ Six months later, after a further round of diplomatic missions, he received his first formal posting, as English ambassador to the Holy See. Henry VIII's letter to Pope Clement VII clearly expressed his confidence in Casali:

... We have known for a long time the most devoted faith, industry and dexterity of the aforesaid Master Gregorio... in our most important matters. For that purpose we are sending him, in whom we have confided absolutely, and whom we have made a participant in many of our councils, at the present time as ambassador to Your Holiness, asking you most strongly, that whenever matters of great importance occur, you should declare them to the same Master Gregorio apart... with whom you can act most freely, and trust him no less than you would ourselves, if we were present, in whatever matter.⁶⁹

The decision to appoint Gregorio Casali, a layman, as ambassador to Rome, diverged from past English practice. Previously, only clerics had been engaged in that position, and it is certainly relevant to ask Casali should have been chosen.⁷⁰ Following the death of Cardinal Bainbridge in 1514, England had employed first Silvestro Gigli, the bishop of Worcester, as its resident ambassador (until 1521), and then – in various combinations – John Clerk, Richard Pace and Thomas Hannibal, all three of whom were clerics. Revenues from the see of Worcester had long been used to remunerate English diplomatic agents in Rome, and the bishopric's newest incumbent, Girolamo Ghinucci, was appointed as ambassador to the papal court alongside Casali.⁷¹ However, as Chapter One discussed, the use of lay ambassadors at Rome was far from unusual and, arguably, offered certain advantages.

⁶⁸ As Gianmatteo Giberti explained to them in a letter of 6 March 1525. *L&P* IV 1159; *Lettere di Principi* I 156v-157v. A series of credential letters from the Pope for Gregorio, dated 3 March 1525, are in ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, nos. 2560 (to the Viceroy of Naples); 2601 (to the duke of Milan); 2603 (to the marquis of Pescara); and 2609 (to the Queen of England).

⁶⁹ 'Prefati vero dicti Domini Gregorii (quem inter dilectos consiliarios nostros habemus) fidem, industriam ac dexteritatem iam pridem gravissimis in rebus nobis addictissimam cognoverimus: eum idcirco, quo prorsus confidimus, et quem multorum nostrorum consiliorum participem effecimus, ad Vestram Sanctitatem oratorem impresentia misimus, ipsam vehementissime rogantes, ut quotiens gravissimi momenti negocia occurrent, velit eidem Dno Gregorio seorsum ac sigillatim declarare, cum eo liberrime agere, nec minorem illi fidem, quam nobis ipsis, si presentes adessemus, quibuscunque in rebus prestare. Secretiores enim notas, quibus de occurrentibus negociis certiores nos faciat, illi credidimus.' *L&P* IV 1649, 1650; Theiner, pp. 550-51; ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, 2380.

⁷⁰ However there were plenty of laymen who had careers in Rome and the papal service more generally. A series of positions in the government of Rome were open to members of the nobility. Francesco Guicciardini was governor of Bologna. Latino Giovenale Manetti, a relation of Gregorio Casali's wife who had left his clerical order to marry, was secretary to Pope Paul III and employed on a number of diplomatic missions.

⁷¹ For Gigli and Ghinucci, see above, Chapter One, p. 35.

There were some general and some more particular reasons why Gregorio Casali's appointment made sense. He was obviously personally a talented diplomat: the numerous letters in his praise testify to that. He was hard-working, prepared to ride tirelessly across the continent. Furthermore, he had clearly made a good impression during his time at the English court. Beyond his talents as an individual, however, he demonstrated many of the broader characteristics that made for a good ambassador. He had been brought up in Rome and was very well-connected. As his brother Paolo noted, the family had many friends and relations among the cardinalate.⁷² There is direct evidence for Gregorio's friendship with Cardinal Benedetto Accolti; we have already seen his early contact with Cardinal Gonzaga; Cardinal Andrea della Valle was a relation.⁷³ More than that, Gregorio would have been aware of the social expectations of the papal court, the questions of manners, comportment, dress and the like. He had access to sufficient resources to maintain the liberal lifestyle expected of an ambassador, although not always without difficulty. He was, in these general terms, the type of person suited to do a diplomatic job.

The most important reason for Gregorio's appointment, however, related to the ongoing wars in Italy. As David Potter and Steven Gunn have argued, England's practical ability to intervene in these wars was only 'peripheral', which left King Henry and Cardinal Wolsey in a poor negotiating position vis-à-vis the other European powers.⁷⁴ The appointment of an ambassador who had military experience and the proven personal wherewithal to raise troops created the impression, if nothing else, that the English were taking the Italian wars seriously. As the Imperial ambassador Louis de Praet wrote:

As the Cardinal [Wolsey] has sent two Italians here as ambassadors, it could seem that again he wants to try and stir up Italian affairs.⁷⁵

⁷² In a letter to Gregorio arguing that he should lobby for Giambattista's promotion to cardinal. 'Multas alios Reverendissimos Cardinales amicos et consanguineos nostros'. *L&P* IV 2633; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VIII 188.

⁷³ On Benedetto Accolti, see Chapter Three, p. 142. On Andrea della Valle, see below, p. 94.

⁷⁴ Potter, 'Foreign policy', p. 113. S. J. Gunn, 'Wolsey's foreign policy and the domestic crisis of 1527-8', pp. 149-77 in Gunn and P. G. Lindley, *Cardinal Wolsey: Church, state and art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 153.

⁷⁵ 'puisque le cardinal a icy envoye deux Italiens pour ambassadeurs pourroit sembler quil vouldroyt de rechief tacher a embroiller les affaires de lad^{te} Italye'. 15 October 1525. *L&P* IV 1702; *Correspondenz des Kaisers Karl V*, ed. Karl Lanz, 3 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1844), I 177.

This was, one suspects, precisely the message that the selection was intended to convey. As Charles Giry-DeLoison has highlighted in the case of Anglo-French diplomacy, it was precisely at times of conflict that diplomats with military experience were most commonly employed.⁷⁶ Another pre-requisite for Casali's engagement must have been the establishment over the course of his early time in England of a relationship of trust, most especially with Cardinal Wolsey, who was principally responsible for the diplomatic service from about 1512 until 1529, but probably also with the king.⁷⁷ It does seem that the Cardinal liked Gregorio: in a letter of 15 December 1527, he wrote that he would be glad for Casali to have the 'whole reward' – if he could get the requisite documents to annul Henry's marriage – on account of 'my affection towards you'.⁷⁸ While this rhetoric of patronage should not be taken too literally, the correspondence as a whole gives an impression of favour towards Casali, particularly when compared with Wolsey's castigation of other diplomats' ineptitude.⁷⁹ Although there is no direct evidence for Henry's opinion of Casali beyond the letter of credential and the comment in the signed bill for his letters patent, which may be somewhat formulaic, the circumstantial evidence suggests that he would also have been a very acceptable face to the king. Sir Francis Bryan, an intimate of Henry's, certainly had a high opinion of Casali.⁸⁰ His early involvement in the provision of luxury hunting-related goods to the king and his obvious ability as a horseman (in 1525, for example, he rode from London to Brescia in nine days)⁸¹ would also point in his favour at a court where there was a heavy emphasis on such activities.⁸² Gregorio's skills at jousting are not recorded, but his cousin Andrea was good enough to win a contest in Bologna.⁸³

⁷⁶ Giry-DeLoison, 'Personnel diplomatique', p. 225.

⁷⁷ On the respective roles of Wolsey and Henry in diplomacy, see Potter, 'Foreign policy', pp. 101-02.

⁷⁸ 'De ea ad Dominum Knyght, et Dominum Prothonotarium Gambaram, in hanc eandem sententiam copiose scriptum est. Sed ob meum erga vos affectum, si fieri posset, maxime vellem, mercedem omnem, et impetrate rei gratiam, quae grandis erit, vestre opere, industrie, fideique debere.' *L&P* IV 3662; *St P* VII 23.

⁷⁹ For example, his furious letter to John Clerk, bishop of Bath and ambassador to France, c. 12 June 1528. *L&P* IV 4361; *St P* VII 74-77.

⁸⁰ *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 148.

⁸¹ *CSP Ven* III 918; Sanudo XXXVII col. 521.

⁸² See Steven Gunn, 'Chivalry and the politics of the early Tudor court', in Sydney Anglo (ed.), *Chivalry in the Renaissance* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 107-128.

⁸³ In 1514. BUB, MS 430, *Cronaca di Friano dell'Ubal dini*, IV 53r-53v.

3. The “cavalier” Casali

INDEED, the identity of ‘cavalier’ was one which Gregorio Casali seemed to cultivate. In the 1526 census of Rome, Casali was one of nine ‘cavaliers’ listed. He had by some way the largest household of this group, numbering 15; the next largest was seven, and one cavalier had a household of only two.⁸⁴ Although some other ambassadors (those of Florence, Milan and Portugal) were described in the census as ‘Lo ambasciator fiorentino’ and so on, Gregorio was not.⁸⁵ It was generally the case that in Italy he was known as the ‘cavalier Casali’. This was the preferred description in Sanudo’s diaries; it was used by the ambassadors of Venice, Ferrara and Mantua; its Spanish equivalent, ‘cavallero’, was used by the Imperial ambassador Miguel Mai.⁸⁶ It was also used in the letters of the cardinal of Ravenna and in the testimony of the cardinal’s agents in their master’s trial for corruption.⁸⁷ In the diaries of the papal master-of-ceremonies Biagio Martinelli, a man whose job it was to get such details right, Casali is described on three occasions as ‘eques’ and once as ‘miles’.⁸⁸ However, it is a word rarely used in the English correspondence. Although on some occasions Gregorio appears as ‘Sir Gregory’, more often he is styled simply ‘master’.⁸⁹

In this period, the concepts of nobility and chivalry were the subject of no little contention in Italy, and it is worth considering where Gregorio’s identity as a ‘cavalier’ might situate him in terms of this discussion. Claudio Donati has argued that the Italian wars functioned as a sort of melting-pot for the many different

⁸⁴ *Descriptio Urbis*, p. 329.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 364.

⁸⁶ For example, Sanudo xxxvii col. 521, 2 February 1525, citing a letter from the podestà of Brescia: ‘È stato qui hozi meco domino Gregorio da Casal cavalier’. Mai to Comendador Mayor: ‘A las vistas de Anglaterra y francia es ido el Cavallero Casal que era aqui Embasador por el Angles.’ *L&P* v 1401; BL, Add. MS 28585, ff. 132v-133r, 8 October 1532.

⁸⁷ ASR, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi 3; trial 2. ASF, Fondo Accolti, bb. 9 and 16. These documents are discussed in Chapter Four, pp. 162-63.

⁸⁸ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 123v: ‘Magnificus D. Eques de Casali’; f. 153r: ‘orator Angliae Eques de Casali’; f. 168r: ‘Oratores Angliae Dominus Auditor Camerae Wigorniensis Episcopus, et Miles de Casalibus’. BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 2799, f. 257r: ‘orator Angliae eques de Casali’. Although it originally referred simply to a soldier, the word ‘miles’ was, in medieval and Renaissance Latin, an equivalent of ‘cavaliere’: on the etymology see Mario Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e Gentiluomo: Saggio sulla cultura aristocratica in Europa (1513-1915)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002), pp. 16-17.

⁸⁹ Wolsey to Pace: ‘the Kinges Highnes sendith at this time into those parties his trustie servant Sir Gregory de Cassales’ *L&P* iv 456; *St P* vi 316 (26 June 1524). Clerk to ?Wolsey: ‘the sayd master gregorye’ *L&P* iv 1131; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B vii 65v (28 February 1525). Francis Bryan to Henry: ‘Master Gregory sent hys brother’ *L&P* iv 5213; *St P* vii 148 (26 January 1529). Carne to Benet: ‘Mayster Gregory hath sent to Bonony’ *L&P* v 586; *St P* vii 329 (17 December 1531).

European notions of nobility; and consequently marked a crucial turning point in the way that concept was understood, as what had previously been a literary debate became a matter of much more immediacy.⁹⁰ The discussion of rival beliefs about nobility, for example, in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, reflected a practical need for Italians to relate to people who held them.⁹¹ Gregorio Casali, as the Italian holder of a foreign title, offers an interesting personification of this interaction of different concepts. While, on the one hand, he derived noble status from his Italian family, the identity of the 'cavalier-diplomat' arguably owed rather more to the conventions of Anglo-French diplomacy. Charles Giry-Deloison has established that between 1485 to 1520, the title of 'chevalier' was held by forty per cent of French ambassadors posted to England.⁹² Robert Muchembled has argued that a fashion for chivalric romance and a 'warrior culture of honour' persisted at the French court until mid-century, and in his study of Anglo-French relations Richardson extends the idea of the 'warrior-leader' to the court of Henry VIII too.⁹³ It is plausible to suggest, albeit tentatively, that in adopting the identity of 'cavalier', Casali made his own incremental contribution to the transmission of this northern European idea of nobility to the Italian peninsula.

Furthermore, Casali's diplomatic career began almost exactly at the point which is often identified as the beginning of 'modern' warfare, that is, the Battle of Pavia, the first battle to be definitively won by virtue of firepower. As Franco Cardini has argued, the dramatic changes in warfare in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century effectively eliminated the cavalier's useful role on the battlefield, rendering him instead a figure largely of the imagination, and, of course, of social distinction.⁹⁴ The 'cavalier' identity itself, however, was a matter of controversy in Italy, often summarised in the literary opposition of *The Prince* and other of Machiavelli's writings, to Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. Domenichelli's useful

⁹⁰ Claudio Donati, *L'Idea di nobiltà in Italia secoli XIV-XVIII* 2nd edition (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1995), p. 29.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 37-44.

⁹² Twenty-four per cent of English diplomats posted to France held a corresponding title. Giry-Deloison, 'Personnel diplomatique', pp. 210, 214.

⁹³ Robert Muchembled, 'Manners, courts and civility', in Guido Ruggiero (ed.), *A Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 156-72 (p. 166). Richardson, 'Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations', p. 314.

⁹⁴ Franco Cardini, *Guerre di Primavera* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1992), pp. 10, 102. On the changing nature of chivalry in this period see also the discussion in Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 239-49 and the introduction to Sydney Anglo (ed.), *Chivalry in the Renaissance* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. xi-xvi.

discussion of these texts highlights Machiavelli's 'massive and frontal attack on the aristocratic-knightly mentality' while noting that in Castiglione's discussion of the perfect courtier his principal profession is expected to be that 'of arms'.⁹⁵ In this regard, Cesare Vasoli's discussion of *The Courtier* in the context of sixteenth-century diplomacy is particularly interesting. To understand the text, he argues, we need to consider its author's background as a diplomat. The rules put forward by Castiglione for the courtier's comportment are just as relevant to the comportment of ambassadors:

Behind the figure of the "good courtier" constructed by Castiglione with all the resources of a consummate literary art, it is not difficult to see a Europe-wide historical process of great import which would favour the rise of the "diplomat" and the "counsellor", ever more capable of substituting themselves for the will of kings and becoming the effective arbiters of decisive political resolutions.⁹⁶

Indeed, Frigo and Mortari suggest that it was only by frequenting the court that the nobility of Mantua could acquire the qualities expected of a good ambassador.⁹⁷ As a courtier-diplomat Casali was, therefore, not idiosyncratic, but characteristic of a wider social trend.

The identity of 'cavalier' also offered to Gregorio Casali certain personal advantages within the diplomatic corps at Rome. Despite the fact that as the king of England's ambassador he had a distinctive position at the court of Rome, and ranked near the top of the diplomatic corps, well above the ambassador of any Italian power, his personal social status was not nearly as high as that of some other ambassadors.⁹⁸ France, for example, employed both a viscount and a duke as ambassadors in these years; the Emperor likewise sent a duke to Rome; the marquis of Mantua sent his own relations. However, as we have seen, the Casali family were relative newcomers to the Roman nobility and although at the English court Gregorio might well present himself as a Roman nobleman, in Rome itself his family history must have been

⁹⁵ Domenichelli, *Cavaliere e Gentiluomo*, pp. 77, 103. However, for an alternative view, see Muchembled, 'Manners, courts and civility', pp. 160-61, who argues that both authors signed up to the 'myth of the prince', the difference being that Castiglione put his case 'more pleasantly'.

⁹⁶ Cesare Vasoli, 'Il cortegiano, il diplomatico, il principe: Intellettuali e potere nell'Italia del Cinquecento', in A. Prosperi (ed.), *La Corte e il "Cortegiano"*, 2 vols (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), II 173-93 (p. 192). Woodhouse also discusses *The Courtier* as a manual for diplomacy in 'Honourable dissimulation', pp. 28-30.

⁹⁷ Daniela Frigo and Annamaria Mortari, 'Nobiltà, diplomazia e cerimoniale alla corte di Mantova', in Cesare Mozzarelli, Robert Oresko and Leandro Ventura (eds), *La Corte di Mantova nell'età di Andrea Mantegna: 1450-1550* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), pp. 125-43 (p. 126).

⁹⁸ On the order of precedence among the diplomatic corps, see the discussion in Chapter One, pp. 44-47.

well-known. Nonetheless, it seems that Gregorio succeeded in exploiting his military background and skills in order to establish himself at court with a recognisable social status (with a respectable classical precedent) which not only complemented his position as ambassador but also emphasised one of the ‘good courtier’s’ most important qualities: ability with arms.

Although a detailed analysis of Gregorio’s military activities would fall outside the scope of this thesis, we have already seen his early experience and the fact that Cardinal Wolsey thought him ‘well expert in the manner of the warrs of those contreyes’.⁹⁹ Whether this referred to his knowledge of the terrain, or of the best ways to raise troops locally, or indeed of the rapidly-developing innovations in military technique during this period we do not know.¹⁰⁰ He seems initially to have been a captain of cavalry: a letter from John Clerk in August 1524 records Casali’s role in raising 500 light horsemen in Bologna, who would be under his command, and a letter of Antonio Surian, the podestà of Brescia, describes him in February 1525 as the ‘captain of 300 horse’.¹⁰¹ The extent to which he, personally, led these troops into battle is not, however, clear, and it is possible that his role is better characterised as that of agent or broker.

Nor should one ignore Gregorio’s role in the May 1527 Sack of Rome, which undoubtedly enhanced his standing at the papal court. On his own account, he pawned all his plate and jewels to help the French embassy secretary Nicolas Raince raise funds to pay infantrymen for the city’s defence.¹⁰² He was in the besieged Castel Sant’Angelo with Clement VII and the cardinals, where he was appointed to represent the citizens of Rome:

Four deputies have been appointed to represent the different classes of people in Sanct Angelo: the Datary for the prelates, Alberto di Carpi for the ambassadors, and the English ambassador, Cavalier Casal by name and a Roman by birth, for the citizens.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *L&P* IV 456; *St P* VI 316-17.

¹⁰⁰ On the changing nature of warfare during the Italian Wars, see Michael Mallett, ‘The transformation of war, 1494-1530’, in Shaw (ed.), *Italy and the European Powers*, pp. 3-21.

¹⁰¹ *L&P* IV 568; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VI 187v. *CSP Ven* III 918; Sanudo XXXVII col. 521: ‘Capitano di cavalli 300.’

¹⁰² ‘Vollant le seigneur Rance envoyer à lever mil hommes de pied, il n’a esté possible de trouver mil escus pour lui donner. J’ay envoyé engager toute la vaisselle, ànaulx, joyaux, bagues qui estoient à la maison.’ Quoted in André Lebey, *Le Connétable de Bourbon, 1490-1527* (Paris: Perrin, 1904), p. 426, n. 1. Judith Hook, *The Sack of Rome, 1527* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 158, mistranslates ‘vaisselle’ as ‘boat’. See also *L&P* IV 3090.

¹⁰³ *CSP Sp* III.i 82; BL, Add. MS 28576, ff. 237v-238r. De Carpi was the French ambassador.

On the lifting of the siege he emerged with a fistful of thank-you letters to Wolsey extolling his good services: from Clement himself, from Cardinals Farnese, Pucci, Gaddi, Campeggio, Benedetto Accolti and others.¹⁰⁴ The impact of the Sack on contemporary politics is hard to underestimate, and Gregorio's presence in the Castel Sant'Angelo must have afforded him considerable political credit at the court of Rome, as must his subsequent efforts raising troops in Bologna to defend the city for the papacy, in which he drew on the help of friends and relatives from both factions.¹⁰⁵

Shortly afterwards, in late July 1527, Gregorio arrived in France, where he met Cardinal Wolsey. On 29 July Wolsey wrote to Henry declaring his intention to make Gregorio commissary of the infantry to be sent to Italy.

And surely, Sir, the said Myssieur Gregory hathe used hym self so wysely, and herdely, in Your Graces and the Popes causes, that aswel His Holynes, as all the Cardinalles, repute that Your Highnes hathe of hym a singler good servaunt and treasure; whom I entende, for his feithe, experience, hardines, and good activitie, to make not only your Commissary for taking of the viewes and moustres of suche fotemen, as Your Highnes is bounde to have at your charges in Italy, but also to induce the Frenche King, that some good parte of them may be under his conduct and leding; with whom I fynde hym so anymate, that he assureth to do acceptable service, besides the good counsail that he can, and intendeth to give to Monsr de Loctryk and other capitains of the liege, which have hym, aswell for Your Graces sake, as for his good qualities and desertes, in right singler reputacion: and his being ther shall not a litle conferre to other Your Graces besynesses, by whom also, from tyme to tyme, Your Highnes shalbe truly advertised of all the successes in those parties.¹⁰⁶

It is evident here that there was no particular distinction drawn between Casali's military and diplomatic tasks: his role as commissary of troops ran simultaneously with diplomatic duties such as negotiations with the marquis of Mantua and duke of Ferrara.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, it is notable that on Gregorio's memorial in the Chiesa di

¹⁰⁴ *L&P* IV 3155-3157 and 3160-3166; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B IX 121r-130v.

¹⁰⁵ On the Sack see Gouwens and Reiss, *Pontificate of Clement VII*, especially Chapters Seven and Eight and, for a narrative account, Hook, *Sack of Rome*. In a letter from Venice, dated 30 June 1527, Gregorio described how he raised 1,000 infantrymen in Bologna. *L&P* IV 3206; TNA, SP 1/42, f. 124r.

¹⁰⁶ *L&P* IV 3310; *St P* I 228-29.

¹⁰⁷ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 45, unnumbered document of 26 August 1527; see also Wolsey's letter to the duke of Ferrara: ASMn, Archivio Estense, Principi Esteri, Cardinali, b. 1435/189, unnumbered document of 27 August 1527. The appointments prompted complaint from the former English ambassador Robert Jerningham, whose previous commission had expired; he complained to Wolsey

San Domenico, Bologna, both his diplomatic and military achievements were commemorated:

Both familiar and beloved of all Christian kings and princes; with the authority entrusted to him under universal law he led very many embassies to the greatest kings and the pope himself, performed with everlasting glory; likewise in the first ranks at war he gave many and splendid proofs of his valour.¹⁰⁸

There was a long tradition of mercenary captains' involvement in diplomatic negotiations, whether formally as ambassadors or not, arising from the close relationship between war and diplomacy. Back in the fourteenth century, the celebrated English mercenary captain in Italy, John Hawkwood, carried out diplomatic missions. His biographer, William Caferro, argues that Mattingly was wrong to suggest that in that period 'diplomacy was for rulers; war for hired men': on the contrary, 'there was in fact hardly a mercenary who was not also a diplomat'.¹⁰⁹ In the different context of the sixteenth century, Potter has argued that military men were perceived to be useful in the diplomatic sphere because they were able to exploit rebellions against the princes to whom they were posted more effectively than other ambassadors.¹¹⁰ The career of Gregorio Casali demonstrates just such a combination of military and diplomatic activities and so, as we will see, does that of his brother Francesco.

To return to the question of Gregorio as a 'courtier', there is limited direct evidence for what we might call his cultural life. However, given the importance of considering the family as a unit in terms of its involvement in diplomacy, it is worth making a brief point here about the activities of Gregorio's brother Giambattista. He was a correspondent of Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, the Marchioness of Mantua, and three surviving letters from him in the Mantua archives record his involvement in commissioning decorative art objects for her.¹¹¹ Giambattista also appears as a

that he was consequently 'the worse regarded, and accompted not onely as [Gregorio's] inferiour, but also as at his commaundement under hym'. *L&P* IV 3657; *St P* VII 23.

¹⁰⁸ 'Regibus et principibus omnibus Christianis aequae notae ac caro, legationibus plurimis apud summos reges et ipsum pont. max. immortalis cum laude functo communis foederis ei permissa auctoritate duxit; idem belli primos ordines ubi multa et praeclara dedit virtutis suae documenta.'

¹⁰⁹ William Caferro, *John Hawkwood: An English Mercenary in Fourteenth-Century Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 345. The reference is to Mattingly, p. 58. For Hawkwood's own diplomacy see in particular Chapter Eight, pp. 191-208.

¹¹⁰ Potter, 'Foreign policy', p. 104.

¹¹¹ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1150, c. 461, a letter of 27 July 1524 regarding problems with some stucchi; Archivio Gonzaga 1463 unnumbered letters of 4 and 16 August 1529 regarding a mirror commissioned for Isabella in Venice.

character in a best-selling Venetian book of the second half of the century, Giovan Francesco Straparola's *Le Piacevoli Notti*. First published in 1550, it takes the form of a series of stories told in the company of Lucrezia Gonzaga and her ladies.

Many noble and most learned men joined this sweet and honest company, among whom Casal of Bologna, bishop and ambassador of the king of England, the learned Pietro Bembo, cavalier of the Grand Master of Rhodes and Vangelista di Cittadini of Milan, a man of great intrigues, took the first place next to the Lady.¹¹²

Although, as Donato Pirovano points out in his introduction to a recent edition of the *Notti*, the named characters are not in any way characterised in the text, the fact of Giambattista's inclusion does give us an indication of how he was perceived by a contemporary writer.¹¹³ We know that he corresponded with Bembo, who referred to Giambattista's 'umanissime lettere' in a 1527 note apologising for not having visited or written to him since his arrival in Venice (this does, however, suggest that they were not particularly close), and one may fairly assume that Giambattista frequented Venetian humanist circles alongside the likes of his sister-in-law's cousin Argentina Pallavicino, who was in contact not only with Bembo but also Pietro Aretino and Fausto da Longino.¹¹⁴ We can thus establish a picture of the Casali brothers as courtiers very much in the Castiglione vein, displaying not only in Gregorio's case military ability, but in Giambattista's case learning and culture.

4. Family and household connections

MILITARY SKILLS alone, however, did not make a good ambassador; nor did effective self-presentation. The most important asset that Gregorio Casali brought to the English diplomatic service was his network of family and friends. The importance of such networks in the functioning of diplomacy is frequently taken for granted but

¹¹² 'A questa dolce e onesta compagnia concorsero molti nobili e dottissimi uomini, tra' quai il Casal bolognese, vescovo e del re d'Inghilterra ambasciatore, il dotto Pietro Bembo, cavaliere del gran Maestro di Rodi, e Vangelista di Cittadini milanese, uomo di gran maneggio, il primo luogo appresso la Signora tenevano.' Giovan Francesco Straparola, *Le Piacevoli Notti* ed. Donato Pirovano, 2 vols (Rome: Salerno, 2000) I 9.

¹¹³ *ibid*, introduction, p. xviii.

¹¹⁴ Pietro Bembo, *Lettere* ed. Ernesto Travi, 4 vols (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1987-), II 432. Bembo refers to Giambattista in two other letters, one to Flaminio Tomarozzo of January 1533 (III 403) and one to Carlo Gualteruzzi of May 1533 (III 442). On Argentina see her entry in Roberto Lasagni, *Dizionario Biografico dei Parmigiani* (Parma: PPS, 1999).

rarely subjected to careful analysis, yet, as this case demonstrates, it should not be underestimated. It is impossible to assess Gregorio's career if we regard him only as an individual; that was not the way he operated. He employed every available family member in diplomatic business, and while it is true that as the king of England's ambassador Gregorio advanced in personal status, just as important as his personal advancement were the associated gains for his family. The Casali were, as the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini drily put it, 'many brothers with limited means'.¹¹⁵ Gregorio was one of four brothers to survive to adulthood, and they had to share their Bolognese inheritance with two male cousins (see Figure 1 – family tree).¹¹⁶ They thus had a considerable interest in working collectively in order to advance the family interests, although it is evident that Gregorio's career was of central importance to the enterprise. If we look in turn at each of these family members, we can see both the advancement they gained, and how this was related to the business of diplomacy.¹¹⁷

a. Giambattista

GIAMBATTISTA was, it appears, the eldest of the Casali brothers.¹¹⁸ He went into the church, and by 1516 was abbot of the church of St Michael of Castro Britonis in the diocese of Bologna.¹¹⁹ Like his uncle Catellano, he became an apostolic protonotary and graduated from the university of Bologna, receiving degrees in civil and canon law on 10 September 1519.¹²⁰ His first recorded diplomatic appointment was in 1525, when from January to May he served as a papal nuncio to England. A letter to Wolsey, probably from John Clerk, then English ambassador at Rome, demonstrates the importance which was attached to the family connection in the selection of an appropriate nuncio:

¹¹⁵ 'Molti fratelli cum poca faculta.' 28 September 1528. *CSP Ven* IV 350; Contarini, f. 86v.

¹¹⁶ ACdM, I, no. 11.

¹¹⁷ A brief summary of the diplomatic roles of the Casali family is given in Appendix 2.

¹¹⁸ Probably Girolamo was born first, but he died in his youth. There is some confusion about Giambattista's exact birth date; the family memorial says he died before his 40th birthday, which would imply a date of 1496 or later; however ACdM, I, no. 11, dated 15 June 1517, says he was aged over 22 but under 25, implying he was born no later than 1495. The *DBI* suggestion of c. 1490 is evidently wrong.

¹¹⁹ He is described as such in ASB, Fondo Notarile, Pasi Bailiardo Priamo, 1514-1516, no. 58, dated 31 January 1516. An unnumbered document in ASB, Fondo Notarile, Paleotti Bonaventura, 1505-1512, appears to refer to Cardinal Riario as the holder of this benefice, and it would be plausible that he had passed it on to a client.

¹²⁰ ASB, Studio Bolognese, Collegi Legali 138, ff. 36v, 37r; Collegi Legali 22, ff. 138r-139r. The latter document makes it clear that in September 1519 Giambattista already held the title of apostolic protonotary.

The Casali family: summary genealogy

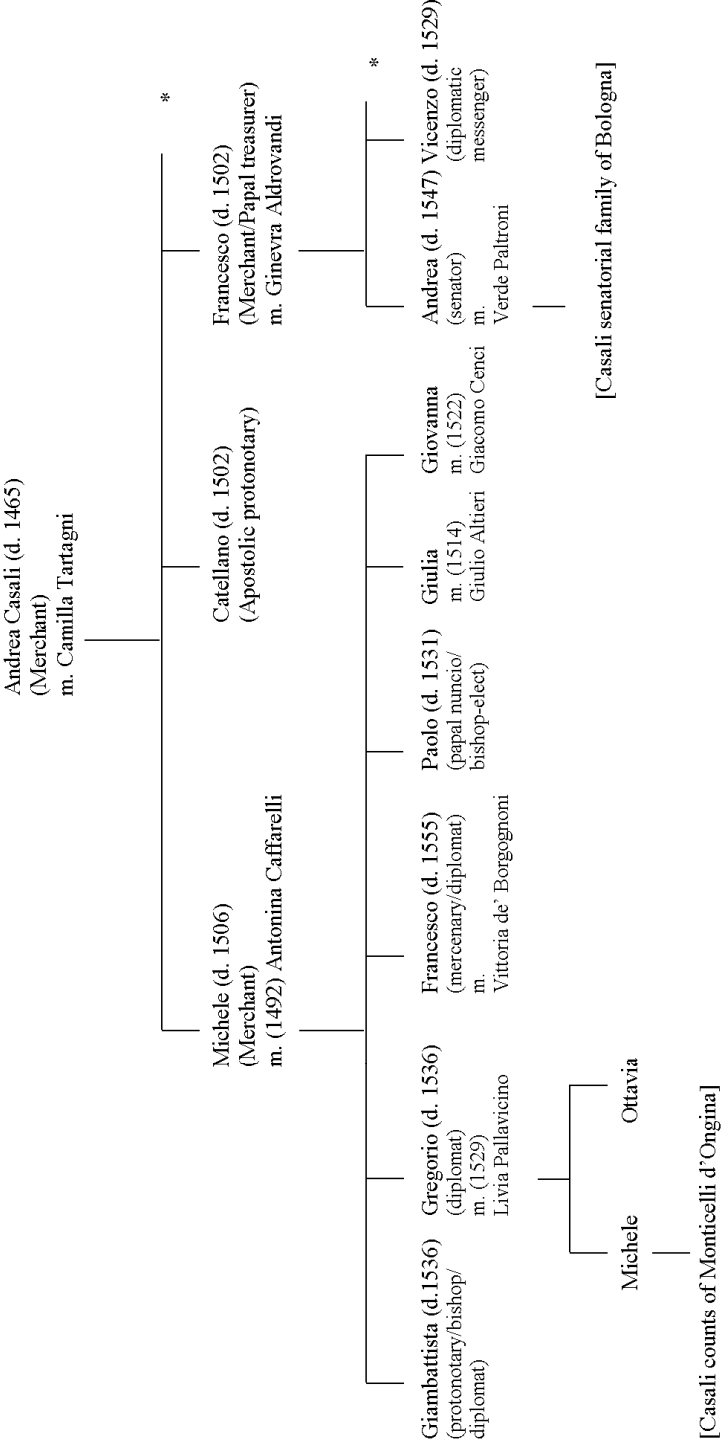


Figure 1

* The daughters of Andrea Casali senior and Francesco Casali senior are not included here.

The popis holynes willing to justifie this his new amytye with the frenche king sendithe with sufficient instructions into Englund at this tyme the prothonotarye de casalijs master gregoris brother as a parson whom his holynes thinkithe to be veray grate and acceptable unto the kinges highenes and your grace for his brothers sacke.¹²¹

Giambattista returned with an enthusiastic testimonial from Wolsey to his ‘diligence, industry, dexterity and prudence’.¹²² Later that year, he was appointed English ambassador to Venice, not long after Gregorio’s first appointment to Rome.¹²³ He arrived to take up his post on 26 January 1526, and on 6 February had his first audience with the College.¹²⁴ The diarist Marin Sanudo did not share Wolsey’s glowing opinion of Giambattista, reporting that he was ‘very inept and not practised in statesmanship’.¹²⁵ Whether Giambattista was indeed inept, whether he was having a bad day, or whether he fell foul of different expectations of diplomatic oratory at Venice and Rome we do not know.

Giambattista subsequently became bishop of Belluno, an appointment, however, surrounded by controversy: he was not the preferred candidate of the Venetians, and it took months of legal argument before his claim to the benefice was finally settled.¹²⁶ Henry VIII lobbied for his promotion to the cardinalate, but this never came about.¹²⁷ Nor did Giambattista ever receive an English benefice, although from time to time the idea was touted.¹²⁸ In 1535 Giambattista left Venice to carry out a mission on behalf of the English to John Zápolya, who was disputing with Ferdinand of Habsburg the Hungarian throne. (It appears that, following the break of

¹²¹ *L&P* IV 1002; TNA, SP 1/33 f. 87r. Giambattista’s instructions are in BAV, MS Ottoboni Latini 3142, ff. 221r-226r. Drafts of his credentials are in ASV, Armadio XLIV, vol. 9, ff. 84r, 85r, 85v and his letter of recall f. 196r.

¹²² ‘Diligentia, industria, dexteritate, atque prudentia.’ Wolsey’s letter, dated 29 May 1525, is in ASV, Segretaria di Stato, Principi, 3, f. 147 (printed in Theiner, p. 549).

¹²³ His appointment was reported in a letter of Lorenzo Orio, Venetian ambassador in London, to the Signoria, dated 24 November 1525. *CSP Ven* III 1175; Sanudo XL col. 555. Giambattista, who was in Rome, reported the appointment to Marco Foscari, the Venetian ambassador there, in early January: *CSP Ven* III 1199; Sanudo XL col. 679.

¹²⁴ *CSP Ven* III 1207; Sanudo XL col. 718.

¹²⁵ ‘Molto inepto e non pratico di stato’. *CSP Ven* III 1215; Sanudo XL col. 785.

¹²⁶ He was appointed on 27 December 1527, but after a long dispute the sentence in his favour was given only on 5 July 1529. ASV, Archivio Concist., Acta Vicecanc. 4, ff. 10r, 32r. A summary of the case is given in his *DBI* entry.

¹²⁷ For example, in a letter of 9 April 1530. *L&P* IV 6322; Theiner p. 591. This, however, makes it clear that Girolamo Ghinucci was the king’s first choice for promotion.

¹²⁸ There is no reference in John Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541*, compiled by Joyce M. Horn et al, 11 vols (London: IHR, Athlone Press, 1962-65) to Giambattista holding an English benefice, but Sir Francis Bryan lobbied for a benefice for him in 1529 (see *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 148-49) and Gregorio himself dropped a heavy hint in the same direction a few months later: *L&P* IV 5638; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 146v.

diplomatic relations with Rome, Gregorio might have taken over as ambassador to Venice.¹²⁹ However, on his journey he was captured by Imperial troops and imprisoned for a year: an experience which probably contributed to his early death in 1536.¹³⁰ We will return to the case of his kidnapping in Chapter Five.

b. Paolo

PAOLO Casali was, like his brother, sent as a papal nuncio to England, in his case in October 1529.¹³¹ According to Eustace Chapuys, the Imperial ambassador in London, Paolo had taken the job at Gregorio's suggestion.¹³² His principal mission was to request aid for the war against the Turks, and it was evident that Clement had chosen envoys – the bishop of Como was sent at the same time to France – who enjoyed close ties to their receiving courts.¹³³ According to some authorities, Paolo was a *cameriere segreto* to Clement VII, although I have seen no firm evidence to support this suggestion.¹³⁴ What is clear, however, is that he was in a position to provide inside information about court matters: particularly useful during the period of Clement's illness in early 1529.¹³⁵ He was also an early point of contact for the family with John Zápolya of Hungary.¹³⁶ Paolo was apparently in line for the

¹²⁹ The Imperial ambassador in London, Eustace Chapuys, wrote in August 1534 that this had been proposed. *L&P* VII 1095.

¹³⁰ *L&P* VIII 672; BL, Cotton MSS, Nero B VII 109. *L&P* VIII 713, 726, 807, 808, 874, 948, 972, 1018, 1052, 1121; *L&P* IX 202; *L&P* XI 70, 182.

¹³¹ His credentials, dated 6 October are in ASV, A. A., Arm. I-XVIII, 3265, ff. 12 and 13; printed in Theiner, p. 566.

¹³² *CSP Sp* IV.i 228.

¹³³ *L&P* IV 5963; *St P* VII 203-04. *CSP Ven* IV 512; Contarini, f. 314v. *L&P* IV 5981; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 231r. The Imperial ambassadors Praet and Mai said the bishop of Como had been chosen 'por su linaje y su persona siempre frances', although they reported that he had made friendly approaches to them. *CSP Sp* IV.i 180; BL, Add. MS 28579, f. 184r.

¹³⁴ He is described as such in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*.

¹³⁵ For example, a letter from Gregorio to Montmorency describes Paolo having 'a long discussion' with the Pope about Genoa. Molini II 59. See also *L&P* IV 5187; TNA, SP 1/52 f. 148r in which Paolo writes to Giambattista with details of the pope's illness; *L&P* IV 5229; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 31r, a further extract from Paolo's letters on the same; *L&P* IV 5259; TNA, SP 1/52 f. 208r, a letter to Vincenzo regarding the same; *L&P* IV 5329; Vit. B XI 86r in which Paolo describes the plotting at court in anticipation of the pope's death: 'molte pratiche fatte dal Generale in Palazzo, caso che'l fusse mancato il Papa'.

¹³⁶ It was to Paolo that Zápolya wrote on 9 October 1531, asking him to thank Gregorio for his help with the king's business: *L&P* V 471; TNA, SP 1/68, ff. 16r-16v. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 881, c. 463r, a letter of Fabrizio Pellegrino to the duke of Mantua, 17 February 1532, suggests that Paolo had met King John in Constantinople. Paolo's role in the Hungarian service has been confirmed by Megan Williams' research in Vienna and Modena and will be discussed in her forthcoming doctoral thesis.

bishopric of Boiano in the kingdom of Naples, but was attacked by robbers and died of his wounds before he could take up office.¹³⁷

c. Francesco

GREGORIO's third brother, Francesco, made his early career as a condottiere, or mercenary captain. In June 1526, he transferred from the Imperial service to that of Venice as the commander of 60 light horse. Sanudo recorded that Francesco had been enrolled into the Venetian military service to please the king of England's representatives, who were, of course, his brothers.¹³⁸ Francesco's change of employment coincided with the agreement of the League between the Papacy, France, England, Venice and Milan. His brothers' roles as English ambassadors, and the tense political situation, precluded his continuing in the Imperial service. As Gregorio explained when a similar issue arose four years later, the king of England did not approve of two brothers being in the service of two less-than-friendly princes, a point to be considered further below and in Chapter Five.¹³⁹ When Francesco's employment with the Venetians came to an end, Gregorio lobbied for him to enter the French service, but there is no record that he ever did so.¹⁴⁰ In 1533 Francesco became the ambassador of John Zápolya, claimant to the throne of Hungary, to the Holy See, a role in which he continued until Zápolya's death in 1540.¹⁴¹ Here we see

¹³⁷ Fabrizio Pellegrino, a Mantuan agent in Rome, explained that at the time of his death Paolo had not yet taken office because the cardinal of Ravenna still had possession of the bishopric. See his letter of 8 December 1531: 'A questi giorni passati andando a Napoli, messer Paulo Casale fratello del Cavalliero, gionto presso a Napoli a quatro miglia fu da xii ladri assassini assalito, robbato, assassinato con una ferita nella testa della qual portato in Napoli pocho dipoi si è morto, era eletto Vescovo di Bovino nel Reame, ma non haveva ancora preso l'habbito perche l'vescovato ancora è in persona del Reverendissimo di Ravenna.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 880, f. 251v. Reference to the bishopric is made on his family memorial, in Francesco Amadi d'Agostino, *Della Nobiltà di Bologna* (Cremona: Draconi, 1588), p. 97, Pompeo Scipione Dolfi, *Cronologia delle famiglie nobili di Bologna* (Bologna, 1670), p. 249, and in Sitoni, *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae*, p. 22. The memorial wrongly gives the date of his death as 1532, however it is reported both in Pellegrino's letter and in a letter of 17 December 1531 from Edward Carne to William Benet. *L&P* v 586; *St P* vii 330.

¹³⁸ *CSP Ven* iii 1308; Sanudo xli col. 510 (8 June 1526). 'facendo per la Signoria per la observantia nostra verso il serenissimo Re anglico far piacer a li soi representanti, per tanto si preso che 'l prefato domino Francesco Caxalio sia tolto a stipendii di la Signoria nostra con 60 cavalli lizieri et ducati 30 per paga per la sua persona. Fu presa. Ave: 180, 10, 1.' *CSP Ven* iii 1308; Sanudo xli col. 516 (8 June 1526);. See also *CSP Ven* iii 1281 and 1310; Sanudo xli col. 382; ASVe, Senato, Terra, reg. 24, f. 107r. The latter, recording the Senate decision, notes the Casali brothers' great love for Venice: they have always been 'affectionatissimi del stato nostro'.

¹³⁹ In a letter to Montmorency, 27 July 1530. 'A lei [Henry] non piace che dui fratelli stiano con dui principi poco amici.' Molini ii 322.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid*, see also the letter to Cardinal Grammont, 7 March 1531, pp. 362-63. According to the *DBI*, after leaving the Venetian service in 1529, Francesco entered the service of the duke of Milan.

¹⁴¹ His credential, dated 29 July 1533, is in ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, 2503. The *DBI* says he continued in the role until 1540.

once again a connection between the brothers' diplomatic roles: Zápolya had been in contact with the Casali brothers as early as 1531, when they provided some informal diplomatic assistance for him via his secretary in Rome, and Giambattista Casali was subsequently sent by the English to liaise with his brother's employer.¹⁴²

d. The cousins: Andrea and Vincenzo

THE cousins did no less well. In March 1525, Andrea Casali became a senator in Bologna, after what Vianesio Albergato, the Bolognese ambassador in Rome, described as some 'very efficacious lobbying' of Pope Clement VII by Henry VIII and Wolsey.¹⁴³ The timing of the appointment, shortly after Gregorio's arrival in Rome with 50,000 ducats from Henry for Clement may not be a coincidence. As the English ambassador John Clerk noted at the time, Gregorio:

Hathe behavyd hyme selfe very wislye, and discretlye, greatly to the kynges highnes is and to your grace is honor: and allso to the popis contentation.¹⁴⁴

Such contentation may well have helped Andrea's career along, although he had already held office in Bologna, as one of the colleges' *gonfalonieri del popolo*, a post to which he had been appointed in 1512 by the papal legate Giulio de' Medici (the future pope Clement VII).¹⁴⁵ He carried out a number of diplomatic missions on behalf of the Bolognese Senate, and his position and contacts in the city proved invaluable when it came to obtaining a favourable opinion from its university in relation to Henry's matrimonial difficulties.¹⁴⁶ Vincenzo, the younger cousin, was

¹⁴² Letter of Gregorio Casali, 24 March 1531, Molini II 365. For Giambattista, see above, note 123.

¹⁴³ Albergato's comment - 'li haveano instato efficacissimamente' - is in ASB, Senato, Lettere VII, vol. 8, unnumbered letter of 14 March 1525. The appointment was made on 6 March 1525. Gio. Nicolò Pasquali Alidosi, *Li Riformatori dello Stato di Libertà della Città di Bologna* (Bologna: Rossi, 1614), p. 25. Sitoni prints an extract from a letter from Henry to Pope Adrian VI praising Gregorio's virtues and lobbying for the promotion of his cousin to the ruling Council of 40. The letter, which according to Sitoni was dated 12 March 1522, is not, as far as I can tell, extant in either the English archives or the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. However, as a number of Sitoni's key sources remain in the Archivio Casali, it is conceivable that he saw a copy of it there, which has since been lost. Sitoni, *Clarissimae Casaliorum Familiae*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁴ 28 February 1525. *L&P* IV 1131; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VII 65-65v, ff. 67-67v.

¹⁴⁵ BUB, MS 430, *Cronaca di Friano dell'Ubaladini*, III 955r. BUB, MS 97, Fra' Leander Alberti, *Istoria di Bologna*, IV 114v.

¹⁴⁶ For his diplomatic missions (two to the Pope and one to the French commander Lautrec) see ASB, Senato, Lettere VI, vol. 4 pp. 303, 405-06 and 429-31; unnumbered letters of June 1526 in Senato, Lettere VII, vol. 9; and unnumbered letters of December 1534 in Senato, Lettere VII, vol. 12. On the business of the divorce in Bologna see the letter from Richard Croke to Thomas Cranmer, 12 September 1530: 'Mr Andrew de Cassalis hath gotten for the king a confirmation of the college of Bononye of their former act, and would have procured the whole university of Bononye to have written *singillatim* as many as were learned, in the king's cause.' *L&P* IV 6613; Pocock I 421. Croke,

used as a diplomatic messenger and might too have expected some reward, but he died too young to advance very far.¹⁴⁷

e. Sisters and maternal relatives

THE role of Gregorio's sisters and maternal relatives in the family's diplomatic business and more general social advancement is – for lack of source material – more difficult to evaluate. However, its importance should not be discounted. His mother's family, the Caffarelli, according to Amayden's history of the Roman nobility, had married into all the best Roman noble families.¹⁴⁸ Gregorio's uncle Antonio Caffarelli was married to Laura Alberini, and his cousins Drusilla-Filippa and Ersilia married into the Muti and Mellini families.¹⁴⁹ Members of all three of these families are listed in a note of Roman noblemen proposed as magistrates during the papacy of Leo X.¹⁵⁰ Other Caffarelli were married into the Colonna, della Valle and Frangipani families, while Gregorio's sisters were married into the Cenci and Altieri families.¹⁵¹ These relationships give an idea of his likely Roman social circle, and as we will see in Chapter Three, sociability – including attendance at family events – was an important element of the diplomat's role. Some caution should, however, be applied in assessing the extent to which Gregorio Casali might have exploited these family connections for diplomatic ends. The Caffarelli, the Colonna and the della Valle can all, to a greater or lesser extent, be regarded as belonging to the Imperial camp.¹⁵²

however, came to doubt the loyalty of Andrea and his associates: see for example his letter of 16 September 1530. *L&P* IV 6619; Pocock I 423-26. See also Bishop Stokesley's letter, 23 September 1530: *L&P* IV 6633; *St P* VII 253-58. A subsequent approach by Andrea to the University on 22 December 1531 is recorded in ASB, Studio Bolognese, Collegi Legali 127, f. 52v (cited, but with an old archive reference, in Surtz, *Henry VIII's Great Matter in Italy*, p. 436).

¹⁴⁷ He died at the age of 28, in 1529. For the details of his diplomatic missions: *L&P* IV 5037; TNA, SP 1/51 f. 115r. *L&P* IV 5038; Burnet IV 64-73. *L&P* IV 5073; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 204r-206r. *L&P* IV 5138; Vit. B xi 2r. *L&P* IV 5148; BL, Cotton MSS, Caligula D vi 348r. *L&P* IV 5221; TNA, SP 1/52 f. 166r. *L&P* IV 5314; Vit. B xi 60r. *L&P* IV 5325; Vit. B x 82r-83r. *L&P* IV 5359; Vit. B xi 87r. *L&P* IV 5386; TNA, SP 1/53 ff. 118r-118v. ASV, Segr. Stato, Francia, 1, f. 209v.

¹⁴⁸ 'Hanno parentato con tutta la nobiltà buona di Roma.' Teodoro Amayden, *La Storia delle Famiglie Romane* ed. Carlo Augusto Bertini (Bologna: Forni, 1967), p. 226.

¹⁴⁹ Caffarelli, *I Caffarelli*, pp. 36-37

¹⁵⁰ BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 3043, 'Adversaria', f. 601. A useful analysis of the leading Roman families in terms of city office-holding is given in Alessandra Camerano, 'Le trasformazioni dell'élite capitolina fra XV e XVI secolo' in Visceglia (ed.), *Nobiltà romana*, pp. 1-29.

¹⁵¹ According to BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 11981, *Notizie delle famiglie romane cavate dalli instrumenti pubblici 1500-1660*, ff. 37r, 59v, 151v, 152v, Gregorio's sister Giovanna was married to Giacomo Cenci and his sister Giulia to Giulio, son of Marcantonio Altieri. Both the Cenci and Altieri were important Roman families: the Cenci lived in the same district of Regola as the Casali. See Amayden, *Famiglie Romane*, pp. 41-45 and pp. 295-99.

¹⁵² On the Colonna, see the reference in note 188. Caffarelli, *I Caffarelli*, documents the family's relationship over more than half a century with the Holy Roman Emperors. The Della Valle were of

Cardinals Colonna and della Valle were at no point even considered as potential allies in the matter of Henry's divorce. The mere employment of a relative, whom they may not have regarded as particularly important or influential, by the English crown would be unlikely to change such people's long-standing loyalties. However, a diplomat with family connections to the 'enemy' – so to speak – might well have access to information which a less well-connected person would struggle to obtain, and it is also on this level that Gregorio's family relationships are important.

f. Livia Pallavicino and the in-laws

IN December 1529, Gregorio Casali married the heiress Livia Pallavicino, in a decidedly advantageous match.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, the marriage contract does not survive, but there is no doubt that her wealth was substantial.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, she had inherited a share of the feudal property of Zibello, although this was the subject of legal dispute.¹⁵⁵ Not only was Livia a member of a very prominent noble family; she was also the niece of Latino Giovenale Manetti, secretary to Cardinal Farnese, the future Pope Paul III.¹⁵⁶ In the early stages of Paul III's papacy, Manetti had a role in attempting a reconciliation between England and the Holy See,¹⁵⁷ and one can presume that earlier too he was a useful diplomatic contact. Livia herself moved in high circles: in 1532 she is recorded as dining with the influential Felice della Rovere Orsini, illegitimate daughter of Pope Julius II.¹⁵⁸ The extent to which she acted as a

Spanish origin: see Amayden, *Famiglie Romane*, p. 192 fn and *DBI* vol. 37 for Andrea della Valle. The 1529 list of cardinals given in Pocock II 605-06 appears to classify both Cardinals della Valle and Colonna as Imperialists, and that given in Joachim Le Grand, *Histoire du Divorce de Henry VIII*, 3 vols (Paris: Martin, 1688), III 299-302 does so definitively.

¹⁵³ According to Katherine A. McIver's genealogical reconstructions of the family, Livia was the daughter of Polidoro Pallavicino (d. 1527) who married Samaritana and Lucrezia Borasca. *Women, Art and Architecture in northern Italy, 1520-1580: Negotiating Power* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 252.

¹⁵⁴ Pocock II 521.

¹⁵⁵ This highly complex and long-running dispute, relating in part to the inheritance rights of a number of Pallavicino women but involving numerous other factors, is extensively documented, with a considerable volume of material in the Archivio di Stato di Parma, Fondo Feudi-comunità and the Biblioteca della Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Parma e Piacenza, Archivio Pallavicino; see also ASR, Collegio Notai Capitolini, 94, ff. 116v-117v; ASV, Camera Apostolica, Diversa Cameralia 81, ff. 241-242.

¹⁵⁶ 'La Signora Livia Pallavicina nepote dil predetto messer Latino.' ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Venezia, 1, f. 4v, letter of 6 May 1524 from the papal nuncio in Venice. Casali refers to Giovenale as his 'avunculus' in *L&P* VII 1255; *St P* VII 572, a letter of 12 October 1534 regarding his intervention in the election of Pope Paul III. For Manetti's earlier career as a secretary to Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi Bibbiena and diplomatic agent see S. Feci, 'Manetti, Latino Giovenale', *DBI*.

¹⁵⁷ For example, in a letter to Cromwell, 24 October 1534, Gregorio wrote that Latino Giovenale had approached him on the pope's behalf. *L&P* VII 1298, *St P* VII 576.

¹⁵⁸ Caroline P. Murphy, *The Pope's Daughter* (London: Faber & Faber, 2006), p. 286.

diplomatic hostess is not known, although it does seem that she lived in Rome and therefore may well have done so.¹⁵⁹

Also married into the Pallavicino family were Counts Ludovico and Guido Rangoni. Ludovico was married to Barbara, daughter of Livia's paternal uncle Rolando, and his brother Guido to Argentina, daughter of another paternal uncle, Federico.¹⁶⁰ Guido Rangoni was one of the most important mercenary commanders in Italy in these years, fighting first with his Bentivogli relatives against Pope Julius II and subsequently for the Venetians, the Papacy and then with the French.¹⁶¹ Wolsey asked Gregorio to use Guido Rangoni's influence with the Pope in 1527.¹⁶² In turn, Gregorio lobbied the French on Rangoni's behalf – 'he is a savvy captain, and has great credit and is very well loved in Italy' – suggesting that he might lead a French army in Italy.¹⁶³ Ludovico Rangoni provided information to Gregorio about the state of Clement's health during the Pope's illness in 1529.¹⁶⁴ However, the Rangoni also usefully illustrate that family relationships were not straightforward. Gregorio and Livia were involved in a long-running lawsuit against Ludovico and Barbara relating to the Pallavicino inheritance, prominent enough to have come to the attention of the Imperial ambassador Mai.¹⁶⁵ This would not necessarily have damaged the prospects for diplomatic collaboration between the Casali and Rangoni – lawsuits between family members were common enough among the nobility – but it does demonstrate the potential tensions of this type of personalised diplomacy. It would be fair to suppose, however, that an important consideration for Gregorio in contracting this marriage was not to gain diplomatic advantages but rather to acquire the feudal property of which his wife had inherited a share.

¹⁵⁹ A letter from the Spanish ambassador Mai, dated Rome, 21 October 1530, mentions that Gregorio had gone to Bologna to bring his wife back to Rome: *L&P* IV 6700; BL, Add. MS 28581, f. 287r. A letter from Francesco Guicciardini, dated 11 January 1532, refers to a discussion within the Casali family about whether the women of Gregorio's household should leave Rome for Bologna, given the danger of war. Guicciardini, *Dall'assedio di Firenze al secondo convegno di Clemente VII e Carlo V (28 giugno 1530 – 2 dicembre 1532). Lettere inedite a Bartolomeo Lanfredini*. Ed. André Otetea (Aquila: Vecchioni, 1927), p. 112.

¹⁶⁰ Litta, *Celebri Famiglie*, table 26: Pallavicino, Marchesi di Zibello. McIver, *Women, Art and Architecture*, p. 252.

¹⁶¹ *Piccolo Sunto Storico della Famiglia Rangoni di Modena* tratto dal dizionario storico di Luigi Moreri (Parigi, 1748), trans. Luigi Rangoni Machiavelli (Rome: Befani, 1908), pp. 30-41.

¹⁶² *L&P* IV 3662; *St P* VII 25-26. 15 December 1527.

¹⁶³ 'È un savio capitano, et ha gran credito et è molto ben voluto in Italia.' In a letter to Montmorency, 27 and 28 June 1529. Molini II 213.

¹⁶⁴ *L&P* IV 5553; TNA, SP 1/54, f. 5r.

¹⁶⁵ *L&P* V 1401; BL, Add. MS 28585, f. 133r.

g. The household

NON-FAMILY household members also participated in the day-to-day work of diplomacy, and gained advancement through their services. Gregorio's secretary Guido Gianetti was naturalised as an Englishman and granted an English benefice; in his will, Gregorio took the precaution of leaving Gianetti six hundred scudi in the event that the benefice was taken away from him, though apparently it was not.¹⁶⁶ Gurone Bertani, who acted as a messenger for Gregorio, travelling both to England and to Rome (while Gregorio was in Bologna) gained citizenship in Bologna and went on to have an impressive diplomatic career of his own.¹⁶⁷ Another member of Gregorio's staff, Baptista Sambuelo, like Gianetti a cleric, was sent to negotiate with Andrea Doria over the provision of galleys for Cardinal Campeggio's travel to England.¹⁶⁸ Baptista evidently understood his role as an ambassador's agent well, for in the process of these negotiations he extracted from Doria's men the news that Doria was considering abandoning the French service and joining the Imperialists, important information which Gregorio immediately passed onto the French.¹⁶⁹ The details of Baptista's rewards are few: in his codicil Gregorio left him fifty scudi, but most probably what was important to him, like Gianetti, was the enhanced access to benefices which his master's connections might bring.¹⁷⁰ The role of the diplomatic household will be considered in further detail in Chapter Three.

It is, in short, possible to cite numerous cases in which Gregorio's family and friendship network was employed in the service of English diplomacy. His nephew Basilio de Zobolis, for example, provided accommodation for visiting English

¹⁶⁶ Guido Gianetti was naturalised and given power to hold benefices in England to the annual value of 100 marks and to be non-resident on 7 December 1532. *L&P* v 1693; TNA, C66/661, m. 25. He was a prebendary of Highworth in the diocese of Salisbury by 11 April 1533, and is recorded as still holding that office in April 1562. *Fasti*, III 60. Codicil to Gregorio Casali's will, 14 December 1536. ACdM, I, no. 15.

¹⁶⁷ See *L&P* v 1648; Pocock II 355-56. *L&P* VI 222; *St P* VII 441. *L&P* VI 456; *St P* VII 455. *L&P* VI 502; TNA, SP 1/76, ff. 59r-59v. *L&P* VI 543; Theiner, p. 603. *L&P* VI 643; *St P* VII 472-73. *L&P* VI 670; TNA, SP 1/77 ff. 50r-50v. *L&P* IX 492; BL, Add. MS 8715, f. 124r. Bertani, originally of Modena, obtained citizenship of Bologna on 28 December 1535, 'È di nobili origini ed in città ha sempre mantenuto un contegno ed uno stile di vita ad esse adeguato.' Giancarlo Angelozzi and Cesarina Casanova, *Diventare Cittadini. La Cittadinanza ex Privilegio a Bologna (Secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Bologna: Comune di Bologna, 2000). On his subsequent career in the service of various cardinals and princes see Kenneth Bartlett, 'Papal policy and the English crown, 1563-1565: The Bertano correspondence', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992), 643-59.

¹⁶⁸ In Gregorio's codicil, ACdM, I, no. 15, he is described as a cleric of Pavia. On the mission to Doria, see *L&P* IV 4379; Pocock I 170-71. *L&P* IV 4401; TNA, SP 1/48 ff. 191r-192r.

¹⁶⁹ Molini II 36; letter to Ambrogio Talenti, bishop of Asti, 24 June 1528.

¹⁷⁰ ACdM, I, no. 15.

ambassadors in Reggio nell'Emilia.¹⁷¹ Unnamed Bolognese friends, together with Gregorio himself, put up a large part of the security for the legate Cardinal Campeggio's voyage to England.¹⁷² It should be emphasised that both the advantages which accrued to Gregorio Casali through his career in the English service and the extent of the service he provided to the English crown can only be fully appreciated in this wider context. This was how ambassadors functioned: they employed their own staff, their families and their associates to carry out diplomatic tasks. So, Gregorio's servant Baptista, who, as we saw above, helped organise Campeggio's voyage to England, would find himself on other occasions involved in transporting cattle which his master had purchased for his lands in Bologna.¹⁷³ This was not untypical for agents of this period, who commonly carried out a wide range of tasks as their employers required.¹⁷⁴ The line between diplomats' public and private activity, a question to which we will return in Chapters Three and Four, was not at all clear; indeed, it is arguable that the distinction would have been meaningless to contemporaries.

Members of Casali's family and friendship networks all benefited from their involvement in diplomatic service, gaining rewards and advancement as a result. Sometimes they could exploit their connections directly, as they did to obtain a royal recommendation that Andrea be appointed to the Senate. Often, however, the advantages were gained more subtly: for example, when contacts acquired through diplomatic activity helped them to make a better marriage or business deal. There was, we should note, no straightforward correlation between the success of a particular diplomatic mission and the advantages for the family: even if the mission failed, the contacts remained and advancement might still be had. This case reflects a broader pattern of family strategies in this period, in which it is very clear that families functioned collectively. Careers are often assessed only on the basis of advantage to an individual; however, the example of the Casali family and their associates demonstrates how narrow such an approach would be. Furthermore, this examination of the Casali family network offers an insight into why Gregorio was

¹⁷¹ Wall, p. 58.

¹⁷² *CSP Ven* IV 321; Contarini, f. 34r.

¹⁷³ In 1530, see ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1153, c. 471r; and in 1536, see ASV, Camera Apostolica, Diversa Cameralia 101, f. 594r.

¹⁷⁴ An excellent discussion of the role of the agent, with extensive bibliography, is to be found in Marika Keblusek, 'Introduction: Profiling the early modern agent', in Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus (eds.), *Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), pp. 9-15.

perceived to be a good ambassador. He was not merely an individual acting alone to promote English interests in Rome. Rather, he could draw on an extensive set of connections across the Italian peninsula acquired from his family, through relationships of friendship and patronage, and through marriage. In employing Gregorio Casali, the English crown gained not only his diplomatic services, but those of the whole 'family firm'.

5. Rewards and risks

THE common perception of Renaissance ambassadors is that, in Garrett Mattingly's description, they 'finished their missions poorer than when they took them up'.¹⁷⁵ That was not necessarily due to the failure of their masters to provide sufficient funding. Although there are instances of such behaviour (Mattingly's citation of the Spanish ambassador Rodrigo de Puebla is a case in point), as Bell has pointed out in the case of England, the 'strong impression' is that Henrician diplomats seem to have been paid with reasonable regularity.¹⁷⁶ The problem was rather that long periods away from either his business interests or his home court and the possibilities of advancement it offered, were not, in general, conducive to improving the ambassador's financial situation. In the case of England, however, Luke MacMahon has argued that on balance a role in Henry's diplomatic service tended to improve one's prospects, particularly in the cases of the more junior figures employed as ambassadors.¹⁷⁷ Insofar as financial matters are concerned, it is difficult to make a firm cost-benefit analysis of Gregorio Casali's diplomatic career, or indeed of anyone's, given that in this period diplomacy was never the sole source of income. However, the case provides an interesting insight into the complexities of diplomats' rewards, and this section will consider the variety of sources from which Casali obtained financing and the various problems that he encountered.

Étienne Dolet was concerned to point out, in his *De Officio Legati*, that it was the responsibility of the prince to supply a 'proper sum of money to defray expenses', and that this should be 'in proportion to the magnificence of the court at

¹⁷⁵ Mattingly, p. 225.

¹⁷⁶ Mattingly, p. 224. Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history', p. 35.

¹⁷⁷ MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', p. 264.

which he holds the ambassadorship'.¹⁷⁸ English ambassadors received a daily stipend or diet, which can best be characterised as a basic income more or less sufficient to cover the costs of their diplomatic work.¹⁷⁹ Gregorio Casali got forty shillings a day, like his fellow resident in Rome Girolamo Ghinucci, the bishop of Worcester. This was a higher sum than most special ambassadors from England received, and perhaps reflected the additional expense of maintaining a suitably magnificent establishment in Rome (as we will see in Chapter Three, the visiting special ambassadors stayed with Casali and did not have to meet the expense of accommodation).¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Casali complained repeatedly about the late payment of his diets and the financial difficulties he experienced as a result.¹⁸¹ He was by no means alone in his complaints: they are echoed in the correspondence of the contemporary papal agents in England and France, who likewise had trouble obtaining the money to cover their expenses.¹⁸²

In assessing whether or not ambassadors' diets covered their expenses in an adequate and timely fashion, the studies cited above have implicitly assumed that diplomats operated within a cash economy. However, diplomats' repeated complaints about their diets may deceive us as to the relative importance of these payments. Recent scholarship has questioned the dominance of cash in early modern economies, arguing that modes of exchange such as credit and barter persisted as important means for the circulation of goods.¹⁸³ Furthermore, both Ronald Weissman (in relation to Florence), and Craig Muldrew (in relation to England) have argued that access to credit was not 'impersonal', but closely dependent on social ties:

¹⁷⁸ Dolet, p. 84.

¹⁷⁹ There is an extensive discussion of English diplomats' remuneration in MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', pp. 218-39.

¹⁸⁰ *L&P* v pp. 304, 306, 308, 312 (Chamber Accounts). Sir Francis Bryan, Pietro Vanni and Stephen Gardiner, all ambassadors to Rome in 1528-29, each had 26s 8d a day. The exception was William Knight, who like Casali and Ghinucci had 40s a day. By comparison, Giambattista Casali, as ambassador at Venice, had 13s 4d a day. Potter, 'Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century', p. 300 suggests that diets were set at a rate 'roughly denoting the prestige of the host sovereign', which accounts for the difference between Rome and Venice, but not for that between resident and special ambassadors.

¹⁸¹ For complaints and proposals for remedies see Bryan to Henry: *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 148. Vanni to Wolsey: *L&P* IV 5225; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 26r-26v. Vanni to Gardiner: *L&P* IV 5227; TNA, SP 1/52, f. 179. Gregorio to Gardiner: *L&P* IV 5221; TNA, SP 1/52, f. 177. Gregorio to Vincenzo: *L&P* IV 5222; Vit. B XI 29r.

¹⁸² LPL, MS 4434, f. 225v.

¹⁸³ In relation to Italy, see the studies in Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch (eds), *The Material Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), in particular the essay by Ann Matchette, 'Credit and credibility: used goods and social relations in sixteenth-century Florence', pp. 225-41.

lending was based on reputation and trust.¹⁸⁴ Thus when Gardiner wrote, as we saw in Chapter One, that Casali was ‘in credit and reputation’ at the papal court he said something not only about the esteem in which Casali was held but also about his financial status. It is arguable that for the ambassador adequate credit at the receiving court was as important as the prompt payment of his diets. Moreover, an Italian ambassador in Italy, known to the local bankers, and with family assets against which loans could be secured (such as the plate and jewels Gregorio pawned to raise money for troops), may have had advantages over visiting English diplomats in this regard, providing a further motivation for the employment of foreigners in diplomatic service.

That said, Casali’s credit had its limits. Notarial documents in the Casali family archive and state archive of Bologna lend credibility to the view that at times Gregorio spent large sums of his own money covering diplomatic expenses. For example, in the space of less than two months, from 8 November to 30 December 1531, he liquidated landholdings and other property to the value of at least 4,353 Bolognese lire (plus a further 70 gold scudi).¹⁸⁵ This substantiates the account in a letter of December 1531 from the English lawyer Edward Carne, in Rome, in which he described to his colleague William Benet, how both Casali and Ghinucci were selling land to cover their expenses. Carne describes their lack of funds to pay for bringing legal experts to Rome, and says:

Mayster Gregory hath send to Bonony, to sell certein land ther, to make money for that purpose... In good feyth hyt ys sayd Maister Gregory ys glad to sell hys landes, to get money to pay lerned men in the Kynges cause; and so lyke wyse the Auditor [Ghinucci]. I ensure you, both dyd hyt at thys tyme with so good a wyll, that my thought they wold a sold all that ever they had.¹⁸⁶

Even allowing for the fact that during the same period Gregorio purchased a house for 600 lire, this is a significant sum of money.¹⁸⁷ Nonetheless, it should be seen for

¹⁸⁴ Ronald F. E. Weissman, ‘The importance of being ambiguous: social relations, individualism and identity in Renaissance Florence’, in Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Weissman (eds), *Urban Life in the Renaissance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), pp. 269-80 (pp. 275-78). Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), in particular Chapters Five and Six, pp. 123-72.

¹⁸⁵ ACdM, I, nos. 85-90. Some of the documents are also in ASB, Fondo Notarile, Gherardi Cesare, protocolli 7, ff. 119, 142, 144. The sales were: 1020 lire and 70 gold scudi for land sold to Battista Bello; 1250 lire for a substantial house in Bologna sold to Giovanni de’ Bandini; 400 lire for land sold to Bernardo Cavanelli; and 1683 lire (a provisional price) for land sold to the Mantichiti brothers.

¹⁸⁶ *L&P* v 586; *St P* VII 329.

¹⁸⁷ ACdM, I, no. 84

what it is: a temporary cash-flow problem and not a long-term financial crisis. Other notarial documents illustrate major property purchases by Gregorio during his diplomatic career: he was part of a company in Bologna, for example, and in January 1531 paid £7635, 3s and 1d in cash to purchase land from other members of the consortium.¹⁸⁸ He had an annual pension of 5,000 ducats from the French king, arranged by Cardinal Wolsey, though he had trouble obtaining its payment.¹⁸⁹ He also had the annuity of 200 gold crowns which came with his knighthood, and, as we saw above, he was granted the privilege of deferring his customs payments for five years.¹⁹⁰ We know that he received a gift from Venice following a diplomatic visit there in 1527, and it is entirely possible that his position also brought him other gifts about which we do not know: the question of gifts is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Four.¹⁹¹

That Gregorio was able to cope in the absence of funds from England was, of course, due to the access for credit enabled by his family connections and by personal wealth such as the share of landholdings in Rome, Bologna and Imola inherited from his father. Beyond that, there is the question of his marriage. As we saw at the start of this chapter, Gregorio claimed that his work had cost him a fortune – thirty thousand ducats – and that only thanks to his wife's dowry had he kept afloat.¹⁹² However, it would be surprising if the status enjoyed by Gregorio as an ambassador at the papal court had not contributed to his ability to contract such a good marriage in the first place. Furthermore, although his wife Livia's inheritance was entangled in a complex legal dispute, in December 1530 Gregorio Casali was given part of the contested property in trust, a half-share of the countship of Castro Zibello which had reverted to the Camera Apostolica. The letters patent from the Camera cited 'the faith and nobility of mind which your Magnificence shows... towards our aforesaid holy father and the Holy See in everything and at all times in

¹⁸⁸ ASB, Fondo Notarile, Casari Ludovico, filza 7, no. 191.

¹⁸⁹ For the French pension, Pocock II 521; on the problems of payment see the letter from Casali to Montmorency, 5 May 1531, *L&P* v 229; Molini II 370. A discussion of the general practice of paying pensions is to be found in Charles Giry-Deloison, 'Money and early Tudor diplomacy. The English pensioners of the French kings (1475-1547)' *Medieval History* 3 (1993), 128-46. Giry-Deloison suggests that Casali in fact received a pension payment from the French only once, of 400 écus, in 1532 (p. 130), but confirms Wolsey's role in drawing up the list of pensioners.

¹⁹⁰ See above, pp. 74, 76.

¹⁹¹ The Venice present consisted of 'silver utensils and cloths of silk, to the value of about 200 gold crowns'. 5 July 1527. *CSP Ven* IV 131; ASVe, Senato, Secreti, filza 7, unnumbered folio.

¹⁹² Pocock II 521.

the most troublesome and difficult matters...'.¹⁹³ We should note then, that Gregorio's rewards came not only from the prince whom he served, but also from the ruler to whom he was posted. As we will see in Chapter Four, such favours and gifts to diplomats were not uncommon but also not uncontroversial: some states banned their ambassadors from accepting gifts from princes to whom they were posted, or required that they hand them over on their return. The English diplomatic service, which was only slowly becoming systematised, had not yet adopted such rules.

It is also likely that Gregorio's position as ambassador enhanced his ability to make business deals within the Papal States and in Italy more broadly. A draft contract in the Archivio di Stato di Bologna suggests that Gregorio was planning to lease land from the cardinal of Ancona, with whom we know he had extensive diplomatic business.¹⁹⁴ Andrea Casali's role as a senator in Bologna, obtained with English patronage, may well have had a positive impact on the family finances, although without further research it is not possible to be certain. The difficulties of analysing Gregorio Casali's remuneration are exacerbated by the fact that his own accounts of his money problems are not necessarily reliable. For example, in a letter of 1533 to the duke of Norfolk, he made a series of claims about his losses in the context of defending himself against allegations of disloyalty:

The Pope hath, most unjustly and not without his own great shame, taken from me six thousand ducats which lawfully belonged and appertained unto me, given of my wife's patrimony. Also against all law and righteousness he hath taken from my brother a certain monastery which the [Venecy]ans had committed unto him; for which cause my said brother is now excommunicate.¹⁹⁵

The first of these claims, that Clement VII seized 6,000 ducats from Livia Pallavicino's patrimony, even if true, and I have not seen firm evidence for it, is considerably muddled by the legal dispute which surrounded her inheritance. The second claim – the loss of Giambattista's monastery – is similarly rather less clear than Gregorio's account might suggest: as we saw above, Venice and the papacy

¹⁹³ 'Fedes ac generositas animi quam Magnificentia V. pluribus ab hinc annis erga prefatum S. D. N. ac sanctam sedem apostolicam in omnibus arduis ac difficillimis rebus ostendit.' ASV, Camera Apostolica, Diversa Cameralia 81, ff. 202v-203r. 17 December 1530.

¹⁹⁴ ASB, Fondo Notarile, Gherardi Cesare, protocolli 6, f. 398. There is a note 'Minuit locat. cardinalis anconitanj' on the document, in what appears to be a contemporary hand; however in the main text the dates, name of the cardinal and amount of money involved are left blank. For the diplomatic interactions with the cardinal of Ancona and his nephew the cardinal of Ravenna, see below, Chapter Four, pp. 162-66.

¹⁹⁵ Pocock II 518.

were in dispute about the Republic's right to nominate to benefices and Giambattista's bishopric was caught up in the arguments. It is very probable that Gregorio, having been unable to prevent Henry's split from Rome, was out of favour with Clement when he wrote that letter. He may also have thought it useful, in maintaining a relationship with the English after Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, to portray himself in this way. However, one should not exaggerate the extent of his 'persecution'. It should be borne in mind that his fellow ambassador Ghinucci, the bishop of Worcester, alongside whom Gregorio had been appointed in 1525, became in 1535 a cardinal.¹⁹⁶ Service to the English crown clearly did his career no harm. It is, however, apparent that in comparison to the English-born diplomatic personnel whose remuneration is analysed by MacMahon, Casali's rewards came from a wider variety of sources and were less directly reliant on the goodwill of the prince he served. Chapter Five will discuss the implications of this observation in greater detail.

So while it is clear that ambassadors were both expected – and prepared – to draw on their own resources to ensure that the necessities of diplomatic business could be paid for, and that a certain amount of financial risk was thus involved in the enterprise, one cannot draw up a definitive final balance sheet. There are too many complicating factors: the lack of account books, the incomplete notarial records, and then the difficulty of establishing to what extent, for example, Gregorio was able to exploit his position as ambassador either in terms of the marriage he contracted, or in terms of making advantageous business deals. However, it is reasonable to point out that in the medium term his immediate family seem to have weathered any temporary problems they faced as a result of Gregorio's diplomatic career rather well, and that in the longer term the Casali successfully established themselves as feudal lords.¹⁹⁷ For such a family, seeking advancement through service to foreign princes, the financial considerations were undoubtedly different than they would have been in the case, say, of a Venetian patrician elected by the Signoria to serve abroad and

¹⁹⁶ See his *DBI* entry.

¹⁹⁷ By the time of Gregorio's death in 1536 he had sufficient assets to bequeath his daughter Ottavia a dowry of 3,000 scudi. *ACdM*, I, no. 14. However, according to Giuseppe Guidicini her actual dowry at the time of her marriage was 2,000 gold scudi. *I Riformatori dello Stato di Libertà della Città di Bologna dal 1394 al 1797*, 3 vols (Bologna: Guidicini, 1876-77), II 134. Gregorio's son Michele managed to hold onto the feudal property he had acquired through his mother's line, property over which the family consolidated its hold during the Farnese rule of the duchy of Parma and Piacenza. See Lorenzo Molossi, *Vocabolario Topografico dei ducati di Parma, Piacenza e Guastalla* (Parma: Tipografia Ducale, 1832-34), p. 229.

required to leave his business interests and role in city politics behind, or an English courtier who risked missing out on promotions at home while in diplomatic service overseas. The Casali family strategy makes sense only if they believed that their diplomatic careers entailed greater potential reward than risk.

ON the whole, the employment of Gregorio and Giambattista Casali in the English diplomatic service was advantageous for both the Casali family and for their employers. However, it is worth considering some of the risks and potential disadvantages that this type of arrangement brought. For the Casali, there was always the risk of a certain insecurity of tenure; however, had Gregorio fallen out of favour with the English there were other possible employers. His brother Francesco, as we have seen, moved from the Venetian military service to become an ambassador for the king of Hungary. A possible comparison is with Pietro Vanni, initially a secretary to Cardinal Wolsey, who was also involved in the diplomacy of these years. Vanni survived the machinations of court politics to remain in the English service through the reigns of Edward and Mary right up until his death in the 1560s.¹⁹⁸

However, the extent to which English diplomacy was reliant on a family-based structure cannot be regarded as unproblematic. As we have seen, it did place limits on family members' career choices: it would have been unacceptable for Francesco to enter the Imperial service.¹⁹⁹ A good example of the problems that this type of personalised arrangement posed can be found in a letter written by Gregorio himself in April 1529 to the French chief minister Anne de Montmorency regarding the *condottiere* Sciarra Colonna. The Colonna family, connections of Gregorio's Caffarelli relatives, were allied with the Holy Roman Emperor, but Gregorio proposed to exploit a fraternal falling-out to create discord:

I have had in these past few days close discussions with Sig. Sciarra Colonna, who has confided greatly in me, and I have gathered from him that he would willingly come over to the service of the Most Christian King, and in this I have had a very good opportunity, finding Sig. Sciarra in great disdain with Sig. Ascanio, his brother, and perhaps also with the Imperialists, and I believe that if this thing is done, as it would seem easily, that it will be of great use and benefit for the enterprise, because the said Sig. Sciarra is a valiant captain, and has great credit with the

¹⁹⁸ See Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 283, n. 165, and Vanni's *DNB* entry (as Peter Vannes).

¹⁹⁹ See above, p. 92. Molini II 322.

Imperialists, and in Abruzzo is not only feared but adored, and if he were given a commission, for as much as he is worth or knows, there would be no better way to spite Sig. Ascanio and the Imperialists. And if nothing else, it would be well enough to have sown this scandal between him and Sig. Ascanio and the Imperialists, making Sig. Ascanio look suspect to the same Imperialists.²⁰⁰

The very relationships which – when the family stuck together – could prove highly valuable to a foreign prince could also, as we see here, backfire if family members came into conflict. We will return to the questions of how the Casali managed their allegiances to and connections with various European rulers in Chapter Five.

THE career of Gregorio Casali illustrates the possibilities for social and family advancement provided by service to a foreign ruler. Although the links of foreign powers with baronial families such as the Colonna are well documented, their relationships with families such as the Casali at a lower, albeit still ‘noble’, level have been the subject of much less discussion. However, it is clear that in this period of extensive foreign military and diplomatic intervention in Italy the opportunities afforded to enterprising individuals and their families were considerable. The foreign employer had much to gain from such a transaction, in the form of extensive family and friendship networks which could be used to further diplomatic ends. In turn, the rewards to be gained from diplomatic service accrued not only to the individual ambassador but also to his family and wider social networks. These networks did not invariably offer direct political support to particular diplomatic projects, and might even on occasion be hostile, but could certainly be exploited in the vital business of information-gathering. However, an over-reliance on such personal connections brought with it certain problems. Employers risked falling foul of family feuds, or finding their instructions subtly adjusted to better fit the family interest. Ambassadors, expected to draw on their own resources to cover diplomatic expenses,

²⁰⁰ ‘Io ho havuto a questi di stretta pratica col Sig. Sciarra Colonna, il quale molto si confida di me, et ho da lui raccolto che esso volentieri si condurrebbe a servitii del Christ. Re, et in questo io ho havuto molto buona occasione, trovandosi il Sig. Sciarra in gran sdegno col Sig. Ascanio suo fratello, et forse anchora con Imperiali, et credomi se questa cosa si facesse, come parrebbe facilmente, che ella torneria in grande utile et commodo della impresa, perchè ’l detto Sig. Sciarra è valente capitano, et appresso Imperiali è di bonissimo credito, et nello Abruzzo è non solamente temuto ma adorato, et condotto che fusse, per quanto egli valesse o sapesse non lascierebbe che fare per fare molto ben dispetto al Sig. Ascanio et Imperiali. Et quando non li facesse mai altro, basterebbe bene assai d’havere seminato questo scandalo tra lui e ’l Sig. Ascanio et Imperiali, mettendo apresso in sospetto ad essi imperiali il Sig. Ascanio.’ Molini II 167. On the Colonna and their relationship with the Spanish, see Alessandro Serio, ‘Pompeo Colonna tra papato e “grande monarchie”, la *pax romana* del 1511 e i comportamenti politici dei baroni romani’, in Visceglia, *Nobiltà Romana*, pp. 63-87.

had to accept a certain level of financial risk to their personal assets. However, a diplomatic career, like a military one, provided a means through which a nobleman with 'limited means' might advance socially outside the world of commerce. It was an honourable lay career. The Casali family 'strategy', if we may call it that, of having two brothers in the church and two in military/diplomatic careers, made considerable sense. While taking care to preserve the family line, they limited further division of their already-divided patrimony and acquired a link initially with England and subsequently with other foreign powers that could be exploited to assist other family members. The potential rewards of such a strategy were great: as we have seen, the former English ambassador Girolamo Ghinucci became a cardinal. Had either Giambattista or Paolo lived, it is not out of the question that there might have been a Cardinal Casali too.

Chapter Three

“The liberal port that Your Grace’s servant does keep”: hospitality, the house and the household

AMONG the many assets that the Casali family brought to the English diplomatic service were their two substantial properties in the papal cities of Bologna and Rome. These provided a base for visiting special ambassadors from England, as well as Gregorio Casali, his brothers and cousins. At this early stage of resident diplomacy, there were no designated embassy buildings. An ambassador would, of course, attend the court to which he was sent, but he prepared his strategies and wrote his letters at home and, importantly, he received guests there. In their correspondence, ambassadors regularly report callers at their lodgings; they visit each other; cardinals visit them.¹ From day to day, the diplomat’s house was the centre of his working life. The importance of hospitality in the diplomacy of this period is summed up in a comment from Nicholas Hawkins, English resident ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V from 1532 to 1534.² While in Bologna for a meeting between Charles and Pope Clement VII, Hawkins became concerned that he was unable to match the standard set by others in the diplomatic corps when it came to entertaining. He wrote to Henry VIII’s chief minister Thomas Cromwell:

Treuth it is, that the knowledge of suche thingis whiche I shuld certifi the King on, for the most parte I must gett it of thother Imbassatours; and therfor must bothe invite them, and be invited.³

Here, Hawkins highlights the role of sociability in gathering information, but it had other functions too: in particular, the provision of suitably lavish hospitality would reflect well on the honour of the ambassador’s prince.

This chapter will ask how members of the diplomatic corps, and others in Rome, understood the practices of inviting and being invited, and will assess what they believed to be important in terms of the house, household and hospitality. For example, the authors of treatises on diplomacy were preoccupied by the proper conduct of members of the ambassador’s household: the chapter will consider why

¹ There are many cases that might be cited: for example, Contarini, f. 58v: ‘Questa matina è venuto ad ritrovarmi fino al mio allogiamento il S^{or} Malatesta Baglion’ or f. 64r ‘son stato ad ritrovar allo allogiamento suo il visconte di Torena’.

² Hawkins was resident ambassador with the Emperor from late 1532 until his death in January 1534. He was initially at Mantua but later followed the Emperor to Spain. Bell, *Handlist*, p. 47.

³ *L&P* v 1661; *St P* vii 406. 24 Dec 1532.

that was and how the resident diplomat's position as householder and host fits into the overall picture of his role. When the special ambassador Sir Francis Bryan praised Casali's hospitality, he noted that his house was 'furnished with gentlemen daily, and that of the best in Rome'.⁴ To contemporaries, the people of the house and their quality were arguably as important as furniture in its more conventional sense, and the chapter will therefore consider the significance attached both to domestic objects and to guests in the context of diplomacy.

Although the argument here focuses on diplomats, their broad understandings of what hospitality meant were shared by other people – for example cardinals and members of the nobility – who were part of the same social circles. An example of the regular interaction between these different groups can be seen in a letter from the Mantuan ambassador to Rome describing a party at Cardinal Cesarino's house in January 1526, attended by the Marchioness of Mantua, Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, and also by Cardinal Ridolfi, the duke of Sessa (who was the Imperial ambassador) and the ambassadors of England, Ferrara and Mantua. The dinner was 'very lavish, and honourable... with entertainments of various sorts of music, songs and instrumental playing'.⁵ The typical social life of an ambassador was probably not very different from that of someone like Cardinal Soderini, who went to 'dinners and parties with other cardinals, some members of the curia and some of the indigenous upper classes of Rome'.⁶ This type of sociability was part of a broader culture in western Europe at this time, which valued the feast as a vehicle for social and political dealings: for example, citing Giovanni Pontano's 'De convivencia', which was prepared for publication in 1498, Michel Jeanneret argues that it presents 'a theory of the banquet as a tool for public life'.⁷ Ideas about hospitality and the household had, however, a much longer pedigree, drawing on both Christian and classical precedents. As Felicity Heal has argued, the house 'was no mere assemblage of rooms; instead, it

⁴ *L&P* IV 5481; *St P* VII 168.

⁵ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 871, c. 44v: 'molto lauta, et honorevole, copiosissima de vivande, et con molto ordine, et con intertenimenti de diverse sorte de musiche, de canti et di soni de varij instrumenti.' Cardinal Cesarino, who was of Roman origin, had a household of 366 persons in 1526. D. S. Chambers, 'The economic predicament of Renaissance cardinals', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 3 (1966), 289-313 (p. 303, footnote, citing the census).

⁶ Lowe, *Cardinal Soderini*, p. 169.

⁷ Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) is a study of Renaissance texts on conviviality and provides useful background for this discussion. See especially pp. 49-56, on the feast in relation to 'the pomp of princes'; the quotation is from p. 51. On Pontano, see below, pp. 118-19.

served to embody the qualities of its owner'.⁸ Heal's research concerns early modern England, and it would be inappropriate to apply her conclusions to the Italian context indiscriminately.⁹ However, although concepts of what was appropriate in hospitality developed in rather different ways in the different European social systems, the basic idea that honour required a nobleman to be hospitable can be regarded as a constant in the period under discussion here.

This chapter will begin by examining both the representational and instrumental functions of diplomatic hospitality. It will then consider the forms that such hospitality might take and the importance of splendour and magnificence in the ambassador's lifestyle, using these findings to contextualise what we know in general about diplomatic accommodation in Rome and in particular about the Casali houses in Rome and Bologna, their use and their contents. Referring to the extensive recent literature on the Renaissance home,¹⁰ the chapter will highlight the suitability of these properties for diplomatic entertaining. The final section will consider who made up the ambassador's household and the precepts regarding the conduct of household members put forward in contemporary treatises on diplomacy. The importance of family houses in diplomatic business is characteristic of a broader pattern of property use in Italy in this period, in which it is extremely difficult to make a distinction between 'public' and 'private' spheres. Indeed, such terminology would have made little sense to a Roman nobleman of the sixteenth century. An idea that might have been more familiar, however, is the concept of the household as a microcosm of the state or polity,¹¹ and the chapter will analyse the particular resonance of this model in the case of the ambassador, offering a new interpretation of the treatises' comments on this question.

⁸ Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 6.

⁹ On hospitality in Rome see Lucinda M. C. Byatt, 'The concept of hospitality in a cardinal's household in Renaissance Rome', *Renaissance Studies* 2 (1988), 312-20.

¹⁰ A concise introduction to the state of scholarship on this topic, with bibliography, is to be found in Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, Flora Dennis and Ann Matchette, 'Introduction. Approaching the Italian Renaissance interior: sources, methodologies, debates', *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006), 623-28.

¹¹ Dennis Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft: Domestic Service in Renaissance Venice, 1400-1600* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 23.

1. The functions of diplomatic hospitality

As we saw in Chapter One, the ambassador's role at Rome combined the symbolic representation of his prince with practical duties such as information-gathering. Diplomatic hospitality involved both these elements. On the one hand, it enhanced the honour of the prince whom the ambassador represented: within this broad framework the provision of hospitality might act as the public expression of a diplomatic alliance or indicate the political standing of a particular monarch. On the other – as we saw in the quotation from Nicholas Hawkins at the start of this chapter – entertaining could be an important means of obtaining news. It would be wrong to impose an overly schematic distinction between the two functions. For one thing, a single event might involve both of them; and besides, there is an obvious practical value involved in promoting one's prince as particularly virtuous. However, as we will see, the two elements are given differing emphases in different types of source and for the purposes of discussion it makes sense to deal with them in turn.

The symbolic function of diplomatic hospitality is well-expressed in a letter from Sir Francis Bryan, one of Henry VIII's inner circle, who was sent as a special ambassador to Rome in early 1529 for the last serious negotiations with Pope Clement VII about Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Sir Francis stayed at Gregorio Casali's house, and was evidently impressed with his host's lifestyle. He wrote to Henry VIII describing:

The honnour that Your Gracys Imbassadour here does dayly to Your Grace, as by keyping a port, no oon Cardynall in Rome suche, hys house furnysshyd with gentyllmen dayly, and that of the best in Rome, and mayny tymys Cardynalles, 2 at a tyme, takyng hym at dyner or supper, wyll sytt downe with hym, and unlokyd for they fare as well as they do at whome; whych causys me to reyoysse, heryng the grett fame and honour, that dayly sprynges on Your Grace, by reson of the lyberall porte that Your Gracys servaunt dose kepe, studyng dayly to increse Your Gracys honour.¹²

Even allowing for a certain degree of enthusiastic over-statement on Bryan's part, the letter sums up rather well the belief that such conduct would reflect well on the king. Likewise, when in 1528 Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox stayed with Casali in Orvieto, they wrote to Cardinal Wolsey with similar praise:

¹² *L&P* IV 5481; *St P* VII 168.

[Gregorio] hath and doth keep here an honourable post, and hath great access of gentlemen unto him to his marvellous cost and charge, and much for the king's honour.¹³

In their assessments, these English-born ambassadors must have drawn on their own notions of proper behaviour in terms of hospitality: as Heal has argued, in England the 'appearance of an open household' was valuable for a lord's reputation.¹⁴ In the case of an ambassador, his liberality enhanced not only his own but also the king's honour. Liberality had the longest pedigree of the social virtues, with a clear classical antecedent.¹⁵ In medieval discussion, Goldthwaite has argued, it was regarded as a 'princely virtue, involving those gestures of spectacle, feasts, gifts and charity by which a prince asserted a public presence'.¹⁶ Even in the context of Renaissance humanism, liberality retained this social sense more strongly than did its fellow virtue of magnificence, which, Goldthwaite suggests, was redefined to fit the context of a 'nonfeudal' society.¹⁷ Ideas about liberality thus translated well to the world of Renaissance princes and their ambassadors.

Noteworthy evidence for the importance of sociability in diplomatic practice is to be found in Thomas Wall's contemporary account of the English embassy to the coronation of Charles V at Bologna in 1529-30. He reports repeatedly that the ambassadors – Sir Nicholas Carew and Richard Sampson – dine 'well accompanied': indeed, they do so almost every day. For example, he writes that on 'Friday third day of December the Chief ambassador dined at his lodging well accompanied.'¹⁸ In the entries for the 5th, 6th and 7th of December there are three similar references.¹⁹ On Thursday the 16th, 'the chief ambassador and all his gentlemen dined with Master Dean which was well accompanied with strangers',²⁰ and so on. In his introduction to this account, the editor, R. J. Knecht, comments that such 'recurrent phrases' convey

¹³ *L&P* IV 4119; Pocock 191. Gardiner himself, in his later role as bishop of Winchester, was 'constantly criticized by puritanical reformers for his princely behaviour and sumptuous household'. Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Tudor Prelates and Politics, 1536-1558* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 58.

¹⁴ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 22.

¹⁵ See the editor's introduction to Giovanni Pontano, *I Libri delle Virtù Sociali*, ed. Francesco Tateo (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999), p. 19.

¹⁶ Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 207.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 208. Tateo likewise argues that it is in his treatises on 'magnificence', 'splendour' and 'conviviality' that Pontano is 'most original', Introduction to *Virtù sociali*, p. 12.

¹⁸ Wall, p. 60. Sir Nicholas Carew was the chief ambassador. Richard Sampson, the Dean of Windsor (Master Dean) was his junior.

¹⁹ Wall, p. 62.

²⁰ Wall, pp. 65-66.

‘a sense of growing monotony’.²¹ It may be monotonous; however, the repetition of the fact that the ambassadors kept good company does tell us something about what Thomas Wall thought important in an embassy.

The significance attached to guests is by no means specific to the English ambassadors, nor indeed to diplomats in general: it reflects a more general social attitude. A Venetian *relazione* of 1523, written following a special embassy to Rome, demonstrates how this understanding of hospitality was used to judge a cardinal’s conduct.²² Cardinal Cornelio, a Venetian, is described in the ambassadors’ account on the basis of the company he keeps. In terms very similar to those used in the English correspondence, they write that the cardinal:

Always has a house full of Roman gentlemen. He keeps a most beautiful court and treats his guests very well indeed: not a week goes by without two or three cardinals dining at his table, on two or three occasions.²³

The cardinal has, perhaps, a somewhat unfair advantage in the location of his property in the Borgo, en route from the papal palace. As the cardinals are passing by (and there’s a very pleasant piazza just outside), Cornelio says:

Most Reverend Lord, stay for dinner with us, and you too, Most Reverend Lord? And he begs them so much, that one or other stays there.²⁴

While this – like the assessments of Bryan, Gardiner and Fox – should not be regarded as a literal description of day-to-day practice, it is evidence for the shared culture of hospitality within which ambassadors constructed their praise of individuals at the court of Rome.

In the context of this culture, diplomats could use comments about hospitality and housing as a means of conveying political messages. For example, in January 1529 the Mantuan resident at Rome, Francesco Gonzaga, wrote to his master, the

²¹ Wall, p. 3.

²² *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato* ed. Eugenio Albèri, series 2, 5 vols (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1846), III 77-120. Venice had sent four ambassadors to Rome to pay homage to the newly-elected Pope Adrian VI. It is not clear which of them wrote the document. Its editor, Tommaso Gar, suggests the most likely is Pietro Pesaro. The others were Marco Dandolo, Antonio Giustiniano and Luigi Mocenigo.

²³ ‘di continuo ha la casa piena di gentiluomini romani. Tiene una bellissima corte; fa un bel trattamento; nè mai v’è settimana che due o tre fiate non mangino alla sua tavola due o tre cardinali.’ *ibid*, p. 117.

²⁴ ‘La casa sua è in Borgo, per dove debbono passare i cardinali quando vengono da Palazzo; e come sono dirimpetto (chè vi è dinanzi una bellissima piazza) Sua Signoria dice: monsignore reverendissimo, state a desinare con noi; e così monsignore reverendissimo? E tanto li prega, che vi restano or l’uno ora l’altro.’ *ibid*, p. 117.

marquis, that the Imperial ambassador, Miguel Mai, was staying in Cardinal Colonna's palace.²⁵ Although in his letter Francesco did nothing more than refer to the accommodation arrangement, his implication would have been clearly understood: the Imperial-Colonna alliance was alive and well. The following month, he wrote that he was involved in organising lodgings for King Ferdinand's envoy Andrea Borgo.²⁶ Once again a passing mention of hospitality made a statement, in this case emphasising the ambassador's practical commitment to working with Mantua's new Imperial allies. The previous year, the Ferrarese ambassador had also thought a question of accommodation worthy of comment: in a letter to the duke of Ferrara he described how the papal military commander Count Guido Rangoni, who had been lodging with Gregorio Casali, was invited by Clement to move instead to an 'honourable room' in the papal palace.²⁷ Rangoni was the only high-ranking officer of the League of Cognac to have escaped imprisonment or death after the League's defeat at Naples in August 1528,²⁸ and the report of the offer suggests Clement's continuing confidence in his commander, something that might well have been under question in the circumstances. By remarking on hospitality, diplomats could drop subtle hints about political developments without committing themselves too explicitly, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusion.

Arrangements around hospitality and sociability at the papal court could also make statements about the status of a particular prince vis-à-vis the Church. In February 1527, Sir John Russell, on a special embassy to Rome with a gift of 30,000 crowns from Henry VIII for the Pope, was offered a room at the papal palace, from where he wrote: 'I am mervelously well intreated, and al at the Popes cost, and gentilmen sent to kepe me companny dayly.'²⁹ On this occasion, the arrangements for hospitality clearly show the ambassador's role as the personification of his prince: Russell's lodgings were a form of thanks to Henry. It is clear that contemporaries thought decisions about who stayed where at court to be of considerable significance. In June 1529, when Cardinal Giovanni Salviati thought he was going to lose out on some prime lodgings for the peace negotiations at Cambrai,

²⁵ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 878, cc. 48v-49r.

²⁶ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 878, c. 71v, 18 February 1529.

²⁷ ASMo, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32, c. 214i/25, 21 September 1528.

²⁸ Maurizio Arfaioli, *The Black Bands of Giovanni: Infantry and Diplomacy during the Italian Wars (1526-1528)* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2005), p. 164.

²⁹ *L&P* IV 2876; *St P* VI 564. The sum of money is given in *L&P* IV 2870.

he dashed off a letter to Montmorency begging him to intercede.³⁰ However, the prelude to Russell's stay at the palace is interesting. Initially, he had declined an invitation from the Datary, Gianmatteo Giberti, to lodge there:

Bicause that others that came of like messaigne from other Princes werre not loged there, and that the same shuld cause a gealousi to be had amongst them, for that I shuld be better intreated than they. Whereunto he answered, that the Popes Holines was more bounde to Your Highnes more than to anny other Prince, and that Your Highnes had doon more for Hym than all the Princes Christien. Al this notwithstanding I went to Sir Gregory de Casales for that night.³¹

Brigden and Woolfson suggest that the purported jealousy was an excuse and that Russell's decision to decline papal hospitality on the first night probably related to his desire for a private discussion with Casali about the political situation.³² That idea is given credibility by the fact that a year later Gardiner and Fox likewise spent their first day at the papal court in 'secret', not attending the pope immediately precisely in order 'to comen at length with Maister Gregory of our charge'.³³ They explained their absence by:

Using... for our excuse, want of apparel, which was true and evident, forasmuch as journeying by post we were compelled to leave all our apparel behind us at Calais.³⁴

However, the fact that Russell felt the need to cite concerns about jealousy in order to refuse hospitality politely and that Gardiner and Fox used the pretext of obtaining suitable clothing in order to spend a day away from court underline the delicacy of the etiquette involved.

In this regard, the rhetoric employed by the embassy herald Thomas Wall in describing one such case of offering and refusing hospitality is also notable. In Bologna for the coronation of the Emperor Charles V in 1529, the English ambassador Sir Nicholas Carew hosted a grand diplomatic dinner at the Casali palazzo. Wall recorded that it was a 'sumptuous supper', but went on to remark that 'many lordes and gentilmen of the emperours... for great busines could not come'.³⁵ Was this the whole story? We can infer from Wall's account that the invitation had been issued and to many people. He also tells us that the Emperor's men turned

³⁰ Molini II 212.

³¹ *L&P* IV 2876; *St P* VI 563.

³² Brigden and Woolfson, 'Thomas Wyatt', p. 477.

³³ *L&P* IV 4118; *St P* VII 63.

³⁴ *L&P* IV 4119; Pocock I 90.

³⁵ Wall, p.65.

down the invitation with a reasonably courteous excuse. Whether that excuse genuinely emanated from the Imperial entourage, or was a polite invention of Wall's we do not know. Quite possibly no-one had really believed they would accept the invitation at all, such were the political tensions over Henry VIII's divorce (in the event, the supper was attended only by the representatives of England's allies). Yet whichever it was, the fact that such a formula was required emphasises the sensitivities that surrounded diplomatic hospitality. These methods were not restricted to the world of diplomacy, but were part of a broader culture. The evidence presented here complements the findings of Jennifer DeSilva, who argues that when cardinals wished to avoid engagement in rituals they regarded as politically undesirable they would cite illness or simply not be at home when they should be.³⁶ They would not, however, explicitly refuse to participate. Offering, accepting and turning down hospitality were all matters subject to complex and codified rituals of courtesy, central to which was the maintenance of honour.

AT LEAST, that is the picture conveyed in the diplomatic correspondence. There was, however, another side to the ambassador's social life: its role in the acquisition of intelligence. Evidence for this is rather harder to find in letters. It does crop up: for example, the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini reported in one letter some military details passed on to him by Gregorio Casali which had originated with some soldiers lodged in Casali's house.³⁷ We also have, of course, Hawkins' reference to the importance of inviting and being invited as means of gathering information. However, such unequivocal descriptions are few and far between: when ambassadors write with news it is – unfortunately for this study – rarely accompanied with much detail about the circumstances in which it was obtained. In contrast, the authors of the treatises on diplomacy were rather more explicit about the advantages to be obtained by maintaining a 'liberal port'. On this point perhaps the most 'strictly utilitarian', to borrow Behrens' description of him, was Étienne Dolet.³⁸ For Dolet,

³⁶ Jennifer Mara DeSilva, 'Senators or courtiers: negotiating models for the College of Cardinals under Julius II and Leo X', forthcoming in *Renaissance Studies* (2008). The question of hospitality was dealt with at greater length in DeSilva's paper to the Renaissance Society of America annual meeting, 2007: 'The visitation: papal ritual and hierarchy on the streets of Rome'.

³⁷ Contarini, f. 283r.

³⁸ Behrens, 'Treatises', p. 625. However, see the discussion below, pp. 137-38 on the problems with extending Behrens' broad analysis of Dolet's treatise as 'utilitarian' to his discussion of the household.

there was a very specific reason to keep a liberal house: ‘liberality,’ he wrote, ‘wins over even men of the greatest integrity’.³⁹ He continued:

An ambassador, moreover, should not practise his liberality solely upon spies and detectors of other men’s plans, but should bestow it upon all alike so far as his wealth will permit, for there is nothing which so readily wins general favour. Now by liberality I mean magnificence and splendour in his manner of living, and an abundance of food sufficient for the entertainment of many persons at the ambassador’s table. By this practice of a lavish and splendid manner of living we place under obligation to ourselves both men of ample and men of slender means.⁴⁰

These attitudes provide further reasons why a family like the Casali, with substantial houses in both Bologna and Rome, and clearly the wherewithal to entertain, might seem an attractive proposition as providers of ‘diplomatic services’ to the English crown. The practical advantages of such a strategy are made even more explicit in Niccolò Machiavelli’s advice to Raffaello Girolami on his appointment as ambassador to the Emperor. Pre-empting Hawkins’ comment on the importance of ‘inviting and being invited’ by some ten years, Machiavelli argued that ‘the best means for getting information is to give it’, advising:

Because courts always include different kinds of busybodies, alert to find out what is going on, you will profit by making all of them your friends, so that from each one you can learn something. The friendship of such men can be gained by pleasing them with banquets and entertainments; I have seen entertainments given in the houses of very serious men, who thus offer such fellows a reason for visiting them, so that they can talk with them, because what one of them doesn’t know another does, and much of the time they all together know everything.⁴¹

These passages outline the key instrumental functions of sociability in the ambassador’s house: in general, to place guests under an obligation to reciprocate in some way, and, more specifically, as a means of obtaining information. We should be aware, however, that in practice the process might work both ways: while an ambassador could spy on his guests, his guests might equally spy on their host.

Like Machiavelli’s letter, Dolet’s treatise is notable for its matter-of-fact approach to the ambassador’s sociability; other treatises (of both earlier and later

³⁹ Dolet, p. 86. Although Reeves uses the word ‘liberality’, Dolet’s original referred to ‘munificentia’, rather than ‘liberalitas’, the term which he used elsewhere in the text: Étienne Dolet, *De Officio Legati* (Lyons, 1541). Behrens gives the alternative translation ‘bribery will suborn even the most incorruptible’; however as we will see in Chapter Four the use of the word ‘bribery’ in this period is problematic. ‘Treatises’, p. 626.

⁴⁰ Dolet, pp. 86-87. In this paragraph Dolet refers to ‘liberalitas’.

⁴¹ Machiavelli, ‘Advice’, p. 117.

dates) paint a more idealised picture. Ermolao Barbaro, a member of a Venetian family long engaged in diplomatic service, concludes his 'De Officio Legati' with the wish that the ambassador's enthusiasm for the arts should inspire the performance of entertainments, painting, writing and singing in his household, not to mention the playing of draughts and ball games.⁴² Yet even Ottaviano Maggi's 'perfect ambassador', in general a paragon of the virtues, is aware of the practical benefits of liberality, which, he says, will put men 'under an obligation for ever'. He recommends, once again, that the ambassador should 'extend his liberality at a banquet in his palace'.⁴³ Taken together with the limited evidence of contemporary correspondence, these treatises offer evidence for the existence of a relatively pragmatic approach to liberality in the early to mid- sixteenth century. Does this approach mark a change in attitudes to match developments in the diplomatic system? An obvious comparison is with Giovanni Pontano's books of the social virtues, a collection of treatises on liberality, beneficence, magnificence, conviviality and splendour prepared for publication in 1498 but probably begun much earlier, in the 1460s or 1470s, before the consolidation of resident diplomacy.⁴⁴ His treatises deal with the proper use of money; their audience was, Welch suggests, the new humanist-influenced administrators who staffed the Neapolitan royal service of which Pontano became first secretary.⁴⁵ In a recent article on these treatises Amedeo Quondam has argued that for Pontano liberality has an end in itself, just as in the saying virtue is its own reward.⁴⁶ However, although that is the dominant sentiment of the treatises, even Pontano concedes that while the splendour and conviviality of which he treats are honourable and praiseworthy in themselves, it is also a matter of

⁴² 'Optandum est, atque adeo summopere quarendum, ut alicuius omnes artis studio, voluptate ducantur, vel pigendi, vel scribendi vel canendi, calculis etiam ludendi [et pila].' Barbaro, 'De Officio Legati', p. 167.

⁴³ 'Quapropter summa illa animorum conciliatrix liberalitas, singularis beneficentia in legato potissimum requiritur. Hac enim una divina virtute omnium animos ad benevolentiam alliciet; complures autem sibi in perpetuum devinciet. Hinc facile poterit certo omnia scire, quae agentur; mirificus enim concursus est futurus honestissimorum hominum ad legati domum, si ipsius latius in aula patuerit.' Ottaviano Maggi, *De Legato Libri Duo* (Venice, 1566), p. 65r.

⁴⁴ Pontano, *Virtù Sociali*. Evelyn Welch, 'Public magnificence and private display: Giovanni Pontano's *De Splendore* (1498) and the domestic arts', *Journal of Design History* 15 (2002), 211-227 includes an English translation of the treatise on splendour. On the dating of the treatises, see Kidwell, *Pontano*, p. 268. They are therefore closer in date to Barbaro's 'De Officio Legati' than to Dolet's work.

⁴⁵ Welch, 'Pontano's *De Splendore*', p. 218.

⁴⁶ Amedeo Quondam, 'Pontano e le moderne virtù del dispendio onorato', *Quaderni Storici* 115 (2004), 11-44, p. 14. The reference is to Pontano, 'De liberalitate', *Virtù Sociali*, pp. 72-73 'Namque gratuitum esse illum volumus, nullumque inde precium praeter rectam beneficiendi conscientiam expectari. Dare enim, ut post huberius accipias, an est aliud quam fenerare?'

prudence to win the affections of both fellow citizens and foreigners with these merits.⁴⁷ Given his involvement in political and diplomatic life, he presumably had some awareness of *realpolitik*. Nonetheless, on an initial reading there seems to be some distance between Pontano's concession to prudence and the hard-headed acceptance of diplomatic practicalities by Dolet and Machiavelli twenty or thirty years later; to analyse those changes in more detail, however, must wait for a more suitable occasion. For now, we can conclude that diplomatic hospitality developed within a broader cultural framework, in which an ambassador's display of 'social virtue' was a means by which to honour his prince. That said, the provision of hospitality also enabled the more mundane elements of diplomatic work to be carried out, not least information-gathering.

2. Forms of diplomatic hospitality

WE have already established that diplomatic hospitality was expected to be 'liberal'. However, other social virtues were expected from diplomats too. This section of the chapter will consider one of them, splendour, in relation to diplomatic entertaining. It will then turn to the question of formality, asking to what extent diplomatic hospitality was subject to firm structural arrangements, what was the balance between formal and informal entertaining, and whether it is possible to distinguish between the two.

a. Splendour

CONTEMPORARY writers on diplomacy were clear that the ambassador's lifestyle should be suitably splendid. James Lindow, citing Pontano, gives a useful introduction to the concept of splendour in the Renaissance, arguing that although the concepts of 'magnificence' and 'splendour' were both related to grand expenditure, 'magnificence became intrinsically connected to the art of building, while splendour was interpreted as a desirable quality governing appropriate domestic expenditure

⁴⁷ 'Nam, etsi splendor ipse e haec, de qua disserimus, convivialitas per se honesta et laudabilis est ac gratuita esse debet, tamen ex hac etiam laude comparare sibi benivolentiam plurimorum tum civium, tum externorum, est non solum comitatis, verum etiam prudentiae.' Pontano, 'De conviventia', *Virtù Sociali*, pp. 254-55.

and display'.⁴⁸ Bearing this in mind, let us return to Étienne Dolet's comments on the need to provide adequately for the ambassador's expenses, which we touched on briefly in Chapter Two. Dolet said that princes and republics:

Should appropriate money for an ambassador in proportion to the magnificence of the court at which he holds the ambassadorship, so that he may not be charged with disrespect for majesty because of the lack of appropriate funds, if his manner of living is more humble or economical than it should be.⁴⁹

That attitude is reflected in a comment from Stephen Gardiner to Henry VIII about Gregorio Casali:

I assure your Highnes he lyveth here sumptuously and chargeably, to your Highnes honnour, and, in this gret skasete, must nedes be dryven to extremite, oonles your Highnes be gracious lord unto him in that behaulf.⁵⁰

Pontano, in his treatise on magnificence, emphasised that while magnificent hospitality was praiseworthy in 'private men', it was especially important for princes receiving guests; moreover, in such cases liberality alone would not suffice: splendour and magnificence were required.⁵¹ By implication, one may conclude, these virtues were expected too in the prince's ambassador. As the personification of his prince at a foreign court, the ambassador needed not only to match the standards of the court to which he had been sent, but also to ensure that his hospitality was 'princely'.

There is limited evidence for precisely what constituted a splendid ambassadorial lifestyle, but Cinzia Sicca, in an article on the London house of the Bardi and Cavalcanti company, gives an account of some interest.⁵² Although Pierfrancesco Bardi and Giovanni Cavalcanti were not ambassadors, they acted as informal diplomatic representatives for the Medici in London from the first years of

⁴⁸ James Lindow, 'Splendour', in Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2006), pp. 306-07.

⁴⁹ Dolet, p. 84.

⁵⁰ *L&P* IV 5476; Stephen Gardiner, *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. James Arthur Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 15. 21 April 1529.

⁵¹ 'In accipiendis etiam hospitibus, cum hospitalitas ipsa iure data sit laudi magnumque civitatis ornamentum afferat, non solum videndum id est, ut liberales in eos simus, verum etiam ut magnifici; quae res, si in privatis hominibus iure plurimum commendatur, quanto magis in principibus ac regibus debet splendescere? cum in iis satis non sit si hospitalitas ipsa liberalis fuerit, nisi sit etiam splendens atque magnifica.' Pontano, *Virtù sociali*, p. 210.

⁵² See also Maria Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds: Maney, 2007), which includes a short section on ambassadors (pp. 228-30) with particular reference to their apparel, confirming the expectation of splendour discussed here.

Henry VIII's reign and, importantly for the present study, hosted Gregorio Casali and Gabriello Cexano, secretary to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, during their 1523 stay in London. An inventory of the Bardi and Cavalcanti house, taken while Casali and Cexano were resident, illustrates its lavish furnishings and these, Sicca suggests, reflect the property's diplomatic role.⁵³ It was extensively decorated with tapestries and paintings, and its well-equipped kitchen indicates that it would have been suitable for entertaining.⁵⁴

While it would be wrong to extrapolate indiscriminately from the Bardi and Cavalcanti case in constructing a picture of expectations at the papal court, it is notable that among the objects to be found in their London house were 'sizeable quantities of silverware'.⁵⁵ The importance of silverware for entertaining is one aspect of diplomatic splendour borne out by significant documentation.⁵⁶ Nicholas Hawkins' comment on the importance of inviting and being invited, quoted at the start of this chapter, comes in the context of a letter to Thomas Cromwell on the apparently insignificant issue of his table service. At the time, late 1532, Hawkins was at the meeting of Clement VII and Charles V in Bologna, and one might suppose that he would have had other matters on his mind. Nonetheless, he complained:

Both Master Benet, and the Imbassadors bothe with thEmperour and with the Pope, and all other Imbassadors as wel smal as great, have ther meate vessel for ther tabul all of silver...

Hawkins, however, did not. He continued:

Now thei, whiche at home be daili servid in silver, divine yow, how thei be content, and what thei thinke both on the King and me, to be servid with me in tin or peuter, and that nocht as ye cnow in Itali...⁵⁷

He therefore proposed to take some of the plate he had on loan from the king, and have it melted down and remade into a more appropriate form at his own expense, if Cromwell 'thocht it convenient' to so persuade Henry. Cromwell's reply is not, to my knowledge, extant, but the letter illustrates very clearly the importance of this particular type of domestic object in establishing social status: Hawkins' guests expect him to serve them on silver tableware, and if he fails to do so they will also

⁵³ Sicca, 'Consumption and trade of art', p. 186. For a transcript of the inventory see pp. 188-201.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 182.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 182.

⁵⁶ For a general discussion of banqueting plate in this period see Valerie Taylor, 'Banquet plate and Renaissance culture: a day in the life', *Renaissance Studies* 19 (2005), 621-33.

⁵⁷ *L&P* v 1661; *St P* vii 406.

think badly of the king. The 1523 Venetian *relazione* similarly emphasises the presence of silverware on the ambassador's table. The ambassadors report that on one occasion they were joined for a grand dinner by many lords, gentlemen and prelates. At dinner there were great plates of the most lavish food. A huge *credenziera* – a sideboard – loaded with silverware took up the whole width of one wall, and reached the beams of the ceiling. The silverware stayed on the *credenziera* at all times, with the exception of the pieces which were in use, a reflection of the *credenza*'s dual-purpose nature as both serving table and means of display, which has recently been the subject of discussion by Allen Grieco and Valerie Taylor.⁵⁸ Both Hawkins and the Venetians were engaged in particularly ceremonial embassies – the latter had been sent to pay homage to the new Pope Adrian VI – and such sumptuousness may not have been an everyday business, but even allowing for a certain degree of exaggeration, the descriptions demonstrate the importance attached to silverware. Furthermore, when in 1528 Cardinal Wolsey asked Gregorio Casali to find out, by means of some conversation with Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci's intimates, what gift would suit the cardinal best, suggesting hangings, gold plate, or horses, Casali replied that *silver* plate should be sent: indicating perhaps that this was more generally the fashion in Rome.⁵⁹

It is interesting to note that tableware is one aspect of domestic splendour picked out by Giovanni Pontano in his treatise on that social virtue, with a typical classical reference to a Roman emperor:

Alexander Severus was liberal and magnificent in many things; but he did not escape censure because he did not use gold during his banquets and his goblets, however polished, were mediocre.⁶⁰

Similarly in Pontano's treatise on conviviality he describes how the household's gold and silver should be displayed on sideboards and balustrades, so that 'as Horace says,

⁵⁸ 'Giunti in corte, molti di quei signori e gentiluomini e prelati furono tenuti a desinare. Il quale fu bellissimo e onorato molto; con gran copia di lautissime vivande e con una grandissima credenziera di argenti, che teneva di larghezza tutta la testa d'una gran sala, e di altezza insino alle travi, tutta carica di argenti grossi che vi stavano di continuo, oltre quelli che si adoperavano: e qualche pezzo ne fu tolto ad imprestito, come tonde e piatti; ma pochissimo numero, perchè cadauno degli oratori ne aveva la parte sua.' *Relazioni* ser. 2, III 102. Taylor, 'Banquet plate', p. 623. Allen Grieco, unpublished conference paper, 'Dining rituals, the *credenza* and the birth of the dining room', *A Casa: People, Spaces and Objects in the Renaissance Interior*, symposium, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 7-8 May 2004.

⁵⁹ Wolsey's letter, dated 5 October 1528, is in *L&P* IV 4813; *St P* VII 100. For Casali's reply of 21 November 1528: 'gratitudinis signu[m]... argentea suppellex' see *L&P* IV 4959; BL, Cotton MSS, Vitellius B x 142.

⁶⁰ Translation in Welch, 'Pontano's *De splendore*' p. 223; see also pp. 228/230 and pp. 229/231 of *Virtù Sociali* for the Latin and Italian. Alexander Severus was Roman emperor 222-235 AD.

the house itself should smile'.⁶¹ As Evelyn Welch comments in relation to *De Splendore*, 'it should not be read as... a rigidly prescriptive text'; however, this is a further example of the correlation she finds between some of Pontano's examples and contemporary preoccupations.⁶²

In contrast to this detail about silverware, descriptions of the food eaten by ambassadors are rare, although as we will see in Chapter Four there is more evidence for the type of food given as presents. Dolet emphasised that ambassadors should provide an 'abundance of food', and the contemporary description of a six-course dinner given on 28 May 1530 by Count Federico Quaglia for Ercole d'Este duke of Chartres, the French ambassador and other French gentlemen – a total of 20 guests – suggests that this was certainly the expectation in noble houses and when ambassadors were the recipients of hospitality.⁶³ Ironically, the available sources afford more evidence for the music played at diplomatic dinners than for the food. We have already seen, for example, that at Cardinal Cesarino's dinner 'various types' of music were played and Clement VII enjoyed motets while dining in his garden.⁶⁴ We also have a good description of the entertainment at Sir Nicholas Carew's diplomatic dinner in Bologna:

And before the sayd supper / during the same / and espescially after supper there was playeng on diuers Instrument[es] as sacbut[es] Cornet[es] vialles croked pipes / virginales / with also men and children sigyng / And thus after supper they daunced. with other passe tymes / as with mores dauncers and men that leped souuerainly.⁶⁵

The sources demonstrate that while the artistically-inspired ambassador described in Ermolao Barbaro's treatise might be a rather idealised figure, music was nonetheless

⁶¹ 'Explicandus tunc est domesticus apparatus, onerandi auro atque argento abaci et plutei, coenationes exornandae, sternenda pavimenta et ita quidem omnia disponenda, ut, quod ait Horatius, domus ipsa rideat.' Pontano, *Virtù Sociali*, pp. 259-60.

⁶² Welch, 'Pontano's *De splendore*', p. 220.

⁶³ Dolet, pp. 86-87. Cristoforo da Messisbugo, *Banchetti Composizioni di Vivande e Apparecchio Generale* ed. Fernando Bandini (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1992), pp. 71-72. The meal included a starter, three fish courses, and a course of fruit and vegetables; it concluded with sugary confections. Erasmus' banquet colloquies provide further detail of contemporary dinner-party planning: the theory of how to organise one's feast is most evident in 'A feast of many courses', first published in 1527. Desiderius Erasmus, 'A feast of many courses', trans. Craig R. Thompson in *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974-), XL 802-08. For details of Roman cuisine mid-century, drawing on the evidence of kitchen account-books, see the article on the Salviati family by Pierre Hurtubise: 'La "table" d'un cardinal de la Renaissance. Aspects de la cuisine et de l'hospitalité à Rome au milieu du XVIe siècle', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome: Moyen âge-temps modernes* 92 (1980), 249-82.

⁶⁴ On Clement, see below, p. 129.

⁶⁵ Wall, p. 65.

a regular feature of diplomatic hospitality in this period.⁶⁶ Together with silverware, lavish food and other forms of entertainment, it would reflect well on the honour of the diplomat's master.

b. Formality and informality

ALTHOUGH such splendour was obviously an important aspect of diplomatic life, it was not necessarily on show every day or on a large scale. When Sir Francis Bryan described to Henry VIII his good relations with the cardinal of Mantua, Ercole Gonzaga, he wrote:

Sir, I insure Your Grace Ye have a grett frende of the Cardynall of Mantua; he ys yours, body and sowle. Twyse or thryse a weke he cummys to my loggyng to me, to supper, lyke a good felaw, without any seremony, and lykewyse hath me with hym to hys loggyng.⁶⁷

The words 'without any ceremony' suggest a level of informality and also, perhaps, the potential for confidential discussion. However, we should be wary of concluding that such suppers were not elaborate or splendid: Lucinda Byatt has noted the preference in normative texts on cardinals' conduct for small dinner parties, suggesting that these more intimate occasions were considered no less appropriate than grand banqueting.⁶⁸ Further evidence would be needed to establish the precise nature of such entertaining.

The example of Sir Francis and the cardinal also raises the interesting problem of distinguishing between diplomats' public and private activities. Sir Francis was staying at the Casali house and, as we saw in Chapter Two, the Casali had a long-standing relationship with the Gonzaga family.⁶⁹ This reciprocal 'dining without ceremony' could consequently operate simultaneously on a number of different levels: as a diplomatic encounter between representatives of England and Mantua, as an expression of personal friendship between two men, and as a means of consolidating the broader Casali family and social networks. As Byatt has commented in relation to cardinals, it is hard to identify a 'strict division' between

⁶⁶ Barbaro, 'De Officio Legati', p. 167.

⁶⁷ *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 150.

⁶⁸ Byatt, 'Concept of hospitality', p. 315.

⁶⁹ See above, Chapter Two, pp. 75, 86-87.

public and private entertainment.⁷⁰ It is clear that this was true in the sphere of diplomacy too. An excellent example of the difficulties of drawing a line between what was 'public' and what 'private' in diplomatic activities is to be found in the case of the wedding of one of Gregorio Casali's sisters, in November 1525, described by the Mantuan ambassador Francesco Gonzaga:

Invited to the wedding of a sister of the Protonotary and Cavalier Casale, *Madama Illustrissima* [Isabella d'Este Gonzaga] went yesterday to dinner at the house of Messer Gio. Antonio da Viterbo, father of the young woman's husband. She was handed over: it was a grand dinner, in that there were enough people, and a quite lavish meal and copious dishes: but the house not being very large, one ate in different places; there were five big tables, at one of which there were only the women without a single man: this is the Roman style; at another were the duke of Sessa, the Portuguese ambassador, the Ferrarese ambassador, the ambassador of Urbino with prelates and other gentlemen. I was also there: the others were full of other gentlemen; there was a bit of dancing before dinner and afterwards, with tambourines, flutes and harp, at ballets according to the custom there.⁷¹

It is striking that even at this family event we see the Roman diplomatic corps gathered around a single table. Such occasions must have provided an important opportunity for informal discussion of diplomatic matters and the building of social networks from which an ambassador might glean useful information.

There were, however, more structured occasions on which ambassadors would meet in the domestic context. For example, on the arrival of a new ambassador at Rome, it was customary for other diplomats resident in the city to visit him at his house. So, when Francis Bryan and his fellow ambassador Pietro Vanni arrived to stay at the Casali palazzo in Rome in January 1529, among their early callers was Gasparo Contarini, who duly reported to the Venetian Senate that he had been to see them and done the necessary formalities, which in turn had been properly

⁷⁰ Byatt, 'Concept of hospitality', p. 316. Byatt cites Ottaviano Rabasco's attempt to differentiate between a cardinal's public and private expenditure, but his treatise is dated 1615 and the effect of church reform on attitudes should be borne in mind, a point which is rather glossed over in the article.

⁷¹ 'Madama Ill^{ma} convitata ad una noza d'una sorella del Proth^{rio} et Cavagliero Casale andò heri sera a cena a casa de M. Gio. Antonio da Viterbo patre del marito de la giovine. La quale fu traduta: il convito fu grande, che vi era gente assai, et la cena assai lauta, et copiosa de vivande: ma non essendo la casa molto grande, si manzò in diversi lochi, che vi erano cinque tavole grande a una delle quali erano le done sole senza alcun homo, che così è il stile de Roma: ad un'altra era il s^{or} Duca di Sessa, l'ambassatore de Portugallo, l'ambassatore di Ferrara, quel d'Urbino con prelati, et altri gentilhomini. Io ancor vi fui: l'altre piene de altri gentilhomini; si danzò un poco inanti cena et doppoi, con tamburini, flauti, et arpa a baletti secondo il costume di qua.' Letter of 27 November 1525. Luzio, 'Isabella d'Este e il sacco di Roma', p. 365.

reciprocated.⁷² However, the protocol surrounding such visits was complex. Officially, ambassadors were barred from receiving any visitors before they themselves had been received by the Pope, although as we saw in Chapter One there was a certain acceptance that such rules might be bent.⁷³ One of the means by which the rules could be circumvented was for visitors to call on the ambassadors' host, who was not covered by the injunction: such subterfuge was made plausible by the blurred line between diplomatic and personal visits.

Another example of formal hospitality can be found in the official lunch to which ambassadors were treated following their first appearance at Consistory. The papal master-of-ceremonies, Paride Grassi, set out in his handbook on ambassadors the correct procedure for their departure to lunch after a formal audience at Consistory, specifying the order of procession and the role of the cardinal-protector, where one existed, in accompanying them.⁷⁴ Even on what might be regarded as an official occasion, however, it can be hard to distinguish between formal and informal hospitality. An instance cited by Contarini, relating to the feast day of Saints Cosmo and Damian, demonstrates the ambiguities that existed in practice:

After I had heard mass with the Pope's Holiness, and was invited with the other ambassadors and cardinals to lunch with His Holiness, I thought to stay a while after lunch to talk with him in order to find out for certain the news...⁷⁵

An apparently 'formal' occasion like a papal mass and the official lunch which followed could offer on its fringes less formal opportunities for information-gathering. Like the distinction between 'public' and 'private', an attempt to draw a sharp line between formal and informal or official and unofficial in diplomatic hospitality tends to break down rather quickly.

⁷² 'Gionseno laltro giorno li do Oratori di Anglia, cioe il R^{do} D. Pietro Vanes, et maestro Briante gentilhomio della Camera del Re, li qual son alloggiati in la casa del Cavallier Casal. Io fui heri ad visitarli et feci cum loro quel officio che si conviene, da li quali mi fu ben corrisposte.' Contarini, f. 158v, 18 January 1529.

⁷³ See above, Chapter One, pp. 48-49.

⁷⁴ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 69v-70v.

⁷⁵ 'Doppo che hebbi udito la messa cum la Sant. del Pont. et cum li altri Oratori et Cardinali fui invitato a pranso cum Sua Sant., mi parse doppo pranso restar un pocco ad ragionar cum lei per intender qualcosa da novo cum certeza...' Contarini, f. 313v.

3. The housing arrangements of the diplomatic corps

THE limits of the terminology ‘public’ and ‘private’ in diplomatic practice are particularly clear when the housing arrangements of the diplomatic corps are considered. During the years of this case-study, Gregorio Casali hosted a series of English special ambassadors at his family houses in Rome and Bologna, and also at his lodgings in Orvieto during the papacy’s exile there.⁷⁶ It is hard to underestimate how useful the Casali property must have been to an English monarchy trying to make a good impression at the papal court. Even cardinals struggled to find high-quality accommodation in Rome, and to have a house in Bologna too was undoubtedly a bonus. As Gigliola Fragnito has pointed out:

Rome in the Cinquecento offered a scant supply of comfortable – let alone decorous – lodgings and could not possibly respond adequately to the growing demand caused by the expansion of the College of Cardinals.⁷⁷

Those cardinals in the best position to find suitable accommodation, she suggests, were either Roman themselves, or from the ‘reigning houses of Italy’, although as D. S. Chambers notes even Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga was unhappy about his situation renting a part of the Orsini property at Monte Giordano.⁷⁸ Ambassadors – who, as we will see, had relatively smaller households than cardinals but were nonetheless expected to project an honourable image for their prince – arguably had further difficulties.

The arrangements for diplomats’ accommodation at Rome seem to have been rather ad hoc, and it is often difficult to establish where particular individuals lived;

⁷⁶ John Russell stayed briefly with Casali in February 1527: see above, p. 115. Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox stayed with him at Orvieto: they wrote to Wolsey that Gregorio had left them ‘his own lodging furnished with beds, to his great incommmodity and our necessary comfort’. *L&P* IV 4119; Pocock I 90. Bryan and Vanni stayed at the Casali house in Rome: see Contarini, f. 158v. While in Bologna for the Emperor’s coronation, the senior of the two English ambassadors to the Emperor, Sir Nicholas Carew, stayed at the Casali palazzo, while his junior, Richard Sampson, lodged ‘a good way distaunt’. Wall, p. 60. In 1532, a representative of the Hungarian king John Zápolya lodged in their Roman house: this person had been directed to make contact with Paolo Casali, but on finding that Paolo had been murdered he was directed by Giambattista Casali to Gregorio in Rome. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 881, f. 463r, letter of Fabrizio Pellegrino, 17 February 1532. Casali’s fellow resident ambassador in Rome, William Benet, does not, however, appear to have stayed at the Casali house, lodging instead in the house of one ‘Bianchet’. *St P* VII 416, cited in MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 51, n. 32; MacCulloch says Bianchetti was Bolognese.

⁷⁷ Gigliola Fragnito, ‘Cardinals’ courts in sixteenth-century Rome’, *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993), 26–56 (p. 39). Fragnito points out that this is in contrast to traditional pictures of Rome, which suggest accommodation was relatively easily obtained.

⁷⁸ D. S. Chambers, ‘The enigmatic eminence of Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga’, *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002), 330–54 (pp. 336 and 338).

however, some details about the lodgings of Casali and his colleagues can be gleaned from the available sources. It seems that it was relatively rare for a resident ambassador in these years to live in his own family house in Rome rather than in rented property, and Casali's rather privileged position in this regard probably contributed to the good impression he made on his colleagues and to his own status at court. As we have seen, the Casali house was in the district of Regola. Thanks to a letter regarding a courier's confusion, we know that in 1529 both the Spanish and French ambassadors were lodged in the nearby area of San Lorenzo in Damaso: the Spanish ambassador in the rather grand Palazzo San Giorgio (that is, the Cancelleria, going by the title of its late owner Cardinal Riario) and his French counterpart in what Casali described as 'a little house of Frenchmen'.⁷⁹ The ambassadors of Portugal, Venice and Siena are recorded in the 1517 census, all living in the district of Campo Marzio. None of them owned the property in which he lived, and the short-term nature of such housing arrangements is evident in the fact that by the time of the 1526 census the Portuguese ambassador was living in the Ripa district.⁸⁰ The arrangements for English representatives were similarly ad hoc, although during the fifteenth century they had often used the English Hospital in Regola as their residence.⁸¹ In 1505 Cardinal Adriano Castellesi gifted his new palace in piazza Scossacavalli (on the Borgo) to Henry VII for the use of English representatives in Rome.⁸² Christopher Bainbridge, in Rome first as ambassador and subsequently as cardinal, stayed first in this 'English Palace', and after 1511 probably in the palazzo

⁷⁹ ASF, Dieci di Balìa, Responsive, 139, letter of Gregorio Casali to Malatesta Baglione, 27 July 1529, f. 322v: 'Intervenue una disgratia al presente vostro messo, ma non pero di molta importantia costui adimando qui in casa mia ov'era lo alloggiamento dello Ambasciadore di Francia gli fu detto che stava a S. Lorenzo et è vero che sta presso S. Lorenzo in una casetta de galli, il buono huomo andatasone a S. Lorenzo a dimando dove stava l'Ambasciadore, et cosi fu mandato su nel palazzo di S. Giorgio dove alberga l'Ambasciadore di Spagna.' The identification of Palazzo San Giorgio with the Cancelleria is confirmed by the reports in early 1529 that the Imperial ambassador Miguel Mai was staying in Cardinal Colonna's palazzo (see above, p. 114). Cardinal Pompeo Colonna held the titular church of San Lorenzo in Damaso at this time and consequently the Palazzo della Cancelleria, which was attached to it. Armando Schiavo, *Il Palazzo della Cancelleria* (Rome: Staderini, 1963), p. 53.

⁸⁰ In 1517, the Portuguese ambassador lived in Cardinal de' Grassi's house, the Venetian ambassador in messer Giovan Andrea Nardini's house, and the Sienese ambassador in a house belonging to Cardinal Cavaglione. Armellini, 'Censimento', pp. 70-72. *Descriptio Urbis*, p. 364. Two other ambassadors are listed by their titles in the later census: the Milanese ambassador lived in Ponte and his Florentine counterpart in the Borgo.

⁸¹ Cardinal Gasquet, *A History of the Venerable English College, Rome* (London: Longmans, 1920), p. 46. Behrens cites the example of John Shirwood, accredited as English orator to Rome in the 1470s, who was also a Treasurer of the Hospital. 'Origins', p. 645.

⁸² In 1504, Castellesi hosted the visiting English ambassadors Gilbert Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, Richard Bere and Robert Sherborn, but probably not at the new palace. The palace was gifted to Henry VII and his heirs on 7 March 1505. Paschini, *Tre Illustri Prelati*, pp. 63-64.

on the Via Papalis formerly occupied by Cardinal Caraffa.⁸³ The ‘English Palace’ was given to Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, later to become England’s cardinal-protector, during his legation to England in 1519.⁸⁴

As we saw in Chapter Two, the Casali house was ‘a large house with halls, chambers, a kitchen, dining rooms, cellars, a garden, a stable and other parts’.⁸⁵ It was apparently located in what is now Via Monserrato, but no longer survives, having been in large part demolished in the 1540s when Pope Paul III decided to improve the view from his new Palazzo Farnese.⁸⁶ The house must have been very near the English Hospital and indeed to the residences of the French and Spanish ambassadors in San Lorenzo. Although the description we have is limited, it suggests that the property would have provided ample accommodation for visitors. Its garden would have been a particularly desirable feature: al fresco dining and entertainment were rather fashionable in the summer months. Benvenuto Cellini describes the playing of motets in the Belvedere gardens while Clement VII dined there, while Contarini refers to two mornings during the summer months at Viterbo when on his arrival at court he found Clement in the gardens.⁸⁷ Chambers points out that when Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga complained about the quality of his rented accommodation he conceded that ‘at least there was a garden’.⁸⁸ The Venetian *relazione* of 1523, describing a special embassy to Rome, likewise refers to a garden. On that occasion, the four ambassadors stayed in a complex of apartments and houses around a single courtyard:

The palace was grand and honourable; and in one part of it Dandolo lodged; at the other end Giustiniani; downstairs, next to a most beautiful

⁸³ Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge*, pp. 112-20 gives more details of Bainbridge’s housing arrangements and household.

⁸⁴ W. Maziere Brady, *Anglo-Roman Papers* (London: Gardner, 1890), p. 29. The palace is now known as the Palazzo Giraud-Torlonia.

⁸⁵ ‘Unam domum magnam cum salis, cameris, quoquina, tinellis, cantinis, orto, stabulo et alijs suis membris positum in Urbe et regione Arenula.’ ACdM, I, no. 10, f. 6r.

⁸⁶ ‘Haveva ancora [Paolo III] disegnato di rizzare la strada di Corte Savella, acciò che quella finestra, che sta nel cantone di casa Farnese, potesse vedere la chiarica, et era un danno di XX mila ducati: andava in terra la casa de’Casalli in buonaparte, Torre o corte Savella, et lo spedale d’Inglesi.’ Letter of Nino Serini, in E. Solmi, ‘Gasparo Contarini alla Dieta di Ratisbona’, *Archivio Storico Veneto* 13 (1907), p. 24. Cited in Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Der Römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance*, 3 vols (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1973), II 107, 136.

⁸⁷ Benvenuto Cellini, *My Life*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Contarini, ff. 38v and 54v. On gardens as a setting for humanist conversation in Rome see also T. C. Price Zimmermann and Saul Levin, ‘Fabio Vigile’s *Poem of the Pheasant*: humanist conviviality in Renaissance Rome’, in Ramsey (ed.), *Rome in the Renaissance*, pp. 265-78 and on the ‘al fresco’ meal in Renaissance culture more broadly see Jeanneret, *Feast of Words*, pp. 22-27.

⁸⁸ Chambers, ‘Sigismondo Gonzaga’, p. 338.

garden, Pesaro; in an adjacent house, which one could reach without going downstairs, lodged Mocenigo; and in another adjacent to that Foscari: a single great and distinguished courtyard served all these houses.⁸⁹

Given the importance of entertaining, suitable facilities both outdoor and indoor were essential and it is interesting to note that the Casali house had more than one dining room.⁹⁰ The same *relazione* describes the use of multiple dining rooms during entertainment: when the four ambassadors were invited for dinner at Cardinal Cornelio's grand house on the Borgo, the diners were split between two rooms. A small group of seven, including the cardinal and the ambassadors, dined in a *salotto*, while the other twenty to twenty-five guests dined in a *sala* next to the garden.⁹¹ The reason for this division at dinner is not explained. It may be related to the fact that – as we saw above – classical sources and normative texts on cardinals' conduct which drew on them put the ideal number of dinner guests between three and nine,⁹² but on a practical level it would have allowed for more confidential discussion between the ambassadors and the cardinal away from potential spies. The practice of separate dining was not, however, unique to cardinals: at a banquet given in 1529 by Ercole d'Este, duke of Chartres, the duke's father (Alfonso d'Este, duke of Ferrara), wife (Renée of France) and aunt (Isabella d'Este Gonzaga) dined separately from the other hundred or so guests.⁹³ Heal has documented the development of semi-separate dining spaces in the English great houses of the fifteenth century, where the lord and his guests would dine in a chamber off the great hall, but there is insufficient evidence to draw a direct parallel between that process and practice in Italy.⁹⁴ Further research will be needed to arrive at firm conclusions on this question.

⁸⁹ 'Era il palazzo grande e onorevole; e in una parte di esso alloggiava il Dandolo; dall'altro capo il Giustiniani; abbasso, appresso a un bellissimo giardino il Pesaro; in una casa contigua, nella quale si andava senza scendere scale, alloggiava il Mocenigo; e in un'altra contigua a quella, il Foscari: a tutte le quali case serve una sola corte grande e onorifica.' *Relazioni*, ser. 2, III 94

⁹⁰ Christoph L. Frommel points to the existence of multiple dining rooms in the Palazzo della Cancelleria: a private one for the cardinal and two large ones for his household in his 'Abitare nei palazzetti romani del primo Cinquecento', in A. Scotti Tosini (ed.), *Aspetti dell'abitare in Italia tra XV e XVI secolo. Distribuzione, funzioni, impianti* (Milan: Unicopli, 2001), pp. 23-38 (p. 24).

⁹¹ 'Le tavole erano preparate in un salotto; una con sette bellissime sedie di veluto ricamate e dorate tutte dentro; e in una sedia ch'era in mezzo, stava esso cardinale, e così gli oratori attorno; di fuori stavano li trincianti ed altri servitori; a capo del salotto vi era una bellissima credenziera di argenti. Gli altri mangiarono in una sala accanto al giardino, dove era pure un'altra credenziera di argenti; ve ne sono da venti a venticinque.' *Relazioni*, ser. 2, III 103.

⁹² Byatt, 'Concept of hospitality', p. 315.

⁹³ Messisbugo, *Banchetti*, p. 43.

⁹⁴ Heal, *Hospitality*, pp. 36-41.

The evidence for the use of particular domestic spaces by ambassadors is likewise rather sparse, but it is likely that their residences would have followed the general pattern of spatial organisation in the patrician and noble houses of the period, in which visitors would progress from the larger ‘public’ rooms towards chambers and studies, where access was more restricted. The references in the correspondence and in Wall’s account of Carew and Sampson’s mission are usually limited to the fact that ambassadors visited each others’ lodgings.⁹⁵ We do know, however, that Clement VII, in exile at Orvieto, met ambassadors in his privy bed-chamber or study, and that in Viterbo he likewise met them in his chamber.⁹⁶ Carew and Sampson, ambassadors to Charles V during his coronation celebrations in Bologna, met the Emperor in his privy chamber.⁹⁷ It seems likely that ambassadors would have tried as far as possible to mimic such princely conduct. The need for secrecy in certain diplomatic negotiations should also be borne in mind, and may have influenced the way the house was used. For example, when Giovanni Bernardino de’ Ferrari, the cardinal of Ravenna’s former secretary, was interrogated about his master’s corrupt dealings with the English ambassadors to Rome, he explained that:

He used to see monsignor Benet and the cavalier Casali going secretly into the cardinal of Ravenna’s house, by the back door, just the two of them.⁹⁸

Such comings and goings led him to presume that the cardinal of Ravenna was working for the king of England. In cases such as this, where ambassadors were clearly engaged in forbidden activities, secret or concealed areas of the house might have come into play. In Paolo Cortesi’s treatise on cardinals’ conduct, *De Cardinalatu*, a ‘secret door’ and ‘hiding places’ are explicitly recommended for the cardinal’s house.⁹⁹ Cortesi’s arguments for their use there – that they would allow the

⁹⁵ For example, Wall, p. 61, records simply that Carew and Sampson met at Sampson’s lodgings.

⁹⁶ ‘At our repair unto the pope’s holiness... there we found with him the cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor, and standing in another angle of the chamber the cardinal Ursinus, the cardinal Cesarinus, and the cardinal De Coesis. And as soon as we were entered his bed-chamber, his holiness withdrew himself into a little study, which his holiness useth for his sleeping chamber; and there caused stools to be brought.’ *L&P* IV 4120, Pocock I 105. ‘Me invido seco a pranso, et doppo pranso se ritoro con mi nella sua camera, dove solus cum solo fui per spacio de forsi due hore et meza.’ Contarini, f. 62v.

⁹⁷ Wall, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁸ ‘Vedeua andare monsignor Benetto et il cavaliere Casale per la porta diriecto in casa del cardinale de Ravenna secretamente lor due senza altri.’ ASR, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi 3; 2 II; 3 May 1535. For the background to these dealings see Chapter Four, pp. 162-66.

⁹⁹ ‘[The audience chamber] should have both a secret door and certain hiding places. The hidden entrance is connected to the loggia (*peristylum*) so that couriers and messengers can save time in their frequent comings and goings, while the concealed places provide the opportunity to examine visitors with care.’ Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D’Amico, ‘The Renaissance Cardinal’s Ideal Palace: A

observation of visitors without their knowledge and easy access for couriers and messengers – are certainly transferable to the ambassador's residence and, as we have seen, in several cases ambassadors did in fact rent properties from cardinals.¹⁰⁰

While the available evidence for the Casali house in Rome is rather limited, their Bologna home is better documented, and it was, in the words of one contemporary, 'uno palazo de Chaxali bellissimo'.¹⁰¹ As a diplomatic venue, the palazzo was particularly important during the visit of the papal court to Bologna for the coronation of Charles V, in 1529-30, when the chief English special ambassador to the Emperor, Sir Nicholas Carew, stayed there and used it as a base for entertaining.¹⁰² It is described in considerable detail in a room-by-room inventory of 1502, produced on the death of Francesco Casali senior, Gregorio's uncle and the head, at that time, of the Bologna household.¹⁰³ Although it is impossible to know the extent to which the furnishings of this house were changed over time, the inventory does give us some indication of the type of building that was available for diplomatic use, and of the domestic environment from which the Casali brothers came to take up their careers as ambassadors. During the fifteenth century, on their way up the social ladder, the Casali had bought up a block of houses in the centre of Bologna. These were near Piazza Maggiore and the cathedral, and the Piazza della Mercanzia, where the family bank was situated.¹⁰⁴ A reconstruction of the block by the nineteenth-century historian of Bologna Giuseppe Guidicini in Figure 2 shows the original Casali palazzo, probably bought before 1465, three houses bought in 1475 from the Pepoli, an old and important family in Bologna, and another house which Guidicini hypothesises is the house with an oratory bought by the Casali in 1503.¹⁰⁵ This reconstruction is not certain; however there is evidence that in 1497, Gregorio's

Chapter from Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu*, in Henry A. Millon (ed.), *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture 15th through 18th Centuries* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1980), pp. 45-123 (p. 83).

¹⁰⁰ See above, p. 128, note 80.

¹⁰¹ Dalla Tuata, *Istoria di Bologna*, II 618. This passage of the chronicle also suggests that the house may have suffered some damage during the battles of 1511 between the Bentivogli and papal factions; however by the 1520s it was clearly in an suitable state for the reception of diplomatic guests. The palazzo was demolished in the second half of the nineteenth century. For further details see the entry in Cuppini, *Palazzi Senatorii*, p. 293.

¹⁰² Wall, p. 60.

¹⁰³ ACdM, I, no. 8, 31 August 1502.

¹⁰⁴ On the location of the bank, see BUB, MS 4207, vol. 24, ff. 100r and 106v.

¹⁰⁵ 'Li 9 giugno 1475 Elisabetta del fu dottor Antonio Bentivogli vedova del dott. Romeo Peopli, e li conti Guido e Galeazzo del fu Romeo Pepoli vendettero a Michele del fu Andrea Casali tre case contigue poste sotto la Capella di S. Giovanni in Monte in confine di Miola, di strada Castiglione, della Via del Vivaro dei beni Casali... per lire 3000.' Quest'ultima casa nel Vivaro sembra quella venduta da Aldrovandino Fondazza ai Casali per lire 2000, come da rogito Bonaventura Paleotti dei 26 agosto 1503.' Guidicini, *Cose Notabili*, III 242-43.

father Michele and uncles Catellano and Francesco, when they were in Bologna, all lived in one main house, bounded by Via Castiglione, Via Miola and Via de' Vivaro.¹⁰⁶ This principal family palazzo seems to have been available for the use of all the subsequent generation throughout their lifetimes, and Gregorio and Giambattista, despite being from the Roman branch of the family, spent considerable periods of time there.¹⁰⁷

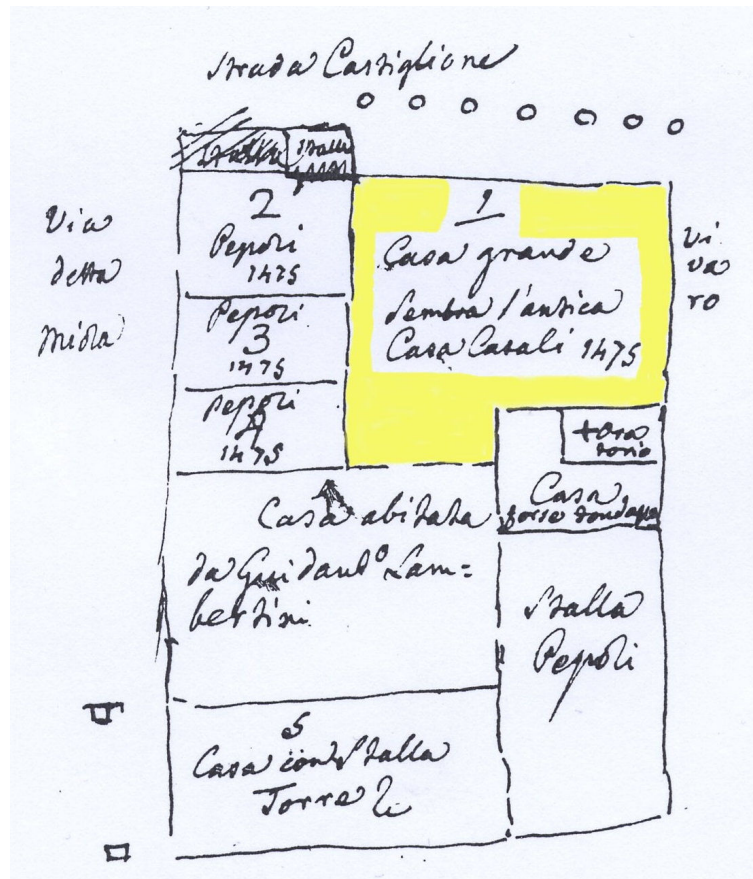


Figure 2

The Casali block in Bologna, adapted from Giuseppe Guidicini, *Gli schizzi topografici originali per le "Cose notabili della città di Bologna"* ed. Mario Fanti (Bologna: Forni, 2000), p. 261; Guidicini's hypothesised location for the family house is highlighted.

¹⁰⁶ 'Plures domos contiguas cuppatas et balchionatas positas Bononiae... in contrata strate Castelionis: In quarum parte ad presens habitant dicti fratres iuxta viam publicam dicte contraete strate Castelionis a latere anteriori: et iuxta viam publicam vocat. miöhola ameridie: et iuxta contractam seu viam vivarij.' ACdM, I, no. 4, 16 October 1497.

¹⁰⁷ See above, Chapter Two, p. 72.

According to the 1502 inventory, the palazzo had a courtyard and loggias at two levels. It had been subject to some alteration: the inventory refers to old and new rooms. On the lower floor, there was a *guardacamera*, used for storage, a *camera magna* (large chamber), a *studio* (obviously used for mercantile business), a lower kitchen (used for informal dining, especially in winter) and a lower loggia. Upstairs there were three chambers, the *sala magna superiore* (great upper hall) which would have been used for formal entertaining and its ante-chamber, where there were stores of blue-edged linen.¹⁰⁸ There was an upper hearth area where Francesco Casali had slept, a family chapel, an upper kitchen (used for cooking) with a well-room next door with a system for bringing water upstairs, a further *studio*, a little chamber and an upper loggia, which was equipped for summer dining with tables and decorated round about with painted medallions.¹⁰⁹ Beyond that, there were several further rooms the location of which is harder to identify.¹¹⁰

This palazzo was an archetypal Renaissance gentleman's household, demonstrating an appropriate mix of devotional activity, study of the humanities, interest in art, family pride and, of course, provision of hospitality.¹¹¹ As was the convention of the time, the family arms were liberally displayed around the house, on items including a brass basin and ewer with the arms in silver; a casket and bedside chest, which may have been wedding items, because they also showed the arms of Francesco's wife's family; on some painted caskets in the lower kitchen; on some benches; and even on an embroidered mule cover.¹¹² Also notable is the existence of a chapel in the family home.¹¹³ Laymen required a papal or episcopal licence to

¹⁰⁸ On linens, see Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior 1400-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), p. 73 and Elizabeth Currie, 'Textiles and clothing', in Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home*, pp. 343-45.

¹⁰⁹ ACdM, I, no. 8, ff. 4r, 13r.

¹¹⁰ Other rooms listed in the inventory include: a chamber for male staff, a new chamber for the maids, a *salvaroba*, a small chamber, the tutor's chamber, a chamber 'of the hearths', another *guardacamera* and five storage rooms.

¹¹¹ There is an extensive literature on the Renaissance home, deriving in particular from the work of the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior. See in particular the catalogue of the resulting exhibition: Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis (eds.), *At Home*, and the related special edition of *Renaissance Studies*. Thornton, *Renaissance Interior*, provides an exhaustive catalogue of the types of object that might be found in homes of this period and the terminology used to describe them.

¹¹² It is notable that when the Venetian ambassadors visited Rome in 1523, their lodgings were decorated both with their own family arms and with the arms of Saint Mark, the Republic's patron. *Relazioni* ser. 2, III 94. See also the numerous references to coats-of-arms in relation to different domestic objects in Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home*.

¹¹³ ACdM, I, no. 8, f. 14r. The Casali chapel contained an image of the Virgin Mary made with precious stones in many colours, and a San Bernardino in plaster holding an open book in his hands and wearing a diadem. The altar was covered with a checked cloth, and on it were two candelabra.

establish a domestic chapel; as Philip Mattox has noted, these had traditionally been the preserve of ‘princes and the high nobility’, but in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the number of altar concessions expanded to ‘members of the lower nobility and the merchant aristocracy’.¹¹⁴ Francesco Casali, as a papal treasurer, would probably not have had difficulty obtaining the appropriate permission. The inventory also provides evidence of other activities suitable for the Renaissance gentleman and his children: there were fifty books in the house identified as relating to ‘the study of the humanities’ and other arts.¹¹⁵ There was a room described as belonging to the *magister puerorum* – the children’s tutor – which contained three tables for studying.¹¹⁶ In terms of artwork, there were the expected devotional images, mostly of the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁷ There was a portrait of Francesco Casali, in his study, and the occasional item with a classicizing theme, for example, a little round plate depicting Hercules.¹¹⁸ The family also owned some ‘profane’ images, in the French style, such as one featuring ‘a nude woman in the middle and other figures in a bath’.¹¹⁹

In terms of splendour, the Casali palazzo certainly bears comparison with that described in the 1505 inventory of the Bolognese noblewoman Nicolosa Castellani, cited by Lodovico Frati as representative of the magnificence of Bolognese patrician palaces in this period.¹²⁰ Even in 1502, it is clear that this was already a house well-adapted to the kind of entertaining and offering of hospitality that would be centrally important to the children’s later diplomatic careers and, as we have seen, in 1506, when the papal court came to Bologna to celebrate Pope Julius II’s victory over the Bentivogli rulers of the city, the Casali palace was considered suitable accommodation for Cardinal Raffaele Riario, one of their patrons at the court of

There was also a Flemish painting of the Virgin Mary and the three Magi on canvas, in a frame of fine gold, a low stool before the altar, for praying, and a brass basin to hold holy water.

¹¹⁴ Philip Mattox, ‘Domestic sacral space in the Florentine Renaissance palace’, *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006), 658-73 (p. 660). See also Donal Cooper, ‘Devotion’, in Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home*, pp. 190-203 (p. 199).

¹¹⁵ ACdM, I, no. 8, ff. 6r-6v: ‘sexdecim volumina libros qui in parte sunt scripti cum penna et in parte sunt scripti a forma in studio humanitatis’ and f. 16v: ‘Una capsula magna in qua sunt volumina triginta quatuor librorum diversorum viz. in studio humanitatis et aliarum artium cum pluribus scripturis intus que fuerunt olim Antonij Varchi.’ On the education of the Casali children, see the discussion in Chapter Two, p. 71.

¹¹⁶ ‘Tres tabule usitate pro studendo.’ ACdM, I, no. 8, f. 19r.

¹¹⁷ The inventory refers to eight images of the Virgin Mary, one of the young Christ and one each of Saints Bernardino and Girolamo.

¹¹⁸ ACdM, I, no. 8: portrait, f. 6r. ‘Una targhetta tonda picta cum Hercule’, f. 5r.

¹¹⁹ ‘Una tella ad morem francorum picta cum una muliere nuda in medio et alijs figuris in uno bagno cum uno tellario schietto circum circa.’ ACdM, I, no. 8, ff. 15v-16r.

¹²⁰ Lodovico Frati, *La Vita Privata di Bologna* (Rome: Bardi, 1968), pp. 21-22.

Rome. Their ability to offer such a splendid environment for hospitality must have been a consideration in the decision to appoint Gregorio as ambassador.

Casali's role as householder also has implications for our understanding of the extent of his authority as a resident diplomat. As we saw in Chapter One, the interaction between resident and special ambassadors was complex: the latter, having more up-to-date instructions and being, in theory at least, better informed of their prince's mind, arguably had greater weight as negotiators, while the power of the resident derived principally from his superior local knowledge and freedom to manoeuvre in the absence of instructions. The role of host, however, adds a new dimension to the power of the resident: through introductions, the drawing-up of guest lists, and the provision of advice, Casali would have had some scope to guide special ambassadors in the direction of a particular course of action. The members of his household – his wife, secretaries and servants – might likewise have participated in this process of socialisation. Indeed, just as we saw in Chapter Two that an ambassador's family could play a key role in the day-to-day practice of diplomacy, so too could the members of his household.

4. The diplomatic household

THIS role as head of the household was an important one for the ambassador: a magnificent property and sumptuous furnishings only went so far. The members of his household, their status and conduct were a vital consideration for contemporaries in assessing an ambassador's work, and the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century treatises on the office of ambassador provide a wealth of comment on this subject. In doing so, they reflect concerns that were themselves the subject of an extensive literature in this period, notably in Venice, which emphasised the parallel between the household and the polity in terms of good order and government.¹²¹ One of the most interesting

¹²¹ Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, pp. 1-41 discusses this phenomenon and provides a substantial bibliography on this topic and the wider question of master-servant relations. Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 23, notes the long history of prescriptive literature on the household in England, from the fourteenth-century *Book of Chyvalry* onwards. Daniela Frigo, *Il padre di famiglia: Governo della casa e governo civile nella tradizione dell'“economica” tra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1985), pp. 17-48 gives a comprehensive history of the genre in relation to Italy, although the focus of her study is on the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

treatises in this regard is that of Étienne Dolet. His *De Officio Legati*, thought to be the first printed treatise on the office of ambassador, begins like this:

Every ambassador who is desirous of rendering due aid... should guide his course in such a manner as to give special consideration to two matters: first to the condition of his own household, and then to the employment of prudence at the court to which he has been sent.¹²²

It is striking that the household comes first. The conduct of servants was a problem that taxed Renaissance writers on the household in general and those who wrote on the subject of the ambassador's servants were no exception. Ermolao Barbaro, whose uncle Francesco had written a treatise on household management, cited a 'common proverb', which he said was known not only in Italy but abroad:

Let no-one make accords without surety of the continence of the ambassadors, their retinue and household.¹²³

Barbaro further emphasised the importance of the proper conduct of the ambassador's entourage:

There should be peace in the ambassador's house, otherwise everyone will disparage and make fun of the ambassador, not least his own men.¹²⁴

Dolet said that ensuring an orderly household was essential for the ambassador, and commented that 'the estimate of our characters will be largely based upon the lives of our servants'; he stressed the importance of their discretion and sobriety.¹²⁵ That the state of the ambassador's household was of concern to writers on the subject should not be surprising given the way that contemporaries would have understood these precepts. As Romano has argued, they regarded effective household management as a metaphor for effective government.¹²⁶ For an ambassador, as the personification of his prince's dignity, the good government of his own household was symbolic of the good government of his prince's realm. Behrens' categorisation

¹²² Dolet, p. 82

¹²³ 'Unde tritum illud, nec uni notum Italiae, proverbium: "Nunquam sine vase continentiae legatorum et comites et familia respondeant."' Barbaro, 'De Officio Legati', p. 166. In the early fifteenth century Francesco Barbaro had written a treatise entitled *De re uxoria*, on which see Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, pp. 10-13; Ermolao himself wrote a treatise on celibacy, *De Coelibatu*, which can be interpreted as a response to Francesco's earlier work: see Margaret L. King, 'Caldiera and the Barbaros on marriage and the family: humanist reflections of Venetian realities', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976), 19-50 and Vittore Branca's introduction to the printed editions of *De Coelibatu* and 'De Officio Legati'.

¹²⁴ 'In legati domo pax sit: aliter legatus ab omnibus contemnitur et ludibrio habetur, praecipue vero suis.' Barbaro, 'De Officio Legati', p. 167.

¹²⁵ Dolet, pp. 85-86.

¹²⁶ Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, p. 23.

of household management as one of the many issues on which Dolet's treatise is 'strictly utilitarian' misses this point entirely.¹²⁷ Dolet did, obviously, have some practical considerations in mind. For example, his reference to sobriety echoes the comment in Erasmus' 'Godly Feast', in which one character notes:

It's not safe for priests or servants of kings to be fond of wine, because wine commonly brings to the tip of man's tongue whatever he was hiding in his heart.¹²⁸

However, for all the potential problems that drunken servants posed, Dolet's injunction also concerned the importance for the diplomat of establishing himself as a responsible *paterfamilias*. His house and household had to embody his own and his prince's virtues. Nor is the question of the household taken up in either of the more recent studies of the treatises, which focus on their significance in terms of the development of the ambassador's role.¹²⁹ Yet it is vitally important for understanding the basis on which contemporaries assessed a diplomat's conduct and standing at court.

Before turning to discuss some problems of order that arose in the Casali household, let us consider the people who formed it. Our most concrete information relates to the servants of the household, of whom some detail is given in the codicil to Gregorio's will. Here he named six individuals: two clerics, Baptista Sambuelo and Guido Gianetti, who we know from diplomatic documents acted as secretaries and agents; a third cleric, Girolamo Scaneffo, described as a *procuratore*, similarly a type of agent but more likely to be concerned with legal and/or financial affairs; one manservant named Terentio de Interanto, and two women servants: Julie de la Fontana, described as a footmaid or housekeeper, and Stephanea, a maidservant or housekeeper.¹³⁰ In the course of his diplomatic career, Gregorio also used three other messengers and agents whom we know by name: Gurone Bertani, Girolamo de' Andini and Giovanni Bernardino de' Ferrari.¹³¹ De' Andini illustrates another of Dolet's comments relating to servants – that they could usefully be involved in

¹²⁷ Behrens, 'Treatises', pp. 625-26.

¹²⁸ Erasmus, *Collected Works*, XXXIX 189.

¹²⁹ Fubini, 'L'ambasciatore nel XV secolo'; Bazzoli, 'Ragion di stato'.

¹³⁰ 'domino Baptiste Sambuelo clerico papien[is]... d. Stephanea servitricj seu massarie... domino Guidoni de Gianettis clerico sanen[is]... d. Iheronymo scaneffo clerico regien[is] civitatis eius procuratore... Terentio de Interanto eius servitorj... Julie de la fontana eius pediseque seu massarie.' Codicil to Gregorio Casali's will, 14 December 1536. ACdM, I, no. 15, f. 2. I have followed Romano, *Housecraft and Statecraft*, p. xxiv, in the translation of the servants' roles.

¹³¹ Full references for Gianetti, Sambuelo and Bertano are given in Chapter Two, p. 97. For Giovanni Bernardino see below, p. 141.

spying – he had an undercover role in France seeking a suitable benefice with which to ‘bribe’ the Accolti cardinals.¹³² The couriers who travelled regularly between Rome and England in this period may also have joined the household while awaiting their next despatch.¹³³ In the specific case of the Casali house, given that this was the family’s residence in Rome, it would be plausible to assume that Gregorio’s brother Paolo, who seems to have spent much of his time at the papal court, also lived there, as would other family members on either a permanent or temporary basis.¹³⁴ As we saw at the start of this chapter, when Sir Francis Bryan praised Casali’s hospitality, he noted that his house was ‘furnished with gentlemen daily, and that of the best in Rome’.¹³⁵ Some of these gentlemen would have been visitors, but we should bear in mind the possibility that others may have been members of the household: perhaps young men of the Roman or Bolognese patriciate, connected in some way to the extended family, who themselves aspired to employment in the field of diplomacy.

There are also some clues about the overall size of the ambassador’s household: in the 1526 Roman census, the Florentine ambassador’s household had eleven members; the Milanese ambassador’s five; the Portuguese ambassador’s seventy. Gregorio Casali was not explicitly listed as the English ambassador; however, his household is there, with fifteen members.¹³⁶ Caution must be exercised in relation to the accuracy of the census, especially given the highly uncertain political situation that prevailed when it was drawn up in the second half of November 1526.¹³⁷ However, a comparison with the size of cardinals’ households given in the same document suggests that the ambassadors’ households were, in general, considerably smaller.¹³⁸ As Heal has argued in relation to England, however,

¹³² See *L&P* v 891. De’ Andini later became a secretary to Pope Paul III, in which capacity he carried out a diplomatic mission to France: see *L&P* xvi 368; *St P* viii 507. Dolet, p. 86.

¹³³ Although the English courier service was rather *ad hoc* in these years, two couriers, Alexander and Taddeo (Thadeus), were employed on a regular basis and at times did have to wait in Rome until documents were prepared. For examples of their missions and payments see *L&P* iv 5530, *L&P* v pp. 311-12; *St P* vii 168.

¹³⁴ Evidence for Paolo’s presence in Rome is found in the letter of Sir Francis Bryan to William Benet, *L&P* iv 6769; *St P* vii 271, in which he asks Benet to make ‘hearty recommendations’ to both ‘Master Gregory’ and ‘Master Paule’.

¹³⁵ *L&P* iv 5481; *St P* vii 168.

¹³⁶ *Descriptio Urbis*, p. 92.

¹³⁷ Lee, in his introduction to the census, raises a series of concerns about its accuracy, including the omission of several well-known long-term residents of Rome; duplicate entries for particular households citing different numbers of people resident; and a lack of congruence with other contemporary sources. *Descriptio Urbis*, pp. 21-24.

¹³⁸ Partner, *Renaissance Rome*, p. 53, argues that the ambassador’s household was ‘unlikely to number less than 70 or 80 persons, unless he was merely an observer for an Italian city’. Partner provides no reference for these figures; it would seem a strange conclusion to draw from the sole example of the

a smaller household need not preclude adherence to ‘the ethos of generosity that was a part of the honour community’.¹³⁹ Furthermore, during the visits of special ambassadors the household size must have expanded significantly. From reports of the size of ambassadors’ retinues we know, for example, that Bryan and Vanni were accompanied by twelve servants on their journey to Rome in 1529.¹⁴⁰ Giambattista Casali was also accompanied by twelve people on his arrival as English ambassador in Venice in January 1526; however, a further six were due, so he would have had a total entourage of eighteen.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, in most cases we have few indications of who these people were. One we do know a little about is Richard Herde, who accompanied Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox to Orvieto in 1528. He was, they wrote, ‘a young man, being himself singularly well learned in physic, in the Greek and Latin tongues, as any we know’.¹⁴² The only reason we have this description is because Herde died of a fever shortly after his arrival. It suggests, however, that such classical learning was valued in diplomatic circles, as does the selection of the twenty-year-old scholar Étienne Dolet as secretary by the French ambassador to Venice.¹⁴³ Further evidence for the regular employment of young men in the diplomatic entourage is to be found in Florentine provisions of 1498 and 1529: these established a formalised role for such ‘giovani’, who might act as deputies to the chief ambassador on a particular mission, participating under his authority in negotiations.¹⁴⁴ While the diplomatic practice of other states was not so firmly codified, there is no reason to suppose that parallels would not exist in a household like Casali’s; in 1538 Stephen Gardiner, by then English ambassador to France, had

Portuguese ambassador’s house in *Descriptio Urbis*. Drawing on the evidence of the 1526 census, Gigliola Fragnito estimates that at that time the average size of a cardinal’s familia was 148 persons; she also cites Chambers’ calculation that the average size in 1509 was 154. ‘Cardinals’ courts’, p. 26. In her study of Cardinal Francesco Soderini, Lowe argues that ‘cardinals were expected to maintain large households, to inhabit impressive palaces and to entertain on a grand scale as part of the social exchanges and rituals that were so important in the life of the papal court’. *Cardinal Soderini*, p. 247.

¹³⁹ Heal, *Hospitality*, p. 47.

¹⁴⁰ See the report of Lope de Soria to the Emperor, 10 January 1529. *CSP Sp* III.ii 612.

¹⁴¹ *CSP Ven* III 1207; Sanudo XL col. 718.

¹⁴² *L&P* IV 4090; Pocock I 88. See also the reference in ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 28v, describing him as ‘literatissimo in greco, latino, et philosophia’.

¹⁴³ According to Reeves’ introduction to ‘De Officio Legati’, Dolet was born in 1509 and at the time of his employment was studying law at Padua. Dolet, p. 81. It is also notable that on the memorial in the Chiesa di San Domenico, Bologna, to Vincenzo Casali, who as we saw in Chapter Two was employed in junior diplomatic roles, his learning was emphasised: ‘Vincentio Casalio adolescenti literis et opt. quibusq. artibus ornatiss. ob indolis et virtutis expectationem rerumq. gerendar solertiam maximis regibus cariss. ann agens XXVIII diem suum obiit MDXXIX.’

¹⁴⁴ Giuseppe Vedovato, ‘I giovani nelle ambascerie della repubblica fiorentina’, estratto dagli *Scritti in onore di Niccolò Rodolico* (Florence, 1944); on the precise role of these young men see pp. 32-35.

an entourage of twelve young men: five under nineteen and seven ‘slightly over’.¹⁴⁵ However, while we can begin to sketch out a picture of the typical roles of these members of the ambassador’s suite – as secretaries, negotiators, possibly spies and also adding an intellectual gloss to the embassy – a fuller assessment must wait for another occasion.

An insight into contemporary understandings of the ambassador’s household and its management can be gleaned from the case of one servant with whom Gregorio Casali apparently had trouble: Giovanni Bernardino de’ Ferrari, a young man who worked as a secretary first for Casali and subsequently for Benedetto Accolti, the cardinal of Ravenna.¹⁴⁶ Casali was by no means unique in his trouble with servants: the reason such evidence is available for Gardiner’s young men in France is that the French complained about their rowdiness.¹⁴⁷ As we will see in Chapter Four, Giovanni Bernardino gave evidence against Benedetto Accolti during Accolti’s trial in 1535 for corruption and abuse of power. The cardinal obviously had an axe to grind against his former servant, but nonetheless his comments are interesting. In his treatise on ambassadors, Ermolao Barbaro had warned that:

There are two offences of the household... to which if ambassadors conspire they sin even more than the offenders: insults and lewdness, whether at home or elsewhere. On the one hand discord is sown and on the other scandal.¹⁴⁸

Giovanni Bernardino, on the cardinal’s account, was guilty of both offences. First, Accolti wrote (in an *aide-memoire* either for himself or his lawyer) that Gregorio Casali had once had Giovanni Bernardino slung into the local prison, Corte Savella, for casting doubt on the legitimacy of Casali’s son.¹⁴⁹ This was an excellent example of firm action to uphold the values Barbaro advocated. For a member of the

¹⁴⁵ Potter, ‘Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century’, p. 310.

¹⁴⁶ Giovanni Bernardino was in his early 20s when he was employed by Casali. He was 27 when interrogated in 1535 and his statement that Bryan and Gardiner could testify to his service implies he must have been in Casali’s employment in early 1529. He was in the Accolti household for about eight months, although had, on his own account, served the cardinal for several years while still living in Casali’s house. Around January 1534 (the date is uncertain; this is the suggestion in *L&P*) he petitioned Henry VIII for aid, declaring his intention to live under English rule. ASR, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi 3; 2 II; 3 May 1535 and *L&P* VII 144. In the 1550s he was secretary to the English ambassador at the Imperial court, Sir Richard Morison, where he became a double agent, spying on his master for the Imperialists. Sowerby, ‘Richard Morison’, pp. 291, 299.

¹⁴⁷ Potter, ‘Diplomacy in the mid-sixteenth century’, p. 310.

¹⁴⁸ Barbaro, ‘De Officio Legati’, pp. 166-67.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Et potra far chiaro il cavalier Casale, che havendo lui [Giovanni Bernardino]... falsissimamente deposto, che quel figliolo che haveva fatto la sua moglie era suppositio, lo fece mettere in corte savella prigione questo inverno proximo.’ ASF, Fondo Accolti, 9, no. 15, f. 1.

household to suggest that Casali was a cuckold was a serious slur on his personal honour, implying as it did a failure on Casali's part to manage both his wife and his servants effectively. Furthermore, in his role as ambassador such disorder also reflected badly on the honour of the prince he represented.

From insults, we move to lewdness: Cardinal Accolti's second accusation was that Giovanni Bernardino had 'never held any office more important there in [Casali's] household than being a *ruffiano*'.¹⁵⁰ That could imply that he was a flatterer or hanger-on, but the overall tone of the document suggests that the more plausible translation is 'pimp'.¹⁵¹ Were there many *ruffiani* hanging around the Casali household helping little with diplomacy but arranging their fellows' liaisons with the local courtesans? It is hard to say, although the record in the 1517 census of a German courtesan, 'Madona Paula', who rented a nearby house from Gregorio's mother Antonina Casali, would suggest that such services were easily accessible.¹⁵² These allegations should alert us to the dangers of regarding the treatises too closely as a guide to practice, and in this regard the presence of the cardinal of Ravenna as a guest on many occasions at the Casali house raises further questions.¹⁵³ The cardinal himself had a reputation for fast living and bad behaviour, even by the lax standards of the early sixteenth-century Curia,¹⁵⁴ and it is necessary to caution against any impression that diplomatic sociability was (whatever the treatises might advise) sober, dull or well-behaved. Sir Francis Bryan, the English ambassador who had such praise for Casali's 'liberal port' in Rome, wrote on another occasion to his friend Lord Lisle, the governor of Calais:

¹⁵⁰ 'Nè fece mai offitio più importante á li di suoi che d'esser ruffiano'. ASF, Fondo Accolti, 9, no. 15, f. 1.

¹⁵¹ The cardinal also refers to his former secretary as an 'arch-pig'; however the decisive context is provided by his comments on Giovanni Bernardino's disreputable conduct with 'certain women of Ancona', *ibid*.

¹⁵² 'Madona Paula todescha cum suo amico cortesana' were recorded as living in a house belonging to 'm^a Añtha Casale' in the parish of San Andrea del Nazareth, where the family home was situated. Armellini, 'Censimento', p. 329. There is ample evidence for the role of courtesans in the social life of Roman elites. Georgina Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975) cites a literary account of a Spanish ambassador visiting Imperia, a well-known Roman courtesan, and notes the relationship between Cardinal Campeggio and the courtesan *Matrema*, pp. 38, 76. See also Tessa Storey, *Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), especially pp. 57-66.

¹⁵³ They were in the Castel Sant'Angelo siege together, after which Accolti wrote to Wolsey describing Casali as '*homo mihi amicissimus*'. *L&P* IV 3162 ; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B ix 126. In late 1529, Accolti was at the Casali house in Bologna, to greet the English ambassadors the first night that they arrived for the Emperor's coronation. Wall, p. 60. The trial records, cited below, Chapter Four, pp. 162-63, detail their extensive interaction during the English attempts to bribe Accolti.

¹⁵⁴ On his lifestyle see Enea Costantini, *Il Cardinal di Ravenna al governo d'Ancona e il suo processo sotto Paolo III* (Pesaro: Federici, 1891).

I perceive that in Calais ye have sufficient of courtezans to furnish and accomplish my desire, I do thank you of your good provision, but... I have called to my remembrance the misliving that ye and such other hath brought me to; for the which, being repented, have had absolution of the Pope.¹⁵⁵

Sadly we have no record of Sir Francis' opinion of courtesans at Rome, although as Susan Brigden has pointed out in her article on Bryan it was part of his mythology that he had slept with one to gain intelligence.¹⁵⁶ If any further confirmation is needed of the likelihood that ambassadors frequented prostitutes (of both sexes), it is to be found in the fact that both Barbaro and Dolet thought it necessary to warn against such behaviour, the latter writing:

If, in the place where he is serving as ambassador, there is some vice which is freely indulged in (as in Venice and at Rome there is much recourse to harlots, both male and female), he should entirely refrain from it.¹⁵⁷

It is safe to assume, however, that not all Renaissance diplomats refrained all the time. Indeed, it would be more surprising to discover that Casali and his colleagues had never socialised with courtesans than to establish for certain that they did so.

The role of 'respectable' women is scarcely better documented: it was not a matter that concerned the authors of the treatises. Sir Francis Bryan made a point of asking his successor at Rome, William Benet, to recommend him to a certain 'Signora Angela', but we have no clue as to her identity.¹⁵⁸ Gregorio Casali's new wife, Livia Pallavicino, arrived in Bologna during the papal court's residence there in early 1530, 'wherfore', recorded the embassy herald, 'there was at supper great feasting and many Ladyes and gentylwome[n]'.¹⁵⁹ As we saw in Chapter Two, Livia came to Rome later that year, and after that time presumably had an important role in the running of the household, but of her specific activities at this time we know little. Given her family connections it is not out of the question that she might have been involved in social activities with members of the curia. Although Rome, with its concentration of cardinals and clerics, had historically had a gender imbalance, or at

¹⁵⁵ *The Lisle Letters*, ed. Muriel St Clare Byrne, 6 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), I, no. 66a.

¹⁵⁶ Brigden, "'Shadow That You Know'", *Historical Journal* 39 (1996), 1-31 (p. 6).

¹⁵⁷ Dolet, p. 87. Barbaro also condemned ambassadors who lived 'extravagantly and licentiously', frequenting 'dissolute youths and concubines' in his 'De Officio Legati', p. 166.

¹⁵⁸ *L&P* IV 6769; *St P* VII 272.

¹⁵⁹ Wall, p. 83.

least an imbalance of ‘respectable’ ladies to ‘respectable’ gentlemen at court, Natalie Tomas has argued that during the Medici papacies the popes’ female relatives took a much more prominent role,¹⁶⁰ and this may have had an impact on the type of social life seen as appropriate for a woman like Livia.

In short, while there can be no doubt that the household and its condition were accorded considerable importance in diplomatic life, there remain many gaps in our knowledge. The treatises tantalisingly warn ambassadors and their servants against misconduct – implying that there was something worth warning against – but ambassadors’ official letters tend to praise hospitality rather than report problems. The letters between friends, like that of Sir Francis Bryan to Lord Lisle, that might document the less salubrious aspects of diplomatic life have often not survived. Where they do, however, they suggest a rather different picture from that painted in the correspondence, one backed up by the Accolti trial documents in their references to diplomatic life.

THE house and household are not usual starting-points for understanding the interactions of diplomacy or high politics; however, this chapter has suggested that there is much to be gained from a consideration of the domestic spaces in which diplomacy took place. In this period, it was expected that the ambassador’s house, household and hospitality should reflect the status of his prince and that in his symbolic role as a representative of the monarch, the ambassador should exercise princely virtues such as liberality and magnificence. The extent of his liberality should be appropriate to the rank of his employer, but also to the nature of the court to which he had been sent, and in the case of Rome that meant it was expected to be substantial. Offers and refusals of hospitality could make political statements, but had to be carefully phrased to comply with the codes of courtesy. Contemporary writers drew a parallel between good household management and good governance of the state: like any Renaissance patrician, the ambassador should be master of his own household but in that role he also demonstrated his prince’s mastery of his realm. An appreciation of this parallel helps us to understand more fully the implications of comments about the house found in diplomatic letters which might

¹⁶⁰ Natalie Tomas, ‘All in the Family: The Medici Women and Pope Clement VII’, pp. 41-53 in Gouwens and Reiss (eds), *Pontificate of Clement VII*. See also the discussion in her *The Medici Women: Gender and Power in Renaissance Florence* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), Chapter Five, pp. 124-63.

easily be regarded as simply descriptive. However, there was also an instrumental role for sociability in the ambassador's house, where his 'liberal port' was vital to making and maintaining political relationships and in gathering information. Grand houses which could be used for entertaining were a definite asset to the ambassador, and one of the Casali family's selling points as freelance diplomats. No great distinction was drawn between 'public' diplomatic entertaining and ambassadors' private and family relationships, so the Roman diplomatic corps might well gather at a family wedding of one of their number; similarly any attempt to differentiate too sharply between 'formal' and 'informal' diplomatic occasions quickly breaks down. A study of the ambassador's household can tell us much about the way diplomacy was practised from day to day, and about the way that contemporaries judged people like Gregorio Casali.

Chapter Four

‘Those who give are not all generous’: Gift-giving in diplomatic practice

THE virtue of liberality was not only expressed through the ambassador’s hospitality. He could also display a ‘liberal port’ by means of his gift-giving, and in turn would be the recipient of presents. These gifts were no straightforward matter, as Baldassarre Castiglione, a former resident ambassador in Rome, understood. When he wrote in *Il Cortegiano* that ‘those who give are not all generous’, he might well have been thinking back to his experience as a diplomat.¹ Indeed, just as diplomatic hospitality had instrumental functions, so the gifts that ambassadors gave and received required something in return. Such exchanges were a pervasive feature of diplomacy, as they were of wider society in this period. In his handbook on ambassadors at the court of Rome, the papal master-of-ceremonies Paride Grassi included a chapter headed: ‘How much ambassadors should give to papal officials, and who these officials are.’² It was not, he said, for him to set out how much ambassadors should give to mimes, jesters and musicians, but he went on to list those officials whom one *was* expected to tip, from himself, as master-of-ceremonies, to couriers, the gatekeeper and the man at the secret garden.³ Getting to grips with the tipping system delineated by Grassi was, however, the least of an ambassador’s problems. Grassi’s precepts were set down for the benefit of his successors and not for publication, and in general the protocol of gift-giving was largely unwritten. The treatises on diplomacy which comment on the importance of liberality fight shy of open discussion of gifts, and even with knowledge of the relevant etiquette, it was hard to avoid mishaps.

This chapter will discuss the ways that different types of gift were used in the practice of diplomacy. It will begin by considering the extent to which gift-giving was subject to regulation, where the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate gifts lay, and the important question of what constituted ‘corruption’ in this period, drawing in particular on evidence about the tipping of lower-ranking officials at the

¹ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Courtier* trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 313. On the *Cortegiano* as advice for diplomats, see the discussion in Chapter Two, pp. 81-83.

² ‘Quantum oratores donant officialibus pape et qui sunt illi officiales.’ BAV, MS Vat. lat. 12270, ff. 70v-71v. A transcript of this extract is given in Appendix 3.

³ *ibid.*, f. 70v.

papal court. The second section will look at the language and concepts used by diplomats to justify their gift-giving, in particular the idea of liberality, which we have already encountered in Chapter Three, and the reciprocal pair ‘reward’ and ‘service’. Here the discussion will focus on two cases in which Gregorio Casali and his colleagues offered rewards to cardinals but subsequently encountered problems, enabling a consideration of the ways that gifts might, as Natalie Zemon Davis has put it, ‘go wrong’.⁴ The third section will turn to more ceremonial types of gift, examining why their public presentation was important, and analysing the symbolism of some of the presents received by ambassadors in terms of sixteenth-century cultural understandings. It will highlight the difficulty of distinguishing between ‘official’ and ‘personal’ gifts both at the level of the individual diplomat, and in terms of gifts between princes, returning to the point made in Chapter One that the diplomat’s individual rank could be relevant in the ceremonial context. Finally, the chapter will consider some of the ambiguities that arose from the fact that the ambassador was simultaneously both private individual and royal representative.

ANY historian engaged in the analysis of gift-giving in the early modern period is faced with the fact that many studies of the topic have been heavily influenced by the work of the sociologist and anthropologist Marcel Mauss, nephew and student of Émile Durkheim, who published his ‘Essai sur le don’ in 1925.⁵ Mauss made it clear, as Gadi Algazi has pointed out, that it was not his intention to provide a model for the use of historians;⁶ nonetheless, his concepts have often been borrowed. Sharon Kettering, for example, has employed Mauss’ theory in analysing French patron-client relationships of later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Maija Jansson has applied it to English diplomatic gifts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷ It is therefore worth outlining the essentials of the theory, the ways in which it has

⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 165.

⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990). On the intellectual context in which Mauss was writing – he was engaged in a polemic against utilitarianism in western political economy – see the foreword to that volume by Mary Douglas (pp. vii-xviii), and the more recent account by Patrick J. Geary, ‘Gift exchange and social science modeling: the limitations of a construct’, in Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen (eds), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), pp. 129-40.

⁶ Gadi Algazi, ‘Doing things with gifts’, in Algazi et al, *Negotiating the Gift*, pp. 9-27 (pp. 9-10).

⁷ Sharon Kettering, ‘Gift-giving and patronage in early modern France’, *French History* 2 (1988), 131-151. Maija Jansson, ‘Measured reciprocity. English ambassadorial gift exchange in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005), 348-70.

subsequently been refined and challenged, and those issues arising from it that are most relevant to this chapter. In summary, Mauss' *The Gift* is not a historical study, but draws on anthropological accounts of archaic societies, particularly those of the Pacific Rim, to posit the gift system as a 'total social phenomenon'. Every type of social institution in the societies Mauss discusses is expressed through gifts, he argues, which must be given, received and reciprocated as 'gift' and 'counter-gift'; the formal voluntary character of the gift conceals this obligation to reciprocate and there is no such thing as a 'free gift'.⁸ There are two key features of Mauss' theory to which particular attention should be drawn: the question of reciprocity and its symmetry or lack thereof, and the question of language and the semantics of gift-giving.

The discussion of reciprocity in Mauss was refined and clarified by Marshall Sahlins, writing in the 1960s on Stone Age economics in his book of that name. Pointing out that Mauss' theory was often mistakenly thought to imply a level of equivalence between gifts given and received, he argued for a 'spectrum of reciprocities' ranging from 'generalized reciprocity' in which gifts are as close as possible to being given freely and the need to reciprocate is vague, through the equal exchange of 'balanced reciprocity' to 'negative reciprocity', the attempt to get 'something for nothing'.⁹ Among the historians of the early modern period who have adopted Sahlins' refinement of Mauss' theory is Natalie Zemon Davis, who has applied it in analysing different modes of exchange in sixteenth-century France.¹⁰ Another variant on Mauss' concept of reciprocity, dealing specifically with redistributive systems of gift-giving, was developed by Karl Polanyi.¹¹ Marcello Fantoni, arguing that the princely courts of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries demonstrate a transitional stage between systems of Maussian 'total counter-services' and modern, industrial economies, has drawn on Polanyi's theory to analyse gifts at the court of the grand-dukes of Tuscany.¹² However, while

⁸ Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 3, 16-17.

⁹ Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 193-95.

¹⁰ Davis, *The Gift*, p. 218.

¹¹ Karl Polanyi, *The Livelihood of Man* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 35-43.

¹² Marcello Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca: Forma e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994), especially section III.a. 'Il dono: liberalità e potere', pp. 97-137 (p. 99). 'Total counter-services' is the description used in the standard English translation for both Mauss' concepts *contre-prestations* and *contre-prestations totales*. Its use, as C. J. Fuller has argued, risks being somewhat misleading because it suggests the transaction principally involves services, as opposed to gifts and services, and because Mauss' differentiation between *prestations* and *prestations totales* is consequently lost. See the review in *Man*, new series, 27 (1992), 431-33 (p. 432).

Polanyi's model has a clear application in explaining the court's internal redistribution of gifts, it seems less relevant in the analysis of the external diplomatic gifts exchanged between courts, which Fantoni specifically excludes from his discussion.¹³ Of the two variants on Mauss it is Sahlins' theory that has greater resonance in the context of diplomacy and will be referred to in the course of this chapter.

Recently, however, Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen have launched a much more fundamental challenge to Maussian theory, questioning whether an overarching category of 'The Gift' is useful at all and arguing that it has led to 'unwarranted generalisations'.¹⁴ Instead, they emphasise the importance of studying the ways that gifts are named, represented and registered. For example, they suggest that it is often only the label applied to a gift, rather than any characteristic of the gift *per se*, that distinguishes its legitimacy or illegitimacy.¹⁵ Such a semantic approach has usefully been employed by Valentin Groebner in his study of political presents in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Basel.¹⁶ He describes the emergence of the word *miet*, which had connotations of bribery and the illicit, in fourteenth-century south Germany; this, he argues, 'appears to have been *the* key term for forbidden gifts to officials'.¹⁷ Bernhard Jussen's study of medieval religious discourse likewise considers the language of gifts to demonstrate that the terms *munus* and *remuneratio*, commonly referred to by scholars in Maussian terms as 'gift' and 'counter-gift', in fact occur in 'significantly different contexts' and cannot be regarded as a conceptual pair.¹⁸

Nonetheless, many historians have remained content to follow Mauss in grouping together a variety of differently-named 'gifts' for analysis, as he does in the case of the Trobriand Islanders, when he notes the 'proliferation of distinctive names for all kinds of total counter-services', only to follow with the dismissive comment: 'One cannot credit the extent to which all such vocabulary is complicated by a curious incapacity to divide and define, and by the strange refinements that are given

¹³ Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, p. 97.

¹⁴ Algazi, 'Doing things with gifts', p. 14.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁶ Valentin Groebner, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages* trans. Pamela E. Selwyn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

¹⁸ Bernhard Jussen, 'Religious discourses of the gift in the Middle Ages. Semantic evidences (second to twelfth centuries)', in Algazi et al, *Negotiating the Gift*, pp. 173-192 (p. 174).

to names.’¹⁹ Among them is Davis, who downplays the differences between types of gift in sixteenth-century France: they were, she says, ‘linked together by the categories and words used to describe them and by the virtues and values they were thought to express in the giver and arouse in the recipient’.²⁰ This chapter, however, will start from the premise that early modern diplomats did make distinctions between types of gift, that this was reflected in the terminology they used to describe them, and that lumping them all together into a single category is, as Algazi suggests, unlikely to be helpful.²¹ The English ambassadors, for example, tend to differentiate in their correspondence between ‘presents’ – gifts that were presented publicly in a more-or-less ceremonial context – and ‘rewards’, those gifts given in return for services rendered (or in the hope that services would be rendered). The analysis here will draw on these categories, paying attention both to the labels given to gifts and the rhetoric attached to the process of gift-giving.

Scholarly consideration of gifts in the specific context of diplomacy is relatively rare.²² Groebner discusses diplomatic gifts in relation to city politics in Basel in his *Liquid Assets*, but while, as we will see, some of his findings have resonance for this case-study, others are more contingent on that particular municipal environment. Levin cites a number of examples of pensions and ‘bribes’ offered by Spanish ambassadors in sixteenth-century Italy, but does not discuss the process of gift-giving in any depth.²³ Richardson considers the exchange of diplomatic gifts between England and France in the sixteenth century, but not particularly in relation to the role of the ambassador. While he employs the concept of ‘reciprocity’ in considering the relationship between Henry VIII and Francis I, he does not refer specifically to the literature on gift-giving.²⁴ He rightly argues, however, that gift exchange was not a mere added extra but rather an ‘integral part’ of relations

¹⁹ Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 30-31.

²⁰ Davis, *The Gift*, pp. 14, 22-23. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, ‘Gifts and favors: informal support in early modern England’, *Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000), 295-338 similarly groups together a wide variety of ‘reciprocal interactions’ under the heading ‘gift’.

²¹ Algazi, ‘Doing things with gifts’, p. 21.

²² Two new studies were published just as this chapter was completed: Anthony Cutler, ‘Significant gifts: patterns of exchange in late antique, Byzantine and early Islamic diplomacy’ and Russell E. Martin, ‘Gifts for the bride: dowries, diplomacy, and marriage politics in Muscovy’, both in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (2008), 79-101; 119-45. Both offer innovative approaches to research on the topic; for some criticisms of the Maussian model in relation to diplomatic gifts, see Cutler, pp. 87-91.

²³ Levin, *Agents of Empire*, pp. 150, 169-70.

²⁴ Richardson, ‘Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations’; for references to gifts see in particular Chapter Three.

between the two countries.²⁵ Jansson, dealing with English diplomatic gifts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, limits her analysis to ceremonial presents covered by the rules of precedence. She is also dealing with a period in which it is possible to make a distinction between ‘personal’ and ‘diplomatic’ gifts, which, as we will see, is highly problematic for the sixteenth century (whether she is right to do so as sharply as she does is another matter).²⁶ The specific issue of the rewards received by ambassadors for their service, discussed in brief by Garrett Mattingly, is addressed in some detail in MacMahon’s thesis on Henry VIII’s diplomatic personnel; he does not, however, situate his analysis in terms of the broader literature on the gift, being principally concerned to assess the overall financial benefit that accrued to ambassadors through their work, dealt with here in Chapter Two.²⁷ In examining the variety of gifts given by and to ambassadors, this chapter will consider the extent to which Mauss’ theory of the gift and those arguments subsequently derived from it, or as alternatives to it, prove useful as tools for their analysis. In particular, drawing on the work of Algazi, Jussen and Groebner, it will suggest that close attention to the language used to describe diplomatic gifts offers important insights into the ways that contemporaries approached their gift-giving, and in doing so it will demonstrate the value for historians of diplomacy of the insights provided in the broader literature.

1. Regulation and registration

AS we saw in Chapter Three, the authors of the treatises on diplomacy had much to say on the subject of the ambassador’s household. In relation to gifts they were, in contrast, rather coy. For example, Étienne Dolet referred to ‘shrewd men not of one’s household, who have been inveigled by our liberality’.²⁸ Inveigling may or may not have involved bribery, of course, but the implication was that they had been persuaded to do something they would not have done otherwise. Later in his treatise, however, Dolet specified that by ‘liberality’ he meant ‘magnificence and splendor in

²⁵ Richardson, ‘Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations’, p. 105.

²⁶ Jansson, ‘Measured reciprocity’, p. 352.

²⁷ Mattingly, pp. 222-28. MacMahon, ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’, pp. 218-278.

²⁸ Dolet, p. 86.

[the ambassador's] manner of living'.²⁹ Even among those who were willing to emphasise the instrumental functions of liberality in general, there was a marked reticence to discuss explicitly the advantages to be obtained through gift-giving. Donald Queller's study of a later Venetian document on the ambassador, probably from the 1570s, finds an implicit reference to the role of gift-giving in cultivating contacts at court in the phrase 'to satisfy everyone according to his rank'.³⁰ Queller is keen to interpret this as an injunction to offer bribes, but he is over-hasty in assuming that such gifts were necessarily illegitimate: in contrast, we will see that they were accepted practice. Indeed, the use of the term 'bribe' in relation to the period of this case-study is bordering on anachronism: it was only just acquiring its modern meaning.³¹ As we will see, however, the idea that gifts might corrupt and the word 'corrupt' itself were certainly current.

Those gifts *received* by ambassadors were the subject of some more discussion. Dolet was clearly aware of the anxieties they aroused and wrote in his *De Officio Legati* that an ambassador would be 'deserving of capital punishment' if:

Won over by gifts or suborned by the promise of wealth and honors, you favor the interests of your enemy, and urge your king to a course which you know is to his disadvantage.³²

Venice, where Dolet served as secretary to the French ambassador, was one of the states that did impose regulations in this regard. Laws of 1403 and 1406, reiterated in 1482, barred Venetian ambassadors from accepting gifts, including benefices. Ermolao Barbaro referred to the proscription in his treatise, but ironically fell foul of it himself in 1491, when, while on embassy to Rome, he was made patriarch of Aquileia by Pope Innocent VIII.³³ Venice was not alone in its desire for regulation: in Basel, for example, gifts received by envoys had to be handed over to the city, a requirement which, according to Groebner, provoked 'a certain disquiet'. The city

²⁹ Dolet, p. 87.

³⁰ Donald E. Queller, 'How to succeed as an ambassador: a sixteenth-century Venetian document' in Joseph R. Strayer and Donald E. Queller (eds), *Post Scripta: Essays on Medieval Law and the emergence of the European state in honor of Gaines Post* (= *Studia Gratiana* 15 (1972)), pp. 655-671 (p. 661, 668). The Italian wording is: 'sodisfare à ciascuno secondo il grado suo'.

³¹ The earliest reference in the Oxford English Dictionary to the use of 'to bribe' in the sense of 'to corrupt an official by reward' is in a dialogue of 1528; the earliest OED reference to the noun 'bribe' in this sense is to the 1535 Coverdale bible. On this point Davis' claim that 'bribe' 'by the early sixteenth century meant a gift to corrupt judgement or extorted for political favor' is rather misleading. *The Gift*, p. 148.

³² Dolet, p. 89.

³³ Barbaro, 'De Officio Legati', p. 164. Paschini, *Tre illustri prelati*, pp. 22, 25. Biow, *Doctors, Ambassadors, Secretaries*, p. 105. Beverley, 'Venetian ambassadors', p. 90.

council passed resolutions on the subject repeatedly, and eventually relaxed the rules, suggesting that their effectiveness in preventing the practice was limited.³⁴ In the context of princely diplomacy, however, strict rules about the acceptance or registration of gifts were, at this stage, rare. The sort of detailed record-keeping of diplomatic gifts that Groebner describes in later fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Basel was not established in England, according to Jansson's study, until the seventeenth century.³⁵ This reflects the general pattern, discussed in the Introduction, in which republics were rather quicker to standardise and regulate diplomatic practices than were principalities, which relied for longer on a more personalised form of representation based on a relationship of service between ambassador and prince. Yet while the rules of diplomatic gift-giving may not have been written, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that clear shared conventions existed. So, how did contemporaries understand them, and, importantly, how did they distinguish between what was an acceptable and what an unacceptable gift?

a. Regulating tips

ONE of the difficulties facing any traveller abroad, even today, is the need to negotiate the local conventions of tipping. The same was surely true at the sixteenth-century court of Rome, where diplomats from across Europe and beyond had to work out how much to pay to whom and when. In an effort to protect new ambassadors from greedy officials' extravagant requests, the papal master-of-ceremonies Paride Grassi set out a list of court personnel to be tipped by the visiting diplomat, and the sums to be given.³⁶ Such payments, he wrote, were a means of expressing gratitude and not a matter of obligation or law, but it was the convention that the ambassador of a king should usually give a total of 150 gold ducats, while a ducal representative should give one hundred ducats in total and those of marquises, republics and other princes could usually give a little less, as they wished.³⁷ There were, in short, very clear expectations about what should be given. Grassi's treatise offers useful guidance with which to interpret other evidence about gratuities, such as comments like that of the Mantuan ambassador who wrote in 1529 to his master the marquis that:

³⁴ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, pp. 117, 126.

³⁵ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, p. 18; Jansson, 'Measured reciprocity', p. 369.

³⁶ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 70v-71r.

³⁷ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, f. 70v.

This poor man at the gates recommends himself to Your Excellency for some money that he says he would receive from you as a singular gift and grace and for alms.³⁸

The precise identity of the ‘poor man’ is not known, nor is it possible to be definitive about the location of the gates. However, in the context of the detailed conventions for tipping described by Grassi, in which he specified that a ducal ambassador should give ‘four or five ducats’ at the ‘iron gate’, this request for a gift takes on a rather different character than it might in a situation where no such conventions existed.

Indeed, tipping was a highly-organised system at the court of Rome, the efficient functioning of which relied on ambassadors and others giving appropriate sums to the appropriate people. On 1 January 1528 William Knight, then an English ambassador at the papal court, wrote to Cardinal Wolsey about his attempts, with Gregorio Casali and Edward Fox, to offer a ‘reward’ of 2,000 crowns to Cardinal Pucci and thirty crowns to Pucci’s secretary.³⁹ As we will see below, the cardinal subsequently refused to accept the money; not so the secretary, who kept his thirty crowns.⁴⁰ Although in modern terms it is tempting to regard this as out-and-out bribery, we should be wary of concluding that the secretary saw this as anything other than a legitimate tip for his assistance. In his study of political presents in sixteenth-century Basel, Valentin Groebner has outlined the concept of an ‘access fee’: the expected gift to a junior official for expediting access to his superiors.⁴¹ It seems plausible that Pucci’s secretary, like the Basel officials, would have supplemented his income through the receipt of regular tips, and that this would not have been perceived as corrupt.

This suggestion is corroborated by evidence from the diary of the papal master-of-ceremonies Biagio Martinelli, in which he regularly recorded the tips he received from visiting ambassadors and how he shared them with his colleagues in the office of ceremonies. For example, on 22 June 1520 they received fifty gold ducats from the secretary of the duke of Albany (ambassador of the king of Scotland), of which Martinelli had 25 crowns; from the Venetian ambassadors of 1523 whose dining and silverware we discussed in Chapter Three they received forty large ducats to share

³⁸ ‘Questo povero homo dalle porte se raccomanda a S. Ex^{ia} di qualche denari che dice che li riceverà in singulare dono et gratia et per elemosina.’ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 878, c. 235r.

³⁹ *L&P* IV 3751; Burnet IV 36.

⁴⁰ *L&P* IV 4120; Pocock I 102.

⁴¹ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, p. 62.

between them.⁴² Martinelli also recorded cases in which the expected tips were not forthcoming. For example, on the occasion of a presentation to the pope by the Imperial ambassador in 1521, he noted:

For that our office is owed jewels, but up until now we've had nothing but fine words.⁴³

Furthermore, a system of tip-sharing was in place between the ceremonial staff and the chamber staff, in which the latter would pass on to the former one-third of any 'emoluments and jewels' they received.⁴⁴ The overall impression of the document is that such gift-giving was an intrinsic and acknowledged element of diplomacy at Rome. These gratuities, like that received by Cardinal Pucci's secretary, can also be conceptualised as 'access fees' in the sense that the ceremonialists were facilitating diplomats' access to the ritual world of the curia, and in this regard Martinelli's recording of tips is particularly notable. Groebner has pointed to the increasingly stringent requirements placed on Basel city officials to report gifts received, and it is arguable that such registration of gifts offered a means of legitimising them and guarding against accusations of favouritism or corruption.⁴⁵ This view is confirmed by the limited evidence we have regarding illicit gifts, which, as we will see, suggests that one of their most important characteristics was that they were given in secret.

b. What made a gift corrupt?

As Natalie Zemon Davis has demonstrated in her study of gifts in France, gift relationships could be 'the source of intolerable obligation and of accusations of corruption'.⁴⁶ What was it, though, that made a gift corrupt? Algazi has argued that it is not any characteristic of the gift itself that defines it as such, but rather the way it is labelled or represented.⁴⁷ In relation to the court of Rome, D. S. Chambers has suggested that the criterion for distinguishing acceptable rewards might be when they were given for 'the performance of just and necessary services in good conscience, for which the laborer was worthy of his hire – in distinction from manipulating the

⁴² BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, ff. 11v, 30r.

⁴³ 'pro qua debentur officio nostro jocalia, sed adhuc nihil habuimus nisi bona verba.' *ibid*, f. 13v.

⁴⁴ 'cum quibus Cubicularijs conventum est per nos Magistros Cermoniarum quod sic teneantur de quibuscunque emolumentis et iocalibus per eos percipiendis, quod detur nobis tertia pars.' *ibid*, f. 27r.

⁴⁵ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, pp. 15-22 on the extensive recording of gifts; p. 69 on the duty to report them.

⁴⁶ Davis, *The Gift*, p. 165.

⁴⁷ Algazi, 'Negotiating the gift', p. 18.

machine and silencing consciences to assist sinister ends'.⁴⁸ His hypothesis is borne out by the issue in May 1530 by Clement VII of a mandate forbidding – on pain of excommunication – anyone from writing or advising on the question of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, 'contrary to his conscience, in the hope of rewards, prayers, hatred, fear or favour'.⁴⁹ This mandate, not cited by Chambers, was clearly aimed at the rival campaigns for scholarly opinion on the divorce question, but it is revealing for the way it draws the line. It was unacceptable to act against one's conscience: it was acceptable to take a reward for doing what one believed to be right. Yet the notion itself is ambiguous. Who, or what, determined whether a gift was taken in 'good conscience'? Here we are dealing with the importance of the representation and labelling of gifts, and the rhetoric that had to accompany them.

When Sir Francis Bryan and Pietro Vanni came on embassy to Rome in early 1529, one of their tasks was to search the papal registers to try and prove that the brief produced by Catherine of Aragon establishing the legitimacy of her marriage was a forgery. Their instructions included the advice to find a trustworthy individual in the scribes' office, whom they could assure of 'a sufficient rewarde, be it in redy money... or contynuall enterteynment', and to handle the arrangement secretly.⁵⁰ In contrast to the 'official' tips that an ambassador was expected to offer to the ceremonialists, in this case the 'reward' was clearly aimed at persuading individuals to do something beyond their normal, day-to-day work. The fact that the arrangement was to be kept secret confirms the impression that this gift was illicit. Unlike regular tips, these rewards were not to be registered or recorded. The plan seems to have worked: Bryan wrote to the king on 26 January 1529 to report that not only had Vanni been searching the papal registers for relevant books and copying them; but that they had 'founde the menys to have those bokys to our logyng privily'.⁵¹ It would be surprising if those means had not included the 'ready money' on offer.⁵² The relatively codified character of tipping at the papal court suggests that it would

⁴⁸ Chambers, 'Economic predicament', p. 310.

⁴⁹ 'Sub excommunicationis latae sententiae pena, a qua ab alio quam a Romano pontifice nisi in mortis articulo nequeant absolutionis beneficium obtinere, mandamus, ne in dicti matrimoniali causa contra conscientiam spe premii, aut prece, odio, vel timore, aut gratia ducti verbo aut scriptis aliquid allegare, scribere aut consulere.' *L&P* IV 6549; Theiner, p. 592. 21 May 1530; an almost identical mandate was issued on 4 August 1530.

⁵⁰ *L&P* IV 4977; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 170r.

⁵¹ *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 150.

⁵² One formal request from Vanni for a transcript is apparent in the records of the Camera Apostolica; this request, dated 27 January 1529, was for a transcript of a letter from Pope Julius II headed 'Dilecto filio Henrico', presumably to Henry VII. ASV, Camera Apostolica, Diversa Cameralia 86, f. 16r.

rapidly become apparent to an official when he was being offered a larger reward than expected. That, in turn, would raise questions about whether some additional service would be required too. Indeed, the system relied on a shared understanding of the reciprocal nature of the reward-service exchange, a concept which we will discuss further below.

What do these cases tell us about the environment in which diplomats might give gifts? First, although the process of regulating diplomatic gift-giving was more clearly codified in republican contexts than in principalities, in the documentation concerning the court of Rome there are indications that registration of gifts was important; this arguably acted as a means of legitimising them. One definition of corruption was inducement to act against one's conscience, and gifts that might be perceived as corrupting had to be given secretly. All of the gifts cited here bear out Mauss' idea that there is no such thing as a 'free gift'. However, the Maussian theories do not shed light on the question of what constituted 'corruption'. That idea requires an analysis of other elements in gift-giving, in particular, the ways that gifts were labelled as acceptable or unacceptable.

2. Rhetorics of gift-giving

How, then, did diplomats avoid the perception that their gifts were intended to corrupt? Given the anxieties that surrounded diplomatic gift-giving, strategies were needed to situate particular gifts in the context of socially-accepted norms, and two rhetorical devices dominate contemporary discussions of gift-giving. The first draws on the classically-inspired virtue of liberality to make the gift appear honourable, voluntary and disinterested. The second device is the pairing of 'reward' and 'service', which draws on ideas relating to feudal relationships of allegiance or their degenerated forms, patronage and clientage. In the rhetoric of liberality, the need for reciprocity is dissimulated: in that of reward/service, it is acknowledged. We have already discussed the meaning of liberality and how it was expressed in the specific context of diplomacy in Chapter Three. The reward/service pair is relatively straightforward, but a brief example will sum up how the process was understood. It occurs in a 1529 letter from Sir Francis Bryan to Henry VIII, concerning the service of Gregorio Casali:

Sir, yf yt wold plesse Your Grace in recompence of sum of hys servyce done unto Your Grace, to reward hys brother, that ys Imbassadour for Your Grace at Venesse, with sum abbay, or elles sum other benefyce, yt shulde not only comfort hym and hys the better to serve Your Grace, but shulde also sownde to Your Gracys honour, to rewarde them that sarve You.⁵³

Giambattista, as we saw in Chapter Two, received no such abbey or benefice from the English. The importance of this letter, however, lies in the three ways it describes reward: as recompense for services already provided, as a means of ensuring better service in the future, and as a matter of honour. It clearly underlines the expectation that such a gift would be reciprocated. In the context of the literature on gift-giving, it can be noted that the concepts discussed here relate to two points on Sahlins' spectrum of reciprocity: liberality refers to generalised reciprocity (in which gifts are as close as freely given as possible) while reward/service refers to a more balanced reciprocity (in which the exchange is closer to being equal).

We can now turn to see how this rhetoric was used in two prominent cases during Henry VIII's divorce negotiations, when the English ambassadors offered substantial gifts to cardinals from whom they were soliciting support. First, however, we should remind ourselves that there was nothing exceptional about a prince offering money or benefices to one or other cardinal. As William Wilkie has pointed out, such arrangements formed the basis of the cardinal-protector system and lacked, as he puts it, 'the odious overtones such a situation provokes in the modern mind'.⁵⁴ Quite apart from the cardinal-protectors, there were plenty of more junior curial figures who owed substantial incomes to the patronage of the various princes: for example, the Italian bishops of Worcester Silvestro Gigli and Girolamo Ghinucci, whose benefices clearly functioned as rewards for their diplomatic service.⁵⁵ It is therefore not surprising that Sir Francis Bryan's list of possible means of winning support in Rome, outlined in a letter to Henry VIII in early 1529, included:

Fayre wordes, large offers of mony, or pencyon, or byshpyrkykes, or yf all thys wyll not serve, with sum bold wordys, we shall wyne thes men.⁵⁶

⁵³ *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 148-49.

⁵⁴ Wilkie, *Cardinal Protectors*, p. 7. On cardinals' financial troubles see the collected studies in D. S. Chambers, *Renaissance Cardinals and their Worldly Problems* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997).

⁵⁵ See above, Chapter One, p. 35.

⁵⁶ *L&P* IV 5152; *St P* VII 144.

The system of payments to cardinals extended well beyond the pensions they might receive from the princes they ‘protected’. The highly formalised system of payments for services relating candidates for bishoprics in Consistory, for example, has been documented by D. S. Chambers. His study shows how the formally voluntary tip originally paid to cardinals in the fifteenth century in the form of food or drink was transmuted into a cash fee, the level of which was subject to bargaining. Cardinal Caraffa proposed to a reform commission in 1497 that a limit should be placed on the tip but it was not until 1530, following concerns that the gratuities demanded were becoming excessive, that a table of charges was established.⁵⁷ The case demonstrates a certain level of anxiety at the papal court in relation to gift-giving, a suggestion borne out by Grassi’s reference to officials’ greed, and this point is to be borne in mind as we turn to the case-studies.

a. Cardinal Pucci’s 2,000 crowns

THE Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor, Lorenzo Pucci, was a Florentine and close advisor to Pope Clement VII. He had a key role in the decision-making related to Henry VIII’s marriage, and during the 1528 English embassy to the papal court at Orvieto met the ambassadors regularly; in early 1529, Uberto Gambarà, the papal governor of Bologna, attributed the problems with obtaining the divorce to the advice given by Pucci and his fellow cardinal Simonetta.⁵⁸ In Gregorio Casali’s first set of instructions concerning the divorce negotiations, the cardinal was specifically named. The ambassadors were to solicit his friendship and favour; on receiving a positive response, they were to offer him a reward.⁵⁹ It is notable that the friendship and favour were to be established first. Sharon Kettering has argued in relation to gifts between patrons and clients in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France that one of the characteristics of acceptable patronage (as opposed to illegitimate bribery) was that it should be situated in the context of a personal relationship.⁶⁰ A similar

⁵⁷ The charge was: ‘15 per cent of the annual taxable value of the benefice, if this was over 33⅓ ducats, and a further 5 per cent for the cardinal’s chamberlains’. Chambers, ‘Economic predicament’, pp. 301 and 309.

⁵⁸ See *L&P* IV 4118; *St P* VII 63. *L&P* IV 4120; Pocock I 97. Sir Francis Bryan reported Gambarà’s comments thus: ‘Hys reson was, bycaus that the Cardynall Saynt Quaterer, and the Cardynall of Monte, Symonett, with another, be well lernyd, and they tell the Pope He may not do hyt; the which causys the Pope to styke at hyt.’ *L&P* IV 5152; *St P* VII 144.

⁵⁹ ‘ut hâc in re eorum gratiam, atque favorem queatis obtinere, in quem eventum ea munera offeretis.’ *L&P* IV 3641; Burnet IV 31.

⁶⁰ Kettering, ‘Gift-giving and patronage’, p. 150.

mentality seems to be expressed in this case. Casali replied a few weeks later, advising that Pucci was acting ‘most lovingly’ in all matters; he and his colleagues proceeded to offer Pucci a gift of two thousand crowns.⁶¹ His secretary, as we saw above, was given thirty. The word used by Casali to describe the reward was *munificentia*, meaning ‘munificence’ or ‘liberality’: in doing so he positioned the offer in the context of the social virtues, as a disinterested, honourable and voluntary gift. However, nearly three months later, it became clear that the cardinal was refusing to take the money.⁶² Whether he had refused it all along, or whether he had accepted it and then changed his mind is not discernable from the surviving letters. Such problems with gifts are well-documented in historical studies: Kettering points out that in patron-client relationships ‘to refuse to give or receive a gift is to refuse a personal relationship, which may be interpreted as a hostile act’,⁶³ and it is clear that this is the ambassadors’ view. Similarly, Ben-Amos has argued that ‘obligations to reciprocate could be involuntary and disliked’.⁶⁴ Here, despite the rhetoric of disinterested liberality, the cardinal clearly believed that in taking the money he would incur an undesirable obligation to reciprocate: the case demonstrates the shared understanding of what such a reward meant.

Further light is shed on attitudes towards gift-giving by the subsequent discussion between Cardinal Wolsey and Casali, some six months later, about whether some other gift might be given to Cardinal Pucci.⁶⁵ First of all, Wolsey said that the king would not rest until the cardinal accepted one, implying that the refusal was an insult and underlining the role of honour in gift exchanges. He then asked Casali to find out, by means of some conversation with the cardinal’s intimates, what sort of gift would suit best, and hinted that the initial offer had perhaps been insufficiently generous. He suggested a gift of hangings, gold plate or horses and

⁶¹ ‘amantissime omnia agit.’ *L&P* IV 3715; Pocock I 38. *L&P* IV 3751; Burnet IV 36.

⁶² *L&P* IV 4120; Pocock I 102.

⁶³ Kettering, ‘Gift-giving and patronage’, p. 131.

⁶⁴ Ben-Amos, ‘Gifts and favors’, p. 333.

⁶⁵ ‘resque indicat, et Dominus Stefanus assidue predicat, quot modis Reverendissimus Dominus Sanctorum Quatuor de nobis sit optime meritis; qui quum munusculum illud, Regiae Majestatis nomine a vobis oblatum, recusaverit, non conquiescere potest Ipsa Majestas, nisi, donec uberiores gratiam retulerit, pignus aliquod memoris animi exhibuerit. Quocirca dexterrime agite, ut ex familiari aliquo colloquio elicitatis, quibus ille rebus maxime oblectetur; mihi que significate num illi aulea, vasa aurea, aut equi probentur; efficiamque ne putet apud Principem inhumanum aut ingratum sua se officia collocasse. Ex eodem quoque Domino Stefano intellexi, quam ardentem Reverendissimus Sanctorum Quatuor cupiat edificium Sancti Petri excrescere et aliquando absolvi, veluti monumentum illud religionis ac pietatis perpetuo futurum, quod ejus animi consilium, ut santum, ita dignissimum, censeo, quod Christianorum Principum liberalitate quam plurimum juvetur.’ *L&P* IV 4813; *St P* VII 100.

further proposed a contribution towards the building of the new St Peter's, which he situated in the context of the 'liberality of Christian princes'. These references to non-cash gifts hint at a belief that perhaps the *type* of gift – money – rather than the fact of the offer had prompted the refusal. Casali, as we saw in Chapter Three, wrote back recommending a gift of silver plate, which as well as being fashionable might have been perceived as a less obviously coercive and thus more acceptable gift than cash. Fantoni has observed that at the Medici court of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, gentlemen received such things as precious objects or titles, while food and cash gifts were perceived to be appropriate for servants, and the discussion here may well reflect a similar set of values.⁶⁶

A further point of note in this letter is Wolsey's injunction that Casali should approach the cardinal's intimates for information: once again we see the role that household members might play in oiling the wheels of diplomatic exchanges. Some useful context is also provided in a letter from Gregorio Casali to his cousin Vincenzo, written in February 1529. At the time, the Pope was ill, but Casali explained that although little could be negotiated, he did not cease to perform all the offices with both Jacopo Salviati, the Pope's secretary, and Cardinal Pucci.⁶⁷ It was within this framework of personal relationships and day-to-day interaction that rewards could be offered: to return to Casali's first set of instructions, the winning of friendship and favour must come first. Indeed, it was only after the failure of such polite and courteous attempts at reward that the ambassadors resorted to the 'bold words' mentioned by Sir Francis Bryan and began to hint about the 'sollicitacion of the princes of Almayn, and such other matier as shuld and ought to feare the Popes said Holynes'.⁶⁸

What can the case of Cardinal Sanctorum Quatuor tell us about the practice of 'reward'? First, it highlights the type of gift considered appropriate for a cardinal in this context: plate, hangings, horses, or donations to a prestigious building project. It suggests that there was some concern about the suitability of money as a gift, and underlines the importance of social interactions in providing a context for acceptable gift-giving. The rewards here also reflect the social hierarchy. The cardinal's

⁶⁶ Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, pp. 102-105.

⁶⁷ 'Circa negotium Regium licet nihil effici possit propter pontificis infirmitatem, tum non desino omnibus officijs agere cum Domino Jacobo Salviato, et Reverendissimo sanctorum quatuor.' *L&P* IV 5302; TNA, SP 1/53, f. 22.

⁶⁸ *L&P* IV 5476; Gardiner, *Letters*, p. 12. On the same date Sir Francis Bryan wrote to the king to report that the pope will 'do nothing for Your Grace'. *L&P* IV 5481; *St P* VII 166.

secretary gets his thirty crowns; the cardinal himself is offered two thousand. In discussions of the cardinal's gift, the concepts of 'liberality' and 'reward' were both used. Yet the case also demonstrates the limits to labels' power. Despite the rhetoric of liberality, Pucci clearly believed that it would be unacceptable to take a gift without offering something in return. As an influential advisor to the pope, the cardinal was acting, in a certain sense, as a 'gatekeeper', and the decision to offer him a reward fits rather well with Groebner's scheme of 'access fees' mentioned above in relation to the cardinal's secretary: Pucci, in turn, was expediting access to *his* superior. However, it would be a mistake to regard him only in that sense: he was, in his own right, a prince of the Church, and it was Gambara's assessment that the pope would defer to his learning.⁶⁹ Like the tips to the servants, the behaviour of Pucci and the ambassadors is best explained by their mutual awareness of the reciprocal nature of gifts. When the cardinal refused the reward, he extracted himself from the duty to provide a service in return.

b. Cardinal Accolti's 'princely reward'

WE can learn more about how corruption was understood and discussed by contemporaries through an examination of the attempt by the English ambassadors in the early 1530s to bribe the cardinals of Ancona and Ravenna. In an effort to win the support of Pietro Accolti, cardinal of Ancona, in Henry VIII's divorce case, the English ambassadors, particularly Gregorio Casali and William Benet but initially also Pietro Vanni, offered large 'rewards' in the form of benefices and pensions to Accolti and his nephew Benedetto, the cardinal of Ravenna.⁷⁰ Benedetto Accolti double-crossed the English, took similar payments from the Emperor, and the whole business was – from the point of view of Casali and his colleagues – an abject failure. A rich collection of material about the affair survives in the form of documentation from the cardinal's 1535 trial for abuse of power in his role as Legate

⁶⁹ See above, p. 159, note 58.

⁷⁰ The earliest reference to a formal relationship between the two cardinals and the English ambassadors in Rome appears in a letter from Pietro Vanni in June 1529. *L&P* IV 5656; TNA SP 1/54, ff. 86-7. Pietro Accolti, born in 1455, became a deacon of the Rota in 1500 and bishop of Ancona in 1501. He was raised to the cardinalate in 1511. Benedetto Accolti, with his uncle's patronage, accumulated benefices from a much earlier age. Born in 1497, he had his first bishopric (a hand-me-down from his uncle) in 1521 and became a cardinal in May of 1527, one of a group appointed on the basis of their promises of money to defend Rome in the months prior to the Sack. In July 1532 he was appointed Legate to the Marches for life, thanks to a payment of 19,000 ducats to the Camera Apostolica. See their respective entries in the *DBI*.

to the Marches.⁷¹ It has not, however, been fully exploited in the two studies which deal directly with the case, those of Chambers and Costantini.⁷² The accusation that Accolti had been corrupted by the king of England was of relatively minor interest in the context of the trial as a whole; nonetheless, three members of his household were interrogated in detail on that point, and the records of their testimony survive, which together with Accolti's private notes and letters, and the contemporary diplomatic correspondence, provide a significant insight into understandings of 'bribery' at the papal court. They establish the importance of secrecy in the context of corrupt gift exchanges. However, they also demonstrate that even in such illicit cases of reward, participants employed the standard rhetoric of gift-giving.

The idea that it is legitimate to offer rewards to ensure that 'justice' and 'truth' prevail is clearly expressed in the documents. When Henry VIII wrote to William Benet, ambassador in Rome, with instructions concerning a 'princely reward' for the cardinal of Ancona, the king explained:

And this offer the king's highness maketh unto him, not to corrupt him, whose integrity, his grace knoweth well, neither would admit it, nor his highness' honour, most addicted to truth and justice, would be persuaded so to do; but only to animate and encourage him to defend and sustain the truth, and to let and empech such injury and wrong, as is enterprised against his highness, in this his grace's matter.⁷³

Whether this flowery explanation can be considered an accurate account of what the ambassadors thought they were doing must be doubtful. It does demonstrate, however, the variety of linguistic devices that might be applied to pretend that a bribe was not a bribe. The idea of 'justice' was also used by the cardinal in a note, probably to his lawyer, about the affair. He wrote that although Gregorio Casali 'tempted me many times with the greatest of offers', Casali:

⁷¹ The impetus for the cardinal's imprisonment was the claim that he had conspired to put to death five members of the Ancona nobility on trumped-up charges. He was eventually freed after the intervention of the Holy Roman Emperor, although Pope Paul III would have preferred to make an example of him. Costantini, *Il Cardinal di Ravenna*, p. 354.

⁷² The case is discussed briefly in Chambers, 'Economic predicament', p. 310, and in greater detail in his thesis, 'English representation', pp. 81-82 and 559-569. Chambers refers to the English sources and to the documents in the Accolti archive in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze but not to the material in Rome. Costantini, *Il Cardinal di Ravenna*, gives an account of the trial, but the author's focus is the Cardinal's role as governor of Ancona and not the English dealings. In addition to the Florentine sources, Costantini considers a selection of the trial documents, which are in the Archivio di Stato di Roma, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi, vol. 3, trial number 2, but not those relating to the allegations that he was corrupted by the king of England.

⁷³ *L&P* v 611, Pocock II 144.

Sought nothing from me on the king's part, except that my uncle and I should be content not to go headlong against the king, and that we should consider well the good justice which this king required.⁷⁴

The cardinal was, of course, attempting to defend himself against the accusation of corruption, and it is rather doubtful that Casali asked for so little from Accolti, although it is possible that he couched his request in such terms. However, it is Accolti's rhetoric that is of interest. As we have seen, it would have been acceptable for him to receive a gift in return for his conscientious conduct. Accolti went on to say of Henry's offer to nominate him to an English bishopric that:

I thanked the king for the great courtesy and liberality which he employed, but told him that I had done him no service, neither I, nor my uncle, for which we would merit such a thing.⁷⁵

Here Accolti employs both the concept of 'liberality' and the pairing of reward and service discussed above to explain why he turned down the bishopric: he could not accept the reward because he had not provided service. He does so with the polite rhetoric conventionally used to hedge around such requirements of reciprocity, just as concepts of liberality were employed in the case of Cardinal Pucci.

Accolti then contradicts himself. Aware that his claim of having turned down a bishopric may not be sustainable (a number of his servants would testify that he had, in fact, accepted it), he tries to characterise the nomination as a voluntary, disinterested gift:

And [Casali] told me that the king had said to him... that even though he was certain not to be able to make use of me in his cause, that nonetheless he wanted to employ this liberality towards me, for the good qualities, etc.⁷⁶

To a contemporary, well aware of the rules of reciprocity, this would surely seem rather unlikely. Nonetheless, because the concept of liberality implied a free, voluntary gift, and denied the reciprocal nature of the transaction, this was a plausible line of argument for Accolti to employ.

⁷⁴ 'El cavalier predetto adunque piu volte mi tentò con grandissime offerte, ne mi ricercava d'altro ^da parte del Re,^ se non che fussimo contenti et mio zio et io, di non andar precipiti contro al Re, et che volessimo considerar bene la bona justitia che esso Re pretendeva.' ASF, Fondo Accolti 9, no. 30, f. 2r.

⁷⁵ Ringratiai il Re della molta cortesia et liberalità che usava, ma li dissi ch'io non li havevo fatto servitio alcuno ne io, ne mio zio per il quale meritassimo tal cosa. *ibid*, f. 2v.

⁷⁶ '[Casali] mi disse che il re li haveva detto in presentia del dottor Stephano, che se bene era certo di non si poter servir di me in la sua causa che pur voleva usar questa liberalita verso di me, per le bone qualita ec.' *ibid*, f. 3r.

In contrast, however, the men who questioned Accolti's servants about their master's activities were quite sure that no-one gave something for nothing. An early exchange in the interrogation of Flavio Crisolino, one of the cardinal's agents in Rome, reveals the interrogator's implicit pairing of reward and service, to which Flavio responds in kind:

[Interrogator]: To what end and effect was the said money given to the said Reverend Lord and the said promises made?

[Flavio]: They were made and given in respect of having him favour the king's matrimonial cause in the presence of his uncle the Reverend Cardinal of Ancona.⁷⁷

The interrogator's question effectively eliminates the possibility that the money might have been given freely with no expectation of reciprocation. The cardinal of Ravenna's former secretary, Giovanni Bernardino, also coupled the concepts of reward and service when, under interrogation, he outlined how Accolti poached him from his post in Gregorio Casali's household:

Living with the cavalier Casali and yet being at the cardinal's service, he said to me many times: you live with me and not with the cavalier and I will reward you richly.⁷⁸

The documents in this case make it abundantly clear that all concerned shared a conception that rewards should be reciprocated. Even while Cardinal Accolti dressed up his self-justification with the rhetoric of liberality and imputed to Henry VIII the possibility that the king would give something for nothing, he claimed that he refused to accept rewards precisely because he was providing no service. Indeed, this was the crux of the case against him: if it could be proved that he did take the rewards, he surely must have provided the service requested.

Thus far, the rewards we have discussed in the Accolti case share many of the characteristics of other gifts: formally voluntary but in fact requiring reciprocation. The Accolti documents also confirm the observation made in relation to Bryan and Vanni's rewards to the scribes, that secrecy was an important concomitant of illicit

⁷⁷ '[Int.] ad quem finem et effectum fuerunt date? dicto pecunis dicto Reverendissimo domino et fatte promissiones predictae. Respondit furno fatte et date respattive havesse afavorire apresso suo zio Reverendissimo Cardinale dancona la causa matrimoniale di ipso re.' ASR, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi 3, 2 I, f. 64r.

⁷⁸ 'Standio con el cavaliere casali et essendo anchora al servitio del cardinale quale mi diceva piu volte tu stai con meco et non con el cavaliere et io te remunerero grassamente.' ASR, Tribunale del Governatore di Roma, Processi 3, 2 II. Giovanni Bernardino di Ferrara, 3 May 1535. This volume contains many un-numbered folios; for reference I have given the name of the witness and the date of the interrogation.

gifts. As we saw in our discussion of the household in Chapter Three, when Casali and William Benet came to Accolti's house to discuss their offers they came on their own and used the back door.⁷⁹ Such a tactic was recommended by Étienne Dolet, who was much concerned at the possibility of servants' indiscretion and advised that the ambassador:

Should look to it carefully that he let fall no hint in conversation which could lead his servants, or others not of his household to a knowledge of his plans.⁸⁰

Furthermore, when Benet went to London to organise a 'princely reward' for the Accolti cardinals, he purported that he went on private business.⁸¹ The need for secrecy was also a problem that the ambassadors encountered in their attempt to obtain benefices with which to bribe the Accolti cardinals. It was, wrote Henry VIII, not possible for the gift to be made secretly, because of the number of court officials who would be involved in drawing up the documentation: 'Clerkis and Kepers of our Signet, Privei Seale, and Great Seale'.⁸² The reticence about making public offers to the cardinals underlines the illicit nature of the transaction. After all, it was not so unusual to grant bishoprics to foreigners: Cardinal Campeggio and Girolamo Ghinucci held Salisbury and Worcester and both provided service to the English in their respective roles as cardinal-protector and ambassador. There was something different about the promises being made here.

The Accolti case tells us much about the ways that sixteenth-century diplomats would approach illicit gift-giving. They would use much the same rhetoric – that of liberality and reward – that they employed in more legitimate cases. Indeed, by labelling gifts in this way they sought to deny the perception of corruption. Underlying the rhetoric was a shared understanding that offering inducements to act against one's conscience would be unacceptable. Finally, this case, like that of the scribes' rewards, emphasises the difficulties that the concept of corruption poses to the standard models of gift-giving.

⁷⁹ See above, Chapter Three, p. 131.

⁸⁰ Dolet, p. 86.

⁸¹ *L&P* v 511; Theiner, p. 598. *L&P* v 611; Pocock II 144.

⁸² *L&P* v 887; *St P* VII 364.

3. Presents and presentations

IN contrast to the secrecy of illicit rewards, some diplomatic gifts worked by virtue of their public nature, and it is to these that we now turn. Fantoni has argued that in the framework of court politics the ostentation of the gift and publicity about it were particularly important.⁸³ Presentations of gifts occurred in a variety of contexts in the course of diplomacy: in formal occasions at court, as diplomats travelled to their postings, and at the conclusion of a particular ambassador's service. This section of the chapter will consider these three types of gift-giving in turn, noting the similarities and differences in the descriptions of gifts and the circumstances in which they were presented.

a. Gifts between princes

IN the early part of the sixteenth century, all sorts of gifts were exchanged between European princes. Their importance might lie in symbolising the friendship that existed between the respective courts, but they might also play a part in the process described by Richardson as 'competitive magnificence'.⁸⁴ This concept bears no little resemblance to the competitive gift-giving described by Mauss in relation to the tribes of north-western America, although Richardson does not explicitly draw on Mauss' theory in his analysis.⁸⁵ As we will see, these princely gifts were not invariably exchanged through formal diplomatic mechanisms; however, one occasion on which there is clear evidence of an ambassador's involvement is the presentation of Henry VIII's pamphlet against Martin Luther, the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum*, to Pope Leo X on 2 October 1521.⁸⁶ The English resident ambassador in Rome, John Clerk, accompanied the formal presentation at a special meeting of Consistory with a sermon against Luther.⁸⁷ As we saw in Chapter One, in this environment the diplomat would have been understood to personify the honour of his king and, in this particular case, that king's commitment to the Christian faith. The reciprocal nature of this exchange is very clear indeed: later the same month,

⁸³ Fantoni, *La corte del granduca*, p. 128.

⁸⁴ Richardson, 'Anglo-French Political and Cultural Relations', p. 312.

⁸⁵ Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 37-38.

⁸⁶ BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, f. 14v.

⁸⁷ *L&P* III 1654; Ellis (ed.), *Original Letters*, 3rd series, 1 262-69; ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, f. 130r.

Henry was granted the title of Defender of the Faith.⁸⁸ Indeed, it formed part of a much longer series of gift exchanges between the Tudors and the papacy. Henry VIII had received a Golden Rose from Julius II in 1510, and in 1513, following his victory against the French at Tournai, he was given the Holy Sword and Cap of Maintenance by Leo X.⁸⁹ In return, Henry gave Giulio de' Medici (the future Clement VII) the cardinal-protectorship of England, and made Giuliano de' Medici, Pope Leo's brother, a member of the Order of the Garter.⁹⁰ These gifts clearly illustrate the functioning of a reciprocal system with the Maussian characteristics that the gifts are formally voluntary but some return is clearly expected. Unlike the gifts discussed elsewhere in this chapter, however, many of them had a particular spiritual significance which added an extra rhetorical dimension to the process of exchange.

While the gifts cited above would have involved some public ceremony in the giving, and some had religious connotations, this was not true of all gifts between princes and popes. There were also presents of luxury items: in 1511 Leo X dispatched some cheese and wine to Henry VIII, and was also involved in commissioning a tomb design for the king.⁹¹ These gifts draw our attention to two important factors in such princely gift-giving. The first is that, for all the religious rhetoric attached to the Golden Rose and the cardinal-protectorship both were elements in a process of military, political and dynastic alliance-building on the part of European princes. Furthermore, they highlight the lack of distinction in this period between personal/family and state interests: were they presents from the della Rovere or Medici to the Tudors, or from pope to king? This ambiguity is confirmed by the fact that the key facilitator of many of these exchanges was the London-based Florentine merchant Giovanni Cavalcanti, who held no official diplomatic position in the papal service, but acted as a representative of Medici family interests.⁹² It will become apparent that all sorts of diplomatic gifts embody such multiple meanings.

⁸⁸ *L&P* III 1659; ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc. 31, f. 131r.

⁸⁹ Margaret Mitchell, 'Works of art from Rome for Henry VIII. A study of Anglo-Papal relations as reflected in papal gifts to the English king' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), 178-203 (pp. 179-80). On the Golden Rose, see Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, p. 170.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ The 'wine and cheeses' are cited in Mitchell, 'Works of art', p. 179; much of that article is given over to a discussion of the tomb project and other artistic exchanges. The tomb in particular has had a more recent scholarly treatment, with extensive new documentary evidence, in Sicca, 'Pawns of international finance'.

⁹² See the articles by Cinzia Sicca, 'Consumption and trade of art', and 'Pawns of international finance', and that of Mitchell, 'Works of Art'.

Nor is it possible to determine the official or unofficial nature of a gift on the basis of the person facilitating it. As ambassador in Rome Gregorio Casali had, as we saw in Chapter One, duties well beyond the immediate environs of the papal court, and one of his many responsibilities was to arrange the exchange of luxury gifts, particularly horses, hawks and hounds, between his employer and various Italian princes. It was in this role, as Chapter Two noted, that he began his career in the English service, and a series of letters in the archive at Mantua demonstrate that it was a recurring task throughout his diplomatic career.⁹³ Casali's involvement in such transactions – and also that of the special ambassadors Sir Francis Bryan and Sir Nicholas Carew – helps to explain why in certain situations the appointment of a 'courtier' type ambassador, familiar with the worlds of the hunt and joust, had particular advantages. In detailing Casali's role, this correspondence provides a useful counterpoint to the evidence concerning gifts of works of art, which has been the subject of more scholarly discussion. Furthermore, the fact that much of the English side of this correspondence is missing raises the suspicion that many other records of similar gift exchanges facilitated by ambassadors might also have disappeared.

Casali was responsible for writing directly to the marquis of Mantua with requests or offers and also for writing letters of introduction for English agents visiting the court of Mantua. He discussed the gifts, too, with the Mantuan ambassador at Rome, Francesco Gonzaga.⁹⁴ In December 1529, when Sir Nicholas Carew, the chief English special ambassador and Henry VIII's Master of Horse, arrived in Bologna with various horses for distribution as gifts, Casali wrote to the marquis:

Of the horses which the Master of Horse has supplied I find none appropriate for Your Excellency except a gelded bay, which runs very well, and will be sent to Your Excellency. The King's Majesty has given the Master of Horse the hottest commission ever made, that he should

⁹³ See above, Chapter Two, pp. 73-75. The relevant letters are in ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 578 (unnumbered letters from England); 869, c. 517v (12 December 1525); 871, c. 257r (4 May 1526) and c. 293r (25 May 1526); 876, c. 521r (1 July 1528); 877, c. 379r (5 July 1528); 878, c. 522r and c. 524r (30 May 1529); 1153, c. 324r (1 January 1530). Only the letters in busta 578 are catalogued in the *Calendar of State Papers (Venetian)*: on the number of uncatalogued letters relating to English affairs in the archive see Alessandro Luzio (ed.) *L'Archivio Gonzaga di Mantova: La corrispondenza familiare, amministrativa e diplomatica dei Gonzaga* (Mantua: Mondadori, 1993, first published 1922), p. 118. Letters in the Archivio Estense at Modena demonstrate that similar exchanges took place between England and Ferrara, although the source material is not so extensive. See in particular ASMo, Archivio Estense, Principi Esteri, 1608/1 (Inghilterra).

⁹⁴ See for example Francesco Gonzaga's letter of 5 July 1528, ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 379r.

look to get such Barbary horses from every place in Italy as principally those of Your Excellency, who can in any case be certain that at present you could not do greater pleasure to the King's Majesty than by providing him with such horses; however I beg you that, should the Master of Horse come to visit Your Excellency, as he wishes to do, you will have ready those two Barbary horses about which you spoke to me.⁹⁵

The letter illustrates the obvious reciprocity involved in that transaction: it was a straightforward exchange of racehorses. Nonetheless, it is not clear that there was always such a direct swap: a letter from Casali in 1532 (reflecting, we may note, an ironic resignation about the poor progress of Henry VIII's divorce) implies that he is simply soliciting horses to be sent to England without an immediate offer of something in return:

The Most Serene King of England, having at present no other solace but to amuse himself with racehorses, wrote to me in days past, and now writes to me again... that he would like to have some Barbary horse...⁹⁶

Here, although there was an underlying expectation of reciprocity in gift-giving between princes, its time-scale was unspecified. The transaction can be described in Sahlins' terminology as tending towards 'generalised reciprocity'. There was an expectation of return, but it was vague.

This correspondence also reminds us of the importance of the rhetoric involved in gift-giving. Another letter shows the language of friendship that surrounded such gifts: Casali wrote that 'there is no prince in Italy whom the King's Majesty loves more than Your Excellency'.⁹⁷ Just like the offers of reward to cardinals, these gift exchanges had to be hedged around with the appropriate words of courtesy, in much the same manner as Kettering has observed in relation to patron-client gift-giving.⁹⁸ These princely gifts, then, functioned in the context of a competition for honour

⁹⁵ 'Delli cavalli che Mons. Lo Granscudiero ha menato non trovo alcuno che faccia al proposito di Vostra Ex., salvo che un baio castrato, che va molto bene, il quale si mandera a V. Ex. La Maesta del Re ha dato a Mons. Lo Grande una commissione la piu calda che facesse mai, che debba vedere di havere cavalli barbari cosi d'ogni luoco d'Italia, come principalmente di quelli di V. Ex., la quale sia pur certa che al presente non potrebbe fare maggior piacere alla Maesta del Re che servirla di tali cavalli, pero la prego che venendo Mons. Lo Grande, come disidera di fare, avisitare V. Ex., ella voglia havere in ordine quelli doi barbari di che ella mi disse.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1152, c. 466r. 14 December 1529.

⁹⁶ 'Non havendo al presente il Ser^{mo} Re d'Inghilterra altro solazzo che dilettersi de cavalli corridori, mi scrisse Sua Maesta a di passati, et hora un'altra volta mi scrive, si come la Ex. V. vederà per la letera che l'exhibitore di questa le mostrerà che vorria havere qualche cavalla barbara per razza...' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 881, c. 627r, letter of 2 June 1532. See also, on the same, c. 653r, letter of 29 August 1532.

⁹⁷ 'La Maesta del Re non ha principe in Italia che tanto ami quanto V. Ex.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1153, c. 324r, 1 January 1530.

⁹⁸ Kettering, 'Gift-giving and patronage', pp. 131-33.

between European princes, in which their ambassadors acted as their representatives. They underline the difficulty of distinguishing between official and unofficial gift-giving in this period and, finally, are given with very similar rhetorical flourishes to those that accompanied the rewards discussed above.

b. Presents on the road

As we saw in the case of the *Assertio*, certain gifts would be given in a highly ceremonial context, where the ambassador would make his presentation in what was, in effect, the persona of his prince. Diplomats could also receive gifts in the persona of their masters, and this is particularly apparent in the case of the gifts which were customarily given in the course of their journeys to and from a posting. Special ambassadors travelling at relatively leisurely speeds were most commonly involved in such presentations: those ambassadors who were travelling for urgent negotiations often bypassed such ceremony.⁹⁹ The distance embodied by the post road has traditionally been regarded as a problem in early modern politics and diplomacy, notably by Fernand Braudel, who called such distance the ‘first enemy’.¹⁰⁰ The evidence, however, suggests that the post road was in fact an important space for hospitality and gift exchange and consequently for political activity. An ambassador’s role as princely representative did not begin on his arrival at his posting, but as soon as he began his travel abroad. For example, while *en route* to Rome in 1528, Sir Francis Bryan received a ‘present off wyne’ from the mayor of Boulogne; this was an opportunity for the mayor to demonstrate his friendship towards France’s ally England.¹⁰¹ The term ‘present’ is used in the English diplomatic correspondence of this period to describe such gifts, and it offers a useful distinguishing category with which to understand this particular variety of gift-giving. The following year, during their voyage to the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor, Sir Nicholas Carew and Richard Sampson received wine in a number of towns, including Boulogne, Abbeville and Nevers.¹⁰² On their final day in Turin, the duke of Savoy sent Carew and Sampson a more substantial gift:

⁹⁹ See the discussion in Chapter One, p. 32.

¹⁰⁰ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* trans. Siân Reynolds (London: Fontana, 1975) pp. 355-56.

¹⁰¹ *L&P* IV 4661; *St P* VII 93.

¹⁰² Wall, pp. 46, 47, 51.

A goodly present of Rawe wyldfoule that is to wytte. vj capons iiij.
fesant[es] / xij wodcock[es] / xij partriches / xij qwayles. and vj
rabett[es].¹⁰³

On their subsequent arrival at Reggio nell'Emilia they were greeted by a nephew of Gregorio Casali, who put them up at his house, 'the fayerest in all the towne', where they received from the duke of Ferrara:

xx. capons xx. pertryches / foure hares / two cheses parmesanes / xij
botteilles of wyne / two barylles of olyues / vj boxes of marmelade and
comfitures / vj torchett[es] and xxiiij ca[n]del[es] of virgin waxe.¹⁰⁴

Likewise, on their arrival in Lucca in 1528, Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox received a hugely lavish 'presente' including twenty 'gret pykes', confectionary and wines. It came with considerable ceremony, the fish alone on four men's heads in basins of silver, and filled a 'gret chambre'.¹⁰⁵ The number of instances in which wine was given provides evidence to complement Groebner's finding that it was also the preferred diplomatic gift in Basel and other cities in eastern France, southern Germany and Switzerland.¹⁰⁶

The *presentation* of presents was important because they worked by virtue of their highly symbolic and public nature. Their particular imagery varied: it might be quite literal, as in the case of the Lucca present, which was decorated with the arms of Henry VIII, those of the city, and those of the Holy Roman Emperor. On the other hand, the gift of wildfowl to Carew and Sampson has a symbolism less obvious today, but which would have been clearly understood at the time. As Allen J. Grieco has argued, wildfowl had a particular cultural significance in late medieval and Renaissance Italy.¹⁰⁷ For most people, the consumption of fowl was regarded as unhealthy: it was thought to heat the blood, and consequently to lead to the sin of lust. For princes, however, and others who exercised political power, fowl was a suitably noble food; in Florence, members of the Signoria were required to eat it.¹⁰⁸ The fact that Gardiner and Fox received a present not of wildfowl but rather of pike in Lucca might reflect their ecclesiastical status, but is more likely to be due to the

¹⁰³ Wall, p. 56.

¹⁰⁴ Wall, p. 58.

¹⁰⁵ *L&P* IV 4078; *St P* VII 60 fn.; TNA, SP 1/47, ff. 117-18.

¹⁰⁶ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, pp. 22-30.

¹⁰⁷ Allen J. Grieco, 'Food and Social Classes in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy', in Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (eds), *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 302-312.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, p. 305.

timing: it was Lent. (Sampson, who did receive wildfowl, was a cleric too.) Such large fish were, like fowl, regarded as suitable gifts for people of high social standing.¹⁰⁹

This gift-giving was an important part of diplomatic ceremonial, allowing the various towns, the two dukes, and the city of Lucca, to demonstrate their friendship and liberality towards the king of England, and thereby to underline their own status as givers. It also reinforces two observations made in previous chapters: first, there is a role for social and personal networks in facilitating such gift-giving, which surely required some advance preparation, evident here in the role of Casali's nephew. Second, there is clearly a close relationship between this type of gift-giving and the liberal diplomatic entertaining discussed in Chapter Three, both of which characterise the giver/host as noble and honourable. A letter from Gardiner and Fox to Henry about their gift from the city of Lucca draws our attention to three important factors. They wrote:

The citizens of this citie having understanding of our commyng, presented us with a marvelous goodly and coostly present in a solempne maner and facyon, not as our personages, but as Your Graces honnour, did requyre.¹¹⁰

As we saw in Chapter One, 'honour' was a constant motif in the diplomatic correspondence of this period, and was central to contemporary understandings of nobility. Its use here parallels the way it was used to praise Casali's hospitality, cited in the previous chapter. Likewise, 'honour' is often referred to in the literature in gift-giving: Marcel Mauss wrote that in the primitive societies he studied, honour was expressed through gifts, but also in many other ways.¹¹¹ Alain Derville comments that the study of the gift invites the scholar to reflect on the centrality of honour, and Natalie Zemon Davis argues that for a local seigneur in sixteenth-century France, his gifts to superiors functioned to establish him in their 'noble world of honor'.¹¹² Unfortunately, in the analysis of gifts, the concept of honour tends to be overshadowed by that of reciprocity. In the case of these presents, however, it is notable that the description places rather greater weight on the former than the latter.

¹⁰⁹ Grieco, 'Food', p. 306.

¹¹⁰ *L&P* IV 4077; *St P* VII 60.

¹¹¹ Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 37-38.

¹¹² Alain Derville, 'Pots de vin, cadeaux, racket, patronage. Essai sur les mécanismes de décision dans l'état bourguignon', *Revue du Nord* 56 (1974), 341-364 (p. 345); Davis, *The Gift*, p. 63.

The second important aspect of Gardiner and Fox's letter is the way it draws attention to the framing of the Lucca gift in terms of a relationship of service between its citizens and the king of England:

They accompte, as they saye, themselves as Your Graces subgettes, and confesse that their citie and citizens, have perceyved noo lesse benefettes and promotions of Your Highnes, thenne if the same had been ther natural Lorde.¹¹³

There were indeed close ties between Lucca and the English court: the bishopric of Worcester had been held from 1497 to 1521 by members of the Gigli family of Lucca, and Henry VIII's Latin secretary Andrea Ammonio and his successor Pietro Vanni (who we have already encountered in his diplomatic role), who both held English ecclesiastical benefices, were Lucchese.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, for a small republic in the period of the Italian wars, this rhetoric of clientage in relation to a European prince was probably a sensible political strategy. However, the similarity between the language of service here and that used in relation to other types of gift is striking.

Finally, Gardiner and Fox's letter makes a key point about contemporary understandings of the figure of the diplomat. By differentiating between their own 'personages' and the king's honour, they draw attention to the ambassador's dual persona as individual and royal representative. In terms of their own social status, this gift was beyond them. Fox, at this stage employed as secretary to Cardinal Wolsey, and Gardiner, also in Wolsey's service, were both Cambridge-educated clerics; although they were rapidly ascending the ecclesiastical ladder neither had yet achieved the office of bishop.¹¹⁵ Yet as diplomats they also personified the majesty of their king and thus the present became appropriate.

c. Leaving gifts

IN trying to account for the ways that municipal officeholders received gifts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Valentin Groebner has suggested that they were '*personae mixtae*, dual but insufficiently separate figures in which official and private incomes and functions overlapped in a complex manner'.¹¹⁶ Groebner does not develop this analysis in any detail. It has, however, much resonance in the case of

¹¹³ *L&P* IV 4077; *St P* VII 60.

¹¹⁴ For the Gigli, see above, Chapter One, p. 35. For Ammonio, *Fasti*, III 53; VIII 41; XII 54, 79; for Vanni, *Fasti*, II 20; III 5, 30, 55; IV 63; VI 36; VIII 41; XII 47 and his *DNB* entry.

¹¹⁵ See their respective entries in the *DNB*.

¹¹⁶ Groebner, *Liquid Assets*, p. 68.

the Renaissance ambassador, who, as we have seen, personified his prince as well as acting in his own right, and it offers a useful starting point from which to consider a second type of present which ambassadors regularly received: that given on their departure from a particular posting. Although this type of gift shares with the present certain ceremonial elements, and undoubtedly had a similar function of honouring the ambassador's master, it included a greater element of 'reward' for the individual ambassador (that is, for his non-princely, private persona). Jansson, dealing principally with the period 1600-1800, says unequivocally that leaving gifts were 'personal'¹¹⁷ but at this earlier stage too sharp a delineation would be inappropriate. Nonetheless, such gifts could add substantially to a diplomat's income, or at least make good the expenses incurred through his work.¹¹⁸

One typical gift to a departing ambassador was the gold chain. Following his special embassy to the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor at Bologna, Sir Nicholas Carew, the chief ambassador and a gentleman of the king's privy chamber, received a gold chain weighing 2,000 ducats, while the other English ambassador, Richard Sampson, dean of the Chapel Royal, also received a chain, but of half the weight. Their herald and secretary, Thomas Wall, was presented with 100 crowns of Venice.¹¹⁹ As Marcello Fantoni has pointed out one of the advantages of the chain as a gift was its easy conversion to cash: it is for this reason, he suggests, that its precise weight and number of links was often specified.¹²⁰ Indeed, it is possible that Nicholas Carew cashed in his chain, for in a list of royal plate three years later is the entry: 'Received of the King a great chain of gold, bought by him of Sir Nic. Carewe, with 101 links.'¹²¹ Such gifts clearly involved an element of personal reward, but were also part of the systemic exchange that went on between European courts and their representatives. That their presentation was an international convention is clearly illustrated by the numerous cases that can be cited: for example, on his departure from England in May 1526, the chief French ambassador received a chain weighing 2,500 ducats.¹²² The chain was not, however, the only acceptable gift: money was also given. Although, as we saw above, cash gifts were not always perceived to be

¹¹⁷ Jansson, 'Measured reciprocity', p. 364.

¹¹⁸ MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', p. 239.

¹¹⁹ Wall, p. 84.

¹²⁰ Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, p. 105. Although Fantoni's study deals with a somewhat later period (late sixteenth to early seventeenth century) the similarity in the gifts is striking.

¹²¹ *L&P* vi 339. April 1533.

¹²² Letter of Uberto Gambara to Francesco Guicciardini, LPL, MS 4434, f. 273v.

appropriate for men of higher rank, Valentin Groebner has pointed out that gifts of gold money, as distinct from those of silver or copper, might also be regarded as ‘costly treasures’.¹²³ In March 1535, on his departure from Venice after almost ten years there as English ambassador, the Senate agreed to give Giambattista Casali ‘silver, gold or money’ to the value of 500 ducats, and his secretary fifty ducats’ worth of cloths of silk or money.¹²⁴ On their respective departures from England in February and December 1529, Vincenzo Casali, acting as a diplomatic messenger, received a gift of seventy-two crowns of the sun, at 4s 8d, while the Imperial ambassador received two hundred crowns of the sun, at 4s 4d.¹²⁵ These leaving gifts functioned in a circular system of reciprocity in which every court (or republic) was expected to give appropriately, even if the return might not be direct or immediate.

The case of Carew, Sampson and Wall demonstrates that such leaving presents might be given with some ceremony. A gentleman of the emperor’s privy chamber, the chamber treasurer and another gentleman usher came to Carew’s lodging with four torches burning before them. Sampson’s gift was accompanied by ‘very goodly wound[es]’, as was the gift to the embassy herald, Thomas Wall.¹²⁶ The case also illustrates how presents to ambassadors were framed within the social order, confirming Fantoni’s observation of later Medici court practice that the intrinsic or symbolic value of the gift rose in direct proportion to the rank of the recipient.¹²⁷ Alain Derville, writing on bribery in fifteenth-century Lille and Saint-Omer, similarly found that social hierarchy was meticulously respected in the exchange of gifts.¹²⁸ The careful observance of such distinctions is confirmed in the case of Carew by the fact that the presentations were made by a gentleman of the Emperor’s privy chamber, his equal in rank.¹²⁹ MacMahon, however, has qualified this point in his study of Henry VIII’s ambassadors, arguing that while social status was indeed

¹²³ *Liquid Assets*, p. 5.

¹²⁴ *CSP Ven* v 38, 40. The rate of exchange is noted in this decision as six livres and four soldi per ducat.

¹²⁵ *L&P* v pp. 309, 316. Note the variation between the rates, and from the official exchange rate.

¹²⁶ Wall, p. 84.

¹²⁷ Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, pp. 97, 102-105.

¹²⁸ Derville, ‘Pots de vin’, p. 345.

¹²⁹ On the diplomatic functions of the Privy Chamber, and the development of an internationally-recognised rank of ‘Gentleman of the Privy Chamber’, see David Starkey, ‘Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547’, pp. 71-118 in Starkey (ed.), *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longman, 1987). MacMahon, however, argues that status as a gentleman of the Privy Chamber was not a definitive factor in diplomats’ ability to build good relations at the receiving court. ‘Ambassadors of Henry VIII’, p. 162.

the central factor in determining the leaving gift, the diplomat's popularity at the receiving court and his length of service were also relevant.¹³⁰

In relation to the question of whether these gifts were official or personal, an interesting example is provided by a present from the Venetian authorities to Gregorio Casali on his return to England after a short visit to Venice in July 1527. The Senate decreed that he should be given 'silver utensils and cloths of silk' worth 200 gold crowns.¹³¹ There are several points of note about this gift. First, the annuity received by Casali with his English knighthood was also of 200 crowns: with one gift he had, effectively, doubled that money.¹³² This should not be surprising: although no extensive research has been done on courtly gift-giving in this precise period, Fantoni's analysis of Medici court practice in the later sixteenth century has demonstrated that 'gifts' typically provided half a courtier's income.¹³³ Casali's Venetian gift is also notable because in the Senate record it was framed in terms of the 'good offices that he had always carried out for the honour and benefit of our state' and so that he would be 'confirmed in his good disposition'.¹³⁴ The political pre-dispositions of diplomats were clearly factors in diplomacy and gifts surely had a role if not in changing attitudes then at least in maintaining them. As we will see in Chapter Five, the Venetians had good reasons to cultivate a relationship with Casali as an individual as well as simply doing honour to his employer: he would become the principal focus for their ambassador Gasparo Contarini's attempts to undermine

¹³⁰ MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', pp. 239-40.

¹³¹ *CSP Ven* III 131; ASVe, Senato, Secreti, filza 7, unnumbered folio of 5 July 1527.

¹³² For the annuity, see above, Chapter Two, p. 74. The question of exchange rates is problematic, but the value of crowns from one country or another does not seem to have varied by more than about ten per cent. An indication of the relative values of currency can be derived from the various English proclamations setting the exchange rates. Neither the gold crown nor the ducat was an English coin, but both were made legal tender in 1522. In that year and in 1525 foreign gold was officially exchangeable as follows: the ducat at four shillings and six pence; the French crown of the sun at 4s 4d; other crowns at 4s. In 1526 the rates were raised to 4s 6d per crown of the sun, and the ducat was allowed to float. In 1538 the French crown was revalued at 4s 8d and the ducat fixed again, this time at 5s. In the meantime, English crowns had been introduced, initially valued in 1526 at 4s 6d but quickly raised to 5s by the end of that year. C. E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), pp. 68-69, 216. The variation in actual, as opposed to official, rates is demonstrated by Thomas Wall's comment that the Venetian crowns he received from the Holy Roman Emperor in 1530 were exchangeable at 4s 8d. Wall, p. 84.

¹³³ Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, p. 105. Fantoni does not discuss diplomatic gifts in this study, focusing on those given within the court.

¹³⁴ 'Essendo per conferirse in Anghilterra il M^{co} Cavallier Casale stato di quel Ser^{mo} Re, apresso la Sant^a del Pontifice / È da usare ogni amorevole demonstratione verso la persona sua / à cio che ultra le' boni officij lha sempre fatto per l'honor, et beneficio del stato nostro, el vade' tanto meglio confermato nella sua bona dispositione.' *CSP Ven* III 131; ASVe, Senato, Secreti, filza 7, unnumbered folio of 5 July 1527.

English policy in relation to the Venetian-occupied towns of Ravenna and Cervia.¹³⁵ Such considerations were probably particularly important in cases of foreign state servants like Casali, whose fortunes were not so closely tied to those of their prince, and they emphasise the importance of considering the private side of the ambassador's dual persona. It is notable, too, that Venice, which as we saw above was most concerned to regulate the gifts received by its own ambassadors should also furnish this example of a problematic gift given *to* an ambassador. Indeed, it suggests that the Republic was well aware of the potential of diplomatic gifts to persuade and wished both to exploit that potential in its own interest and prevent its exploitation by another power.

4. Problematic presents

CASALI'S present from Venice illustrates the difficulty of applying the standard models of gift-giving in the diplomatic context. It is not simply a gift from Venice to the king of England's ambassador, but also to Casali as an individual. While there is no doubt that the Venetians wanted something in return, the lines of reciprocity are blurred. This gift could be reciprocated by means of a similar gift to a Venetian ambassador departing London, but it could also be reciprocated by means of Casali showing some favour toward Venetian interests. It is not the only gift in this case-study that poses such problems. To conclude this chapter, we turn to two other examples that highlight the ambiguities of gifts given to ambassadors. Both were given by members of the Gonzaga family to English diplomats: the first is the regular gift of venison from the cardinal of Mantua, Ercole Gonzaga, to Sir Francis Bryan, and the second a pair of hunting dogs given by the marquis of Mantua, Federico Gonzaga, to Giambattista Casali during the latter's residency as English ambassador in Venice. In the first instance, Cardinal Gonzaga's gift formed part of a relationship also established through regular mutual hospitality, as discussed in Chapter Three, and complemented his regular dining with Bryan. In a letter to Henry VIII, Bryan wrote that the cardinal:

¹³⁵ See below, Chapter Five, pp. 196-99.

Has the name, oone of them, that lovys best huntyng, and for the most part he ys owt of huntyng and kyllys every day 4 or 5 rowys, and sendys me part to my loggyng.¹³⁶

This brief comment emphasises the many questions that need to be asked of early modern gifts. Was anything expected in return? Was this a symbol simply of friendly relations between the English and the rulers of Mantua? Should it be regarded as a 'diplomatic gift', or was it an exchange 'between friends' of the type frequently made by one courtier to another?¹³⁷ Was it simultaneously all of these things?

The gift of hunting dogs from the marquis of Mantua to Giambattista provides further evidence for the ambiguous nature of some diplomatic gifts. They can be understood as a personal gift to Giambattista Casali or as a diplomatic gift to the ambassador of the king of England, and thereby to the king himself, expressing friendship and good relations between the courts. As we saw in Chapter Two and will discuss further in Chapter Five, Giambattista was to some extent a client of the Gonzaga family, and provided the marquis with at least some service either by writing directly with useful news or by passing it onto the Mantuan ambassador at Venice.¹³⁸ We might therefore conclude that the gift tends towards the personal rather than the official, an impression confirmed by Giambattista's letter of thanks to the marquis in which he commented that the dogs were:

Worthy of the lord you are, and far too good a gift for me, for which I thank you, and even though I am not fit to return the favour with any effect, I will nonetheless return it through my good will.¹³⁹

Yet although Giambattista chooses to employ the language of clientage here, the fact that he was a representative of the English king gave the gift an additional level of significance of which both participants in the exchange must surely have been aware.

¹³⁶ *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 150.

¹³⁷ Ambassadors often sent each other gifts and solicited them. In December 1530, Sir Francis Bryan, now ambassador to France, wrote to William Benet in Rome asking him to remind Gregorio Casali to send on some black silk hose he had requested, and asking for two pairs of perfumed gloves too. *L&P* IV 6769; *St P* VII 270. Edward Carne also sent perfumed gloves from Rome to both Edward Fox and Thomas Cromwell. *L&P* V 1025; *St P* VII 371. *L&P* VI 644; TNA, SP 1/77 f. 43. In 1532 and 1533 Edmund Bonner also sent a series of small gifts to Cromwell: a dialogue between 'Marforius' and 'Pasquillus' at which 'to laughe', possibly the satirical rewrite of *Te Deum laudamus* later published in a 1541 German translation; four Parmesan cheeses, which he personally brought back to London from Parma; seeds which he has collected while in Italy; and books, at least one of them annotated. *L&P* V 1658; *St P* VII 394. *L&P* VI 103; TNA, SP 1/74 f. 130. *L&P* VI 158; TNA, SP 1/74 f. 177.

¹³⁸ On his provision of information, see below, Chapter Five, pp. 207-08.

¹³⁹ 'Ho ricevuti per mano del Mag^{co} oratore suo qui uno paro de cani a nome di V. Eccel^{tia} presente degno di quel signor ch'egli è, et troppo grande a me dil che ne la rengratio assai et ancora che io non sia atto a rendergliene mai el contracambio con effetti io pur col buon animo glielo rendero.' ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1461, unnumbered letter of 1 February 1527.

His letter is also notable for its implicit pairing of the concepts of gift and service and draws our attention once again to the importance of the rhetoric attached to gift-giving.

THE diplomatic gift-giving detailed in this chapter amply demonstrates Castiglione's maxim that 'those who give are not all generous'. The gifts given by, and to, ambassadors, required a return. Presents, rewards and gifts of all sorts were important tools in diplomatic practice. Tips would ease an ambassador's way through the stages of ceremony at the court of Rome, while presents *en route* would honour a prince. Gift-giving was also a means through which the social virtue of liberality could be expressed: the rhetoric of liberality was, however, also a means of legitimising gifts which were not truly 'liberal'. The complex conventions attached to gift-giving once again emphasise the importance for the ambassador of good local knowledge, and remind us too of the difficulty of distinguishing between the official and the personal in the diplomacy of the early sixteenth century.

Early modern societies were, as Fantoni has argued, in a stage of transition away from Maussian 'total counter-services', where the gift exchange was all. The gifts we have discussed here function alongside the remuneration received by envoys in the form of diets and expenses: they are not the only means of exchange. Nonetheless, in terms of understanding diplomatic gifts, Mauss' theory can reasonably be applied to those which function within a system of exchange at the societal level, whether they involve a straightforward reciprocal relation (between one prince and another) or a circular one (in the sense that each court is obliged to offer to the ambassadors of another a similar gift). Such gifts include those given by one prince to another, ceremonial presents, and diplomats' leaving gifts. Groebner's argument that gifts could act as an 'access fee' has some particular applications, most notably in relation to the tipping of lower-ranking court officials, but it does not seem to account for every variety of diplomatic gift.

A focus on the semantics and rhetoric of gift-giving offers a promising means of understanding the workings of the system. In particular, the distinction drawn by contemporaries between 'present' and 'reward', and the coupling of the latter concept with 'service' offers an important window on their engagement with different types of gift, as does their use of the concept of 'liberality'. The instances of corrupting, or potentially corrupting, gifts emphasise the importance of considering

the ways that gifts were labelled, and the rhetoric that might be used to legitimise them. Finally, while the model of gift exchange proposed by Mauss and refined by Sahlins can be applied at the societal level to the circulation of gifts between princes and in instances where the ambassador is clearly acting in his princely persona, in other situations the ambassador's dual persona complicates matters. Who, in such cases, is responsible for reciprocating the gift? The prince, or the diplomat? If the diplomat, in which capacity: as his 'official' or his 'private' self? This dual identity will be a focus for discussion in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

‘He is off ther own nation heir, and therfor hathe the mor creditt’: the foreign state servant in Renaissance diplomacy

WHEN Gregorio Casali was first sent on a diplomatic mission to Rome, before his formal accreditation as ambassador to the Holy See, the ambassador John Clerk, bishop of Bath, wrote, probably to Wolsey, that Casali:

In the declaration [*of*] the kynges highnes good mynd towards the affayres of [...] Italye, and other his highnes is ryche qwalytes, is t[*he*] better belevyd, nott by cause he spekythe in them more fervently than I doo, butt by cause he is off ther own nation heir, and therfor hathe the mor creditt.¹

The fact that Casali was seen as ‘one of us’ at the papal court was regarded positively. Furthermore, his ‘credit’ derived not only from his family connections and social status, but also from a national origin shared with others at the Curia. Although today it seems strange that anyone not of English nationality might act as the king of England’s ambassador, it is clear that in the early sixteenth century there were thought to be many advantages to the practice of employing foreigners in diplomatic service. Some of these stemmed precisely from the dual persona of the diplomat discussed in Chapter Four.

As we saw in Chapter One, resident diplomats enjoyed considerable autonomy in terms of their day-to-day activities. The time required to cross sixteenth-century Europe made it impossible for the principal to be consulted on urgent matters. It was, therefore, vital for a prince to be sure of his ambassador’s loyalty. At times, however, a prince might profit from the service of a diplomat who could evince some independence, who had ‘credit’ in his own right and was perceived to speak in his own persona, not only as the mouthpiece of his master. We have already seen that Gregorio Casali could offer to the English a family network, houses for entertaining and a keen awareness of the customs of the Curia, but further advantages derived from the fact that he was Italian. This chapter will draw on a series of case-studies to consider why that was the case; however, it will also examine the problems that the employment of foreigners might pose for both ambassador and prince, asking whether his sometimes ambiguous status left the diplomat vulnerable.

¹ *L&P* IV 1131; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B VII 67-67v. 28 February 1525.

The chapter will begin by assessing the assumptions of the existing literature about the employment of foreigners in diplomacy, questioning whether an emphasis on practical factors like linguistic skills and ability in information-gathering gives an adequate picture of contemporary understandings. It will outline and analyse the specific advantages for sixteenth-century princes in employing foreign state servants, particularly in relation to their use in subterfuge and dissimulation, but will consider too the risks of this system, both for princes and ambassadors, drawing on contemporary descriptions of diplomats in foreign service. A fourth section will examine the ways in which a family such as the Casali could manage simultaneous relationships with a number of foreign powers, and consider whether these relationships were regarded as positive or negative in the context of service to the primary liege, England. A final section will discuss the implications of Casali's diplomatic career post-schism for our understanding of his role as a foreign state servant.

As we saw in Chapter One, the difficulties of communication in early modern Europe meant that resident ambassadors might well be required to make sensitive decisions, at least on tactical matters, without the possibility of communicating with their principal. This raised the important question of their sincerity and fidelity, issues that might seem particularly pertinent in the case of foreign state servants, whose fortunes were often rather less closely tied to their masters' than their native counterparts, and who might over time move from the service of one prince to that of another. The general consensus of the literature on the Renaissance ambassador is that ethnic or national origin was not a decisive factor in the employment of any particular diplomat. Christine Isom-Verhaaren's recent research has revealed the extent to which elite individuals could move between different sovereigns' military or diplomatic service, choosing or rejecting ties of allegiance: the key, she argues, was 'the loyalty that the individual brought to his service to the ruler'.² Rita Mazzei's analyses of the careers of two sixteenth-century Italian secretaries in the Polish service, both of whom had diplomatic roles, tend to confirm that impression,³ and the

² Isom-Verhaaren, 'Shifting identities', p. 132. On this point she closely echoes the view of Prodi, *Diplomazia del Cinquecento*, pp. 10-11.

³ Rita Mazzei, 'Quasi un paradigma: "Lodovicus Montius Mutinensis" fra Italia e Polonia a metà del Cinquecento', *Rivista Storica Italiana* 115 (2003), 5-56 and 'La carriera di un Lucchese segretario del

few studies of foreign agents in the English diplomatic service during this period do likewise. Esther Hildebrandt's article on Christopher Mont, a native of Cologne who was naturalised as an Englishman in the 1530s and subsequently served extensively as an English agent in Germany (though without full ambassadorial status), makes no explicit comment on Mont's loyalties but concludes that his 'cosmopolitan character' made him a 'remarkable man and unusually successful second rank diplomat'.⁴ Another prominent example of a foreigner in the English service is Tommaso Spinelli, a Florentine who served as English ambassador in the Low Countries in the early sixteenth century. Betty Behrens' now rather dated study of Spinelli does not deal explicitly with the question of loyalty: again the implication is that it was not an issue.⁵ In his overview of Henrician diplomacy, Gary M. Bell spells out the conclusion that Spinelli:

Alerts us to the fact that in this age of personal connections, local identity and fluid frontiers, foreign nationals could be expected to serve as loyally as would a Middlesex man.⁶

Maria F. Mellano takes the case further, arguing that in certain contexts foreign state servants were thought to be more reliable than their native counterparts; she suggests that in the earlier years of Tudor rule a possible motivation for the employment of Italians in English diplomacy at Rome was to avoid the use of English agents who might be nostalgic for the Yorkist regime.⁷ She does not, however, provide documentary evidence to this end, and as we saw in Chapter One her work does not take into account the precedents for the employment of foreigners in English diplomatic service, so the suggestion must be regarded at best as tentative. That said, there were certainly cases in which the loyalty of rulers' own subjects was open to doubt. D. S. Chambers has suggested that John Clerk did not return to Rome after 1527, despite his considerable diplomatic experience at the Curia, because he had the wrong position on the divorce, and after the schism one English ambassador, Richard Pate, abandoned his posting at the Imperial court to go into exile in Rome.⁸ Frey and

re di Polonia a metà del Cinquecento', *Archivio Storico Italiano* 164 (2006), 419-56. I am grateful to Trevor Dean for drawing my attention to Mazzei's work.

⁴ Esther Hildebrandt, 'Christopher Mont, Anglo-German Diplomat', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984), 281-92, (p. 292).

⁵ Behrens, 'Thomas Spinelli'.

⁶ Bell, 'Tudor-Stuart diplomatic history', p. 31.

⁷ Mellano, *Rappresentanti italiani*, p. 21.

⁸ Chambers, 'English representation', p. 547. For Pate, see see Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, p. 432 and his *DNB* entry.

Frey offer a rare exception to the consensus of the literature, claiming that the choice of a foreign ambassador ‘could obstruct negotiations, particularly if an exile or rebel were chosen’, but they do not establish that exiles or rebels were common choices (which is doubtful) and the only concrete example of such problems they cite is Charles VIII’s general refusal to deal with ambassadors of Breton birth.⁹ In contrast, they note a variety of cases in which foreigners were employed in diplomatic service without difficulty, which rather undermines their argument.

Given this general agreement that loyalty could be expected from foreign state servants in much the same way as from their native counterparts, it is ironic that one of the preoccupations of the limited research relating to the Casali family and their activities should be precisely the question of whether or not Giambattista Casali, ambassador at Venice, was entirely loyal to Henry VIII. Cesare Vasoli and Edward Surtz, in studies published simultaneously but without reference to one another, came to different conclusions. According to Vasoli, Giambattista played a ‘double game’ to mislead the English agent Richard Croke, whom he should have been helping to obtain scholarly support for Henry’s divorce.¹⁰ In contrast, Surtz, in a much broader study of the quest for opinions on the divorce, is rather more sceptical: addressing the question of loyalty frequently but obliquely, he cites evidence that Giambattista stuck to his instructions, and attributes the difficulties to a ‘prolonged misunderstanding and feud between Richard Croke and the Casali’.¹¹ The problem, in short, is that the principal source on this matter, Croke’s correspondence, is consistently hostile to the Casali family.¹² The bias in his letters and the absence of complementary documentation make it impossible to give a straight answer to the question ‘were the Casali loyal to England?’ For the record, however, it is worth noting that Gregorio Casali denied Croke’s accusations; in 1530 Giambattista was reported by the Imperial ambassador in Venice, Rodrigo Niño, to have expressed his discontent and

⁹ Frey and Frey, *Diplomatic Immunity*, p. 136.

¹⁰ Cesare Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione: studi sulla cultura del Cinquecento e Seicento* (Naples: Morano, 1974), pp. 184-209. The study is based principally on the printed abstracts of Croke’s correspondence in the *Letters and Papers*.

¹¹ Surtz, *Henry VIII’s Great Matter in Italy*, p. 55.

¹² Croke’s correspondence is to be found in BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XIII. His extensive complaints include the description of Gregorio as a ‘lyght dissimuler’ at f. 74r (*L&P* IV 6328) and at f. 88r the comment that ‘yff any off the Cassalys do ever the kinge any good or mal thinges that they may knowye do not utterly hurte the kinge and his causes and beguile yow and al his ambassadors thar that they can hange me drawye me and quarte[r] me’ (*L&P* IV 6445). It is, however, apparent from a reading of the letters that Croke’s accusations met with some scepticism in London and that he had been warned off ‘meddling’ with the work of the Casali and Ghinucci.

embarrassment at the business of the divorce, and furthermore to have said he was aware that as a ‘vassal of the Pope’ he was under suspicion, but that hardly amounts to great evidence of active disloyalty.¹³ I have found no surviving record of any similar comment by Gregorio, and while the Imperial ambassador in London, Eustace Chapuys, did report that Paolo Casali had told him of Gregorio’s ‘sincere attachment’ to the Imperial service, this could easily represent an attempt on Paolo’s part to persuade Chapuys into some indiscretion.¹⁴ An assessment of the Casali family and their service to England should surely begin from the view that – in this period – there was no great distinction to be made in terms of loyalty between foreign-born and other diplomats.

1. The advantages of the foreign state servants

THE earlier chapters of this thesis have documented in some detail the many assets that Gregorio Casali brought to the English diplomatic service: his military knowledge, his family network and social background in Rome, his household and ability to provide hospitality, his relationships with members of the College of Cardinals and with other ambassadors. On this straightforward level, there were numerous reasons why Casali’s employment made sense. He – and his fellow Italians in the diplomatic corps – had a level of local knowledge that gave them advantages over the Englishmen. Insofar as the studies of foreign state servants broadly contemporary to Casali address the question ‘why employ foreigners in diplomatic service?’, which in general they do rather superficially, they tend to cite two types of factor. The first can be categorised as ‘practical assets’ like social networks and linguistic abilities. Behrens, for example, emphasises Tommaso Spinelli’s ability to gather news through the networks of his Florentine mercantile family, and his wide range of social contacts.¹⁵ Hildebrandt points to Christopher Mont’s social circle, as well as his linguistic capacities, knowledge of the English court and education, and Mazzei to humanistic education, prior experience of diplomacy and personal

¹³ For Gregorio’s denials, see the various documents he wrote in early 1534 to justify his actions as ambassador: *L&P* VII 85-88, and in particular the section in Pocock II 520. On Giambattista see *L&P* IV 6422; BL, Add. MS 28580, ff. 104v-105v, and ‘en la qual es tenido por sospechoso por ser vasallo del Papa,’ *CSP Sp* IV.i 365; BL, Add. MS 28580, f. 206r.

¹⁴ *CSP Sp* IV.i 228.

¹⁵ Behrens, ‘Thomas Spinelly’, pp. 167-68, 171, 173.

networks.¹⁶ Isom-Verhaaren concludes that what rulers appreciated were ‘skills and connections’.¹⁷ All of these things could, of course, be acquired over time by a resident ambassador of whatever national origin, particularly if he had earlier experience in the country, perhaps through a role as secretary or through university education. Nonetheless it would be difficult for such a person to replicate the full structural advantages that the foreign state servants enjoyed.

The second commonly-cited factor relating to the employment of Italians in foreign diplomatic service concerns their perceived abilities in that sphere of work. In relation to the 1490 appointment of Giovanni Gigli as English ambassador to Rome Behrens says it was ‘current opinion’ that Italians were ‘more versed than men of other nations in diplomatic subtleties’, a comment quoted approvingly by Mellano.¹⁸ Mattingly refers to the ‘technical superiority’ of Italian diplomacy, and the appreciation by the major European powers of the Italian roots of the developing diplomatic system was undoubtedly an important consideration in their decision to engage Italian expertise directly.¹⁹ An interesting take on contemporary opinion about Italians can be found in a letter from Gregorio Casali to Montmorency about the employment of Italian mercenary captains, in which he wrote that:

Should the Most Christian King want to make war in Italy, he must employ Italian captains, because in truth you French lords are too valorous [*troppo valenthuomini*] to have to deal with Spaniards, who fight only with cunning and fraud.²⁰

The image of Italian captains presented here – experienced in dealing with subterfuge and deceit – is surely one that extends to the sphere of diplomacy too. Furthermore, the example reminds us that in the period of the Italian wars, when European powers were engaged in battle on Italian soil and their diplomats had to contend with detailed questions about local military matters, there were, as Chapter Two discussed, obvious motivations for the employment of Italian diplomats. However, there were also more subtle considerations in the choice of ambassador, and contemporaries cited very particular reasons for the employment of foreigners in diplomatic roles that related rather less to the strictly practical issues and rather more

¹⁶ Hildebrant, ‘Christopher Mont’, p. 285. Mazzei, ‘Carriera di un Lucchese’, p. 420.

¹⁷ Isom-Verhaaren, ‘Shifting identities’, p. 132.

¹⁸ Behrens, ‘Origins’, p. 653. Mellano, *Rappresentanti italiani*, p. 22.

¹⁹ Mattingly, p. 149.

²⁰ ‘Volendo la Maes. Chris. far guerra in Italia era necessario ch’ella si servisse di capi italiani, perchè in vero voi signori francesi sete troppo valenthuomini ad havere a fare co Spagniuoli, i quali combattono solamente con astutia et fraude.’ Molini II 213.

to the possibilities that these men provided in terms of their ability to dissimulate and their freedom of manoeuvre. It is to these that we now turn.

a. The ability to dissimulate

THERE were certain types of mission to which foreign-born diplomats were uniquely well-suited. For example, in late 1527 Cardinal Wolsey was looking for a way to send an ambassador to Pope Clement VII, who was imprisoned in the Castel Sant'Angelo, for a secret discussion of Henry VIII's divorce. Henry had already dispatched his secretary, William Knight, on the mission, but Wolsey was sceptical about the likelihood of Knight gaining access to the Pope, and suggested instead that England's former resident in Rome, Girolamo Ghinucci, bishop of Worcester, should be sent with Gregorio Casali and the papal nuncio Uberto Gambara who had recently been in England. Wolsey conceded that Knight was 'a wise, trusty, feithfull subjecte, and Counsaillour, to whom more feythe is to be geven than to any straunger', but nonetheless argued that under the circumstances the Italians would be a better choice:

Sens I am advertised that the Popes Holynes is deteyned in streite hold... I can not imagyne no better instrumentes in erthe to be sent unto the Pope, than Gregory de Cassalys, the Bishop of Worcestre, and the Prothonotary Gambara, who shal fynde more faysable [*entraunce*] to His Holynes presence, than your Secretary, [*or*] any other person to be sent from Your Grace out of England.²¹

Whether Wolsey really thought Knight worthy of 'more faith' than the Italian alternatives, or whether that was a politic manner of disagreeing with Henry must be a moot point. However, his subsequent instructions to Casali demonstrate that sending a 'freelance' diplomat was an essential part of the operation:

Therefore, as the King's Majesty has the fullest confidence in your faith, industry, dexterity and prudence, he wishes that, as soon as you receive these letters, you should put off altogether any other matters at all committed to you by him or from anywhere else, and think through all the possible ways and means by which you could most secretly – having changed your appearance and, as if you were someone else's agent, or as if you had a commission from the duke of Ferrara to settle some controversy between him and the Pope, or in some other more secure way – gain access to the Pope's presence and to an interview far away

²¹*L&P* IV 3400; *St P* I 270, 272. Events proved Wolsey right: see Knight's report of his failure to gain access to the Pope: *L&P* IV 3553; *St P* VII 14 and *L&P* IV 3638; *St P* VII 17.

from any witnesses, if it can be done, in order to carry out your commission.²²

Wolsey's strategy for gaining access to the Pope was predicated on the fact that Casali would be able to convince the Imperial agents who had control of Clement's person that he was acting on behalf of someone other than Henry. The subterfuge was not, in the event, tried, because Clement escaped. However, the idea that Casali might have had a commission from the duke of Ferrara was plausible, because on occasion he did act for other princes: in August 1527, for example, he had been accredited as an ambassador for France to negotiate the entries of the marquis of Mantua and the duke of Ferrara into the Holy League.²³ By comparison with any of the English-born ambassadors, he was far better placed to dissimulate his true purpose.

A similar tactic was employed to enable discussions between England and France during the imprisonment of Francis I, after the Battle of Pavia in 1525. While England remained in alliance with the Holy Roman Empire, the dowager Queen of France, Louise of Savoy, sent Giovanni Gioacchino da Passano, an Italian agent without full ambassadorial status, to England to begin negotiations about an Anglo-French alliance. According to Mattingly, this enabled Wolsey 'to assure the Spanish ambassador that this Genoese banker was merely the queen dowager's personal man of business'.²⁴ Mattingly does not discuss the relevance of Passano's national origin, but the pretence (whether or not the Spaniards entirely believed it) was surely made more convincing by the fact that he was not a Frenchman.

The foreign-born ambassadors were not only able to pretend that they were acting on behalf of other princes, or in a private business capacity, but could also give the impression that they were acting for themselves, beyond any mission with which they might have been entrusted by their employer. The employers were aware

²² *L&P* IV 3641; Burnet IV 22: 'Proinde ipsa regia majestas de fide, industriâ, dexteritate, prudentiâque vestrâ plenissime confidens, vult ut statim his literis acceptis, rebus aliis quibuscunque ab eâ vel a quovis alio vobis commissis omnino posthabitis, vias modosque omnes possibiles excogitetis quibus potestis secretissime, mutato habitu et tanquam alicujus minister, vel tanquam commissionem habens a duce Ferrariae pro nonnullis inter pontificem et eum componendis controversiis, vel aliâ quâ licuerit securiori viâ, ad pontificis praesentiam et colloquium accedendi, omnibus arbitris semotis, si fieri possit, pro vestris obeundis mandatis.'

²³ He was jointly accredited to Mantua with Giovanni Gioacchino da Passano; their credential, headed 'Procura Christianissimi Regis in Joachinum de Passano, et Gregorium Casalium ad requirendum Marchionem Mantuae ut adhaereat partibus ipsius Regis', is in ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 45, unnumbered. Letters giving Casali full powers to negotiate with the duke of Ferrara are in *Catalogue des Actes de François I^{er}*, 10 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1887-1908), VI 86, no. 19331.

²⁴ Mattingly, pp. 166-67.

of this, and tried to exploit the fact. John Clerk's comment, cited at the start of this chapter, that Casali was 'better believed' by his fellow Italians when he spoke of Henry VIII's virtues, because he was 'of their own nation', and consequently had 'more credit' has an interesting echo a few years later. When Sir Francis Bryan and Pietro Vanni were sent to Rome in late 1529, their draft instructions included the injunction that:

And the said master Peter as of hym self shall aparte say unto his holynes, Sir I being an Italyan can not, but with a more fervent zeale and mynde than an other studye and desire, the weale honour and surete of your holynes and the see Apostolique, which compellethe me to shewe unto your holynes frankly what I see in this mater.²⁵

The instructions went on to set out in some detail precisely what Vanni should say to the Pope. The comments he was to make 'as of himself', pretending a personal interest as an Italian in the welfare of the Church, were in fact nothing of the sort: rather, they were an integral part of the English strategy. However, maintaining an impression of independence from the employer enabled the foreign state servant to engage in such deceptions.

The idea that an ambassador could speak 'as of himself' raises important issues. As we saw in Chapter Four, Valentin Groebner has argued that late medieval officeholders had a 'dual persona', a concept that is highly resonant in the study of diplomatic gift-giving. Here once again we see the dual persona in operation: the ambassador can speak for his king but also on his own behalf. The citation of the 'self' is a further point of note in the context of the extensive debate on questions of individualism and self-fashioning in Renaissance studies.²⁶ In 1980, Stephen Greenblatt presented his postmodern interpretation of the Renaissance self: in a striking opposition to the nineteenth-century notion of the autonomous Renaissance individual, famously set out by Jacob Burckhardt, Greenblatt's subjects were

²⁵ *L&P* IV 4977; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 174v.

²⁶ There is considerable literature on this subject: key works include Richard C. Trexler (ed.), *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1985) and William J. Connell (ed.), *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For a very recent contribution, including surveys of the relevant literature, see Paul D. McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), especially Chapter Eight, pp. 193-223. The latter works of course pose the problem of whether or not it is appropriate to generalise from the Florentine case.

‘remarkably unfree’, shaped by their cultural contexts.²⁷ Ronald Weissman likewise criticised Burckhardt but allowed for significantly greater autonomy on the part of individuals than did Greenblatt. From the empirical perspective of a study of credit relations, he argued that individuals in Florence in fact had multiple social ties; in order to manage these various commitments they employed ‘mechanisms of ambiguity’.²⁸ In a recent study, John Jeffries Martin has criticised both modern and postmodern approaches to the Renaissance self, arguing that a variety of different concepts of the ‘self’ existed in the Renaissance, and indeed that they changed over time, with a greater emphasis, for example, on the ‘sincere self’ as the sixteenth century progressed.²⁹ His concepts of the ‘prudential self’, prepared to dissimulate where necessary and embodied in Castiglione’s perfect courtier, and of the ‘self-consciously acting’ ‘performative self’, have particular significance in the study of the ambassador.³⁰ The royal diplomat would simultaneously perform the role of his prince, while maintaining a prudent silence on matters best kept secret, exploiting the ambiguity of his dual persona for political effect. The limited evidence available in these cases would tend to support the view that an ambassador was able to present various selves as the situation demanded, exercising a certain degree of personal autonomy in that process. He could appear as the personification of his prince’s dignity, or as himself, or disguised as someone else’s agent: he could be sincere about his own or his prince’s opinions, or he could prudently dissimulate. Furthermore, while an ability to manipulate these ‘selves’ was an asset to any Renaissance ambassador, the foreign state servant was peculiarly able to walk the stage in masks.

b. Freedom of manoeuvre

In Gregorio Casali’s case, the impression of a self apart from his diplomatic identity was reinforced by the language used to describe him. As we saw in Chapter Two, he was widely known as the ‘Cavalier Casali’. Although his status as an ambassador is

²⁷ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, ed. Irene Gordon (London: New English Library, 1960), pp. 121-28; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 256.

²⁸ Weissman, ‘Importance of Being Ambiguous’, p. 279.

²⁹ Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*. McLean, *Art of the Network*, p. 210, questions Martin’s periodisation, suggesting that a tension between ideas of prudence and sincerity can be discerned in letters of the 1420s and 30s.

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

amply documented,³¹ the manner in which he was described by others in the diplomatic corps suggests that they did regard him as somewhat distinct from his English colleagues. For example, in a letter of 23 June 1528, the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini refers to ‘the French orator’, ‘the French secretary’ and ‘this agent, or orator, of Urbino’, but to the ‘Cavalier Casal’.³² The Mantuan ambassador, in a letter of 26 March 1528, likewise refers separately to ‘the English ambassadors who are here’ and to the ‘cavalieri Casale’.³³ In another letter, of 14 August 1528, however, the Mantuan ambassador refers in a discussion of ambassadors to ‘that of England, i.e. the Cavalier Casali’.³⁴ This was not an absolutely hard-and-fast rule: in June 1528, for example, the Ferrarese ambassador Conte Roberto Boschetti described Stephen Gardiner and Casali together as ‘*oratori del re anglico*’.³⁵ However, the overall picture suggests that within the diplomatic corps a distinction was made.

This ambiguity in the foreign-born ambassador’s status gave him a greater freedom to facilitate ‘unofficial’ diplomatic practices such as spying or hostage-taking. One such example is Casali’s involvement in the kidnapping of the Imperial agent Sigismondo di Ferrara, which provides an excellent illustration of his dual but overlapping roles as English ambassador and autonomous actor. Sigismondo was a high-level diplomatic messenger, and in May and June of 1528 was travelling back and forth between the two principal fronts of the war: Lombardy, where the Lanzknechts had just arrived under the command of Georg von Frundsberg, and Naples, base for the Imperial captains and diplomats in the south.³⁶ Casali was tipped off that Sigismondo would be arriving with commissions from the Emperor giving

³¹ The first credential is in *L&P* IV 1649, 1650; Theiner, pp. 550-51; ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, 2380. Gregorio’s name is also listed with those of Benet and Vannes in Benet’s credential of 15 May 1529, Theiner p. 563, and alongside Ghinucci’s in Ghinucci’s credential of 5 October 1529. Theiner, p. 565.

³² ‘Lo Orator di Francia’; ‘lo secretario di Francia’; ‘questo agente, over Orator di Urbino’; and ‘il Cavalier Casal’. Contarini, ff. 17r-17v.

³³ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 28r-28v. ‘Gli ambasciatori d’Inghilterra che sono qui, sono stati per due o tre volte da Nostro Signore et della negociatione loro per anchora non s’intende altro, havendoli Sua Santita dato audienza secreta, dove non è intervenuto se non la persona di quella, et essi, insieme co’l cavaliere Casale.

³⁴ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 460v.

³⁵ ‘Havendosi a partire domattina el Dottor Stephano... son stato a visitare sua signoria & il Cavaliere Casale oratori del re anglico.’ ASMo, Archivio Estense, Ambasciatori, Italia, Roma, b. 32, c. 212i/78.

³⁶ See the letter of Nicolas Raince, dated the day after Clement’s departure from Orvieto, BNF, MS Fr. 3040, f. 58r, which notes that Sigismond had already travelled from Ferrara to Naples bringing the news that the Lanzknechts were in Italy, and had left Orvieto the previous day to return to Ferrara and thence to the Lanzknechts, and also the letter in ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 272r in which the Mantuan ambassador reports similarly, dated 2 June.

the Prince of Orange's ambassador powers to negotiate with Clement: something that England and France were anxious to avoid.³⁷ An opportunity arose to take Sigismondo hostage and thereby obtain the secret Imperial correspondence he was carrying; the operation, however, carried some risk of upsetting the Pope, who had given Sigismondo a safe-conduct; and the timescale meant there was no possibility of requesting instructions from England.³⁸ Casali, with the assistance of the French embassy secretary Nicolas Raince, arranged for Sigismondo to be taken hostage; he was then imprisoned in the Bracciano fortress of the Orsini family. The contents of his dispatches were highly valuable for the allies, revealing details of divisions and distrust between various important figures in the Imperial camp, as well as their commanders' assessment of the financial situation.³⁹ The case provides a classic example of the difficulties summed up by the theorists in relation to the ambassador's autonomy, and highlights a number of significant factors relating to the role of foreign state servants in facilitating 'unofficial' diplomatic practices.

The kidnapping initiative began with the involvement of four members of the diplomatic corps. It was proposed by Casali to the Venetian ambassador Contarini; they both discussed it with the French ambassador, and the three agreed to co-operate.⁴⁰ They therefore asked the agent of the duke of Urbino (the duke was captain-general of the Venetian army) to organise Sigismondo's capture during his return through the duke's territories. There was a good reason for such a tactic: it would have removed the members of the diplomatic corps from direct involvement in the affair and would have avoided the papal displeasure incurred when Sigismondo was kidnapped within the Papal States.⁴¹ However, the plan fell through.

Casali's role as a 'freelance' diplomat then came into play. More so than any of his colleagues, he could give the impression of acting independently. His own

³⁷ See his letter to Ambrosio da Fiorenza, dated 2 June. Molini II 39.

³⁸ On safe-conducts and the limited respect they were accorded in practice see E. R. Adair, *The Exterritoriality of Ambassadors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, 1929), pp. 125-26, Frey and Frey, *Diplomatic Immunity*, pp. 134-36 and E. John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), pp. 22-24.

³⁹ On their contents see Contarini, f. 22r. Copies of the two intercepted letters, one from the duke of Pranswich and the other from Antonio da Leva, are in ASVe, Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci, Dispacci (lettere) degli ambasciatori, b. 22, ff. 166-67.

⁴⁰ Contarini, ff. 17r-17v.

⁴¹ The Mantuan ambassador, who was not directly involved, commented that the kidnapping was 'not well done, given the respect that one ought to have for a brief of His Holiness'. 'L'atto non è stato bello, attento il rispetto, che si dovea haver al Breve di Sua Santità'. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 350r.

description of his motivations, in a letter to Ambrosio da Fiorenza, an Italian agent in the French service, makes no mention of his role as English ambassador:

I judge that it would be very appropriate, for the interests of the affair and for our honour, to have this Signor Gismondo captured and to put him in some fortress that is available to us. Nevertheless, I have made provision to seize him en route and have him taken to a fortress of the Count of Pitigliano, which is available to the Secretary of France [Nicolas Raince], so he says. And after the outcome, as I hope, because I have given good orders and sent sufficient good men, Your Lordships will command what is to be done etc.⁴²

This letter offers a reminder of the relevance of Casali's military skills to his role as ambassador; however it is also striking for its ambiguity: is Casali acting 'as of himself', or as the English ambassador, or in some position half-way between the two? Whose honour is 'our honour': that of Gregorio and Ambrosio, or of the English and French? He sent on a copy of this letter to Montmorency, but the note accompanying it makes matters no clearer:

Your Lordship will see by the same copies to Messer Ambrosio how far I went to seize that Signor Gismondo da Este, which was a holy and good work for us, as you will see daily.⁴³

Casali's relationship with the French will be discussed further below; however, it suffices to say for now that the ambiguous 'we' in these letters is a piece of rhetoric rather more open to a foreign state servant than to someone identified very clearly with the English crown.

Furthermore, the ambiguity itself created diplomatic possibilities: the vagueness about the precise responsibility for the operation meant that it could be disowned if necessary. Gasparo Contarini, who as we saw was involved in the initial discussions, could thus write rather disingenuously to Venice that he 'did not know who was responsible'.⁴⁴ He limited himself to reporting the Pope's claim that the 'French ambassador and the Cavalier Casali' were to blame, which is notable for the

⁴² 'Io giudico che sarebbe molto a proposito per l'interesse della cosa et per l'honor nostro di far pigliare questo Sig. Gismondo et metterlo in qualche rocca che stia ad instantia nostra. però io ho fatto provisione di pigliarlo per camino et farlo condurre in una rocca del conte da Pitigliano che sta ad instanzio del secretario di Francia, come lui dice. Et seguendo l'effetto, come spero, perchè ho dato bono ordine, et mandati homini suffitienti et da bene, Vos. Signorie commandaranno quello che si haverà da fare etc.' Molini II 42.

⁴³ 'V. S. Vederà per le medeme copie a M. Ambrosio quanto ho fatto per pigliare quel S. Gismondo da Este, quale è stata una santa et bona opra per noi, secundo ch'ella vederà alla giornata.' Molini II 43.

⁴⁴ 'Non so di cui sia stata questa trama. La Santita del Pont. ragionando questa matina mecco, pensa che la cosa sia procesa dal Cavalier Casale et Orator Francese, monstra di haverlo habuto a male.' Contarini, f. 17v.

citation of Casali as an individual with no reference to his status as English ambassador. The Mantuan ambassador, Francesco Gonzaga, did likewise, reporting that:

His Beatitude has given the Cavalier Casali and Nicolas, the French secretary, a good ticking-off, thinking that they were responsible, but they firmly deny it.⁴⁵

Once again, Casali is denoted in his own right, while Nicolas is described in his official capacity. That said, in another letter Gonzaga referred to ‘these Frenchmen, or the English ambassador’ as the likely culprits; however, this variation merely emphasises the ambiguity of Casali’s status.⁴⁶

The Sigismondo case illustrates the latitude that a foreign state servant enjoyed in carrying out unofficial diplomatic activities. The sources are unclear on the question ‘for whom was Casali acting?’, but we should not conclude that if only there were more documents then all would be revealed, rather that there was a deliberate cultivation of doubt on that question, which was generally useful to the Anglo-French allies. The advantages of the foreign state servant system were not only related to practical questions of local knowledge, but also to the wide variety of possibilities for dissimulation and subterfuge that these men offered to their masters.

2. Problems of the foreign state servant system

THESE advantages, however, could also pose problems. The employer took that risk that – afforded too much freedom – the ambassador might not fully carry out his instructions. The ambassador took the risk that, should a particular mission go wrong, the employer might choose to disown it as a personal, unauthorised enterprise.

⁴⁵ ‘Sua Beatitudine ha lavato bruscamente il Capo al Cavaglier Casale et a Nicolas Secretario di Franza pensando che loro ne siano stato causa ma arditamente negano.’ ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, c. 358r.

⁴⁶ ‘S. Beatitudine ha anche preso grandissimo sdegno di questo caso di Sig^{do} da Ferrara, il quale ella giudica sia seguito per opera di questi Francesi, o dell Oratore Anglico che loro habbino advertito il Farfa, et fattolo prendere’. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 877, cc. 353v-354r.

a. Risks for the employer

AS we saw in Chapter One, the question of ambassadors' freedom to deviate from their instructions was one that concerned contemporaries. The simple fact of the time required for travel and correspondence imposed a systemic risk than a prince's instructions might not be implemented in the way he would like. While the foreign state servant's freedom to act (or pretend to act) on his own behalf could be advantageous to his employer, it could also militate against the effective execution of his mandate. Such problems become apparent during discussions between the Venetian ambassador Gasparo Contarini and the English ambassadors about the papal towns of Ravenna and Cervia. During Clement VII's imprisonment following the Sack of Rome, the Venetians had occupied the two towns on the pretext of protecting them from the Imperialists. Henry VIII – with the aim of gaining Clement's favour vis-à-vis his marital problem – instructed his ambassadors to argue for the return of the towns to the Papal States, but the Venetians had no intention of co-operating.⁴⁷ Ravenna and Cervia had strategic advantages, and to relinquish them would significantly alter the balance of power in the region.⁴⁸ Aiming to undermine the English strategy, Contarini used a series of tactics that clearly demonstrate a distinction in his mind between Gregorio Casali and his fellow foreign state servant, Pietro Vanni, and the English-born special ambassadors.

Contarini initially focused his efforts on convincing Casali to support the Venetian cause. In a letter of June 1528, he described a meeting with the English ambassador, Stephen Gardiner, who had just received orders to travel to Venice with one of the French ambassadors to insist on the restitution. Contarini had tried to dissuade him from doing so. He went on:

I also spoke with the Cavalier Casali, explaining to him how unhelpful it was for the common enterprise at this time to molest Your Serenity, on whose shoulders the whole burden of the war now rests. He promised me to do dextrously the same work with Doctor Stephen, that I have done.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The English view is set out in a letter of March 1528 from Henry VIII to the Doge, Andrea Gritti: *L&P* IV 4089; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B x 50r-50v. One of the leading advocates of the policy was Stephen Gardiner, who put the position emphatically to Contarini when they were both in Viterbo: 'Il qual grandemente si scalda in questa materia.' *CSP Ven* IV 293; Contarini, ff. 8v-9r. There is a useful account of Contarini's mission in Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, pp. 42-59.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴⁹ 'Ho anchora parlato cum il Cavallier Casal, mostrandoli quanto era mal ad proposito della commune impresa a questo tempo molestar V. S. sopra le spale della qualle era hora tuto il preso de la guerra. Mi ha promesso di far cum il dottor Stephano dextramente lo istesso officio, che ho fatto io, ma che il Pont. lo sollicitava.' *CSP Ven* IV 301; Contarini, ff. 13r-13v.

In this letter, as in the Sigismondo correspondence, Contarini presents Gardiner as the ‘English orator’, but names Casali in his own right. In further letters, Contarini describes meeting ‘alone’ with Casali, who tipped him off about the arrival of letters from Henry VIII to Venice, and writes about Casali’s success in persuading his fellow ambassadors – Sir Francis Bryan, an intimate of the king’s and cousin of Anne Boleyn, and Henry’s Latin secretary Pietro Vanni – to delay sending on these letters to Venice, citing the excuse of the Pope’s illness.⁵⁰ According to Contarini:

[Casali] told me that he had a huge argument with the other new English ambassadors about this, but nevertheless persuaded them that until the Pope’s illness was over, they should delay. I know that they also consulted the cardinal of Mantua about this, who was of the same opinion that they should defer it, and so they will defer, for the moment. Indeed, in my judgement Your Serenity should be well satisfied with the Cavalier Casali’s operations.⁵¹

Contarini’s account is corroborated in the report by Sanudo of a letter sent by Gregorio to his brother Giambattista, English ambassador to Venice, which was read to the Venetian College, in which Casali wrote ‘that he does good work for our Signoria’.⁵² It seems clear that Casali had decided to favour the Venetian interest to the extent that he was prepared to delay the implementation of his mandate from England, although this should be seen in the context of the example cited in Chapter One, in which the English ambassadors in Rome likewise delayed carrying out instructions about which they had concerns.⁵³ This was, on occasion, evidently perceived to be acceptable conduct.

Contarini also wrote positively about his chances of convincing Pietro Vanni to support the Venetian position: once again, his letter emphasises the distinct status of foreign state servants. Contarini described Vanni, on the basis of his Lucchese origins, as ‘affectionate to the name of Venice’: whether or not this was true, it must have been something that he thought sounded plausible.⁵⁴ As we have seen, Vanni’s ability to play the role of concerned Italian was exploited by the English; Contarini seems to hint that he could be persuaded to play it again, in favour of Venice. He

⁵⁰ *CSP Ven* IV 401; Contarini, f. 162r. *CSP Ven* IV 405; Contarini, f. 167v.

⁵¹ ‘Mi afferma haver molto conteso cum li altri Oratori Anglici novi sopra cio, et pur li ha persuasi che fino non se vedi altro della egritudine del Pont. si soprasedi, Io so che han’ consultato questa materia cum il R^{mo} di Mantua, il qual è stato della istessa opinione che se differischa, et cosi defferirano, per hora. Invero di le operation di questo Cavallier Casal vostra Serenita a iudicio mio ne debbe remanir ben satisfatta.’ *CSP Ven* IV 405; Contarini, f. 167v.

⁵² ‘Sichè’l scrive lui fa bon officio per la Signoria nostra.’ *CSP Ven* IV 408; Sanudo XLIX col. 417.

⁵³ See above, Chapter One, p. 56.

⁵⁴ *CSP Ven* IV 398; Contarini, ff. 158v-159r.

further reported that, on the eve of Vanni's departure, Vanni not only offered his services to the Republic, should they be of use in the future, but also apologised for his king's conduct in the Ravenna and Cervia negotiations, explaining that Henry's choice of words and letters had been made in what the king believed to be the common interest.⁵⁵ If Contarini's account is correct, during their conversation Vanni evinced the independent point of view that was permitted to him as a foreign state servant while defending the king whom he served. He did not, however, go as far as Casali and this perhaps reflects his rather different status: Vanni, although an Italian, had built a long-term career at the English court and probably did not have the multiple relationships of patronage that Casali and his brothers enjoyed.

While some of Casali's friendliness towards Venice can be attributed to the structural context of the foreign state servant system, there are some particular factors that should be noted. The Venetians were currently the employers of Gregorio's brother Francesco: the family consequently had an incentive to cultivate their favour. Furthermore, Giambattista Casali, as we saw in Chapter Two had been appointed to a bishopric in the Veneto, against the wishes of the Venetian authorities. Gregorio solicited Contarini's intervention on his brother's behalf after the case was decided in Giambattista's favour, and Contarini wrote in a letter detailing Gregorio's request that the family had carried out 'the best of offices' for Venice.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the Ravenna and Cervia affair coincided with a period when Gregorio was suffering financial problems and lamenting the absence of any money from England. A whole series of letters in late January 1529 document and propose remedies for the Casali family's financial difficulties: Francis Bryan wrote that Henry should 'reward' Gregorio and Giambattista; Pietro Vanni wrote to both Wolsey and Gardiner that Gregorio's diets had not been paid; Gregorio himself wrote to Stephen Gardiner that he was grieved Vanni had brought him no money, and to his cousin Vincenzo in London with a description of his distress.⁵⁷ It is plausible that this temporary breakdown of Gregorio's financial relationship with England encouraged his attempts to placate the Venetians, with the aim of protecting the family interests with

⁵⁵ *CSP Ven* IV 508; Contarini, f. 309r.

⁵⁶ 'Han fatto optimo officio', Contarini, f. 266v.

⁵⁷ Bryan to Henry: *L&P* IV 5213; *St P* VII 148. Vanni to Wolsey: *L&P* IV 5225; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XI 26r-26v. Vanni to Gardiner: *L&P* IV 5227; TNA, SP 1/52, f. 179. Gregorio to Gardiner: *L&P* IV 5221; TNA, SP 1/52, f. 177. Gregorio to Vincenzo: *L&P* IV 5222; Vit. B XI 29r. In fact the problem was not a matter of deliberate royal delay, but that the merchants who should have been transmitting the money had gone bankrupt, and it was several weeks before a new arrangement could be made. *L&P* IV 5235; Vit. B XI 49r. *L&P* IV 5375; Vit. B XI 88r.

a turn to Venetian patronage or at least the effective extraction of Giambattista's episcopal revenues from the see of Belluno.

The case of Ravenna and Cervia illustrates the problems that the employment of foreign state servants, with mercenary motivations, might pose for the employer. While freedom of manoeuvre could be helpful to princes when they wished to engage in subterfuge, and family connections could function as highly effective news networks, both had the potential to compromise effective diplomatic representation. The case illustrates the extent to which an ambassador could, particularly when unhappy at his treatment, operate in a way that ran counter to his instructions; this problem was exacerbated by the fact that if the relationship of service to the English broke down the Casali family could seek employment elsewhere with relatively greater ease than any of the English diplomats in Henry's service.

b. Risks for the diplomat

THE problems were not, however, all on one side. The somewhat looser relationship that existed between an employer and his foreign state servants also entailed dangers for the ambassador. In 1535, *en route* to Hungary to carry out a diplomatic mission for the English to King John Zápolya, Giambattista Casali was captured and imprisoned by Imperial troops loyal to the Habsburg King Ferdinand, Zápolya's rival for the Hungarian throne.⁵⁸ Giambattista had just completed ten years as England's ambassador to Venice. Gregorio Casali protested at the injustice of his brother's imprisonment and asked Thomas Cromwell to persuade Henry to intervene.⁵⁹ The political situation, however, was not favourable to the Casali: in the same month Pope Paul III nominated the bishop of Rochester, John Fisher, to the cardinalate. Fisher had been in prison since his refusal in April 1534 to take the oath of Succession naming Elizabeth as Henry's successor, in the absence of male heirs; at the time of his nomination he was condemned to death. Gregorio, acting as English representative in Rome, told Cromwell that he had remonstrated with both England's

⁵⁸ c. 5 May 1535. *L&P* VIII 672; BL, Cotton MSS, Nero B VII 109.

⁵⁹ On 14 May he wrote to Cromwell, protesting that the detention was contrary to *jus gentium* and asking that Henry intervene. *L&P* VIII 713; *St P* VII 599-600. On 1 June he wrote again, commenting that everyone wonders at Ferdinand's insolence, that against every law he should keep in prison an ambassador of such princes: 'Mirantur nanque omnes tantam ejus fuisse insolentiam, ut Oratorem tanti principis contra omne jus in carcere habeat.' *L&P* VIII 807; *St P* VII 607.

allies in the cardinalate and with the Pope, but he must have been aware that the affair did not bode well for his own standing with the English.⁶⁰

Cromwell's reaction illustrates the advantages (for the employer) and the risks (for the diplomat) of the ambiguous status of the foreign state servant. He cut Giambattista Casali loose, and effectively denied that his actions had had official sanction. In discussions reported by the Imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys he referred to his ambassador as 'not a wise man' and maintained that Giambattista's detention or otherwise would have the advantage of saving Henry the cost of his maintenance.⁶¹ In fact, such support as was forthcoming for Giambattista seems to have come mainly from members of the cardinalate and probably derived more from his status as a bishop than as an ambassador.⁶² The incident illustrates the vulnerability of diplomats who were playing a peripheral role in relation to their master's main preoccupations. As far as one can tell, Giambattista's mission consisted principally of making trouble for the Habsburgs by means of proffering English support to their Hungarian rival. This may have been useful to the English but it was not a central part of their diplomatic strategy; in fact to those in England who were considering a renewed alliance with the Emperor it was not useful at all. It is even possible that the idea for the mission originated with the Casali family: since 1533 Gregorio's brother Francesco had been John Zápolya's ambassador at the Curia.⁶³ Once this rather dubious initiative failed, it was politically easier for the English to placate the Habsburgs than to make an issue of their ambassador's detention. That option was open to them precisely because Giambattista Casali was a foreigner. Had an Englishman of comparable social status (that is, a bishop or nobleman) gone to Zápolya as ambassador, it seems most unlikely that Cromwell would have behaved in the same way. So while – as we saw in Chapter Two –

⁶⁰ *L&P* VIII 777; *St P* VII 604.

⁶¹ *L&P* VIII 948 and 1018: letters of Eustace Chapuys to Charles V, dated 30 June and 11 July 1535.

⁶² In his letter to Cromwell, Gregorio mentions that many cardinals had written to the papal nuncio with Ferdinand on the matter, but that the nuncio was complaining that this had put him in a bad light with Ferdinand's councillors. *L&P* VIII 1121; *St P* VII 621. There is one such letter in ASV, Arm. XL, 53, f. 134, from Cardinal Simonetta to the Cardinal of Trent, Bernhard von Cles, dated 1 November 1535. Simonetta does not mention Giambattista's status as an ambassador, but focuses on the fact he is a bishop.

⁶³ Francesco Casali's credential as John Zápolya's ambassador to the Pope is dated 29 July 1533. ASV, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, 2503. A letter to Gregorio from Buda of 7 December 1533 shows his involvement, along with Francesco, in efforts to get Zápolya's excommunication lifted. *L&P* VI 1509, BL, Cotton MSS, Vespasian F 1 29r-30v.

employment in foreign diplomatic service offered many opportunities for advancement, it also carried serious risks.

3. Managing allegiances

IN her discussion of foreigners in the French and Ottoman services, Christine Isom-Verhaaren uses the term ‘shifting identities’ to describe the process by which elite individuals adopted new identities in terms of religion and allegiance as they moved from the service of one prince to that of another. In the case of the Casali family, the concept of ‘shifting identities’ is problematic. Although they served a number of foreign princes, there is no evidence that in the long term they sought to do anything other than maintain their existing identity as Italian noblemen and gain social advancement within the Italian context, as Gregorio’s marriage to a Pallavicino heiress demonstrates. An analysis of the Casali, therefore, is not so much about ‘shifting identities’ but rather about the process of managing allegiances. They illustrate at the level of international diplomacy the problem described by Weissman in relation to Florentine individuals: a need to honour ‘commitments to diverse groups and individuals’, which could be maintained through the cultivation of studied ambiguity.⁶⁴ How, then, did the Casali balance their various connections with the different European powers?

Contemporaries were aware that to be a servant with two masters was not a straightforward matter. Two letters from the bishop of Verona, Gianmatteo Giberti, then in Rome, to the papal nuncio in England, Uberto Gambara, provide a useful illustration of the problems. Giberti was lobbying on behalf of Girolamo Ghinucci, Casali’s fellow resident ambassador at the court of Rome. Ghinucci had lost out on a diplomatic mission to the French court because of his poor relationship with the king of France, and Giberti wanted Gambara to use his influence to smooth out the problems. He wrote:

Your Lordship knows how difficult it is to change a set opinion, even with good service. I know that whenever [Ghinucci] can, without

⁶⁴ Weissman, ‘Importance of being ambiguous’, p. 271.

departing from the service of his master, he does excellent work for the French, which he desires should be known.⁶⁵

Giberti went on to ask Gambara to drop this information into conversation with the French ambassador, in a suitably subtle way. A few days later, however, he thought of a problem, and in a subsequent letter added the following caveat:

But Your Lordship should not speak of this with the Most Serene King, nor with the Most Reverend Lord [Wolsey] nor with any of those English lords, but only with Frenchmen, so that the profit sought from one side is not lost from the other.⁶⁶

Giberti was evidently concerned that if the English heard too much emphasis placed on Ghinucci's friendliness to the French or believed that he was seeking to enter the French service, they might conceive a poor impression of him. The letters demonstrate that whatever use might be made of an ambassador's multiple relationships, it was important to maintain the principal in the view that he was the most important employer, and had no rivals for that allegiance. Gregorio Casali and his brothers thus had to take care that their various links with foreign powers were carefully managed.

a. England: the primary allegiance

THE Casali family's primary relationship of service was with the English crown. It was Gregorio's role as English ambassador that established his international status as a representative of a prince, and this was clearly the allegiance he preferred to emphasise. When he wrote to others about Henry VIII, he often used the terms 'my king' or 'our king': in letters to the French chief minister Montmorency, for example, he referred to 'our king's majesty', and to 'our king's cause' (the divorce) while in one to the marquis of Mantua he referred to 'the king my lord'.⁶⁷ The contrast between the clarity of these examples and the ambiguity of language discussed above

⁶⁵ LPL, MS 4434, f. 31v, letter of 11 July: 'V. S. sa quanto difficilmente anchor con una buona servitù si toglia un'opinione già fatta. Io so che Monsignor l'auditor della Camera dovunque può non si partendo dal servizio del suo patrone fa bonissimi officij per francesi, il che desidero sia conosciuto. Però V. S. mi farà singulissimo piacere dove può destramente farne come da se testimonio con l'Ambasciatore di francia non mostrando però di farlo à posta, ma facendolo cadere in ragionamento a proposito.'

⁶⁶ *ibid*, f. 34r, letter of 14 July: 'ma di questo non parli V. S. ne col Serenissimo Re, ne con Monsignor Reverendissimo ne con alcuno di quelli Signori Anglesi, ma solo con francesi perche quel guadagno che si cerca fare da l'un canto non fusse perdita [sic] da l'altro.' See also f. 37r for continuing discussion on the matter.

⁶⁷ 'Alla Maes. del Re nostro,' Molini II 213. 'La causa del Re nostro è a mal termine,' Molini II 369. 'Dal Re mio Signore', ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 876, c. 521r.

is notable, and demonstrates the variety of ways in which the ambassador might present himself as circumstances required, just as Weissman's Florentines do. In turn, a range of letters from other English diplomats in Rome described Casali as a 'good servant' of the king: for example, John Russell said that Casali was 'very studious and dilligent in the kinges affaires and hath doon the king highe service here', while Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox said 'noon other coulde in this place doo better service unto Your Highnes thenne he doth'.⁶⁸ In April 1529 Gardiner referred to Casali's:

True, faythful, and diligent service, which I have hertofore and doo nowe perceyve in him here.⁶⁹

Casali thus portrayed himself as owing allegiance to the king and was portrayed by others as a good servant. The importance of the English relationship was such that actual or potential relationships with hostile powers – such as Francesco Casali's employment as a mercenary captain in the Imperial service – had to be rejected.⁷⁰

The practice of employing foreigners in diplomacy has some parallels with developments in the military sphere, where over the course of the fifteenth century *condottieri* became more likely to be employed on longer contracts, and many developed a close identification with the prince or republic they served. Are there insights to be gained through a comparison of the two roles? In comparison to their fourteenth-century predecessors, fifteenth-century *condottieri* were, Michael Mallett has argued, 'relatively faithful, increasingly aristocratic, and highly professional'.⁷¹ Frigo has suggested that this period saw a rapprochement between the identities of mercenary captain and 'cavalier' in which greater emphasis was placed on service to the prince.⁷² To this extent, there seem to be some commonalities in ways that the roles of mercenary captain and diplomat were understood. The traditional account, in contrast, has tended to counterpose them: Hale, for example, has argued that the aristocracy gradually moved away from military careers into new administrative and

⁶⁸ *L&P* IV 2879; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B IX 57r. *L&P* IV 4118; *St P* VII 64.

⁶⁹ *L&P* IV 5476; Gardiner, *Letters*, p. 15.

⁷⁰ See above, Chapter Two, pp. 92, 105.

⁷¹ Michael Mallett, *Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy* (London: Military Book Society, 1974), pp. 83, 257. On the period after 1494 see Mallett's more recent study, 'I condottieri nelle guerre d'Italia', in Mario del Treppo (ed.), *Condottieri e uomini d'arme nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Naples: Liguori, 2001), pp. 347-60.

⁷² Daniela Frigo, 'Principe e capitano, pace e guerra: Figure del 'politico' tra Cinque e Seicento', in Marcello Fantoni (ed.), *Il "Perfetto Capitano": Immagini e realtà (secoli XV-XVII)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001), pp. 273-304 (pp. 279-80).

court-based occupations, one of which was diplomacy.⁷³ However, all these histories of the mercenary identity are dealing with a long process of change over time, rather than with the *condottiere*'s personal understanding of his role, and it is difficult to draw direct comparisons with the evidence on the ambassador presented here. However, as we saw in Chapters One and Two, a significant number of diplomats had military backgrounds, and there were perceived to be certain advantages to the employment of soldier-diplomats. It therefore seems plausible to suggest that there would have been some overlap between the mentalities of military and diplomatic service, and that this could help to account for the way that Casali understood his relationship with the English crown. A firmer conclusion, however, would require more comprehensive comparative analysis of the way the two identities were described and understood.

b. Pope and cardinals

It was also important for any ambassador – if he was to gain influence at the court to which he was sent – to build a good relationship with both the prince and his courtiers (or, in Gregorio's case, the pope and cardinals). Like his colleague Ghinucci, Gregorio Casali was the subject of lobbying praise from Gianmatteo Giberti to the papal nuncio in England Gambara:

Where Your Lordship can do good offices for the Lord Cavalier Casali, he certainly merits it; he does for his king whatever is committed to him with every diligence and is very affectionate to Our Lord.⁷⁴

Once again, the language of 'his king' is notable, but the letter also reminds us that it was advantageous to the English – Gregorio's primary employers – to have an ambassador who was so close to the Pope. As we saw in Chapter One it was precisely that sort of access and credit that were considered good attributes for the resident ambassador.

Casali's relationship with the papacy, however, was more complex, because his family were temporal as well as spiritual subjects of the Church. On the whole, these allegiances did not come into conflict, but after the breakdown of English relations with Rome Gregorio attributed his cousin Andrea's loss of a Bolognese feudal

⁷³ J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), p. 97.

⁷⁴ LPL, MS 4434, f. 118v, letter of 1 January 1527: 'Dove V. S. puo far bono officii per il Signor Cavaglier Casale certo lo merita, che fa per il Re suo con ogni diligentia quel che gli è commesso et è molto amorevole à N. Signore.'

jurisdiction to the family's loyalty to England which, he implied, had put him out of favour with Pope Clement.⁷⁵ This loss, however, was not necessarily the result of victimisation: in a bull of 30 January 1532 Clement VII removed a number of countships which had been conceded to Bolognese citizens by Sixtus IV, and the most that can be said is that despite vigorous lobbying Gregorio was not sufficiently in favour with the Pope to convince the papal legate to Bologna, Francesco Guicciardini, that Andrea should be treated as a special case.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Gregorio's assertion demonstrates that in situations of crisis the management of multiple allegiances became particularly complex.

c. France

JUST as Gregorio Casali's affectionate relationship with Clement VII, was perceived positively by the English, so was his good rapport with Francis I. Wolsey thought Casali was 'so anymate' with Francis that 'he assureth to do acceptable service', explicitly in terms of the war effort but also, his letter implied, in terms of Henry's divorce.⁷⁷ Luke MacMahon has argued that Francis had a preference for ambassadors from the gentry and nobility and that their 'personal skills and sociability' were important factors in diplomacy.⁷⁸ For much of the period of Casali's role as an English ambassador, England and France were allies and it should not, therefore, be surprising that he maintained a close relationship with key figures at the court of France like the Grand Master, Anne de Montmorency. However, it is often hard to distinguish which aspects of that relationship were part of his 'official' role as ambassador, and which aspects were part of a personal cultivation of patronage: once again, the process reflects the ambiguous nature of his role as a foreign state servant.

⁷⁵ *L&P* VII 86; Pocock II 518-19.

⁷⁶ Valerio Rinieri, *Diario, ovvero Descrizione delle cose più notabili seguite in Bologna dall'Anno 1520 in sino à tutto l'anno 1586*, BUB, MS 2137, ff. 18v-19r. For the Casali family's lobbying of Guicciardini on this question see Guicciardini, *Dall'assedio di Firenze*, p. 205. On the broader context, see Giacomo Zenobi Bandino, 'Feudalità e patriziati cittadini nel governo della "periferia" pontificia del Cinque-Seicento', pp. 94-107 in Maria A. Visceglia (ed.), *Signori, Patrizi, Cavalieri nell'Età Moderna* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992), who argues that the revoking of the majority of the Bolognese feudal jurisdictions was part of a centralising process within the Papal States. Roberto Volpi argues that during this process the dominant oligarchy in Bologna demonstrated its willingness to sacrifice the interests of individual families for the collective benefit of the patriciate. *Le regioni introvabili: Centralizzazione e regionalizzazione dello Stato pontificio* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1983), p. 53.

⁷⁷ *L&P* IV 3310; *St P* I 228-29.

⁷⁸ MacMahon, 'Ambassadors of Henry VIII', pp. 154-58, 162.

As we saw above, in August 1527 Gregorio was accredited as an ambassador for France to Mantua and Ferrara.⁷⁹ The double accreditation demonstrates that it was not perceived unacceptable to act simultaneously on behalf of two allied princes. The credential specifically mentioned his status as the English ambassador, but it is noteworthy that it was thought useful by the French to accredit Gregorio as well as their regular representative Giovanni Gioacchino de Passano, perhaps because of Gregorio's good relations with the Mantuan court. On that occasion he clearly had an official, formalised role in the French service. His correspondence on military matters with Montmorency is more ambiguous.⁸⁰ English policy relied on a strong French intervention in Italy to counter-balance the influence of the Emperor, and Casali's often-hawkish military advice is clearly focused to that end.⁸¹ His frank comments to Montmorency all fit well with the pursuit of the English strategy in Italy: in one letter, he commented that 'everyone is cursing the Most Christian King' over his failure to invade Milan.⁸² In another, addressed to Ambrosio da Fiorenza, the bishop of Asti, but copied to Montmorency, Casali described one of the French ambassadors as 'incapable', commenting that 'truly, he doesn't seem to me the man to negotiate in this court'.⁸³ Although it is not clear whether this series of correspondence with the France was motivated by an explicit mandate from England (there is, as far as I can tell, no documented instruction to this end), it certainly marries well with English policy. However, it is also notable that just as Gregorio used his English diplomatic role to promote his friends and family, so he used his connections in France, lobbying Montmorency for jobs for his brother Francesco and for his cousin-in-law Guido Rangoni, among others.⁸⁴ The concern for personal advancement that characterised Casali's diplomacy for England was present in his relationship with France too. As we saw in Chapter Two, Casali received a pension from the French king. This was not in itself unusual: a substantial number of English

⁷⁹ See above, p. 189.

⁸⁰ Twenty of Casali's letters to Montmorency, dated between April 1528 and May 1531 and dealing principally with military issues, survive in the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

⁸¹ For example, Molini II 18-23 is a letter from Casali to Montmorency, dated 23 May 1528, in which Casali emphasises the need for reinforcements against the lanzknechts. Molini II 86-87 is another letter from Casali to Montmorency, dated 10 April 1529, in which Casali argues that the French should give Stefano Colonna a commission. On English policy see Gunn, 'Wolsey's foreign policy', pp. 159-60 and Potter, 'Foreign policy', pp. 115-17.

⁸² 'In effetto ciascuno biasim[a] il Chr^{mo}, che habbia lassato et lasci preterire la occasione di fare la impresa di Milano.' BNF, MS Fr. 6636 p. 33, letter of 21 April 1529.

⁸³ 'Questo Presidente di Provenza a me non pare capace di queste cose; et veramente non mi pare homo da negoziare in questa corte.' Molini II 37, letter of 24 June 1528.

⁸⁴ See above, Chapter Two, pp. 92, 96.

courtiers did so. Although the French hoped that this would encourage them to maintain friendly relations between the two realms, David Potter has argued that the pension arrangements were unlikely to create a pro-French ‘faction’ at Henry’s court.⁸⁵ In relation to Casali, it is doubtful that the pension was the definitive factor in his contacts with the French court, but it is conceivable that it contributed to a general sense that he owed service to France even if only in the limited sphere of the provision of military information and advice, and even if only while the Anglo-French alliance endured.

In short, Gregorio’s relationship with the French was complex. His good relationship with Francis was useful to the English, and congruent with their general foreign policy. The issue would have come to a head only in the event of a breakdown of the Anglo-French alliance, and there is a precedent for that scenario in the English switch from alliance with the Holy Roman Empire to alliance with France. In that case, Gregorio’s brother Francesco defected, with his mercenary troops, from the Imperial service to that of Venice, a decision which emphasises that at least at that time, the family prioritised the maintenance of the relationship with England.

d. Mantua, Venice and Hungary

THE Casali family also had relationships of service with three other political powers: the Gonzaga of Mantua, the Republic of Venice and King John Zápolya of Hungary. Each connection had slightly different characteristics, and was led by a different family member. That with the Gonzaga of Mantua is probably the closest to a client-patron relationship in the traditional form, although it should also be seen in the context of the much longer-standing English relationship with the principality. Cardinal Bainbridge had been friends with the previous marquis, and Gregorio Casali’s very earliest role in the English service had involved facilitating luxury gifts between the respective princes.⁸⁶ As we saw in Chapter Two, Giambattista Casali was a correspondent of Isabella d’Este Gonzaga and had a close relationship with her son, Cardinal Ercole; Gregorio’s nephew Ludovico subsequently entered the Gonzaga service. Both Giambattista and (less frequently) Gregorio provided diplomatic information to Mantua, either directly or in Giambattista’s case via the

⁸⁵ Potter, ‘Foreign policy’, p. 129.

⁸⁶ Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge*, p. 67.

Mantuan ambassador in Venice.⁸⁷ Despite his position as English ambassador, Giambattista's letters to the marquis made clear that he regarded himself as owing the latter service:

Although being the servant of Your Illustrious Lordship that I am, I ought to write to you often, and advise you of what I hear, I do not do so, knowing that your orator is very sufficient and diligent.⁸⁸

The relationship proved useful for the Casali in 1529, when both marquis and marchioness wrote letters in favour of Francesco Casali, who had been captured while fighting the Imperialists in Puglia.⁸⁹ In that particular case, letters from Mantua, which was about to switch sides and ally with Charles V, were probably far more useful than anything the English might supply: there were advantages to maintaining multiple allegiances. It is, however, notable that after the change in Mantuan allegiance, the Casali correspondence with the newly-promoted duke of Mantua is restricted to matters of luxury gift-giving between England and Mantua and the personal question of patronage for Ludovico. It is not possible to say whether this apparent change is due to lacunae in the archives or to a deliberate decision, but the ongoing provision of diplomatic information would surely have been regarded as problematic.

Second, the Casali developed a relationship of service with Hungary and John Zápolya that would outlast their connections with England. The precise origins of this relationship are unclear, but certainly as early as 1527 the idea of making trouble for the Emperor by means of favouring the Vaivode against the rival Habsburg King Ferdinand was being touted in the courts of England and France.⁹⁰ It seems that initially Paolo Casali took the lead in working with the king's agents, but after Paolo's death Francesco Casali became Zápolya's ambassador in Rome.⁹¹ It is likely that this was initially conceived as a secondary relationship for the family,

⁸⁷ In a letter of 17 September 1527, ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1461(unnumbered folio), Giambattista wrote to the marquis of Mantua that as soon as he returned to Venice he would 'as usual pass on all the news to your ambassador'. 'Io subito gionghi secundo il solito comunicare tutto con lo Ambassatore di quella.'

⁸⁸ Unnumbered letter of 1 February 1527, ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1461: 'Ancora che io sia servitore di V. S. Ill^{ma} com'io sono et doveria scriverle spesso et avisarla di quello intendo, no'l facio conoscendo la molta sufficientia et dilligentia del suo oratore.'

⁸⁹ See the unnumbered letters of 9 and 16 August 1529, from Giambattista Casali, asking for and acknowledging receipt of letters from the marquis and marchioness of Mantua in Francesco's favour. In the event, Francesco escaped and the letters proved unnecessary. ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga 1463.

⁹⁰ For example, in a letter from Roberto Acciaiuoli, at the court in France, to Uberto Gambarà, the papal nuncio in England, of 13 February 1527. LPL MS 4434, f. 239v: 'Li disegni di travagliar l'Imperatore per via delli ellettori et del dar favore al Vaivoda.'

⁹¹ See above, Chapter Two, p. 92.

subordinate to the connection with England. However, it fitted well into the constraint posed by the need to cultivate ‘friendly princes’ as patrons.

The relationship with Venice is distinctive because with the possible exception of Francesco Casali, who was employed in the Venetian military service, there was no sense of ‘allegiance’ to the Republic in the same way that there might be to a prince. As we saw above, in the case of Ravenna and Cervia, there is evidence that at times Gregorio Casali behaved very favourably towards the Venetians. Here, as with Mantua, we find a precedent in Cardinal Bainbridge, who according to Chambers ‘identified himself with Venetian interests from the beginning’.⁹² Bainbridge’s case makes the important point that such connections were by no means restricted to foreign state servants, although Chambers is careful to emphasise that the cardinal was “‘oon faytheful man” to his lay liege in England’.⁹³ There were, however, several reasons for the Casali to maintain a good relationship with Venice: it would make Giambattista’s role as English ambassador to the Serenissima rather easier, and it would help Francesco maintain his employment. In terms of the fit with English strategy, while the Ravenna and Cervia case presents an obvious problem, it should be noted that England had important trading relationships with Venice and at times had allied with the Republic as a counter-balance against the papacy in Italy.⁹⁴

THIS series of connections within the broad anti-Habsburg alliance might lead one to conclude that the Casali were themselves pro-French or anti-Habsburg. However, the comment that ‘the French are good friends of the Italians’, attributed to Gregorio Casali by the Venetian ambassador Marin Giustinian in 1532 should not necessarily be taken to be his personal opinion rather than a general expression of English policy appropriate to his role as ambassador.⁹⁵ Bearing in mind that, as we saw in Chapter Two, Casali’s maternal relatives in the Caffarelli family had long-standing Imperial connections,⁹⁶ and the fact that Gregorio entered the English service during a period of Anglo-Imperial alliance, it seems doubtful that the eventual attachment of the Casali family to the various anti-Habsburg princes was anything other than circumstantial. The fact that the Casali were ‘many brothers’ gave them the advantage that different family members could be the principal contact with different

⁹² Chambers, ‘English representation’, p. 290, and also *Cardinal Bainbridge*, p. 64.

⁹³ Chambers, *Cardinal Bainbridge*, p. 64.

⁹⁴ Shaw, ‘The Papacy and the European powers’, pp. 116-17.

⁹⁵ ‘Francesi è boni amici de italiani.’ *CSP Ven* IV 829, Sanuto LVII col. 336.

⁹⁶ See above, Chapter Two, p. 94.

powers: Gregorio with England, Giambattista with England but also enjoying a close relationship with the Gonzaga of Mantua and resident as ambassador in Venice, Francesco (through his military service) with Venice, Paolo and subsequently Francesco with Hungary. This was an important means of managing the family's multiple allegiances. There is no evidence that people in England were concerned about Casali's various relationships of patronage. On the contrary, his access and connections were perceived to be useful. It was a good thing to be 'animate' with the French king and 'loving' to the Pope. The Casali did not have to 'shift identities' in order to maintain their allegiances to these foreign princes. Rather, they could maintain a consistent identity as members of the Bolognese or Roman nobility, emphasising one or other of their relationships of service as circumstances required.

4. Casali's continuing service after the schism

GREGORIO Casali's role in English diplomacy after Henry's break with Rome demonstrates the extent to which he regarded continued service to the English as important. On Sunday 29 June he had carried out one of his last ceremonial duties as ambassador to Rome. It was the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and as the senior ambassador present in St Peter's he brought water to the Pope for his ritual hand-washing.⁹⁷ On 12 August letters arrived in the city from Henry VIII ordering William Benet to return to England. Casali and Ghinucci were to stay, but without negotiating anything. The Venetian ambassador in Rome reported:

Having taken his leave from the Pope, the Reverend Master Doctor Benet, the Englishman, should depart, and the Auditor of the Camera and Cavalier Casali, nonetheless his ambassadors, should stay without negotiating anything.⁹⁸

This account is notable because while it emphasises that Casali and Ghinucci will remain the king's ambassadors, it distinguishes between them and the 'English' orator Benet. It was clearly thought significant that Henry was withdrawing his

⁹⁷ BAV, MS Barb. Lat. 2799, f. 257r-257v.

⁹⁸ *CSP Ven* IV 967; Sanudo LVIII col. 590 reports the account of the Venetian ambassador in a letter of 14 August: 'Avanti heri al tardi vene lettere dil re Anglico a li soi oratori che, non occorrendo far altro dil matrimonio qui in corte et esser stà dechiarito contra la intention loro, el reverendo dotor domino Beneto inglese tolto licentia dal Papa si parti, et che lo auditor de la Camera et cavalier Casal, pur soi oratori, restino senza negotiar alcuna cosa.'

English ambassador but not his Italian agents. Casali's precise status after this point is unclear. A letter from Buda regarding Hungarian affairs, dated 7 December 1533, is addressed to Gregorio as 'the ambassador of the king of England'.⁹⁹ However, given that Henry's instructions from August 1533 have not survived, it is difficult to establish whether it was really his intention that Ghinucci and Casali should continue to have full ambassadorial status; in any case following Henry's excommunication they would surely have been barred from participating in the liturgical ceremonies.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, it is clear that until his death in late 1536, Gregorio continued to act as at least an informal representative of the English crown, while Giambattista's employment as ambassador to Venice continued until March 1535.

It is not clear whether he was in Marseilles in October and November 1533 for the visit of the papal court, but by December of that year, Gregorio had travelled to London, where he seems to have stayed until August 1534.¹⁰¹ The evidence for what happened during this stay is limited, but as we have seen, Gregorio had been the subject of vigorous criticism from Richard Croke, and he wrote several documents to justify himself in response to Croke's allegations.¹⁰² It is clear that this was not a particularly easy time in terms of Gregorio's relationship with the English. A letter from the Imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, dated 17 January 1534, reported that Gregorio was considering leaving the English service, and it is certainly plausible that he might have done so: he suggested as much in his letter of self-justification to the duke of Norfolk.¹⁰³ His brother Francesco had by this time been appointed ambassador to Rome by John Zápolya, and – should it have become necessary – the family had an alternative source of foreign patronage upon which to draw. However, Gregorio seems to have mended his relations with Cromwell somewhat, and by May 1534 Chapuys was reporting the suggestion that Gregorio might go to Venice on

⁹⁹ 'Magnifico domino Gregorio de Casalis, oratori Serenissimi Regis Anglie apud Pontificem Maximum domino et Amico Nobis honoran.' *L&P* VI 1509; BL, Cotton MSS, Vespasian F 1 30v.

¹⁰⁰ After the June 1533 reference, there is no further mention of English representation in the diary of the papal master-of-ceremonies.

¹⁰¹ Ghinucci, Vanni and Bonner were all in Marseilles in October or November of 1533. See *L&P* VI 1316; *St P* VII 515. *L&P* VI 1334; *St P* VII 518. *L&P* VI 1425; Burnet VI 56. In November Bonner forced his way into the Pope's chamber to present Henry's appeal against the divorce sentence. The sentence itself was not finally given until 23 March 1534: see ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Vicecanc. 4, f. 111v. For Gregorio's presence in London in December 1533, see *CSP Ven* v 3, a report dated 29 January 1534 of Giambattista reading to the Capi dei Dieci a letter from Gregorio dated London, 13 December.

¹⁰² *L&P* VII 85-88.

¹⁰³ *L&P* VII 83. *L&P* VII 86; Pocock II 521: 'And now that I thought the time of my reward to be at hand, I have perceived a right good one to be prepared for me, and precious one, and well coloured, that is to be released from the pains which servants taketh.'

behalf of the English while Giambattista went to Hungary.¹⁰⁴ Gregorio had evidently decided that maintaining a relationship of service with England was worthwhile.

In August 1534, Gregorio left London for Rome, possibly with the intention of going on to Venice. Clement VII was seriously ill and Gregorio's main task at Rome was to assist in the expected conclave.¹⁰⁵ He wrote to Cromwell in advance, explaining his intentions, and was supplied with blank letters of credence from Henry VIII, which he endorsed with Alessandro Farnese's name and distributed.¹⁰⁶ As we saw in Chapter One, the barriers to communication meant that the English had no choice but to rely on the fidelity of their diplomats in intervening in the conclave, and the fact that Casali was given this task indicates the level of confidence he still enjoyed. In the early days of the new papacy, he told Cromwell, he was approached by the Pope and asked for his opinion on the best way to achieve a reconciliation between England and the Holy See, but said that having no commission to speak on the matter he was unwilling to offer advice.¹⁰⁷ His comment is indicative of a change in his freedom to manoeuvre: whereas previously, on his own account, he had been free to judge himself what would be necessary for the 'victory', that was no longer the case. Whether he had really been so reticent is a moot point, but his cautious approach to Cromwell was probably wise, as was his decision to continue writing to England with updates on the situation in Rome, despite receiving no regular response.¹⁰⁸ In April 1535, Cromwell wrote acknowledging the various letters Casali had sent since his departure from England, thanked him for his diligence in writing and suggested that he should try to persuade the Pope to pronounce Henry's marriage valid, without awaiting further orders.¹⁰⁹

It was clearly useful at this point for the English to maintain an informal presence in Rome through which such lobbying could take place, although whether there was ever any serious intention of pursuing a reconciliation must be doubtful.

¹⁰⁴ *L&P* VII 726.

¹⁰⁵ *L&P* VII 1057, 1095, 1181, 1228.

¹⁰⁶ See his letters to Cromwell, *L&P* VII 1185; *St P* VII 570 and *L&P* VII 1255; *St P* VII 570, to Norfolk *L&P* VII 1262; *St P* VII 573; and to Lord Rochford *L&P* VII 1263; *St P* VII 574. The use of blanks was not unusual. See Queller, *Office*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁷ 'Io gli ho detto non havere commissione alcuna di parlare sopra cio, et che mal volentieri vorrei consigliarlo in cio.' 24 October 1534, letter from Casali to Cromwell. *L&P* VII 1298; *St P* VII 576.

¹⁰⁸ *L&P* VII 1405, 1406; *St P* VII 579, 581; general updates from Gregorio to Cromwell about new pope, 8 November 1534. *L&P* VIII 17; *St P* VII 582; general update to Cromwell, 5 January 1535. *L&P* VIII 251; BL, Cotton MSS, Vit. B XIV 150r-151r; general update, 20 February 1535, translated into English.

¹⁰⁹ 10 April 1535. *L&P* VIII 523; *St P* VII 591. The credential does, however, survive in the Vienna archives, for which information I am grateful to Megan Williams.

Judged by the infrequency of his letters, Cromwell seems to have taken rather a limited interest in Casali's activities, but he cannot have been entirely unhappy with the family's service, for in March 1535 Giambattista Casali was recalled from Venice, and set out on the mission to Hungary which had first been mentioned almost a year earlier.¹¹⁰ There is no formal evidence in the English archives for Giambattista's accreditation to John Zápolya; however a letter from an English agent in Venice, Edmund Harvel, who had been involved in the quest for scholarly opinions in favour of Henry's divorce, described him as 'the kinges imbassadour'. That letter, as we saw, also brought the earliest report of his capture *en route* by Imperial troops.¹¹¹

Despite the period of tension around Giambattista's kidnapping and John Fisher's execution, discussed above, the family did not abandon their connections with the English. Francesco Casali, who as Zápolya's representative in Rome remained at the Curia while Gregorio withdrew to Bologna, wrote to Stephen Gardiner in December 1535 'by the order of Gregorio', giving details of plans for a bull against the king which would threaten Henry with deprivation of his kingdom.¹¹² By early 1536, Gregorio was back in Rome and engaged in more regular correspondence with England again, providing in particular updates on the war situation.¹¹³ In April, Gregorio wrote to the bishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean du Bellay, that he had been appointed English ambassador to the Emperor, presumably for the period of the Emperor's visit to Rome that month.¹¹⁴ There is no surviving credential in the English archives, so it is not easy to verify whether this was in fact the case; assuming, however, that he was so accredited, it would be evidence of continuing English confidence in his services. By July 1536, Giambattista Casali had been freed from his imprisonment. He was in ill health, but hoped to travel to England after he had recovered.¹¹⁵ In the event, he did not recover, and died that autumn. Gregorio, too, fell ill. His last recorded involvement in diplomacy is an apposite reminder of

¹¹⁰ On the infrequency of the correspondence see Gregorio's letter to Cromwell of 14 May 1535, in which he complains of the delay in receiving an indication from England of Henry's attitude towards French proposals for an English reconciliation with Rome. *L&P* VIII 712; TNA, SP 1/92, f. 171r. On Giambattista's mission see *CSP Ven* v 38, 17 March 1535 and *CSP Ven* v 40, 22 March 1535.

¹¹¹ c. 5 May 1535. *L&P* VIII 672; BL, Cotton MSS, Nero B VII 109.

¹¹² *L&P* IX 999; *St P* VII 637.

¹¹³ *L&P* x 297, 546, 620, 682, 683, 687, 796, 814, 906, 955, 977, xi 70, 179, 181, 182, 744, 963.

¹¹⁴ Du Bellay, *Correspondance* II 313: 'Hora ella deve sapere che la M^{da} del Re m'ha commesso che io la serva per ambasciadore appresso lo Imperatore.'

¹¹⁵ *L&P* XI 70, 182.

the importance of its social side: on 21 November 1536, about a month before his death, his secretary Guido Gianetti wrote to the English ambassador Richard Pate, offering him hospitality at the Casali house in Rome.¹¹⁶

These later years of Casali's employment demonstrate not only his continued loyalty to England but also the flexible nature of diplomatic representation in this period. Although he can no longer be regarded as having full ambassadorial status at Rome, it is clear that he remained an informal representative and in instances such as the 1534 conclave was trusted to act in the English interest. It is particularly telling that he seems to have overcome at least some of the criticism made by Richard Croke and perhaps by others to re-establish himself in the English service, and it is not inconceivable that in the longer term he might have gone as ambassador to Venice. His fellow ambassador Pietro Vanni stayed in England and in the royal service until his death in 1563, although his role was not primarily a diplomatic one. It must be questionable, however, for how long someone like Gregorio Casali could have served the English in a major overseas posting, and it is notable that after Giambattista Casali's death his duties at Venice were taken over by an Englishman, Edmund Harvel.¹¹⁷ As Michael Wyatt has argued, the schism with Rome sharply disrupted Italians' involvement in English state affairs.¹¹⁸ While Italian influence in England did not evaporate, its nature, and what was permitted, changed. With the exception of Vanni, no other Italian diplomat would be employed in the English service at a senior level for the remainder of the sixteenth century.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, from the 1550s a dominant motif in diplomatic relations would be the embassy chapel dispute: the conflict over the right of an ambassador of a Catholic prince to observe his religion in a Protestant country, and vice versa.¹²⁰ The process of confessionalisation, as Tracey Sowerby has observed, had important implications for diplomatic practice.¹²¹ While further research is needed to assess the extent to which religious division affected the different European diplomatic services, and its impact over time, in the case of England it is clear that Gregorio Casali's career fell in the

¹¹⁶ *L&P* XI 1131.

¹¹⁷ Bell, *Handlist*, p. 289.

¹¹⁸ Wyatt, *Italian Encounter*, p. 64.

¹¹⁹ See the lists of diplomatic representatives given in Bell, *Handlist*.

¹²⁰ Mattingly, pp. 186-87. For a case-study see the discussion in Sowerby, 'Richard Morison', Chapter Six, especially pp. 284-91.

¹²¹ Sowerby, 'Richard Morison', pp. 317, 372.

closing stages of the period in which foreigners were perceived to be acceptable diplomatic representatives.

FOREIGN state servants engaged in diplomacy were, during this period, considered to have characteristics distinct from those of their native counterparts. These were not only related to practical considerations that the literature has tended to emphasise, although such things as access to information networks and local knowledge were of course important. The advantages of employing foreigners in diplomatic service included a range of possibilities for dissimulation and subterfuge, based on the pretence that the diplomat in question was acting either for himself, or for someone other than the actual principal. The ambassador's ability to dissimulate his true purpose could be extremely useful for the employing prince; it became easier, for example, for the prince to disclaim responsibility for a particular strategy, although that in turn could be dangerous for the ambassador. However, there were risks for the prince too: the very freedom of manoeuvre that made such dissimulation plausible might also compromise the effective execution of the his instructions.

The example of the Casali family and their service to England also raises questions about the ways that foreign state servants conceptualised their own identities and relationships of service. It is clear that their primary relationship was one of service to the English crown, but although Gregorio Casali described Henry VIII as 'my king', he did not adopt a permanent English identity in the manner documented by Isom-Verhaaren for men in the services of France and the Ottoman Empire. Rather, he and his brothers managed a series of allegiances to and links with foreign princes while pursuing a strategy of family advancement in Italy. To do so, they projected a variety of different selves, sometimes appearing to act firmly on behalf of the king of England, sometimes very much in their own interests. That was, however, a type of behaviour that many Renaissance people, in all sorts of social contexts, would have understood.

Conclusion

If one were to judge Gregorio Casali in terms of the outcome of his diplomacy, it would be hard to avoid the conclusion that his career was a failure. He did not get Henry VIII the divorce that was eventually achieved back in England; by the end of his life Henry had been excommunicated and England's reformation was under way. That would, however, be the wrong way to assess his work. Quite apart from the fact that it is hard to see how any other English ambassador to Rome could have done better, Casali's role in diplomacy was essentially a mercenary one. He was interested in improving the lot of his family and undoubtedly he did so, moving the Casali firmly out of the merchant class and into the world of the landed nobility. While traditional accounts of Renaissance diplomacy have found in it the origins of 'modern' diplomatic practice, the case of Gregorio Casali emphasises that many of its characteristics seem highly alien to the twenty-first century observer. Sixteenth-century diplomats were regarded as the personification of their prince's honour. In the symbolic world of the court they fought to defend that honour through assertion of their place in the order of precedence. An ambassador's lifestyle was expected to be liberal, magnificent and splendid, thereby reflecting the virtues of his prince. Diplomacy drew heavily on private resources and family connections.

The case of Gregorio Casali illustrates well the variety of duties with which a resident ambassador might be charged. While the literature on Renaissance diplomacy frequently identifies newsgathering as the resident's most important task, this study has demonstrated that this was far from his only function. He had significant roles, too, in negotiation, as a 'fixer' for special ambassadors, and in the symbolic world of the court of Rome, where the liturgical ceremonies provided a space in which the rivalries of the European powers were symbolically played out. Furthermore, the thesis has illuminated the social networks that underpinned this process, emphasising the role of family ties and sociability in the efficient operation of diplomacy. Casali's extensive connections at the Curia, whether through his guardian Cardinal Riario, his mother's family the Caffarelli, or patrons such as the Gonzaga of Mantua, accorded him a high degree of credit in the eyes of contemporaries, who praised his access to Pope Clement and the esteem in which he was held. Only through an appreciation of his personal networks and social status is

possible to understand fully why his English colleagues had such praise for his diplomatic activities.

The overall picture of the diplomatic corps at Rome that emerges from this snapshot of practice in the 1520s and 30s suggests that here was a developing level of professionalism. At the centre of European diplomacy, there was a small but identifiable group of Italian diplomats employed in the service of various foreign powers. In this period, ties of allegiance to a prince could still over-ride issues of national origin. Although the loyalty of foreign state servants did come into question, so did that of diplomats born and bred in the home country. The substantial problem in terms of assuring any individual's loyalty was related to questions of distance and difficulty of communication, which meant that in practice rulers had little option but to allow the exercise of significant autonomy by their diplomats. Furthermore, while Italian diplomats' networks, military expertise and knowledge of the papal court were all desirable assets to the powers engaged in the Italian wars, this thesis has argued that foreign state servants also offered to their employers important possibilities for dissimulation.

It is impossible to draw a clear line between what was 'public' and what was 'private' in the diplomatic practice of this period. The ambassador's house, for example, acted as an embassy building: his servants and associates functioned as embassy staff. The authors of treatises on diplomacy were concerned to ensure the proper conduct of household members, because the ambassador's authority over his household reflected the king's good governance of his realm. When he entertained at home, he not only acquired information but demonstrated the liberality appropriate to his status as a princely representative. Diplomatic gift-giving could also demonstrate liberality, but it was surrounded by anxieties. Contemporaries were well aware of the potential of gifts to corrupt; offers of reward had to be hedged around with the appropriate rhetoric. Practices of gift-giving also draw our attention to the dual persona of the Renaissance ambassador as both private individual and royal representative. It is not always straightforward – nor was it intended to be – to discern for which of these two selves a gift was intended. Indeed, Renaissance diplomats, and in particular foreign state servants like Casali, projected multiple selves as they managed a series of allegiances. They might represent their own prince, or another, or act in their own right; they might also pretend to do any of these things while dissimulating their true purpose. The foreign state servant could,

more effectively than his native counterpart, evince an impression of independence, and that might be useful to his prince; it also, however, entailed risks for both diplomat and employer.

This assessment of Casali's significance as an ambassador and of the assets he brought to the English service, hitherto not fully appreciated by scholars, raises questions about the existing accounts of English diplomatic practice during the reign of Henry VIII. Casali had considerable experience in junior diplomatic roles prior to his engagement as ambassador, and by means of his appointment to Rome and that of his brother Giambattista to Venice, Cardinal Wolsey gained an efficient and effective network for the conduct of English diplomacy in Italy and indeed Europe. There is no evidence that Casali's contemporaries in the diplomatic corps believed English representation at Rome to be sub-standard. The case of the Casali brothers certainly adds to the doubt about Gary M. Bell's thesis that only under Elizabeth did English diplomacy become systematised, confirming the criticisms made by Luke MacMahon and Tracey Sowerby. However, it also raises new issues in relation to the ways that the schism with Rome altered the course of developments in English diplomatic practice, a point to be borne in mind in future research.

Beyond its analysis of Casali's career, this study has aimed to demonstrate the variety of insights that may be derived from innovative approaches to the study of diplomacy. By focusing on diplomatic practice at the micro-level, it has been able to consider topics such as family networks, the domestic environment, the symbolism of diplomatic gifts and rhetoric of gift-giving, and conceptions of the self and allegiance. It is fair to say that all of these are areas that have lacked due attention in studies to date; while the conclusions here can only be a starting point, they demonstrate the rich possibilities that alternative methods of study might contribute to a new diplomatic history of Renaissance and early modern Europe.

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Appendix 1

English embassies to Pope Clement VII, 1525-33

Gregorio Casali and Girolamo Ghinucci

Accredited 20 September 1525

Ghinucci begins embassy in Spain c. 23 November 1526

John Russell

Accredited 2 January 1527

Arrived Rome 6 February 1527

Departed Rome 24 February 1527, but returned after an accident

Departed Rome c. 1 May 1527.

William Knight

Arrived Foligno 4 November 1527

Returned to Foligno having been to Rome 4 December 1527

Departed Orvieto 1 January 1528.

Stephen Gardiner and Edward Fox

Arrived Orvieto 20 March 1528

Fox returned to London in May 1528

Gardiner arrived Venice 24 June 1528 and departed in late July.

Sir Francis Bryan and Pietro Vanni

Arrived Rome 18 January 1529

Bryan left Rome 31 May 1529

Vanni left Rome 14 September 1529.

Stephen Gardiner

Arrived Rome 15 February 1529

Departed Rome 31 May 1529.

William Benet

Accredited 20 May 1529

Arrived Rome 16 June 1529.

Girolamo Ghinucci

Re-accredited 4 October 1529.

Sir Nicholas Carew and Richard Sampson

(ambassadors to the Emperor, attending his coronation)

Arrived Bologna 2 December 1529

Departed Bologna 7 February 1530.

Thomas Boleyn earl of Wiltshire, Edward Lee and John Stokesley bishop of London

Accredited 20 January 1530

Arrived Bologna 19 March 1530.

Boleyn and Lee had returned to England by early August, having subsequently gone to the French court. Stokesley's mission was principally concerned with the acquisition of university opinions in favour of Henry's divorce. He left Italy in September 1530.

In August 1533 William Benet was withdrawn from Rome; Casali and Ghinucci remained with uncertain status.

Sources: Wall, Contarini, Theiner, *L&P* iv, *CSP Ven*, *CSP Sp*, BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12276, Bell, *Handlist*.

Appendix 2

Diplomatic roles of the Casali family

This table gives a brief summary of the information contained in the discussion of the Casali family and their involvement in diplomacy in Chapter Two. Full references are given in the footnotes to the Chapter.

Gregorio Casali

English diplomatic agent 1519-1525

Papal diplomatic agent 1525

English ambassador to Rome, 1525-33 (continuing as a diplomatic agent until his death in 1536)

Special ambassador on behalf of France to Mantua and Ferrara, 1527.

Giambattista Casali

Papal nuncio to England 1525

English ambassador to Venice 1526-1535

English ambassador to King John Zápolya of Hungary 1535.

Francesco Casali

Mercenary captain in Imperial service pre-1526

Mercenary captain in Venetian service 1526-1529

Ambassador of John Zápolya to Rome, 1533-1540.

Paolo Casali

Papal nuncio to England 1529.

Andrea Casali

Senator in Bologna from 1525; carried out diplomatic missions on behalf of the city to Rome and to the French commander Lautrec

Assisted with English diplomacy in Bologna, 1530-1531.

Vicenzo Casali

Diplomatic messenger between England and Italy, 1528-29.

Appendix 3

**Paride Grassi, *De Oratoribus Romanae Curiae*
BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 12270, ff. 70v-71v**

Quantum oratores donant officialibus
pape et qui sunt illi officiales

Ad magistros Cerimoniarum non pertinet
taxare summam quam oratores velint donare
mimis, buffonibus, histrionibus, stipendiarijs,
Tibicinibus, tubicinibusque et Thimpanistis,
ac similibus, sed ut volunt oratores erogant
et donant; Consueverunt tamen Infrascriptis
precipue donare secundum hanc taxam quae
sequitur non quidem ex obligatione vel
lege aut jure aliquo nisi ex mera gratia
quod antiquitus semper usitatum est fieri;
ideo humiliter se commendare offitiales dent
oratoribus ut secundum quod alij oratores antiqui fecerunt
Ita ipsi novi facere velint Et quantum insatia-
bilis est hominis appetitus Et offitiales semper
plura habere vellent quam possent Ideo magistri
predicti dantes cedulam huiusmodi oratoribus,
[f. 71r]

advertant in duobus. Primo ut non dent de
manibus proprijs eorum vel alterius ipsorum
scriptas ipsas cedulas. Item ut rogent
ipsos oratores ne cui ex offitialibus predictis
huiusmodi cedulam ostendant quoniam ipsi offitia-
les turbarentur cum magistris qui parum taxa-
runt Cedula etc.

Reges solent dare in totium ducatos auri in
auro ad plus Centum et Quinquaginta vel
circa:

Magistris Cerimoniarum	Quinquaginta
Macerijs	Quindecim vel xx
Ostiarijs	Quindecim vel xx
Parafrenarijs pp	Vigintiquinque vel circa
Cursoribus	Duodecim vel circa
Ad porta ferream	Sex vel septem
Ad Cathenam	Quatuor vel tres
Ad hortum secretum	Tres similiter vel 4.

Duces vero minus solvere solent viz Centum vel circa viz:

Magistris	Quinquaginta vel xltā
Macerijs	Decem vel xij
Ostiarijs	Ostiarijs x vel xij
Parafrenarijs	xv vel xviii

Cursoribus	Octo vel decem
Ad porta ferream	quatuor vel quinque
[f. 71v]	
Ad Cathenam duos	duos vel 3
Ad hortum	duos vel tres.
Marchiones Respublice et alij prin-	
cipes soluunt aliquid minus aut ut placet.	