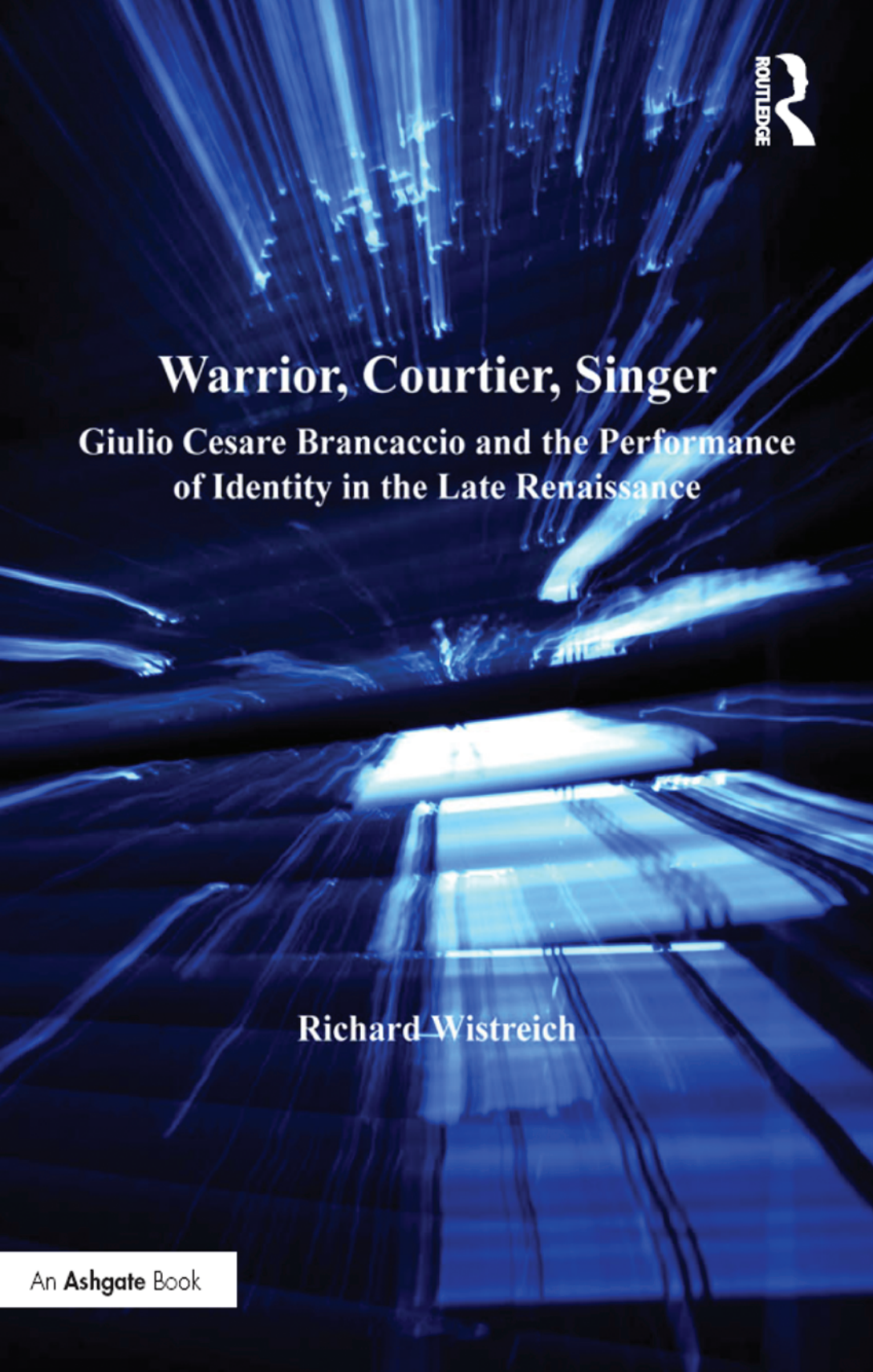
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Warrior, Courtier, Singer
Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance
Richard Wistreich
An Ashgate Book

WARRIOR, COURTIER, SINGER

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Warrior, Courtier, Singer

Giulio Cesare Brancaccio and the Performance of Identity in the Late Renaissance

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List of Abbreviations

Library sigla

Brussels	Brussels, Bibliothèque royale Albert Ier
Florence AS	Florence, Archivio di Stato
Florence BN	Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale
London BL	London, British Library
Lucca	Lucca, Biblioteca statale
Madrid PR	Madrid, Palacio Real, Biblioteca y Archivio
Mantua AS	Mantua, Archivio di Stato
Milan BA	Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana
Modena AS	Modena, Archivio di Stato
Modena BE	Modena, Biblioteca estense e universitaria
Montreal	Montreal, Conservatoire de Musique, Centre de Documentation
Naples AS	Naples, Archivio di Stato
Paris BN	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
Parma AS	Parma, Archivio di Stato
Simancas AG	Simancas, Archivio general
Vatican	Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
Venice BC	Venice, Biblioteca Correr
Vienna HHS	Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv

General

New Grove II	*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie (29 vols, London and New York, 2001)

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Introduction

This book about a Neapolitan warrior-courtier started, perhaps surprisingly, with my work as a singer of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music. For a number of years I have been reading and performing those few songs specifically for a bass voice that occupy a small but persistent space among the many hundreds for soprano or tenor in printed volumes of monodies published in Italy and elsewhere in Europe between about 1600 and 1650. Just viewed on the page, these bass songs share a number of distinctive characteristics: although often extremely simple in terms of harmonic construction, they are striking for their depiction of ubiquitous roulades and cascades of very fast notes and other written-out decorations, as well as for their large voice ranges. Some of them look truly extraordinary in this respect, requiring two or, very occasionally, three different clefs in order to keep the pitches on the stave, and this physical stretch is often highlighted by sudden great leaps from high to low and back again, not necessarily for obvious text-related reasons. In sum, this notation describes a style of singing of impressive virtuosity, whose realization presupposes great flexibility and technical bravura.

It is at first sight puzzling, then, that by comparison, virtually no printed or manuscript source of music for basses from *before* 1600 appears to demand remotely similar virtuosity. There are, as it happens, virtually no extant solo songs for bass from that earlier period, so we are dealing almost exclusively with bass parts in polyphonic music, liturgical and secular. Ranges seldom exceed the Renaissance norm of the span of the stave with a single clef and music for the lowest voice rarely has extended passages of sequentially adjacent pitches, let alone many small note values. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that the actual performance styles of bass singers – which the monody prints in some way represent – almost certainly did not suddenly start in 1600, even though earlier notation does not apparently either prescribe or describe them. If, instead of being a record of an apparently sudden 'step change' in vocal technique, the appearance of graphic representations of such a performance style around this time is rather a function of developments in print culture and technology,[1] then it will be necessary to look beyond the notation to find out how basses used their voices in the performance of songs in the mid- to late sixteenth century.

My initial project, then, was simply to look for Italian bass singers and find out more about their styles of singing in order to complement the practical research into appropriate vocal technique in which I am engaged as a performer. Very soon I found myself asking further, much wider-ranging questions. For example, why might such vocal virtuosity have been so prized and what were the cultural values of the societies and institutions that generated and supported this special kind of singing?

1 For stimulating discussion of these ideas, see Tim Carter, 'Printing the New Music', in Kate van Orden (ed.), *Music and the Cultures of Print* (New York, 2000), pp. 3–37.

What were the contexts – physical, social and intellectual – that gave meaning to the performance acts of which this later notation is some sort of record?

Of the Italian bass singers of the sixteenth century, none is more illustrious nor so intriguing a character than the Neapolitan Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, best known to historians of vocal music because of his brief membership of the famous 'musica secreta' of Duke Alfonso d'Este II in Ferrara in the early years of the 1580s. However, I was struck by the fact that although music historians are naturally interested in Brancaccio as a famous singer, this was of almost negligible interest to his two twentieth-century biographers, presumably because of the tiny role that music appeared to have played in his life as a soldier and courtier. It was these latter two interrelated identities, not his prowess as a singer, that made his 'life' interesting to a passionate and patriotic Neapolitan historian and worthy of an entry in a biographical dictionary of significant Italians.[2]

Brancaccio may have been a remarkable performer, whose singing attracted admiring comments from knowledgeable contemporaries, but his story hardly fits any conventional image of a famous musician.[3] For a start, there are no specific pieces of music that we can say without doubt that he either composed or sang, nor did he ever refer to himself as 'a musician' – indeed he was outraged at any suggestion that he might be one. Of his written works, none is musical: all are, in fact, about military science. But the fact that my project looked so unpromising as a topic of music history only increased my curiosity and my sense of the inadequacy of many of the existing ways of telling the 'story' of music in the Renaissance.

The history of Renaissance music has certainly moved on from almost exclusive attention to notated musical works and their composers: many hundreds of once-forgotten performers and the institutions in which they worked are now much better known to us. But in order to make a history of music that acknowledges it as something inextricably embedded in a society's culture, we need to go on to consider the totality of those musicians' lives. Music historians, of course, long had an interest in the 'lives of the great composers' as keys to establishing the ontology and meaning of the 'great works' of music. It is a methodology now viewed askance in modern music history, distrusted largely because of its Romanticist implications as well as its apparent denial of a music history to cultures that 'lack' canons of 'great works' or identifiable composers. The practice of musical biography and its part in music historiography remains beset by anxieties thrown up by epistemological upheavals in the humanities in recent years.[4]

But this by no means makes biographical study redundant in a different sort of historical investigation, based on the idea of music as something that happens

2 Benedetto Croce, 'Un capitano italiano del Cinquecento: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio', in *Varietà di storia letteraria e civile: serie prima* (Bari, 1949), pp. 57–78, and Umberto Coldagelli, 'Brancaccio, Giulio Cesare', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 13 (Rome, 1971), pp. 780–4 (much indebted to Croce's work).

3 Nor has Brancaccio made it into the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

4 For a recent survey of some of these issues, see Jolanta T. Pekacz, 'Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and its Discontents', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 23 (2004): 39–80.

rather than as something that resides exclusively on paper. Indeed, biography, in its widest sense, has enjoyed a new lease of life in the past quarter of a century in other spheres of early modern cultural history, especially since the landmark publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and in the subsequent, ever-spreading reach of ensuing new historicist ways of investigating 'the complex interactions of meaning in a given culture'.[5] Although the so-called 'new historicism' has been widely contested, there is no doubt that this extraordinarily fruitful current of thought and writing has spurred biographical writing and given it at least a respectable position among other historical narratives. This is particularly useful in a project such as mine, in which the possibility of writing a generalized and objective account of a style of singing (as if there could ever be such a thing) is constantly being stymied by the demanding interruptions of a very singular and often unruly protagonist.

This book, then, is in the form of a biography, but one that has several versions or layers that in practice are inseparably interleaved, but can be roughly delineated as follows. First, it brings together just about all the currently known documentary sources relating to its central subject, Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, irrespective of their sometimes highly eclectic nature. These documents form the basis for a series of contextual studies which consist of oscillations between, on one hand, close-up textual analysis of the writing and the unravelling of the detail and rhetoric of certain moments or interactions between Brancaccio and others, and on the other hand, the widest possible panning shots which put the action into broad political or cultural context. This narrative procedure is not arbitrary, but reflects precisely the nature of the source material, which likewise ranges from the minute to the sweeping, generating a multi-dimensional or kaleidoscopic story, different from the more even focus of 'single-issue' or totalizing historical narratives. Secondly and especially in the second and third parts of the book, I engage with specific contemporary intellectual or institutional structures, setting Brancaccio's story against them. In so doing, I also show how the apparently clear-cut distinction between 'context' and 'contextualized' is regularly blurred and that 'foreground' and 'background' often change places or interact. At times, for example, Brancaccio's life seems to be a precise embodiment of one or other trope of noble identity and at others the plots of his 'real life' adventures read like those in an epic romance – at one point, he even turns up as a semi-fictional character in a book about the nature of nobility.

Part I presents an account of Brancaccio's life, drawing on all the material currently available to me. Many important sources were identified by Brancaccio's first major biographer, Benedetto Croce, although many more documents have come to light in the process of this and other recent studies. Some of those not hitherto available in modern books are reproduced in Appendix 2; there is very likely plenty more documentary evidence waiting to be found. Brancaccio not only moved among the most powerful figures in European political history of the mid-sixteenth century, but was himself actually present and active at some of its decisive moments (a fact of which he himself was acutely aware). It is perhaps ironical that I am therefore

5 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), p. 3.

compelled at times to engage the most dominant traditional narrative of history – that which focuses on wars, dates and the deeds of powerful men – as a critical strand of the thick weave in which his story is embedded. In the course of the narrative, I have also allowed space to subject Brancaccio's treatises, letters and more personal writings to analysis as texts, with special attention to what they might divulge about him as an individual.

Part II starts over again, telling a version of the same chronological story using different contextual materials and beginning at the place where my initial investigation had started: Brancaccio the bass singer. These chapters deal exclusively with the musical dimension of Brancaccio's identity, bringing together a large array of different kinds of source material about bass singing in Italy in the sixteenth century. This is a necessary undertaking, given that nearly all the evidence for Brancaccio's life in music is anecdotal, does not yield easily to any single approach, and certainly does not explain *why* he was so celebrated as a singer. I want to know better what he (and other singers like him) did that made him (and makes him still) famous as a musician. In the process, I hope to be able to develop a history of bass singing in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that takes account of such disparate materials and different ways of analysing and synthesizing them.

The too simple idea that the appearance in print of the so-called 'new music' for the first time around 1600 was simultaneous with the 'invention' of a new kind of singing style has already been much revised by a number of scholars whose work has informed mine.[6] An important strand of this work has continued to focus on written notation, and particularly the manuscript and other evidence for the 'unfixed' nature of composed sixteenth-century music when it was sounded in performances. The recognition of the importance of improvisation (the precise meaning of which in the Renaissance is still far from clear) and of a so-called 'unwritten tradition' (a distinctly value-laden negative) has helped in some ways to dismantle the positivist, composer-led model of musical process in the period. But it has not yet produced a commonly agreed language in which to talk about a very complex cultural phenomenon that includes music-creation, performing and listening. For the time being, talking and writing about vocal music and singing will continue to involve the appropriation of a variety of historical, musicological and literary approaches.

The sometimes untidy conglomeration of information uncovered in close reading of the documents that told the story of Brancaccio's life in Part I and the equally complicated questions raised in the exploration of what it might mean to call Brancaccio a 'bass singer', point up the interconnectedness of issues such as the construction of identity, the nature of social institutions and interactions

6 These include, for example, Howard Mayer Brown, 'The Geography of Florentine Monody: Caccini at Home and Abroad', *Early Music*, 9 (1981): 147–68; Tim Carter, 'Printing the New Music' and 'On the Composition and Performance of Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1602)', *Early Music*, 12 (1984): 208–17; Jeanice Brooks, '"New Music" in Late Renaissance France', *Trossingen Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik*, 2 (2002): 161–78; Dinko Fabris, 'The Role of Solo Singing to the Lute in the Origins of the Villanella alla napolitana, c. 1530–1570', ibid., pp. 133–46; John Walter Hill, *Roman Monody, Cantata and Opera from the Circles around Cardinal Montalto* (2 vols, Oxford, 1997).

between members of courtly-military society of the mid-sixteenth century. For understandable reasons of intellectual rationale, these are usually studied in a certain degree of isolation one from another. In Part III I seek to bring some of these strands together, focusing on the self-articulation of Brancaccio the warrior-courtier in socially and culturally changing times. I explore the connections between aspects of Brancaccio's personal discourses (his actions, his narratives and those of others, including his musical performances) and various themes such as contemporary notions of nobility and honour, *virtù*, masculinity, dissimulation and performance – all of which contribute to an investigation of his 'self-fashioning' within a society in which identity was a highly performative construct. But Brancaccio's story is not simply a conveniently exemplary one, useful only as a way of elucidating apparent paradigms of sixteenth-century elite culture. As the story of his life will, I hope, make apparent, he was a remarkably singular individual who made dozens of lasting impressions in a world in which making an impression was an undertaking vital to the successful sustenance of noble identity.

The study of courtly society in the Renaissance has been an extraordinarily active, innovative and fertile one for a long while now, not least in the field of music history, and I have been able to draw on a broad range of historical scholarship offering a number of different possible critical approaches to the exploration of the themes thrown up by the subject of this book.[7] I have adopted whichever useful elements of each one seemed appropriate to the particular job in hand and this seems to me to be entirely in keeping not only with the diversity of material, but also with progress towards new ways of researching and writing about musical practice in the early modern period. My decisions about how to subject the source material about Brancaccio to a set of narratives have certainly been influenced by my reading in contemporary historiography and critical theory, but I do not want to clutter an already messy narrative with yet further layers of meta-text showing which bits of theory might be being invoked and when (it would, in any case, be impossible to be precise at every point). My main endeavour has been to combine the best of constructionist, historicist and narrative ways of writing history by taking up the challenge made by Peter Burke in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* with which he invited historians to try 'making a narrative thick enough to deal not only with the sequence of events and the conscious intentions of the actors in these events, but also with the structures – institutions, modes of thought, and so on'; he asks 'what would such a narrative be like?'[8] What follows is one possible answer.

7 A significant recent publication that has particular resonances with the subject matter of this book, Kate van Orden's excellent *Music, Discipline, and Arms in Early Modern France* (Chicago, 2005), focuses primarily on the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; it appeared too late for me to make direct use of in this study, but its conclusions have influenced my understanding of the relations between music and noble militarism.

8 Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1991), quoted in Alun Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London and New York, 1997), p. 112.

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PART ONE

Identity of a Performer

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Chapter One

Napolitano y de buena casta

The soldier, courtier and singer Giulio Cesare Brancaccio was born into a family of the Neapolitan nobility, probably in the second decade of the sixteenth century.[1] The family was large and its complex genealogy is as yet unreconstructed, but various Brancaccios (the name is often spelled Brancazzo or Brancazo in Neapolitan sources) had played significant roles in the history of the Kingdom of Naples for a good three hundred years before Giulio Cesare's birth, would do so throughout the sixteenth century and continue to be important well into the nineteenth.[2] The family's status and the structure of the social world into which Giulio Cesare was born and which shaped his career and his very identity were determined by historical and political forces that are fundamental to the ensuing narrative.

Naples was the capital of a substantial and autonomous kingdom with its own special aristocratic structure. Its highest baronial rank consisted of a number of princes, who, besides their regional feudal seats where they ruled virtually autonomously, also had palaces and political power bases in the capital.[3] The city itself was divided into five districts or *seggi*, which were not only geographical but also political divisions. Each *seggio* was presided over by a leading baronial family and each provided home and focus of identity for a number of other noble families which traditionally retained special ties of fealty to *seggio* and to each other; thus, family name and *seggio* were defining marks of Neapolitan nobility.[4] The Brancaccios belonged to the *seggio* of Nido,[5] which was presided over by Ferrante Sanseverino d'Aragona,

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1 Neither Brancaccio's date of birth nor of his death has yet come to light.

2 Vincenzo di Sangro, *Genealogie di tutte le famiglie patrizie napoletane e delle nobili fuori seggio* (Naples, 1895), pp. 33–4.

3 A useful introduction to the upper echelons of the social hierarchy of Naples, which lists the names of its nobles and principal officers in the mid-sixteenth century, is Enrico Bacco, Cesare D'Engenio Caracciolo et al., *Descrittione del regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1616, repr. 1671); the opening chapters are published in English, with commentary, as *Naples, an Early Guide*, ed. and trans. Eileen Gardner (New York, 1991).

4 For a brief explanation of the system, see Tommaso Pedío, *Napoli e Spagna nella prima metà del Cinquecento* (Bari, 1971), p. 152. As an example, in a portrait of the lutenist and singer Fabrizio Dentice made long after his exile from Naples and establishment at the Farnese court in Parma, his status as a Neapolitan nobleman was confirmed 'essendo Cavaliere molto nobile di Seggio': Ranuccio Pico, *Appendice di varii soggetti parmigiani* (Parma, 1642), Aggiunte II all'appendice, in Dinko Fabris, *Andrea Falconieri napoletano: Un liutista-compositore del Seicento* (Rome, 1987), p. 15 n. The important families of each of the five seggi are listed in Bacco, ed. Gardner, *Naples*, pp. 132–6.

5 The principal church of the Nido district, Sant'Angelo a Nilo, was founded in 1384 by Giulio Cesare's ancestor Cardinal Rinaldo Brancaccio; his tomb in the church includes

Prince of Salerno, one of the feudal barons of the Kingdom of Naples; his wealth, political ambition and eventual downfall provide an important background to the first part of this story. Members of Nido families who were close associates of his household, including Giulio Cesare and another nobleman-musician, Luigi Dentice, were inextricably bound up with the Prince of Salerno's own political fate; in order to make sense of Brancaccio's life, a basic record of Neapolitan history in the first half of the sixteenth century is thus unavoidable.

In February 1495, Charles VIII conquered Naples for the French, ending 64 years of Aragonese rule. He settled all its feudal estates on Frenchmen with a few exceptions, notably Roberto Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno (Ferrante's father), confirming the amicable connection between the Salerno dynasty and France that dated back to the time of René d'Anjou.[6] It was a link which would continue to be invoked and nurtured by succeeding generations and eventually cause the downfall of the family. The French were expelled six months later, but Charles's successor, Louis XII, inheriting the Angevin claim to the throne of Naples, reconquered the city in July 1501. Three years later, Naples was taken by Gonzalo de Córdoba, 'El Gran Capitán', and was absorbed into the huge and spreading Spanish, later Habsburg, empire.[7] Ruled from then on by a series of Spanish-appointed viceroys, the kingdom entered a period of quasi-colonial rule that was only ended by Napoleon. The Neapolitan aristocracy retained their status and riches, paying allegiance (and enormous taxes) to the Habsburgs, whilst the political control of the state was firmly in the hands of the viceroy. In 1528 a French army under Lautrec invaded the kingdom and many Neapolitan nobles rose up in rebellion in his support (including Fabrizio Brancazzo, Baron of Trentola and Loriano), but his siege of the city was repulsed and the Spanish retained control. In September 1532, Pedro Alvarez de Toledo became viceroy and remained in office until his death in Florence in February 1553.[8]

Pedro de Toledo was the emperor's delegate but had the power to behave essentially like a sovereign. Based in a magnificent palace at the Castel Nuovo, he established a court of royal proportions and set about founding a family dynasty, rebuilding the city and taking firm political control of the state. The 'native' Neapolitan aristocracy was essentially integrated into the system, and so long as they were prepared to accept the pre-eminence of the viceroy, stability was secure. However, the viceroy increasingly behaved tyrannically, and many Neapolitans looked to Emperor Charles V as the one whom they hoped would relieve them of their burdens by deposing Toledo and replacing him with someone more acceptable, preferably one of their own. It may

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famous sculptures by Donatello and Michelozzo di Bartolomeo.

6 Charles also left another Francophile noble, Giacomo Caracciolo, with his lands intact; his heirs would also play an important part in the later rebellion against Spanish rule (see below).

7 Robert J. Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France* (London, 1996), pp. 41, 44–8, 51–4, 62–4, 158.

8 Pedío, *Napoli e Spagna*, p. 251. The principal recent source of information about the viceroy is Carlos José Hernando Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles en el siglo XVI: El Virrey Pedro de Toledo. Linaje, estado y cultura (1532–1553)* (Salamanca, 1994); see also Giuseppe Galasso, *Alla periferia dell'impero: Il regno di Napoli nel periodo spagnolo (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Turin, 1994), pp. 41–78.

have been Toledo's pretensions to regal status that began the rivalry with the Prince of Salerno, who had his own traditional dynastic claim on the throne of Naples, lived in a quasi-royal fashion himself, and was the wealthiest of the Neapolitan barons. He had married the beautiful Isabella Villamarino di Cardona, and assembled a court around him to rival the viceroy's, although the two men publicly professed cordial relations.[9] The Prince of Salerno's courtiers were 'nearly all from the most noble families' and from at least the 1520s he had maintained a sizeable musical establishment of 'the most excellent musicians from various parts of Italy and many also from foreign countries, on whom he spent three thousand scudi a year'.[10] The prince was also a successful soldier, whose military reputation and standing in the eyes of the emperor were about to be confirmed at the highest level. What began as a test of who could hold Charles V's attention during his state visit in 1535–6 was to lead, seventeen years later, to an assassination attempt and open rebellion.[11]

First blooding

In his *Curriculum vitae*, written around 1573 (Appendix 2, Doc. 1), Brancaccio opens the account of his career in summer 1535, in the highly successful campaign of Charles V against Barbarossa and subsequent restoration of the imperial client Muliasse as King of Tunis, and this is the first documented date in his life we so far have. The idea of the campaign had been urged on Charles by the Neapolitan nobles in alliance with the viceroy, because of the menace of Turkish pirates operating out

9 *Dell'istoria di notar Antonino Castaldo: Libri quattro ne' quali descrivono gli avvenimenti più memorabili succedenti nel regno di Napoli sotto il governo del vicerè D. Pietro di Toledo e de' Granveza* [*ca.* 1573] (Naples, 1769), p. 45: 'i quali oltre il trattarsi da gran Signori, vivendo al costume Reale, per le loro maniere signorili, splendide, e liberali, e per le fiorite Corti, che di Cavalieri, e d'huomini eccellenti tenevano ornate e piene, erano da ogn'uno amati e riveriti' [Besides moving among great princes, [the Prince and Princess of Salerno] lived like royalty. They were loved and respected by everyone for their liberal, splendid and generous behaviour and for their flourishing court, which was adorned with nobles and excellent gentlemen]. See also Giuseppe Galasso, 'Trends and Problems in Neapolitan History in the Time of Charles V', in A. Calabria and J.-A. Marino (eds), *Good Government in Spanish Naples* (New York, 1990), pp. 64–75.

10 Filiberto Campanile, *L'armi overo insegne de' nobili* (Bologna, 1610), p. 42, cited in Cesare Corsi, 'Le carte Sanseverino: Nuovi documenti sul mecenatismo musicale a Napoli e in Italia meridionale nella prima metà del Cinquecento', in Paologiovanni Maione (ed.), *Fonti d'archivio per la storia della musica e dello spettacolo a Napoli tra XVI e XVIII secolo* (Naples, 2001), p. 6: 'I suoi cortegiani eran quasi tutti di famiglie nobilissime … Eran' … musici eccellentissimi venuti da diverse parti d'Italia, e molti anche da paesi oltramontani, a' quali pagava ogni anno di provisione tre mila scudi'. For the Princess of Salerno, see Benedetto Corce, 'Isabella Villamarino', *Anecdoti di varia letteratura*, ser. 1, vol. 1 (Naples, 1942), pp. 266–73.

11 See Alessandro Fava, 'L'ultimo dei baroni: Ferrante Sanseverino', *Rassegna storica salernitana*, 4 (1943): 57–82; Scipione Miccio, 'Vita di Don Pietro di Toledo Marchese di Villafranca', in Francesco Palermo (ed.), *Narrazioni e documenti sulla storia del regno di Napoli dall'anno 1522 al 1667*, Archivio storico italiano, 9 (Florence, 1846).

of the harbour of La Goletta, close to Tunis, and the war was partly financed by special taxes raised in Naples. The goal was successfully accomplished by a force consisting of a fleet under the Genoese admiral, Andrea Doria and a large Spanish and Neapolitan army led by Don Federico and Don García Toledo, the two sons of the viceroy. With them were local troops under the principal Neapolitan nobility, among whom was the young Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (quite possibly still a teenager), taking his first steps in the military world for which his birth and education would have destined him and which was to shape the rest of his life.[12]

On 4 July, La Goletta was taken with great loss of life, including many Neapolitan nobles. But the victory was a resounding one for Charles V, who lost no time in having the news broadcast in Italy, and especially in Naples. This success and the emperor's subsequent triumphal return gave the impetus to a manifestation of pride and self-confidence by Neapolitans which continued for more than a decade, during which the cultural and intellectual identity of the city and kingdom took on a kind of nationalistic fervour. It is within and against this background of chivalric, military and artistic display that Brancaccio's own 'identity world' can be located. The celebrations of the victory were carefully orchestrated and used for specific political ends. The physical presence of the emperor in the kingdom allowed the Neapolitans to impress him with a massive demonstration of affection and opulence that promised to open a new era in the often-strained relationship between subjects and colonial power. Descriptions of the festivities constitute some of the only information about cultural activity in Naples in this period against which to assess Brancaccio's own development as a warrior and courtier in the orbit of the Prince of Salerno.

The Tunis expedition gave a major boost to the prince: he was singled out for praise for his leadership of the Italian infantry at the siege of Goletta, and was seen as representing the generally good impression made by the Neapolitans, which in turn gave him a privileged role in the celebrations of Charles's entry into the city.[13] The emperor left Tunis on 17 August, reached Sicily after twelve days and was received into the city of Palermo a month later, passing through Calabria during October. He stayed with the two senior nobles in the Kingdom of Naples: first, Pietro Antonio

12 Gregorio Rosso, 'Istoria delle cose di Napoli sotto l'impero di Carlo V cominciando dall'anno 1526 per insino all'anno 1537 scritta per modo di giornale', in *Raccolta di tutti i più rinomati scrittori dell'istoria generale di Napoli*, vol. 8 (Naples, 1770). It is quite possible that Brancaccio's immediate commander would have been the Prince of Salerno himself, but by the time he came to write his *Curriculum vitae* – aimed at getting himself reaccepted into Spanish service – he had suppressed the by then disgraced prince's name entirely.

13 James Ogilvie, *The Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples*, 2 vols (London, 1731), vol. 2, p. 534: 'Goletta was first attacked, and, after much Toil and Slaughter, was taken on 4th of July. The Neapolitans behav'd with great courage, and particularly the Prince of Salerno, General of the Italian Foot, signaliz'd himself with much honour'. Ogilvie's passage is based on Pietro Giannone, *Istoria civile del regno di Napoli* (10 vols, Milan, 1723), which, in turn, follows Rosso, 'Istoria delle cose di Napoli'; Ogilvie also appears to have drawn on Castaldo, *Istoria*. Salerno was accompanied on the Tunis campaign by his secretary, Bernardo Tasso, who had joined his service in 1532; Edward Williamson, *Bernardo Tasso* (Rome, 1951), p. 8. Brancaccio, as a young man from the prince's own *seggio*, and thus quite likely under his command, may have begun his life-long connection with the Tasso family in this campaign.

Sanseverino, Prince of Bisignano and then in Salerno with Pietro Antonio's distant kinsman, Ferrante Sanseverino himself.[14]

This was a propaganda campaign to impress on the emperor that Naples was a European kingdom with its own fully functioning aristocracy that could rival any other in the empire, including Castile. Another chronicler of Naples, Antonino Castaldo, listed the leading Neapolitan women who also entertained the emperor, beginning with Maria d'Aragona, who was the wife of Alfonso d'Avalos, praising her for her 'beauty, royal presence, wit and incomparable judgement', as well as Donna Giovanna d'Aragona Colonna and her sister-in-law, the famous poet and patroness Vittoria Colonna, Isabella Villamarino, Princess of Salerno (all three 'almost on a par with Maria') and finally, Donna Maria di Cardona, Marquise of Padula, future wife of Don Francesco d'Este.[15] Meanwhile, Pedro de Toledo, preparing his own cultural offensive, was kept waiting in Naples.

On 25 November, Charles made his triumphant entrance into a capital city decorated with arches, statues, *colossi* and inscriptions praising the new Caesar. The Prince of Salerno seems to have succeeded in being very close to the centre of attention, despite the heavy presence of major Spanish and other powerful European leaders, including the supreme commander, Alfonso d'Avalos, Marquis of Vasto; the Duke of Alba; Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Prince of Molfetta (a particular rival of Salerno); Andrea Doria (Genoese admiral of the imperial fleet), Pierluigi Farnese (son of the pope), and the Dukes of Ferrara, Urbino and Florence.[16]

Charles remained in the city for four months, until the end of carnival. By day, the *Sindaco* and the Deputies (parliament) met at the church of S. Lorenzo to discuss the subventions to be levied in the kingdom to finance Charles's campaigns, and every night the emperor was extravagantly entertained with banquets, theatre and music. The Prince of Salerno and his wife, and also the Prince of Bisignano, competed with Pedro de Toledo to give Charles the most attention.[17] On 19 December, the viceroy gave the emperor a solemn banquet in the gardens of the Poggio Reale, which included a pastoral comedy ('un' Egloga o Fraza pastorale che ci fu molto ridicola'), probably acted by a professional troupe. Theatre was again on offer at Candlemas (2 February 1536), which marked the start of Carnival. After going to the Monte Olivio with all the Neapolitan and foreign nobles (possibly for a church service), the emperor was entertained by the Prince of Salerno with a 'most beautiful comedy'.[18] The Mantuan ambassador to Naples, Nicola Maffei, was astounded by the beauty of the women and by the quality of all the performances, especially the music, exclaiming that 'it seemed as though Paradise had presented all her beauty and harmony [pare che il

14 Rosso, 'Istoria delle cose di Napoli', p. 325.

15 Castaldo, *Istoria*, p. 56. Brancaccio would come to know these illustrious women well; he will later be described as a guest and performer at one of their salons, as well as being a close of associate of each of their husbands.

16 Pedío, *Napoli e Spagna*, p. 328.

17 Rosso, 'Istoria delle cose di Napoli', pp. 332–3; Castaldo, *Istoria*, p. 61. See also Anthony M. Cummings, *The Politicized Muse: Music for Medici Festivals, 1512–1537* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 151–4.

18 Rosso, 'Istoria delle cose di Napoli', p. 331.

paradiso havesse aperto ogni sua bellezza et armonia]'.[19] He was likewise impressed with the luxurious exhibitionism of the Neapolitan nobility, and particularly with the Sanseverino palace, which vied with the viceroy's for richness and regal splendour.[20] Charles was clearly delighted by his reception and rode about the city in disguise throughout Carnival, as did his most senior nobles, Ferrante Gonzaga and the Duke of Alba. The Neapolitans returned the feeling, delighting in the excitement and wandering the streets making music, perhaps believing that the emperor had come to save them from the oppression of his lieutenant, Toledo.[21] Charles, however, used the occasion to impress on his viceroy the need to curb the rebellious tendencies of the Neapolitans by any necessary means. This Don Pedro did throughout his 'reign': he reportedly once told the Florentine ambassador that in his 21 years as viceroy he had had 18,000 people executed.[22]

Forty years later, Brancaccio chose to open the account of his life's achievements with his participation in the Tunis campaign, which must have seemed like a quasi-crusade, so apt for the first blooding of a young member of the military-noble caste. He had sailed in a huge armada to a foreign continent with the great nobles of the land, following the Holy Roman Emperor himself to engage a leader of the infidels on his own territory, thence to return home together with the victorious Caesar and to participate in a triumph of classical proportions. He almost certainly took his place in the subsequent political and cultural display as a rising member of a significant family within his *seggio* and in the close orbit of its leading light. Since he was a member of a noble family, we can be fairly sure that his education would have prepared him for his role in this world through the development of specific skills – military, political and cultural. Quite apart from soldiering, to which he would devote his life, Brancaccio must at some point have been introduced to a humanist

19 Mantua AS, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 812, in Giuseppe Coniglio, 'Note sulla società napoletana ai tempi di Don Pedro di Toledo', in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri* (3 vols., Naples, 1959), vol. 1, p. 359.

20 See also Sánchez, *Castilla y Nápoles*, p. 282.

21 Coniglio, 'Note sulla società napoletana', p. 359, citing the words of Nicola Maffei, reports that 'Passavano maschere, che lanciavano "ovi pieni d'odore", gruppi di musici gareggiavano l'un con l'altro, nel cantare "cose villanesche all'usanza di qua" o "cose de madrigali molto concertatamente". Giravano per le vie, improvvisando versi e canzoni in onore delle belle donne che vedevano alle finestre e "rendeano una suave harmonia", con diletto a quelli che la poteano udire' [masquers went around throwing "eggs filled with perfume", groups of musicians competed with one another in the singing of "villanellas typical of the place" or madrigals "much concerted [possibly: 'arranged with many singers and instruments']"; they wandered through the streets improvising verses and songs in honour of the beautiful women whom they saw at their windows "producing a sweet harmony to the delight of those who were able to hear it"]. The intriguing musical information conveyed in this report has been analysed by, among others, Fabris, in 'The Role of Solo Singing to the Lute'.

22 Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, *The Habsburgs and Europe 1516–1660* (Ithaca and London, 1971), p. 52. The warm feelings of the people towards the emperor contrasted with those of some of their leaders. Having failed to persuade Charles to remove Pedro de Toledo as viceroy, the Marquis of Vasto thereafter withdrew from the negotiations at S. Lorenzo, although he continued to take part in the festivities.

curriculum (he was able to publish a Latin epithalamium some years later) and had his musical talents nurtured, both of which would have contributed to the basic skills of courtiership necessary for furthering his career through the networks of the European noble class, as we will see. We do not know whether the young Brancaccio consciously 'chose' to follow a quasi-professional military career abroad, or whether this represented the only realistic option for a young Neapolitan of his social position. Certainly, he benefited from the opportunities presented by his participation in his first campaign, and, together with a major force of fellow Neapolitan nobles and soldiers, Giulio Cesare followed Charles V northwards when he left Naples to engage further in military campaigns against the empire's major competitor in Europe: France and its leader, Francis I, who had just invaded and successfully occupied Savoy.

Service abroad

Charles left Naples in March 1536, and after spending time in Rome to meet the new pope, Paul III (Alessandro Farnese, elevated on 13 October 1534), he moved north and invaded Provence in July, capturing Aix and Marseilles. Brancaccio was in his first of very many campaigns in wild terrain, learning the style of warfare characterized by guerrilla-style skirmishing and the siege and defence of fortified towns that was to become his speciality. The French commander, Montmorency, Constable of France, destroyed food stores, wells and mills throughout Provence and cleverly denied his attackers major confrontations, leading them deeper and deeper into hostile terrain until Charles was forced by disease and hunger in his army to retreat into northern Italy. Brancaccio took part in Charles's ensuing campaign of defence in the territories of Milan. As a member of what was essentially a Spanish army commanded by the Marquis of Vasto, Brancaccio began a lifelong involvement in the wars of Piedmont, even returning later as a member of a French army to take a town he had previously besieged with the Spaniards. He took part in the sieges of Cherasco, Chieri and Alba, describing his experiences later as 'many beautiful actions against the French [molte belle fattioni contra francesi]'.[23]

The changing nature of warfare demanded the development of new skills based not so much on old-fashioned chivalric style as on mechanistic siege warfare and flexible tactics. The work, and thus the whole collective identity of the warrior-noble class, was in flux, and Brancaccio's life and career closely reflect this.[24] Technological and tactical developments associated with the increasing importance

23 *Curriculum vitae*, fol. 132r.

24 The so-called 'military revolution' of the sixteenth century and the changing nature of the role of the noble class in European warfare is a major area of scholarship and debate. The following have been important to the present study: Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1988, rev. 2000); J.R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe* (London, 1998); David Eltis, *The Military Revolution in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York, 1995); Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (Athens, Ga., 1981); J.R. Hale, 'The Military Education of the Officer Class in Early Modern Europe', in id. (ed.), *Renaissance War Studies* (London, 1983),

of firearms, advances in fortifications and the subsequent tendency for fighting to be centred on towns and castles rather than in open battle, contributed to a subsequent decline in the importance and status of 'armour-plated' heavy cavalry, which had been the traditional military role of the nobility. The style of fighting and, indeed, of military life as a whole in the Piedmont campaign, was utterly different from the image we may have of the gigantic lumbering armies and huge set-piece battles of the campaigns in Italy of the previous generation. Relatively small groups of essentially 'freelance' professionals now fought each other in virtual isolation from the rest of the world. It was a theatre in which to exercise the 'pure' values of mid-sixteenth-century warrior-nobles, offering recurring opportunities to indulge in bravado, risk and remarkably self-centred displays of military *virtù*, in which the somewhat haphazard taking and retaking of geographical objectives appears to have been less important strategically than simply pursuing warfare in the company of peers – on both sides. It lived up to Jean Giono's apt description: 'For several generations of gentlemen, Piedmont and Milan were a kind of "wild west" which entertained every impulse, ambition and dream of honour and glory'.[25] It is not difficult to imagine how the experience of these years formed the young Brancaccio, and may help to explain the way in which he conducted himself for the rest of his life. The sheer lust for adventure and bravado which he demonstrated so often would surely have found echo in the racy prose of Blaise de Monluc's *Commentaires*, gripping in a *Boys' Own* kind of way, for example, in his description (here, in Andrew Clark's 1674 translation) of how he just left home in Gascony one day, drawn inexorably towards the way of life to which he had been bred: 'being enflam'd with the report of the noble feats of Arms every day perform'd in Italy, which in those days was the Scene of Action, I was possess'd with a longing and desire to visit that Country'.[26]

It seems entirely fitting that Monluc and Brancaccio, who were almost the same age and apparently similar in temperament, should have started out fighting on opposite sides and then later have been comrades in arms in many campaigns, often traversing the same territories and refighting sieges and skirmishes for the same fortified hill towns and villages over and again. At its extreme, this kind of fighting was little more than sport for the bored younger sons of the upper aristocracy. Monluc relates how at the siege of Volpiano in 1555 (at which Brancaccio was also present on the opposing side) the three young royal 'Princes of the Blood', Monsieur Enghien, his brother, the Prince of Condé, and Monsieur (later Conte) de Nemours, just turned up without any military commission, having absconded from court in order to hot-foot it to Italy where, they had heard, there was to be 'une belle bataille'. They said that they were 'only there for their pleasure, and without any command, being come

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pp. 225–46; James Supple, 'François de la Noue and the Education of the French "Noblesse d'épée"', *French Studies*, 36 (1982): 270–81.

25 'Pour plusieurs générations de gentilshommes, le Piémont et le Milanais furent une sorte de "Far West" qui permit tous les élans, toutes les ambitions, tous les rêves d'honneur et de gloire', quoted in Jean-Marie Constant, *La vie quotidienne de la noblesse française aux XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (Paris, 1985), p. 11.

26 *The 'Commentaries' of Messire Blaize de Montluc* [sic]*, Mareschal of France*, ed. Andrew Clark (London, 1674), p. 6.

from Court, upon the report of a Battail speedily to be fought'. They were soon joined by others of their young aristocratic friends, the Messieurs de Ventadour, du Lunde, de Lauzun, de Malincorne and de la Chataignerie, and 'were never absent from the work, and at the Assault went on together'.[27] Groups on both sides often acted completely irresponsibly, setting off on unplanned skirmishes with a few men in order to take prisoners for ransom or to get noticed in other ways.[28]

Within his first six years of active service, Brancaccio had already had a wide variety of different kinds of military experience, including naval expeditions, major campaigning in Africa, northern Italy, southern France, Flanders and Germany, as well as sieging, open warfare and guerrilla tactics in the mountains of Piedmont. Besides the technical skills he would have acquired, we must also consider other aspects of this life. A number of contemporary military memoirs such as those by Monluc and Cesare Maggi describe the intense experiences of male bonding in perilous but exciting situations and the cavalier irresponsibility of military action a long way from home. The physical and social environment is seen purely in terms of its relevance to fighting, power exchanges and practical exploration of absolute concepts such as honour, *virtù* and fealty, encoded in a largely unwritten, shared language.[29] What these books of memoirs offer is a view of the almost obsessive attraction of war and fighting as the prime indicator of identity; it is perilously addictive, producing for the first time a class of nobles for whom soldiering became, for long stretches, a full-time occupation rather than an occasional practical expression of a settled chivalric ethos; the horrors of war are everywhere neutralised by the rhetoric of honour. The combatants on each side shared an ethos and a set of traditional modes of living and interacting with one another that gave them a unifying identity as a group or class which transcended distinctions of nationality and even, at times, of religious affiliation; stories of mutual respect and courtesy between members of this class across the battle divide are legion.[30]

Building a career: patrons, marriage and family

The campaigning in Piedmont ended with the treaty of Nice on 18 June 1538 after the successful retaking of almost all the territory held by the French. Brancaccio returned to Naples after three years of the warrior life but he had clearly not spent

27 Ibid., p. 169.

28 Constant, *La vie quotidienne*, p. 14.

29 Blaise de Montluc [*sic*], *Commentaires et lettres*, ed. Aphonse de Ruble (4 vols, Paris, 1864–1870); Luca Contile, *La historia de' fatti di Cesare Maggi di Napoli, dove si contengono tutte le guerre successe nel suo tempo on Lombardia et in altre parti d'Italia et fuor d'Italia* (Pavia, 1564; Milan, 1565). For an overview, see also Robert J. Knecht, 'Military Autobiographies in Sixteenth-Century France', in *War, Literature and the Arts in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, ed. J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (London, 1989), pp. 3–21, and R. Puddu, *I soldato gentiluomo: Autoritratto d'una società guerriera. La Spagna del Cinquecento* (Bologna, 1982), esp. pp. 1–60.

30 See Hale, *War and Society*, esp. chapter 5, pp. 127–52: 'The Society of Soldiers: the Professionals'.

all of his time fighting. Like any young member of his class, he had also been assiduously making contacts and working to get himself noticed. Military careers were haphazard and needed constant servicing: there was no continuity between campaigns, and opportunities and commissions had to be pursued along networks of patronage and service to the powerful. Three letters which Brancaccio wrote in the following three years to Ercole d'Este II, Duke of Ferrara, have recently come to light and show that he not only kept alive contacts through the standard processes of courtesy correspondence, but that he had already served in some capacity (presumably military) in the duke's entourage. Throughout the century, Ferrara maintained strong links with both poles of the European divide, and it was to remain a constant point of return for Brancaccio for the rest of his life, even as he (like the Este themselves) crossed between 'Spanish' and 'French' loyalties.

In December 1538, Brancaccio was in Bologna, presumably making his way home, and he wrote a letter to Duke Ercole that encapsulates succinctly the nature of the developing relationship, and, indeed, reflects thousands of similar transactions conducted daily up and down the ranks of the European noble classes in the sixteenth century. Elegantly constructed statements of the humblest servility and an expression of his unceasing wish to serve the duke sandwich a request for the loan of a horse to take back home to Naples to put to stud:

> To my Illustrious and Excellent Patron,
>
> When I was seeking leave to depart from your service I was not in a position to ask you for a favour because I was so moved by your kind words and so overwhelmed by tears, that I could barely offer my unworthy life for your service. Yet, now, presumptuously compelled by passion, I wish to let you know that I am enamoured of a grey horse and, without caring for manners, I come to beg you for your rare kindness, if you would like to take care of this, and hand it over to the person carrying this letter, who is my faithful servant and will bring it to Naples. If Your Excellency does not know which horse I mean, give me any other as you wish, since it cannot be anything less than perfect. I promise that I will send it back to you in two years, having mated it with another horse of its own breed. Now I close, so as not to bother you further. I will just say that among all the graces I had from God, the first one is this, that he made me the servant of Your Excellency. Therefore, I will not cease to pray you to consider myself worthy of receiving your graceful orders, and I will be most happy to obey them. I kiss the hands and feet of Your Excellency. From Bologna, 20 December 1538.
>
> From your Illustrious Excellency's humble servant Giulio Cesare Brancaccio
>
> To the Illustrious and Excellent Signor, my master, the Duke of Ferrara[31]

31 Modena AS, Archivio segreto, Particolari, Busta 227: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (Bologna) to Duke Ercole II d'Este (Ferrara), 20 December 1538: 'Illustrissimo et Exellentissimo Signor Mio patrone osservissimo. Atteso che nel cercar licentia da l'Exellentia vostra, mi casco l'anima, udendo sue parole cosine di pietà, e fui sì oppresso da lacrime, che a pena offerir posse in suo servitio questa misera vita; non mi fo concesso di poter supplicarla d'una gratia. Prosontuosamente adesso, constretto da la passione le fo intendere come accesome d'un suo ginetto leardo senza [water damage] altramente mirar a creanza nisciuna, vengo a pregarla per sua rara gentilezza, se ne voglie incomodare, e consignarlo al presente

In February 1539 he wrote from Naples, begging the duke to command him in any service he might do for him.[32] He referred to a recommendation from the duke's brother, Francesco d'Este, who had married into the Neapolitan nobility (Maria di Cardona, Marquesa of Padula and Countess of Avellino) in 1536 and whom Brancaccio may have first encountered in the Provence campaign in the same year.[33] This and other letters appear to have gone unanswered, as we learn from another written a month or so later, in which Brancaccio wonders what he can have done to offend the duke such that no fewer than three letters 'have not been deemed worthy of a reply, as a good servant might have expected from such a patron'. It was a problem which was to continue to dog his relations with the Este and it is fascinating to read very similar moans being repeated more than forty years later to Ercole's son, Alfonso.[34]

Sometime in 1540, Brancaccio married Beatrice Pignatelli, a member of another prominent family from the Nido *seggio*.[35] On 20 March 1541, he had an excuse to write again to Ercole. Disarmingly gauche in his uncontained happiness, he opened

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lator di questa mio fidatissimo servitore, che mel condurra in Napoli. Si l'Exellentia vostra non sa qual sia il cavallo ch'io li cerco, donemene uno a suo arbitrio che non potrà esser si non cosa perfettissima promettendole fra dui anni remandarlo accompagnato in la sua razza. Adesso per non più fastidirla fo fine, con farle intendere; che de l'oblighi che debbo tener a dio, il primo sì è questo, che m'habbia fatto servitor de l'Exellentia vostra. Dunque non cesserò mai di pregarla che mi faccia degno di suoi grati comandamenti, & sappia che questo sarà mia summa felicità, e bene. Baso le mani, e piedi di l'Exellentia vostra. Da Bologna il xx di dicembre del XXXVIII

Dell Vostra Illustrissima Exellentia humil servo Giulio Cesare Brancazzo

Al' Illustrissimo et Exellentissimo Signor e patrone mio osservissimo il signor Duca di Ferrara'.

This is Brancaccio's earliest known surviving letter; his connection with the Este was probably fresh: he claimed in a letter in 1580 to have been a close associate of the family for 40 years (see Chapter 3). Francesco's wife, Maria de Cardona, was the niece of Isabella Villamarino, Princess of Salerno and was celebrated for her poetry, musical skills and her beauty; she was a leading light of the Salerno circle. In 1550, Brancaccio acted as witness for Don Francesco d'Este in a legal record of a financial transaction in Naples AS, Banchieri antichi, St. 109, no. 26; I am grateful to Donna Cardamone for transcribing and generously passing this reference on to me.

32 Modena AS, Archivio segreto, Particolari, Busta 227: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (Naples) to Duke Ercole II d'Este (Ferrara), 23 February 1539.

33 Luisa Bertoni, 'd'Este, Francesco', *Dizionario bibilografico degli italiani*, vol. 43 (Rome, 1993), p. 346.

34 Modena AS, Archivio segreto, Particolari, Busta 227: Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (Bologna) to Duke Ercole II d'Este (Ferrara), 20 March 1539: 'S'io sapeva che l'Exellentia vostra ... s'haverna da irar cossì [sic] contra di me che a tre mie lettere non m'havessi fatto degno di resposta, come a buon servo aspettar conviene da un tanto patrone'.

35 Croce, 'Un capitano italiano', p. 59, cites two documents (which have so far proved unlocatable by the archivist) referring to the marriage to Beatrice Pignatelli: Naples AS, Quinternioni, vol. 84, fol. 71v (1540); Naples AS, Collaterale, Privilegi, vol. 41, fol. 17 (1548). During 1540, the Prince of Salerno made a major diplomatic journey to Siena, Milan, Paris, Antwerp, Gent, Bruges and as far as London. So far, there is no documentary evidence that Brancaccio accompanied him, although, as member of Ferrante's 'court', there is no

his heart: mentioning that the Ferrarese ambassador in Naples, Giulio Cesare Caracciolo (a poet and prominent member of the circle around the Prince of Salerno) had been telling of the 'delightful and divine' life of the duke in Ferrara, and thinking about this has stirred the idea in his mind that he might share the same happiness by serving Ercole, he comes to the point:

> And to make known the state of my affairs, I inform you that the lady, my wife, has had a daughter, which having emerged healthy, I embraced with as much pleasure as if she had been a boy. God grant you boys: I (with this) shall be content with girls, unless it should happen, that doubt of my honour and the certainty of the emptying of my purse within a short time, should generate bad humours. I kiss your gracious hands, praying that I be numbered among your most beloved servants.[36]

The daughter, who was probably an only child, was called either Cornelia or Vittoria – a mid-seventeenth-century genealogy of several prominent Neapolitan families that records her subsequent marriage to Scipione Venato, son of Ferrante Venato (an illustrious family of the Porto *seggio*) and Girolama Sanseverino de Bisignano (from the Nido *seggio*, and the other 'royal' branch of the Prince of Salerno's family) offers both names; this marriage apparently produced no grandchildren for Giulio Cesare and Beatrice.[37]

For the next six months Giulio Cesare apparently lived peacefully enough in Naples, but in autumn 1541 he left his wife and baby daughter to return to North Africa to fight, probably under the command of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, as part of the emperor's campaign in Algeria against 'Turkish pirates', who once again menaced Spanish and Neapolitan Mediterranean traders. The invasion was an unqualified disaster: the imperial fleet was wrecked in a storm and Charles's commanders were unable to prevent the loss of 12,000 men and 150 ships.[38] Brancaccio's *Curriculum vitae* relates his participation in this action and the following year's campaign, thousands of kilometres to the north, in Flanders, against William of Cleves, whose marshal was Maarten van Rossem (known as 'Black Martin' for his above-average level of brutality); Charles defeated William and annexed Cleves in 1543. Such a juxtaposition of campaigns in successive years, which saw the indefatigable emperor rushing with his armies from the south-western Mediterranean to the north-east of his

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reason why he should not have done so (as his friend and fellow musician courtier Luigi Dentice apparently did: see below); see Corsi, 'Le carte Sanseverino', pp. 9–10.

36 Modena AS, Particolari, Busta 227, Giulio Cesare Brancaccio (Naples) to Duke Ercole II d'Este (Ferrara), 20 March 1541: 'E per far avisato a quella d'esser dele cose mie li fo intendere come la signora mia moglie ha fatto una figliuola, e per esserne uscita a salvamento l'ho pigliata con quella piace volezza come fosse maschio. Dio mandi all'Exellentia Vostra deli maschij, che io con questo mi contenterò delle femine, avenga che l'esser dubio de l'honore, e certo del devacar dela borsa fra poco tempo, generano mali humorij. Basci le sue graziose mani, pregandola mi tenglii [*sic*] al numero de li suoi cordiali servitori'.

37 Carlo de Lellis, *Discorsi delle famiglie nobili del regno di Napoli, parte prima* (Naples, 1654), p. 174: 'Scipione, figluolo di Ferrante [Venato], e di Girolama Sanseverina si casò con Cornelia, o Vittoria Brancaccia, figluola di Giulio Cesare, e di Beatrice Pignatella, dalla quale non hebe figluoli'.

38 David Maland, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1973), p. 232.