A Concise History
of ITALY
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

By Italian Shores
The Balearics
Dalmatia

BY ERIC AND BARBARA WHELPON

Grand Tour of Italy
Calabria and the Acolian Islands
Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica
Greece and the Islands
A Concise History of ITALY

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A Concise History
of ITALY
I

KINGDOM AND REPUBLIC

Rome from its foundation (753 B.C.)
to Augustus (31 B.C.)

SUMMARY

B.C.
616–509 The Etruscan Kings.
509 Founding of the Republic.
396 Capture of Veii.
390 Gauls sack Rome.
281–275 War with Pyrrhus, King of Epirus.
Gradual absorption of Magna Graecia
(Southern Italy).
264–241 First Punic War.
218–201 Second Punic War—Scipio defeats Hannibal, Carthage loses colonies.
149–146 Third Punic War—Siege and destruction of Carthage.
148 End of Fourth Macedonian War—Rome annexes Macedonia and Greece.
118–91 Military dictatorships of Marius and Sulla
—Creation of a regular army.
60–49 Triumvirate of Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar—continued expansion of Rome in the Near East, in Spain and in Gaul.
48 After war with his rival Pompey, Caesar becomes sole dictator.
44 Caesar assassinated by Brutus.
43–31 Second Triumvirate is formed, breaks up, and after further civil war Caesar's nephew Octavius defeats Mark Antony at Actium. He is acclaimed Emperor in 29 B.C. and takes the name of Augustus in 27 B.C.

If the Roman chroniclers are to be believed, Rome was founded by Romulus in the year 753 B.C. They also asserted that he was the son of an Alban princess and of the god Mars, and that he was descended from Aeneas who had fled from the burning walls of
Troy and landed in Italy after a series of astonishing adventures described most graphically by Virgil in the *Aeneid*.

Romulus and Remus (as we all remember) were thrown into the Tiber on the orders of the cruel king of Alba Longa, and then saved by a she-wolf who suckled them.

When they grew up they returned to the city of their birth, but eventually they decided to "found a settlement near the place where they had been left to drown" (Livy: *Early History of Rome*).

Romulus killed his brother in a quarrel, and proceeded to fortify the Palatine Hill, which formed the nucleus of ancient Rome.

Now it is wise to assume that every legend is based on fact, and we can believe that a young shepherd or brigand of Latin stock did indeed build a little city on one of the tiny volcanic hillocks that rise up near the Tiber, and that he populated it with friends and outlaws from neighbouring tribes to whom he gave asylum.

The site selected either by wisdom or by accident was a fortunate one. In those days the Tiber was navigable, and its course ran nearer to the Palatine Hill than it does now. The stone available for quarrying was a volcanic rock so hard that buildings constructed from it endure for ever. Some Sabines had settled on the Quirinal Hill not more than three-quarters of a mile away, and it was their wives and daughters who were kidnapped by the Romans because of the shortage of women in their stronghold.

According to the legend, they prevented a war between their new husbands and the men of their own tribe, but it is a fact that Numa, the second king of Rome, was a Sabine, and that in all probability he devised the Roman calendar.

For nearly four centuries, the expansion of the city state was slow.

Around them, on the south bank of the Tiber, the Romans had as neighbours their kinsmen, the Latins, divided up into small tribes which were frequently rivals. Further away, on the hills, were the Sabines, also more or less of their own race and speech, like the Samnites whose territory lay to the south among the mountains of Central Italy. In the far south were the Iapyges, and in Sicily the Sicels, both of them destined to be colonised by the Greeks in the same century as the foundation of Rome.

The city of Venice was to be created a thousand years later, but
the Venetians in the north-east may have come from Asia Minor, and chroniclers of a later date suggested that, like the Romans, they were descended from Trojan refugees.

The Ligurians in the north-west, like those of the present day, occupied the narrow strip of land, between the Apuan Alps and the sea, that has Genoa as a centre. They were probably Iberians and like the pre-Celtic inhabitants of Western Europe, short and swarthy, with dark curly hair. Facing the Romans, on the north bank of the Tiber, were the Etruscans who are believed to have come from Asia Minor a thousand years before the birth of Christ. The legend is that on a fine summer evening, the first migrants "sailed out of the sunset" and landed near the mouth of the Po. Their leader Tyrrenenus gave his name to the sea that washes the western shores of Italy.

In their prime, the Etruscans occupied the greater part of Northern Italy, and even some regions immediately to the east and to the south of Naples. Their ships traded with Greece and most parts of the Mediterranean, and in their tombs, Greek and Egyptian works are frequently found. Though they lived in wooden houses, they built temples of stone, and massive gateways and walls of immense blocks of granite. They may have been the originators of the arch in Europe, and their dress, their religion and their legal forms were partially adapted by the Romans. To put it briefly, the early features of Roman civilisation were derived from the Etruscans, whilst the Etruscans were certainly influenced by the Greeks.

If the Roman deities were taken more or less from Etruscan mythology, both the Etruscans and the Romans were to modify the attributes of their gods in an attempt to make them correspond to the gods of Greece—so Jupiter was held to be the same as Zeus, Venus was the Roman name of Aphrodite, Neptune of Poseidon and so on. Like the Etruscans, the Romans cherished household gods, the Lares and Penates to whom each family poured out libations of wine and gave a portion of their food daily. The spirits of the dead passed into the Underworld, just as in Greece, but the gods of Rome were shadows instead of being immortals of flesh and blood with carnal lusts and habits. The Romans also were prepared to accept, or at any rate tolerate, the gods of other nations. Since Romulus was the son of a god, the conception of kingship was in some ways a religious one, though religious
matters were under the rule of the *pontifex maximus*. Later on the Emperors were able to impose on their subjects a belief in the sacred character of their office, which the Holy Roman Emperors of the Middle Ages tried to revive.

Judged by the vivid, colourful paintings in their tombs, the Etruscans were filled with the joy of life and found inspiration in dancing, swimming, hunting and the beauty of nature. They seem to have been happy and uninhibited, and their crafts, their statuary and their pictures are infinitely superior to those of the Romans. We cannot be surprised therefore that the highest expressions of Renaissance art were to be found in Tuscany where so many of their descendants live.

The early Romans, on the other hand, prided themselves on the austerity of their lives, and, until they came under the direct influence of the Greeks, their artistic and literary production was slight and lacking in distinction. Like most Puritans, when they abandoned their rigid principles, they gave themselves up to debauch, and this must explain the licentiousness of the Roman Empire from its outset.

From earliest times, the administrative pattern of Rome was established. The settlers on the Palatine, the Quirinal and the Capitoline hills met on a marshy, flat strip of ground which became later on the site of the Forum. The kings were elected and, following a practice used by some of the Italian city states, they were frequently foreigners, on the principle, doubtless, that they would be impartial. They received their powers from a popular assembly known as the *Curiae*, but the Senate was the permanent council of Rome, and the *patricians* alone could be members.

Until well on into the Republic, when they elected a tribune to represent them, the *plebeians* (or common people) suffered from a kind of legal and social *apartheid* which placed them in an inferior position. It has been suggested that the patricians were descended from the earliest settlers, and it is certain that their different clans could claim to be of Sabine, Latin or Etruscan origin. Since the patricians were usually prosperous, the plebeians were frequently dependent on their high caste co-citizens for subsidies and loans. Then, most humiliating of all, intermarriage between members of the two communities was forbidden.

Below these, were the slaves, the economic backbone of the countries of antiquity, for with all their intelligence, the labour-
saving devices of the Greeks and the Romans were slight, and they never discovered any other source of motive power but human sinews. Thus it was that wars were fought to obtain fertile land or for plunder, but more especially to make prisoners who would till the soil, man the oars of galleys, labour unceasingly to build temples, roads and ramparts. Their owners had power of life and death over them, but then the Roman law gave the heads of household similar rights over the members of their families. It is difficult to estimate the part played by slaves in the early stages of Roman history, for we do not know what proportion of the population they represented. We do know that the free yeoman farmers formed the greater part of the armies of the Republic, and that they were its worthiest citizens.

The first four kings of Rome belong to the realm of legend, and so we will pass them by save for the Sabine monarch, Numa, who is believed to have been a disciple of the Greek philosophers. He is also believed to have established the rules governing the worship of the gods, to have created orders of priesthood and to have instituted the College of the Vestal Virgins, the maidens who were to have in their keeping the Holy Fire, and the Palladium, the sacred image of Pallas Athena, brought to Italy from Troy by Aeneas. The three Etruscan kings, Tarquinius Priscus (616–578 B.C.), Servius Tullius (578–534 B.C.), and Tarquinius Superbus (534–510 B.C.), may indicate a whole dynasty, or merely monarchs of outstanding personality. During this period, it is believed that the Cloaca Maxima, the Servian Wall, the Circus Maximus and the first temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill were built as well as a temple to Diana on the Aventine Hill.

The Cloaca Maxima was not only meant to drain refuse, but also the marshes between the Capitoline, the Aventine and the Palatine Hills. The Servian Wall was five miles long and enclosed within its battlements the seven hills of Rome. The Circus Maximus was used under the later Empire for chariot-racing—a form of sport which became involved with political factions.

The last Tarquin was expelled from Rome in a revolt that broke out because the King's son had raped Lucretia, wife of a citizen named Collatinus.

The following year, 510 B.C., is given as the date of the traditional founding of the Republic, in which the functions of the king were exercised by two consuls who were elected for the
period of a year only. Nevertheless the régime was still aristocratic and the struggle of the plebeians for freedom was destined to continue for many years—indeed they regretted the passing of the kings who were inclined to favour them at the expense of the patricians. First of all however, the Romans had to fight for their lives, for Tarquin had taken refuge with his kinsmen on the far side of the Tiber, from which the Etruscans attempted to dominate the new-born republic. If their leader, Lars Porsena, and his army were prevented from crossing the bridge over the Tiber by Horatius, as the well-known legend relates, it would seem that the territories of Rome were diminished as a result of the expulsion of Tarquin.

Gradually the pressure of the Etruscans was lessened owing to two outside factors. First of all, the Etruscans and their Carthaginian allies were defeated at sea by the Greeks of Syracuse and other Sicilian states. Then the Etruscans were driven out from their settlements in the vicinity of the Campagna, and the Gauls began to make incursions into Northern Italy.

In 396 B.C., the Etruscan fortified city of Veii surrendered to the Romans after a siege of ten years. On the same day, the Etruscan town of Melpum (Milan) in the far north was stormed by the Gauls. The cities of the Etruscan league were unable to resist the advance of the newcomers, who swept down the peninsula, routed a Roman army at the Battle of Allia and captured the city of Rome, except for the Capitoline Hill, which, according to tradition, was saved from a surprise attack by the cackling of geese.

Whether the Gauls were defeated by the Roman general, Camillus, has never been decided. They were certainly unable to consolidate their conquests in the centre of the peninsula, and withdrew from it, but they occupied the whole of Italy to the north of the Apeninnes, the region that became known as Cisalpine Gaul. The Senones, another tribe of Celts, settled along the shores of the Adriatic in the region between Rimini and Ancona. Since the Romans had captured a number of cities that lay to the north of the Tiber, the bulk of the Etruscans now lived within the present frontiers of Tuscany. Decried and derided by Roman historians, they had been overwhelmed by having to fight simultaneously on several fronts, and it is only recently that the greatness of their civilisation has been recognised.
After driving back several incursions of the Cisalpine Gauls, the Romans began to practise a policy of expansion.

In the space of fifty-three years (343-290), they waged three wars against the Samnites who were finally subdued, even though on one occasion (312 B.C.), an entire Roman army was forced to surrender at the Battle of the Caudine Forks after which the captives were contemptuously dismissed after having been made to march under a yoke.

The Samnites had in fact profited by the decline of the Southern Etruscans to expand their territory at their expense, and also at the expense of the Greeks of the far south. Within eight years of the final defeat of the Samnites, the Romans had also occupied Crotona, Locris and other Greek cities on the Ionian sea.

As the Romans approached Tarentum (Taranto), the Tarentines, who had preserved their independence throughout, summoned to their help their Greek compatriot, Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. He was joined by the Bruittians and the Lucanians, inhabitants of the south-western peninsula of Italy, which the Romans had recently annexed. Pyrrhus, with his elephants and his twenty-five thousand highly trained men, won two victories, but his losses were so great that he declared: "Another such victory and we are lost."

His attempt to occupy Sicily was nearly successful, but it was thwarted by the concerted action of the Carthaginians and the Romans.

Eventually Pyrrhus sailed home, and his garrison at Tarantum was forced to surrender to the Romans. Despite his skill as a leader he had failed largely because he did not conciliate subject races.

The Romans succeeded mainly because of their readiness to assimilate the peoples they vanquished. For instance, the citizens of some of the Latin and Etruscan towns were soon able to aspire to become Roman citizens and have full privileges when they visited the Metropolis. A wide degree of freedom was granted to others who could embrace the laws and institutions of Rome without having the full rights of citizenship. A firmer hand was kept on the inhabitants of regions which were thought likely to revolt. Lastly there were the allies who remained theoretically independent but looked for protection and perhaps subsidies, in return for the auxiliary troops they provided.
To strengthen their position in newly conquered territories, the Romans used to send out colonies of farmers and ex-soldiers who were allocated land requisitioned for the purpose. In many regions, colonisation undoubtedly brought some benefits in its train—a harsh though sound legal system, a unified system of weights and measures, the Roman calendar and the Roman numeral, an end to regional warfare, a common language, and probably greater prosperity. Indeed, the inhabitants of some countries demanded to be incorporated with Rome.

The Romans had scarcely driven off Pyrrhus and reconquered Lucania and Calabria, when war broke out with the Carthaginians over Messina which was hard pressed by the Greeks of Syracuse. Some of the inhabitants had appealed for help to the Carthaginians, others to the Romans.

Thus began the first of the three Punic Wars (264–241 B.C.) with the odds seemingly very much against the Romans. The city of Carthage had been founded near the present site of Tunis by the Phoenicians towards the middle of the ninth century. Imbued with the spirit of enterprise and keen commercial sense of their ancestors, the Carthaginians flourished. At the height of their power, their colonies comprised a thousand-mile-long strip of North Africa, the greater part of Sicily, the whole of Sardinia and of Corsica, as well as a sizeable portion of Southern Spain.

The Carthaginians were excellent sailors, whereas the Romans were relatively unaccustomed to the sea. On land, the former had at their disposal a highly disciplined professional army recruited from all parts of their empire under the leadership of intelligent and well-trained officers.

At the outset, the Romans were at a disadvantage, especially at sea, where they were repeatedly defeated. Then they succeeded in copying the construction of the Carthaginian ships, and were finally victorious by the use of a new manoeuvre which consisted in attaching themselves to the craft of their opponents with grappling irons, and overwhelming their crews with boarding parties.

As a result of the First Punic War, the Romans annexed the greater part of Sicily and seized Corsica and Sardinia.

The Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.) is noted for the brilliant generalship of the Carthaginian commander, Hannibal. Since his
country had lost her supremacy at sea, he advanced through Spain and the South of France and led his forces and even fighting elephants across the Alps at the Little St. Bernard Pass and down into Italy.

How near he was to success may be judged by the fact that he destroyed an entire Roman Army at Trasimene (217 B.C.), and the next year he routed a vastly superior force at Cannae. There was a general rising against the Romans in Italy, in which the cities did not participate.

Owing to the delaying tactics of the Roman dictator, Fabius, who would not risk a battle, Hannibal was gradually worn down since he had no siege train with which to capture Rome. Eventually he was forced to withdraw from Italy with his troops, because reinforcements sent out to help him had been defeated. At Zama, near Carthage, his army was routed by Scipio Africanus, and Carthage was forced to yield up her colonies in Spain and in other parts of the Mediterranean.

The Romans spent the next sixty years in fighting and subjugating the Macedonians, the Syrians and the Spanish, nations that had sided with Carthage, and now resisted invasion with desperate vigour.

As Macedonia and Greece came under Roman occupation, the influence of Greek civilisation became greater in Rome. The Romans copied the architecture of the Greeks, imported statues and works of art from Greece, and the educated prided themselves on speaking Greek and knowing the Greek authors.

The Third Punic War (149–146 B.C.) not only put an end to the revival of Carthage but terminated the existence of both the state and of the city which was razed to the ground.

Although the Romans had consolidated their conquests of Illyria (Dalmatia), Syria, Greece, Macedonia, Spain and Africa, there followed a period of political and social troubles that only came to an end a hundred years later when Augustus assumed power (31 B.C.).

First of all, a noble, Sempronius Gracchus, who had been elected a tribune of the people, proposed an agrarian law by which the big estates should be divided up and handed over to the peasantry (similar laws were passed in Italy after the Second World War). He was murdered, but his brother, Gaius Gracchus, also became tribune, and similarly proposed a number of reforms
which included the granting of Roman citizenship to all Italians. This measure aroused much opposition, and Gracchus and a number of his supporters were massacred by their opponents.

Eventually, twenty years later, after a revolt of the provinces, known as the Servile War, citizenship was granted to all Italians who had remained faithful or submitted, including later on, the Cisalpine Gauls.

There was trouble also outside the homeland when four large Roman armies were beaten in turn by the Cimbri and the Teutons, two immense tribes of barbarians which had invaded the recently annexed South-eastern provinces of Gaul. Fortunately the victors turned into Spain on a plundering expedition which lasted two years. During this time, the Roman forces had been occupied with fighting King Jurgutha, an African ally who had turned against his protectors. After two protracted campaigns, the rebel was defeated and captured by Marius, a ranker general who distinguished himself still further by routing the Teutons in Provence, and the Cimbri at Vercellae in North-western Italy.

In a short survey such as this, it would be impossible to detail the various events that occurred in the first thirty years of the last century before the birth of Christ. It is sufficient to state that there was a struggle for power between the plebeian Marius, and the aristocratic Sulla, one of the best of his former generals. The latter eventually triumphed after having defeated Mithridates, the napoleonic King of Pontus in Asia Minor, who was actually threatening the security of Macedonia, Greece and other Eastern provinces of Rome. On his return, Sulla broke into Rome at the head of his army and imposed himself as dictator. He introduced a number of reforms, of which the most important was to strengthen the authority of the Senate at the expense of the powers of the tribunes of the people. He retired in 78 B.C. and died soon after. He had attempted to stem the decay of the Republic, but his reforms only succeeded in postponing its dissolution, for none of his measures was really lasting in its effect.

Indeed civil wars continued to rage after his death, but a revolt in Etruria was suppressed by a young officer named Pompey. Shortly afterwards there was a revolt among the slaves, led by a gladiator named Spartacus who held out for nearly two years on the heights of Vesuvius, but his forces were annihilated by Pompey after they had been contained and defeated by Crassus.
Pompey was now hailed as the greatest of Roman generals, since he had previously quelled a serious rebellion in Spain where an ex-governor had attempted to create an autonomous state.

In the year 70 B.C. Pompey and Crassus became consuls and began to annul many of the reforms introduced by Sulla. Pompey continued to progress from strength to strength, gaining more fame by suppressing the piracy which was rife in the Eastern Mediterranean, driving Mithridates out of his kingdom and annexing his lands, and pacifying Palestine.

In the meantime, a young politician named Julius Caesar gradually came to the fore under the protection of Crassus. He persuaded his chief to ally himself with Pompey, and together, the three formed the first Triumvirate (60 B.C.).

In order to bring himself up to the military level of his colleagues, Caesar set out to conquer Northern Gaul, and he did so in the course of eight years of systematic campaigning. Crassus was given Syria, and Pompey returned to Spain, the scene of his former triumphs. When Crassus was killed fighting the Parthians, Caesar and Pompey became rivals for supreme power. When the latter tried to rule Rome as sole consul, Caesar came with his loyal and highly trained troops and, at the head of a single legion, "crossed the river Rubicon" from Cisalpine Gaul into the real Italy, breaking the rule which forbade a general to lead his forces into Rome except to celebrate a triumph.

Pompey withdrew to Greece, but in the year 48 B.C., he was defeated by Julius Caesar at the battle of Pharsalia in Epirus, and was forced to flee to Egypt where he was assassinated. Caesar, who had followed him in pursuit, fell in love with the beautiful Queen Cleopatra and remained in Egypt for three months.

After further victories over the followers of Pompey, Caesar was now left in supreme power over the Roman Republic. Breaking all rules, he had been made Consul for five years after the battle of Pharsalia, and his term of office was extended to ten years in 45 B.C. In 44 B.C., a Senate, augmented and packed with many of his followers, made him dictator for life. It was at this point that he was murdered by Brutus, the leader of a democratic group. At Caesar's funeral, Mark Antony, one of his loyal officers, gained the sympathy of the Roman crowd by the impassioned funeral oration so remarkably rendered into English by Shake-speare.
Many of Caesar’s contemporaries believed that he intended to make himself king and this was scarcely surprising: dictator for life, consul for five years, he was in full control of the finances of the Republic. Then the imperium which had been granted him for life was transmissible to his children, and together with it, the office of pontifex maximus, so that he was at the same time chief of the armed forces and interpreter of the state religion. Besides this, as princeps, or leader of the house in the Senate, he could select or refuse topics for debate, and he could suspend or nominate Senators.

Since the idea of monarchy was still associated in the minds of many Romans with the tyrannous Tarquins, it is scarcely surprising that there was growing opposition among the members of the ruling classes, despite Caesar’s administrative reforms, his plans for an extensive reconstruction of Rome, and for an increase of the territories overseas.

Now that the one man capable of maintaining peace had disappeared, the inevitable state of anarchy followed. Mark Antony attempted to assume power, but was thwarted by the Senate. A few months later, Mark Antony joined forces with Marcus Lepidus, Governor of Transalpine Gaul, and Octavius, Caesar’s great-nephew, to form the Second Triumvirate.

The new rulers began by proscribing their political enemies, and executed, among many others, Cicero who had distinguished himself not only by his oratory and philosophic works, but also because he had opposed Caesar and later on, Mark Antony. After a hard won victory at the battle of Philippi, the Triumvirate then succeeded in eliminating both Cassius and Brutus.

Whilst Lepidus and Octavius claimed the Western lands as their sphere of influence, Antony withdrew to the Eastern provinces. Civil war continued, first of all against Pompey’s son, who was supported by the former followers of his father, but was defeated by Agrippa in Sicily.

Having disposed of their rivals, the Triumvirs began to quarrel. After Pompey’s defeat, Octavius interned Lepidus and took command of the twenty-two legions of his army. Thus reinforced, he spent some years consolidating his position in Western Europe, whilst Antony waged an unsuccessful war against the Parthians. Though already married to Octavius’s sister, Antony became infatuated with Cleopatra, married her, and confirmed
her position as Queen of Egypt. Being descended from one of Alexander’s generals, she was Greek in race and speech. She had had a son by Julius Caesar, who most certainly fell in love with her, and she enslaved the unfortunate Antony, who was suspected of treachery to Rome.

After having gained the consent of the Senate, Octavius set out with a fleet to subjugate Antony and Cleopatra. After the Battle of Actium in the Gulf of Patras, Antony fled to Egypt where he committed suicide, whilst Cleopatra, after having attempted in vain to charm Octavius, poisoned herself with an asp to avoid being taken to Rome as a prisoner of war.

Having liquidated all his rivals, Octavius was now undisputed ruler of the Roman World in which he was to figure as the first Emperor (31 B.C.).
ROME TRIUMPHANT
The Empire from Augustus (31 B.C.) to Aurelianus (A.D. 275)

SUMMARY

31 B.C.–A.D. 14 Rule of Augustus, first Emperor.
A.D.
14–37 Tiberius.
33 Crucifixion of Christ.
69–79 Vespasian—builds the Colosseum and many other fine monuments.
98–117 Trajan, remembered because of his Forum and the column celebrating his conquests, extends the Empire to the shores of the Persian Gulf. Roman trading fleets sail regularly to Indian ports.
117–138 Hadrian. A great administrator, responsible for many buildings in Rome, including Castel Sant’ Angelo, the Pantheon of Agrippa, several temples, and the immense villa in the Campagna that bears his name.
138–275 Under the Antonines, Titus Aurelius Antoninus (138–161), Marcus Aurelius (161–180), and Commodus (180–192). Rome and the Roman Empire enjoy a period of great prosperity. The third century however is notable for a succession of corrupt and inefficient emperors, many of whom came to a violent end. A few of them are fairly successful in repelling the invasions of the Barbarians who had begun to break through the frontiers of the Empire. One of them, Aurelianus (270–275), builds the Aurelian Wall which still surrounds
ROME TRIUMPHANT

Rome, as a precaution against incursions. He consolidates the Empire by some withdrawals, also contributes to its survival by sound administration and suppressing autonomous movements in outlying regions.

In the year 29 B.C. Octavius returned after having settled the newly conquered province of Egypt. All that was lacking in the celebration of his triumph was the presence of Cleopatra, otherwise the world was at his feet. As Imperator he was in supreme command of the Army; as Princeps he could direct the debates of the Senate; as Censor, he could eliminate senators who displeased him; as Tribune he retained the popularity of the plebeians, and lastly as pontifex maximus he was head of the state religion. Since he was consul for life, he was the chief magistrate of the metropolis, but he was also pro-consul, so that the provinces that depended on the Senate were under his sway.

All these offices he exercised with a strict but outward observance of democratic procedure, and on occasion he offered to resign one or other of them, only to be begged on bended knee to remain.

Wisely, he avoided all semblance of kingship or of claiming the prerogative of kingship. Walking through the streets of Rome in the garb of a private citizen, he used to stop to talk to his friends and made no display of his power.

Since he would not be king, he agreed to be called "Augustus", which means "worthy of worship", and thus he was revered as a god in the remoter provinces, though worship of the Emperor was forbidden in Rome and throughout Italy.

Indeed, though Augustus established the Roman Empire, in his case, the title of Imperator applied in theory only to his military rank. Yet, to quote the historian Merivale, "the establishment of the Roman Empire was the greatest political achievement that any human ever wrought. The achievement of Alexander, of Caesar, of Charlemagne, of Napoleon, is not to be compared with it for a moment."

His empire, which was to be extended under Trajan a century later, comprised Spain, Gaul, Belgium, South Germany, the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the
greater part of the coastal regions of North Africa. Its population has been variously estimated as being from 107 to 122 million inhabitants of which twenty-two million were to be found in Italy and perhaps two million in the city of Rome itself.

This vast empire was garrisoned by thirty legions of seven thousand men each, and the whole army including auxiliary troops cannot have amounted to more than 340,000 soldiers in all, without counting the twenty thousand Praetorians, a body of guards in the metropolis recruited under the Emperors. On most frontiers, there were buffer states kept friendly to the Romans by subsidies, trade concessions and military help when required.

The inhabitants of the Empire remained satisfied because they enjoyed the benefits of the peaceful conditions that prevailed within its frontiers, the relative absence of crime, and the efficient administration. The splendid Roman roads facilitated commerce and travel. On these highways that cut through mountains, bridged rivers, linking up cities without any deviation, men using relays of horses could travel as much as a hundred miles a day.

When the port of Ostia was built at the mouth of the Tiber by the Emperor Claudius, ships could reach the Straits of Gibraltar in as little as six or seven days, and Alexandria quite frequently in ten days.

In all the countries of Western Europe and North Africa the language of the people was Latin. Alone the Greeks of Europe, of the Eastern Adriatic, Asia Minor and Egypt clung to the speech of their ancestors, and the Syrians, both in Syria and Egypt, followed their example, thus paving the way for a division of the Empire at a later date.

The Romans were not only polytheists, they tolerated and even encouraged the building of shrines to the gods of other nations in their metropolis.

Under the Emperors, people from all parts of the known world visited Rome, and they were astounded by the splendour of the monuments and of the buildings which grew in number in each successive reign. It was said of Augustus that he had found Rome a city of brick and that when he died it was a city of marble. Indeed he restored eighty-two temples, built a temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, the Pantheon (the shrine of all the gods), the Forum of Augustus, the Theatre of Marcellus, and much else. The East was plundered to adorn the city, and obelisks from
Egypt were set up in squares; columns and statues were brought from Greece. It is claimed that from the Island of Rhodes alone 3,000 statues were taken away by the Romans.

By good fortune, or just simply because of the natural grandeur of the times, some great poets and writers flourished during the early years of the reign of Augustus. Due credit must also be given to the Etruscan Maecenas who used his immense wealth and political influence to give financial and moral encouragement to poets and in particular to Virgil and to Horace. Then there was Ovid who had to live in retirement because of his opposition to the new régime. Lastly, Livy was the author of his monumental History of Rome of which only thirty-five volumes out of the 142 have survived to the present day.

The most dramatic event of the reign was the total annihilation of three Roman legions in the Forest of Teutoberg by the German Arminius (Hermann). This defeat put an end to the plans of the Emperor for the conquest of Germany and so the imperial garrisons were ordered to remain on the West bank of the Rhine.

Since the sons of Augustus predeceased him, he chose as his heir, Tiberius, his stepson by his second wife, Livia, a strong-minded woman who was believed by the Romans to dominate her husband and to take a very active part in state affairs.

Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) was acclaimed as successor to Augustus, partly because he was the heir of the Emperor, but also because he was a successful general and considered to be capable of maintaining order.

In his immediate circle there were plots and counterplots, murders by violence, poisoning or stealth, but the Empire was well-governed and public finances were administered without dishonesty in spite of the corruption and jealousies in the court.

Because of his fear of assassination, Tiberius withdrew to Capri, leaving the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, Sejanus, to execute his orders in Rome. When Sejanus was discovered to be plotting against him, the Emperor had him arrested and executed.

Some Roman historians, including Tacitus, affirmed that Tiberius withdrew to Capri in order to practise all sorts of nameless vices and that he was a monster of cruelty.

Caligula (37–41), his successor, was a great-grandson of Augustus

1 As all dates from now on are, unless noted, "A.D." these initials will be omitted on following pages.
by his mother, and of Livia by his father, so great had been the
intermarriage between the descendants of Julius Caesar, Mark
Antony and Augustus. A singularly vicious and unbalanced young
man, his access to power drove him crazy. Even more afraid of
conspirators than his predecessor, he caused suspects to be pro-
scribed, assassinated, brutally tortured and slaughtered on the
slightest pretext. Nevertheless, he treated nobles and senators
with the greatest insolence, and in the course of a very few years,
he squandered the treasure accumulated by Tiberius on the most
astonishing extravagances. He even declared that he would make
his favourite horse a senator. Finally, he foolishly insulted one of
the officers of his guard who revenged himself by assassinating
his imperial master.

Claudius (41–54), another Julian, was proclaimed Emperor by
the Praetorians because they imagined that he was a drooling
imbecile whom they could easily dominate. Lame, hideous, with
rolling head and awkward gait, he had been the butt of all the
members of the Julian family. Nevertheless, he proved to be a
good administrator and he gained the support of the Senators by
consulting them frequently. He was popular with the plebeians
because he repealed some of the taxes imposed by Caligula.

His generals conquered Mauretania (Morocco and Western
Algeria) and Friesland (Holland). In the year A.D. 43 he visited
Britain when the Southern regions of that country were turned
into a Roman province. Except when urged on to cruelty by his
wife, the notorious Messalina, he was humane, for he spared the
life of the British chieftain, Caractacus, who had been captured by
the Romans. He was also responsible for extending Roman
citizenship to Patrician Gaus and allowed them to be nominated
for the Senate.

Two real benefits were conferred on Rome by Claudius. The
first was the building of a large aqueduct, and the second the
opening of the port of Ostia. Being of a studious nature, Claudius
wrote a voluminous history of the Etruscans which has unfortun-
ately been lost, and he attempted a reform of the Roman alphabet
which proved unsuccessful though examples of his lettering can
be seen on tablets affixed to the monuments of his time.

Claudius came to an untimely end when he was poisoned by his
fourth wife, Agrippina, who wanted her son (his stepson), Nero,
to become emperor. The latter rewarded his mother for this
signal service by having her assassinated when she attempted to take an active share in governing the country.

For the first five years of his reign, Nero accepted the guidance of the Stoic philosopher, Seneca, and of the Prefect of the Praetorians, Burrus, and his mild rule made him very popular with the Romans. Suddenly his mood changed, and he caused his step-brother, Britannicus, to be assassinated, and, shortly afterwards, his mother and his first wife, Octavia. Like Caligula, the Emperor was seized by a kind of folly. A haunting fear of being assassinated caused him to exile, torture, and execute many innocents. He astounded the Romans by contending in the circus before vast audiences against professional singers and poets. Loathed by the nobles, he lost his popularity with the mob when rather more than half Rome was destroyed in a vast conflagration which was believed to have been started by his orders. To turn away the suspicion from himself, Nero laid the blame on the Christians, members of a new sect which was rapidly gaining adherents. Many of these he caused to be put to death by burning at the stake, crucifixion and by being thrown to wild animals in the arena—his cruelty was such that even the hardened Romans pleaded for the victims. Among them were St. Peter and St. Paul. However the Christians were not alone to suffer, for Nero also persecuted the Stoics who believed in pantheism and were men of high ethical standards and austere in their way of life.

In 68, the legions in Spain proclaimed their General Galba, Emperor, and there were risings in Gaul. When the Praetorians turned against him, Nero fled to the country, and shortly afterwards, committed suicide, dying a few minutes before his opponents arrived.

After a year of confusion during which three different generals were struggling for supreme power, a ranker general, named Vespasian, was proclaimed Emperor by the Prefect of Egypt, and was shortly afterwards accepted in Rome.

Vespasian (69–79), the first of the Flavian Caesars, had achieved promotion by sheer merit, and he had gained some fame by pacifying the rebellious inhabitants of Palestine, though he had left to his son Titus the task of besieging and destroying Jerusalem. He pleased the Romans by pulling down the “Golden House”, the immense palace built by Nero in one of the quarters destroyed by the great fire of Rome. On the site, he constructed the Colos-
seum which could hold from 40,000 to 50,000 spectators. He also paid for the restoration of the Capitol, and instituted a class of salaried teachers.

Titus (79–81) was popular during his short reign which was marred only by the eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum. His achievements in Palestine were immortalised by the Arch of Titus on which are recorded in bas-relief the different phases of the siege and capture of Jerusalem.

His successor, Domitian (81–96), combined loose living with legislation of a puritanical kind against adultery and immorality. During the last three years of his reign he was so terrified of being assassinated that he liquidated many of his relatives and many more of his immediate entourage. He himself was assassinated, it is believed, at the instigation of his wife who imagined that she was the next suspect on the list. Incidentally, Domitian was the first Emperor to insist on being addressed as “Our Lord God”. After his demise, an elderly Senator named Nerva ruled for a short while, and died two years later, but not before assuring the succession by adopting as his son, Trajan (98–117), a brilliant soldier, born in Spain, but presumably of Italian parentage. Being popular with the army, he set out to extend the frontiers of the Empire by declaring war on the Dacians whom he defeated. Owing to the number of Romans who settled there, their country, Rumania, is still inhabited by people who are Latin in speech and race. The triumph celebrated on his return surpassed anything that had ever been seen in Rome. Over ten thousand gladiators died in the arenas and eleven thousand animals perished in fights of different kinds. The deeds of the campaign in Dacia are commemorated on the splendid column erected in the centre of Trajan’s Forum.

In the last part of his reign, Trajan attacked the Parthians, thrusting as far as the Persian Gulf, hoping doubtless that the Roman Empire would one day take in India, a country with which the Romans traded most profitably.

“Were I yet young,” said Trajan, “I would not have stopped until I had reached the limits of the Macedonian conquest.” Although he did not emulate Alexander’s invasion of India, the Emperor did sail some way down the Persian Gulf.

Trajan died shortly after; he was sincerely mourned by the Romans, though his conquests did not last and actually added to
the burden of imperial expenditure at a time when taxation was
beginning to drain the resources of the Empire. He was also
remembered as a great builder, restoring temples and enlarging
public places in Rome, and constructing monuments in the pro-
vinces. On the Adriatic he founded the port of Ancona, where
he is commemorated by an arch. He extended the harbour of
Civita Vecchia and constructed roads and bridges in Spain.

According to an old tradition, he was ruthless in his persecu-
tion of the Christians, perhaps because he associated them with the Jews
who fomented rebellions against the Romans in order to avenge
the destruction of Jerusalem.

Hadrian (117–138), ward and cousin by marriage of Trajan,
and acclaimed as his successor by the Army and the Senate, was
one of the greatest of the emperors. A man of tireless energy, he
spent years travelling through different parts of the Empire deal-
ing with administrative problems, constructing roads, buildings
and harbours and investigating complaints.

Like Augustus, he believed in limiting the boundaries of the
Empire as a matter of economy and defence, and so he abandoned
the conquests of his predecessor. He visited England and built
the wall, later known by his name, to keep out the unruly and
barbarian Picts and Scots. To encourage loyalty throughout the
vast territories of Rome, he made citizenship a possibility to all
their inhabitants, regardless of race. A complete revision of taxa-
tion was introduced, but the increasing depopulation of many
regions created difficulties which could not be resolved even
though slave labour was gradually replaced by share-cropper
tenantry.

Obsessed by his love for a beautiful youth named Antinous,
Hadrian was so heartbroken at his death, that he raised him to the
rank of a god and even erected temples for his worship. Indeed
statues of Antinous can be seen in the Louvre, the Vatican and
many other museums.

Although primarily a soldier and administrator, Hadrian was
noted as a patron of the arts, building the huge villa which bears
his name outside Rome. Covering eight square miles, it contained
in miniature replicas of many famous monuments in other parts
of the world. In Rome itself he erected the immense mausoleum
which was turned into the fortress known as the Castel Sant'Angelo in the Middle Ages, the Temple of Venus and Roma, and
the Pantheon of Agrippa. In Athens he was responsible for the construction of the Olympion, the temple of Zeus, the Pantheon and many other monuments.

In his reign, a revolt in Palestine was suppressed with such rigour that the countryside was almost deserted. In any case the Jews were only allowed into the newly rebuilt Jerusalem once a year and so the large-scale emigration started under Vespasian continued, and their nation was scattered throughout Europe and the Near East.

Antoninus Pius (138–161) was nominated by Hadrian as his successor. At his accession he was already middle-aged and experienced in politics. He was the first of the Antonine emperors whose age is noted as being the most prosperous in the history of Ancient Rome. If there were signs of a coming decline because of heavy taxation and the gradual depopulation of certain districts, the bulk of the inhabitants of the Empire were better off than ever before, particularly in the Eastern provinces, the North of Italy and the South of France. Everywhere cities were adorned with monuments of great splendour: temples (such as the immense temple of the Sun at Baalbeck), circuses (such as the amphitheatres at Nîmes and Verona), triumphal arches, baths and libraries. In some regions, there were free distributions of oil, wine and corn, just as in Rome, and poorer townsfolk could enjoy gladiatorial fights and chariot-racing without payment. Famines were rare, because provinces that suffered from a bad harvest were compensated by the surplus from morefavoured regions. Ships of from 700 to 900 tons sailed from Ostia and Ancona to all parts of the Empire. Then, every year, a fleet of 120 vessels sailed from an Egyptian port on the Red Sea to Southern Arabia, India and Ceylon. Their cargoes were carried across the Isthmus of Suez to or from Alexandria which became one of the most prosperous cities of the Western world.

The network of roads that radiated out from the Forum could be used most efficiently since houses had been built every five or six miles to give shelter to forty horses available for relays.

If the peoples of the Empire could enjoy a high standard of justice and the maximum amount of protection from bandits and criminals, the more educated learned to speak and to read Greek and to derive pleasure from the works of the poets, dramatists and philosophers of Greece and of Rome.
Gauls, Britons, Spaniards or Syrians could live in a sophisticated manner in splendid villas, only because of the Pax Romana, the name given to the state of excellent administration, peace, respect of laws, and sound policing which prevailed within the confines of the Empire. They could therefore profit by the trade facilities and the means to create wealth placed within their reach. Vines and olives had been planted in the South of France, the cultivation of flax was introduced into Gaul and into Britain, and the use of artificial grass became known all over the Empire. To the Romans we owe the apple, the apricot, the peach as well as many kinds of flowers and vegetables. The legionaries even brought nettles to Britain because they believed them to be a cure for rheumatism; they bred snails, not only as a delicacy, but because of their tonic virtues.

Many reasons have been given to account for the decline of Rome: economic, physical and administrative, but the most credible seems to be a decline in moral and spiritual values. By the middle of the third century, men began to neglect the sources of wisdom; there were moreover few poets, philosophers and writers of note to inspire them. The Romans even began to shift the burden of defence on to the shoulders of foreign mercenaries, and, as we shall see, it was these hired soldiers who destroyed the Empire from within.

Marcus Aurelius (161–180), son-in-law of Antoninus Pius, was appointed by him as his successor. Though the security of the Empire was threatened by rebellions in Britain and in Asia Minor and by invasions from Germanic tribes over the Danube, his reign may be considered a highly successful one. Able generals put down the revolts whilst the emperor himself was able to drive back the Marcommani, a German tribe which had not only crossed the Danube but penetrated into metropolitan Italy and had actually started to besiege Aquileia, a large city halfway between Venice and Trieste.

As a Stoic, Marcus Aurelius practised virtues which aroused the admiration of his subjects: he was abstemious and denied himself all luxury, working hard, enduring misfortune without complaint and never listening to slander, though he was unsparing of himself.

He explained his principles in his Meditations, a book written, it is believed, for the benefit of his son. Strange to say, he was
hostile to the Christians, whose tenets he knew only slightly. As pontifex maximus he considered their beliefs harmful to the religion of the Romans. They seemed to him to be working against the unity and harmony of the Empire. Nevertheless he strove to diminish the brutality of gladiatorial displays, he introduced legislation to better the condition of women, children and of slaves, and he toiled incessantly to improve the lot of his subjects.

In many ways he was unfortunate. At the beginning of his reign several quarters of Rome were destroyed by floods which produced famine in the countryside. The rebellions he had to suppress were the result of past injustices, and the invasions he had to repel were a matter of circumstances. The year of his death, plague swept the Empire which hastened the depopulation of many regions and cities.

Commodus Antoninus (180–192) was the dissolute son of the puritanical Marcus Aurelius. Good-looking and with an easy flow of oratory, he began by gaining the popularity of his subjects, but he soon lost their affection because of his neglect of public affairs. Then, after he had discovered a plot against his life, his suspicions and fears induced him to execute officials and friends on the slightest pretext. He horrified the nobles by taking part in gladiatorial combats in which he was inevitably the victor, though occasionally he spared the lives of his victims. Eventually, his mistress, the chief of the Praetorian Guard, and one of his officials combined to have him assassinated by a professional wrestler in order to protect themselves from arrest and inevitable torture and death. The end of this reign marked a resurgence of civil war between generals who strove to become Emperor by the acclamation of the troops. The formula was repeated with great regularity throughout the greater part of the third century. Nine emperors out of ten were murdered, and immediately after their demise, several candidates tried to seize the throne by violence.

Septimus Severus (193–211) did die a natural death in York after suppressing a British rebellion. He had indeed brought the whole Empire under his control, but not before he had eliminated rivals by fighting that lasted three years. He maintained himself financially by deprecating the currency, and he gained the support of the troops by increasing their pay and allowing them to
marry. Thus the efficiency of the army was impaired and the traditional discipline of the legionaries was weakened.

His son Caracalla (211–217) murdered his brother to make sure of the succession, and continued his father's policy of depreciating the coinage and increasing the pay of the troops. However he did beat off incursions of the Germans (Alemani) in South Germany, and of the Goths on the Danube. To win the allegiance of all his subjects, he granted Roman citizenship to freemen throughout the Empire.

Elagabalus (218–222), a youthful priest in the temple of the Sun at Emessa in Syria, was acclaimed Emperor by the troops who believed erroneously that he was the son of Caracalla whose generosity had won their affection. Moreover, it was the custom for newly-elected emperors to reward their military supporters very generously out of public funds. His extravagance, and his curious habit of putting on feminine attire, soon lost him his popularity and he was murdered by the Praetorians.

Considering the state of anarchy that prevailed, it is scarcely surprising that the greater part of the third century was marked by rebellions in different parts of the Empire and by invasions from outside. The Goths broke through from the Black Sea and their fleets harried the coasts of Greece. They advanced progressively in the Danubian provinces. The Persians, in a national revival, exercised constant pressure on the Roman colonies in Syria; the Goths and the Allans (another Germanic tribe) in Asia Minor. In the meantime the Alemani raided Northern Italy repeatedly.

Lucius Domitius Aurelianus (270–275) revived the drooping spirits of his subjects when he drove back the Alemani with great energy, suppressed a movement for autonomy by Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, on the Eastern frontiers of Syria, and recovered Gaul from Tetricus, a separatist Roman official. Aurelian built the ramparts (the Aurelian Wall) which still surround Rome—an ominous precaution for the security of the city which had not been threatened since the days of Hannibal.

In the course of this century there had been wholesale persecutions of the Christians who continued nevertheless to grow in influence and numbers, despite the competition of the followers of Mithra, a sect that was very popular with the soldiery.

Since there are practically no written records of the practices of
this religion, it is almost impossible to summarise its tenets in a few words. The teachings of Mithra were monotheistic. He enjoined meekness to his followers and it would appear that their ethical standards were high.
END OF AN EMPIRE

Italy from Diocletian (284) to the Coronation of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor (800)

SUMMARY

284–305 Diocletian—tries to save the Roman Empire by dividing up the administration under the rule of two emperors and two "Caesars", but his success is only apparent.

330 Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor, transfers the capital to Constantinople.

379–395 Theodosius—divides the Empire between his two sons, so that the Eastern Emperor remains in Constantinople, the Western Emperor in Ravenna.

410 Rome sacked by Alaric the Goth.

455 Rome sacked and plundered by the Vandals.

476 Romulus Augustulus deposed by Odoacer—end of the Empire of the West.

555–568 Byzantine occupation of Italy (reign of Justinian).

568–774 Lombard domination of Northern and Central Italy.

728 The Lombard King Liutprand presents the Patrimony of St. Peter to the Pope.

800 After quelling the Lombards, Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor.

DIOCLETIAN (284–305), like three of his immediate predecessors, was an Illyrian, a soldier of real ability, and an energetic administrator who attempted to restore order, to bring about a return of prosperity and to ward off the incessant attacks of the Barbarians.

It was characteristic of him that, on being acclaimed emperor, he slew with his own hand the Prefect of the Praetorians, who by
reason of his office could not only make emperors but have them assassinated.

The new Emperor undertook sweeping reforms of the administration, standardised the currency, fixed prices and assumed control of the guilds. On the other hand, he insisted on being treated with the full reverence accorded to Eastern monarchs and the luxury of his court astonished his contemporaries.

To deal with problems of defence, he augmented the armed forces, making the rather dangerous experiment of recruiting auxiliaries from among the potential enemies of his country. To deal with foes from within and without, he appointed a second emperor and two "Caesars" who shared with him administrative and military responsibility. His Eastern capital was at Nicomedia in Asia Minor, another one was at Milan, the third at Treves, a German town near the frontier of Luxemburg, and the fourth at Sirmium in the Balkans. After defeating the Persians, the rebels in Gaul and in Britain and the Alemanni, Diocletian celebrated one of the last great triumphs held in Rome.

He ended his reign by abdicating and retiring to the immense palace he had built himself at Spalato (Split) in Dalmatia (305).

Constantine the Great (306–336), the son of Constantius (one of the Caesars), succeeded him, uniting the Empire after twenty years of warfare against rival claimants. It was when fighting the battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome, that he saw the vision of the Cross which is said to have converted him to Christianity. In 313, he published the Edict of Milan proclaiming religious toleration throughout the Empire. Christians could now make bequests to the Church, a factor that helped it considerably and fostered the foundation of religious orders.

In the year 330, the Emperor inaugurated his new capital, Constantinople (Byzantium), strategically situated between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora and in an excellent position for trading with the East.

For a while, Rome continued to be the social and intellectual capital of the Empire, but the departure of the government to Milan and Constantinople increased the influence and authority of the Bishops of Rome and paved the way for the creation of the Papacy. Constantine went further, for he built the great church of St. Peter's next to the site of the Apostle's martyrdom, and over the tomb which is believed to be his. By commemorating
the founder of the Christian Church, Constantine drew the attention of the nations of the world to Rome as the shrine and metropolis of Christianity.

Already the Primacy of Rome was being recognised, but the unity of Christianity was threatened by different heresies, and more especially by the Arians who questioned, among other beliefs, the authorised doctrine of the Trinity. They flourished mainly in the Empire of the East and among the Barbarians.

St. Augustine (353–430), one of the greatest of the Christian fathers, clarified and established many fundamental doctrines of the Church, whilst Pope Innocent I (402–417) proclaimed the supremacy of the Papacy over the Christian Church. A few years later, Celestine I expounded the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession—that Christ had conferred authority on Peter who had transmitted it to his successor, the Bishop of Rome.

Another theological development of this age was the abolition of the pagan office of pontifex maximus and the removal of the altar to Jupiter from the Senate.

Julian the Apostate (361–363), a nephew of Constantine, became Emperor after a period of civil war and general confusion. Though brought up as a Christian, he reverted to the religion of the Greeks and of the Romans, and he considered himself to be a disciple of Plato. Hence he expressed a belief in religious toleration. In the course of his short reign, he fought successfully against the Persians and, before his accession, he had driven back a Frankish invasion of Gaul.

Nevertheless, the disintegration of the Empire continued. Mesopotamia (Iraq) was surrendered to the Persians (Iranians). Under Theodosius the Great (379–395), the Romans came to terms with the Visigoths and admitted them as allies because they had been defeated by the Huns, a tribe of Asiatic Barbarians who were advancing behind them. By now the Goths were divided into two "streams", the Visigoths who appeared first and eventually settled in Spain after years of wandering, and the Ostrogoths who came later, after having been for a while under the domination of the Huns. Among the Goths, as indeed among the German Barbarians, many soldiers had served in the imperial armies and of these a large number had been converted to orthodox Christianity or to the Arian heresy.

A ruler of great ability, Theodosius succeeded in uniting the
Roman Empire once more, but at his death the division between
the East and the West became permanent.

His younger son, Honorius (395-423), Emperor of the West,
was fortunate enough to have the services of a Vandal general
named Stilicho who drove the Visigoths out of Greece, and
prevented them from conquering Italy.

Preoccupied as he was with the defence of Italy, Stilicho was
unable to stop the evacuation of Britain by the Romans who
crossed over into Gaul under the leadership of a puppet emperor
ominated by the troops of the garrison. The reason for this
migration has never been properly explained, but the legionaries
had to fear incursion from the Picts and Scots in the North, and
from the Saxons and Angles in the South. Gaul itself can scarcely
have been safer, for the country was overrun by the Vandals and
the Burgundians, Germanic tribes who formed part of the general
migration of the Barbarians towards the west. Eventually the
Vandals occupied a large part of Spain. Later they moved on to
North Africa, and from their base at Carthage they occupied
Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearics. The Burgundians
settled in South-eastern Gaul where they founded a kingdom of
which the two chief towns were Geneva and Lyons.

Imbued with the spirit of self-destruction that obsessed the later
emperors, Honorius caused Stilicho to be assassinated, thus
removing the one general who was capable of repelling the
Goths. He did save himself from capture by transferring the
administrative capital of the West from Milan to Ravenna, a city
near the Adriatic coast, about sixty miles to the south of Venice,
and almost impregnable because of the swamps that surrounded
it.

Now the Goths were led by Alaric, who had held a command
in the army of the Emperor Theodosius and had turned against
Honorius because he had been refused the promotion to which he
considered himself entitled. A Christian of the Arian heresy, he
appears to have treated the Romans with a certain clemency,
though admittedly he was out for plunder. So he invaded Italy
in 410 and by-passed Ravenna. He forced the Romans to surren-
der their city, probably by threatening to destroy their food
stores in the port of Ostia. Though the "sack" lasted for six days,
the property of the Church was respected, and the number of
citizens slaughtered does not appear to have been great. Alaric
himself preserved some reverence for Rome and for the Empire, for he did not make himself Emperor, and he attempted repeatedly to negotiate with Honorius. As it was, Alaric’s brother, Ataulfus, married the Emperor’s sister, Galla Placidia, who had been captured during the invasion but was far from being a reluctant bride. Shortly after the Sack of Rome, Alaric died at Cosenza in Calabria just as he was meditating on invasion of Sicily.

Some of the Goths left Italy and made for the South of France and Spain, driving out the Vandals and creating the short-lived kingdom of the Visigoths. When her husband died, Galla Placidia was ransomed by the Romans for six hundred thousand measures of wheat, and on her return to Ravenna, Honorius forced her to marry a general named Constantius who became the father of her son, the Emperor Valentinian III. Her second husband having died, Placidia not only manœuvred to make her son Emperor, but through him she dominated the Empire for twenty-five years.

Her two best generals, Aetius and Boniface, were soldiers of true genius who might perhaps have revived the failing forces of the Empire of the West. Unfortunately, they were jealous of each other and Aetius killed his rival in a quarrel. Aetius redeemed himself to some extent by defeating Attila, King of the Huns, at the Battle of Châlons. Attila and his Asiatic hordes had been raiding different parts of the Empire and extorting tribute for some years.

Cruel, ruthless and invincible, these invaders were feared far more than the Romanised Goths who never lost their reverence for Rome or for the name of Emperor. When Attila advanced on Gaul, the Romans, the Visigoths and the Burgundians joined forces to bar his way. Beaten but not routed, Attila turned back and set out to plunder or conquer Italy. When he stormed a number of cities of the North-east, some of the inhabitants took refuge on the sandbanks in a broad lagoon, and their descendants survived to found the city of Venice. Later he was persuaded to refrain from attacking Rome by Pope Leo I who visited him personally, accompanied by a deputation of Roman senators. Whether he withdrew out of respect for the Pontiff or simply to rest, has never been proved. One thing is certain, the influence of the Holy See was growing rapidly and this incident increased its prestige in the Christian world.
In this fifth century after the birth of Christ, the Arian heresy began to disappear in Western Europe, though it was destined to reappear in different forms in the Middle Ages. The creation of monasteries helped to strengthen the spiritual authority of the Church whilst serving the needs both spiritual and physical of many laymen in this very disturbed age.

In the sixth century, St. Benedict established the order that has perpetuated his name, and he founded the Monastery of Monte Cassino, half-way between Rome and Naples. Whilst Abbot of this great Monastery, he laid down the celebrated “rules” which were to form the basis of monastic life throughout Europe. Though Benedict was not the first to found monasteries, he gave the religious houses a definite form which had been lacking in those created by his predecessors, St. Athanasius and St. Martin of Tours. The Benedictines worked in the fields, but they also helped to preserve for civilisation the greatest literary works of the Greeks and of the Romans. For centuries, Monte Cassino was without any doubt one of the greatest centres of learning in Europe and also one of the greatest spiritual influences.

In 456, Rome was again captured and plundered by Barbarians, this time by Vandals who had arrived by sea from North Africa. Some of the besiegers were Romans who had allied themselves to the invaders, and some of the defenders were Goths who had settled in the city. This time, the assailants behaved with such ferocity and destroyed so much, that the name of Vandal came to be used as a term of abuse.

In 475, Orestes, a Barbarian general in the Roman service, nominated his son, Romulus, Emperor, and Augustus. The next year, Augustulus, as the Romans nicknamed him, was deposed by a Barbarian from Central Europe, Odoacer, who had been in the Roman service. He ruled Italy for fourteen years, accepted by the Italians and acclaimed by the Barbarian settlers. Theoretically the Empire of the West had been reunited to the Empire of the East, but Odoacer was virtually independent. When he started to expand the territories under his control, the Emperor Zeno of Byzantium encouraged Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, to supplant him.

After a siege lasting three years, Ravenna was forced to surrender, Odoacer was murdered and Theodoric succeeded him, taking as title, King of the Ostrogoths and Patrician of Italy. His
realm comprised the whole of Italy, the present territories of Switzerland, Yugoslavia and South Germany. The Visigoths held the greater part of Spain and the greater part of France, South of the Loire, and to the West of the Rhône. To the East of the Rhône, but overlapping it to the North, were the Burgundians. To the north of the Loire, the newly established Franks were overlords of France, the territory of the present Netherlands, and most of Western Germany as far as the North Sea. By now, the Anglo-Saxons held the greater part of England and the Vandals were still flourishing in North Africa.

In course of time all these German-speaking Barbarians were assimilated in countries like France, Italy and Spain, where they were outnumbered by the Latin-speaking inhabitants—in other countries the Germanic dialects remained in ordinary use.

Theodoric came to Italy with three hundred thousand Ostrogoths, but the years of his childhood spent at Constantinople, as well as his later contacts with the West, had given him an insight into the civilised ways of the Romans, even though he was nearly illiterate. Nevertheless, he did build six splendid churches in Ravenna for Arian worship and, during his lifetime, three Catholic churches were also constructed, for he believed in toleration. Advised by his learned minister Cassiodorus, his reign of thirty-three years was an age of peace and prosperity for Italy (489–526).

A year after the death of Theodoric, a Macedonian named Justinian became Emperor of the East, and his great ambition was to revive the lost glory of the Roman Empire by reconquering Western territories. A man of great talent and administrative ability, he was fortunate in his generals, and in his wife, Theodora, who urged him on to action. A woman of very humble birth, she had been an actress and perhaps a prostitute. Nevertheless, Justinian was madly in love with her, for she was not only very beautiful and intelligent, but also very entertaining.

Before starting his policy of expansion, Justinian revised the legal system of his country, and his code was adopted also in Italy.

In 533, the Byzantine general, Belisarius, drove the Vandals out of North Africa, conquered and occupied Sicily and, advancing northwards, captured Rome and Ravenna. After this initial success, the Byzantines suffered some setbacks, but eventually the whole of Italy came under their rule as well as the territories of the
Eastern Adriatic, which had been part of the Ostrogoth kingdom, and most of South-eastern Spain.

When the thirty-eight years of Justinian’s reign ended in 565, the people of Italy were impoverished and demoralised by the havoc of war, the countryside was ravaged, most towns had been repeatedly stormed and sacked, and the Byzantine troops had behaved as if they were campaigning in a hostile land. The population had fallen, vast areas of land were abandoned and in many places, the plains, undrained, were allowed to become unhealthy swamps, almost uninhabitable because of malaria.

As for Rome, the city, which may have had as many as two million inhabitants under the Antonines, was so reduced, that at the end of the war there remained only a few thousand. The water supply had been decreased when the Gothic leader, Totila, broke down some of the remaining aqueducts, and attempted a total evacuation of the Romans since his army could not provide a sufficient garrison. Later, when he encouraged the Romans to return, the chariot racing organised to induce them to come back was watched by only a handful of spectators for the city was still virtually deserted.

The Campagna, the rolling plain that surrounds Rome, had formerly been tilled by yeoman farmers, and later covered with productive estates and luxurious villas with wonderful gardens. Deserted and neglected it became so unhealthy that no dwellings were erected upon it until the middle of the twentieth century.

To the North of Rome stretched the Maremma, formerly a fertile and productive plain from ten to twenty miles broad and a hundred and thirty miles long. It became a swamp covered by a dense undergrowth, that has only been drained in the course of the last 120 years. Deterioration of this kind also devastated vast tracts of land at the mouth of the Po, along the Adriatic coast, and in Southern Italy.

Shortly after the death of Justinian, Italy was invaded once more, this time by the Lombards, a particularly wild Germanic tribe numbering some two hundred thousand, including women and children. They are believed to have originated in North Germany, and their last wanderings had led them to the plains of the Lower Danube. Some of their number had served as auxiliaries with the Byzantine troops, and this, doubtless, had made them wish to return to Italy.
Since the Emperor of the East and the bulk of his forces were engaged elsewhere, the Lombards had no difficulty in overwhelming the depleted forces of the Ostrogoths who remained. Eventually, the Lombards occupied most of the plains of Northern Italy and the region of the North-west which is contained in the present province of Tuscany, that is to say, an area including Florence, Pisa and Siena. They also held the Duchies of Spoleto and Benevento—the greater part of Southern Italy save for the heel and toe of the peninsula which were still held by the Byzantines who retained Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Liguria and the Exarchate. The Lombards made Pavia their capital, presumably because this city had survived devastation, whereas Milan, only a few miles away to the North, had been repeatedly besieged and plundered. The Exarchate was a broad strip of land which stretched from the mouth of the Po to Ancona, and across to the coast that extends to the North and to the South of Rome. Theoretically this territory was ruled by a Byzantine official called the Exarch, whose headquarters were in Ravenna, but as time went on, his sway was restricted to the area immediately in the vicinity of his capital, whilst the country around Rome acknowledged the temporal as well as the spiritual dominion of the Pope.

To begin with, the Lombards were destructive, cruel and harsh, claiming for themselves a third of the cultivable land, but frequently contenting themselves by taking on the former owners as tenants in return for a share of the crops. Soon the newcomers began to assimilate Roman culture and to mix with the population. In course of time, they developed considerable artistic talents of their own, though this fact has only been recently recognised. The “Dukes” who had borrowed their titles from the name of “dux”, given to high Byzantine officials, created dynasties, and so did the “counts” (from the Latin, *comes*) and the “marquises” (from the German, *markgraf*: keeper of the frontier).

The Lombards might well have dominated the whole of Italy had it not been for Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) whose religious fervour, force of character, and administrative ability made him one of the greatest personalities of all time. A former Prefect of Rome, he became a monk and founded monasteries in Sicily, then represented the Holy See in Constantinople before becoming Pope himself. Author of important theological works, he was also the originator of the beautiful Gregorian Chant. His
energy was boundless, for he organised missions under St. Augustine for the conversion of the English from paganism, and he sent other missions to Spain, to Gaul and to the Lombards to woo them from their ancient beliefs or from the Arian heresy.

Since the Emperors of Byzantine neglected their Italian domains, the Popes, beginning with Gregory, gradually began to replace them in the eyes of the people who revered the Pontiff as their defender against the violence of the Lombards and of the Byzantines.

Later, theological differences increased the rift between Rome and Byzantium, and these came to a climax in 726, when the Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian, forbade the use of images in churches. This edict aroused the opposition of the Italian clergy, whilst the heavy taxes imposed by the Byzantines made the people furious. A rebellion broke out in Ravenna, in the course of which the Exarch was murdered and the soldiers of the garrison slaughtered. Taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, Liutprand, King of the Lombards, invaded the Exarchate and the "Duchy" of Rome.

Pope Gregory II, a worthy successor to his great namesake, kept the Lombards from occupying the countryside around Rome, merely by the exercise of his moral and spiritual authority. Since the Byzantines had abandoned the Holy City, we can ascribe the beginning of the territorial sovereignty of the Popes to this year, 728.

The Exarchate of Ravenna continued its existence theoretically until 756, when Pepin the Short, King of the Franks, invaded Northern Italy for the second time to protect the Pope from the attacks of the Lombards. The Exarchate was not restored to the Byzantines, but handed over to the Pope, together with a large part of Central Italy to form what was called the Patrimony of St. Peter, or, later on, the Papal State. This territory, at times diminished and at others expanded, remained under the control of the Holy See until 1860. It comprised the present provinces of the Romagna, the Marches and Umbria. The Lazio, the region immediately round Rome, did not become a part of the Kingdom of Italy until 1870.

By the middle of the eighth century, the Franks were the dominant power in Western Europe. Under Clovis they had invaded and occupied Gaul towards the end of the fifth century,
while retaining their domains on the far side of the Rhine. Later, they expanded Northwards to include Frisia, and eastwards, to take in a large section of Central Germany.

In 732 an official known as the Mayor of the Palace, called Charles Martel, defeated an immense Arab army near Poitiers. The battle lasted six days, and most certainly decided the fate of Western Europe for, in the space of less than a hundred years, the Arabs had conquered the whole of North Africa and Spain, besides immense territories in the Middle East. Charles Martel’s son, Pepin the Short, deposed the King of the Franks and was elected King in his stead.

In return for protecting him from the Lombards, Pope Stephen II crowned Pepin in Rome and gave him the title of Patricius Romanorum, an award normally given by the Emperor.

Pepin’s son, Charles the Great (Charlemagne) (771–814), changed the whole course of European history by his conquests, for he invaded and annexed vast tracts of Germany as well as the whole of the present area of Bavaria, Bohemia, Austria and the Northern part of Yugoslavia, that is known to us as Croatia. He put an end to the Lombard domination of Northern Italy, bringing under his sway the whole of the peninsula down to Rome, and for another fifty miles beyond it. The Lombard Duchy of Benevento made a token submission to the Franks but remained independent, and the Byzantines maintained their hold on Calabria, Naples and Sicily.

In 799, the newly-elected Pope Leo III appealed to the Franks for help after having been in danger of losing his life in riots stirred up in the Holy City. His peril was so great that he took refuge in the Court of Charlemagne, who came to Rome and appeased the rioters and the conspirators. Shortly afterwards, on Christmas Day 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor, amid the acclamations of the crowd. His title was Holy because it had been conferred on him by the Supreme Pontiff and, as Emperor, he was considered to be the heir and successor of the Caesars.

So once more there were two Empires, but the Empire of the West was German rather than Roman, whilst in the Empire of the East, men of Greek speech and culture predominated. In Byzantium, Charlemagne was held to be an usurper, but the Imperial Throne was occupied by a woman, the Empress Irene,
who had seized power during the minority of her son. The new Emperor envisaged the possibility of joining up the two Empires by marrying her, but she died in 802. Ten years later, Charlemagne gave up Dalmatia, Istria and Venetia to the Eastern Empire in return for which the Emperor Michael I recognised his title as Holy Roman Emperor. By crowning him, the Pope solved the immediate problem of the anarchy that prevailed in Rome, and created the conception of an ideal to bring peace to Western Europe; the Pope was to be the Vicar of Christ and to delegate the temporal power over Christianity to the Emperor. The first could sway men by inspiration, and by power to punish by excommunication; the second could wield the sword of Justice to assert his authority. This great ideal was wrecked by human frailty, and by the nebulous claim of the Emperors to keep Italy. And yet the Holy Roman Empire in different forms lasted for precisely a thousand years.

The tragedy was that most Emperors believed that Italy belonged to them by right—and to uphold this right they were prepared to shed blood and cause endless misery.
4

THE MEDIEVAL PATTERN
Rise of the Communes
and the Struggle for Power (800–1122)

SUMMARY

814 Death of Charlemagne.
843 Kingdom of Italy established.
877 Introduction of Feudalism.
962 Revival of Holy Roman Empire in Northern Italy. Growth of cities and their independence of the Emperor. Increase in population and prosperity. Social structure reflecting that of Classical Rome. Communes receiving support of the Pope, termed themselves Guelfs, of the Emperor, Ghibellines. Rivalry between the factions.
1073–85 Gregory VII, Hildebrand, Pope. Beginning of struggle between Papacy and Emperor for control of the Church.

Charlemagne’s Empire did not, and could not last for a variety of different reasons of which the most obvious was that his successors were not men of his calibre. This vast realm had been conquered and held together by his dominant personality rather than by a skilfully built up administration. In a state where even the Emperor could barely write his own name, it was obviously extremely difficult to create an efficient civil service, and so Charlemagne had relied mainly on travelling inspectors to see whether the dukes, marquises, counts and barons were carrying out their duties properly and without corruption.

In 877, all holders of major titles in the Empire were informed that their rank and their estates were to be hereditary and to pass intact to their eldest sons, though considered to be held in trust for the monarch. Later on, this legislation was applied also to
vassals of lesser rank, and so began the Feudal system, for with this tenure came the obligation to take the oath of loyalty to a liege lord, and to do military service under his banner when called upon.

The soil was tilled by serfs or bondsmen who divided the produce with their lord, and they were obliged to remain on the estate where they were born and to do a certain number of days forced labour every year.

Since the Feudal system existed throughout Western Europe, these facts are only stressed because of their specific application to Italy. The profit-sharing method of land tenure (as apart from bondage) was known as the Mezzadria, and was practised until it was abolished a few years after the Second World War. In rich agricultural zones it was considered to be satisfactory, but in the South, it was the cause of real hardship among the peasantry.

Feudalism was not indigenous to the Italian soil, for it was imposed by the Franks, and the landowners were for the most part descendants of Germanic invaders who treated their serfs with great harshness.

Under the Romans, citizens were held to be equal socially and in law, and this tradition was to inspire townsmen to fight for their freedom, as individuals, but two centuries were to pass before the real emancipation of the communes began.

When Charlemagne’s son, Louis the Pious, died, the Empire was divided among three of his heirs; Germany was allotted to Louis the German, the western part of France to Charles the Bald, and the intervening countries, the Netherlands, Alsace Lorraine, Burgundy, Provence and Northern Italy, were formed into a single state called Lothringia (Fr. Lorraine) after Lothaire who was to rule it. By the end of the century, Germany had absorbed most of the Netherlands as well as Alsace Lorraine but Burgundy, Provence and Italy became independent kingdoms.

The Italian kingdom was short lived. A king, Berengar, was elected to rule over a realm corresponding to the former kingdom of the Lombards, but conditions were not favourable to independence. The Pope still held sway over the patrimony of St. Peter, the Byzantines lingered precariously in Southern Italy, but the Arabs had invaded and occupied Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, whilst the Huns continued their raids from the Danube region.

The nobles of different races quarrelled incessantly and could
not settle their differences. The kingdom came to an end in 962 when the Holy Roman Empire was revived.

The new Emperor, Otto the Great of Saxony, King of Germany, had manifested his intentions from the outset. At his accession he was crowned King in Charlemagne’s chapel at Aix-la-Chapelle. On invading Lombardy in 952, he took the title of King of Italy and was crowned ten years later at Pavia. The succeeding year he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope John XII, whom he deposed shortly afterwards and replaced by a candidate of his own choice.

Later, he assured the succession of his son to the Empire and, from this reign onwards, the Holy Roman Emperors automatically asserted their claim to rule over Italy and to intervene in Italian affairs. The four Emperors of the House of Saxony set out to dominate the Italian nobles, to control the elections of the Popes, and to annex the Byzantine domains in the South. They failed to achieve this third objective, but they began to sap the authority of the nobles by placing cities and towns under the rule of bishops and by giving the citizens special privileges.

Before long, the Emperors were to learn that the emancipated towns, or communes as they were called, would cause them more trouble than the recalcitrant nobles. Of importance from the Italian point of view and for the future of civilisation, was that the greater freedom in the cities allowed artists, architects and writers to develop their talents more fruitfully than anywhere else in Europe.

The independence of the townsfolk was still more assured when they rebuilt the ramparts destroyed by the Barbarians, the Byzantines or even the Franks. With solid fortifications to protect them, the citizens could no longer be bullied by any noble who happened to have a few hundred men-at-arms in his service, even though they still feared that their city might be stormed by large armies disposing of siege equipment.

After the invention of gunpowder, the political climate of Europe changed, for artillery was expensive and in consequence seldom used by minor robber barons. On the other hand, it was comparatively easy for a king with powerful cannon to breach the walls of a city or to destroy the castle of a rebel baron. In England and in France this circumstance brought about the end of the Feudal System and the beginning of absolute monarchy. In Italy,
the armies of France, Spain and the Empire stormed and plundered countless cities and the state of anarchy and confusion that prevailed favoured the rise of the tyrants, and the latter, in due course, put an end to the glorious spirit of freedom enjoyed by artists, poets and philosophers of the Renaissance.

However, during the early evolution of the communes, it is certainly true to say that, before the building of the ramparts, quite large cities had been obliged to pay ransom to bands of no more than a hundred men. As soon as they were protected by strong walls the townsfolk obtained permission from the Emperor to buy arms and to form and train militias. Strangely enough the various Barbarian invaders had allowed the towns to keep their magistrates and their councils in order to have someone with whom to negotiate for the levying of ransoms or taxes, or for requisitioning of any kind. As towns became organised and the city militias grew in efficiency, nobles tended to emigrate to the country since they could no longer bully the inhabitants, and might even fear their hostility.

After a while, cities tended to expand beyond their boundaries and even to attack landowners. The latter, in their turn, sought the support of their serfs and peasants and began to enfranchise their dependants in order to gain their allegiance.

The result of these improvements in the relationship between master and man was that the rural population grew rapidly, even in regions that had become virtually deserted owing to the devastations of Barbarians. On the other hand, there was at the same time a contrary movement on estates where the rule was oppressive, and many countrymen took refuge in the cities in order to get away from feudal exactions.

When the cities grew prosperous, the craftsmen and tradesmen formed themselves into guilds or corporations to govern the exercise of their profession, and also to be able to express their needs or complaints to those in authority; first of all to the churchmen or the nobleman who held sway over their city, and later on to the city council (Gran Consiglio) and to the consuls when the latter replaced the feudal lords. These councils developed in order to resist oppression and to strive for the greater freedom of the cities.

The social structure of the towns resembled in many ways the social structure of Rome. In course of time the prestige and
influence of the nobles diminished though their wealth gave them some importance. Next to them came the borghesia or popolo grasso, consisting of the merchants, the contractors, and the skilled craftsmen who alone could be represented on the council or in the general assemblies of the citizens. Beneath the borghesia came the popolo minuto, the unskilled labourers, workmen, the peasants and the lesser craftsmen and these, like the plebeians of Roman times, were not allowed to take part in the administration until much later on. Like the plebeians, the popolo minuto had to struggle for three or four centuries to gain their rights.

In the early days of the communes, cities had been governed by a general assembly consisting of all the borghesec, but when the latter became too numerous to be able to debate together in a large piazza, the Council was substituted. This body was eventually replaced by a College of the Priori and Anziani. The priori were the representatives of the different wards of the town, and the anziani were selected from among the older and more distinguished citizens.

When consuls were elected to replace the feudal lords or prelates, they became responsible to the Emperor and were entrusted with the job of collecting taxes or tributes, and of transmitting them to the imperial authorities. However, all city administration was modified progressively, and eventually the consuls were replaced by a podesta and a capitano del Popolo. In many cities the podesta was a foreigner, so as to be sure of impartiality, and frequently his term of office was limited to seven years to prevent him from getting involved by his friendships with local people.

In the event of war, every citizen was liable for service with the militia, and the men were enrolled in companies from each ward, and each section was led by a gonfaloniere or standard bearer. The gonfaloniere of the whole city was usually stationed in the carroccio, a heavy chariot drawn by oxen, surmounted by a figure of Christ, with the flags and the standard of the city flying from a tall pole in the centre. There was also an altar in the front, at which Mass was celebrated every day in the presence of the militia. At the back of the carroccio sat the buglers who sounded calls to guide the movements of the army. The carroccio was the focal point of the army in battle.

A palace for the signoria or administrators was built in every city, and from the tall tower a large bell was hung to sound the
alarm in case of danger. In Florence, this bell is still known as the *Vacca* (the cow), and its deep tolling has impressed many thousands of tourists from all over the world.

Since most cities felt the need of some form of protective alliance, each commune sought the support of the Pope or of the Emperor, that is to say they called themselves Guelfs or Ghibellines. The Welfs were a family that opposed the Franconian Emperors in Germany, and the Wailblinger was another name for the Hohenstaufen dynasty of Germany, and these two words were corrupted by the Italians into Guelf and Ghibelline.

These terms were first used in Italy when the Welfs of Germany stirred up the people of Lombardy against the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, but the loyalties to the Pope or to the Emperor had already existed for nearly a century. The rivalries between the two parties were complicated by the fact that there were adherents of both sides in every city, and in nearly every city they struggled for domination. As a rule the nobles tended to be Ghibellines and support the Emperor, and the townsfolk of the lower classes were Guelfs and backed by the Papacy. Very frequently neighbouring towns supported rival parties, so Milan was Guelf and Pavia was Ghibelline. Florence was usually under the sway of the Guelfs and Pisa was loyal to the Emperors most of the time. Sometimes the situation was reversed and the party in power was expelled, but usually returned to exact terrifying reprisals on their opponents. Large towns waged wars on their neighbours in order to force them into their particular alliance, but this led eventually to policies of expansion which turned city states like Florence and Milan into the territorial states of Tuscany and Lombardy.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the reverse process had taken place as, for instance, when Countess Matilda of Tuscany died and her domains disintegrated: cities such as Florence, Siena and Pistoia attained complete independence, especially when they had already achieved a certain degree of autonomy.

By a curious paradox a Pope created, or helped to create, the Holy Roman Empire, and it may be said that the persistent efforts of Otto the Great and his successors to reform the Papacy helped to give the Holy See the power to oppose the Holy Roman Emperors. Time after time, the Emperors intervened to clear up confusion over the nomination of a Pope, and then, finally, the Emperor Henry III (1039–1056) appointed four German Popes
in succession, the last of whom, Leo IX, made important reforms in the administration of the Holy See and in the election of the Popes. It was during his tenure that Henry III gave the Duchy of Benevento to the Papacy.

An initiation of reform of the Church began outside Rome in the Benedictine monastery of Cluny in Burgundy where the monks preached against the moral laxity of the age and insisted on a stricter application of the "rule". Their example was imitated in the religious houses of Italy, and four German Popes nominated by Henry III were influenced by the Cluniac reforms.

The intervention of this Emperor in the affairs of the Papacy was, on the whole, beneficial. His nominees appear to have filled their high office with a full sense of their responsibilities to God and to man, in striking contrast to their immediate predecessors.

However still greater changes were in store, for soon was to begin a life and death struggle between the Papacy and the Emperors for the control of the Church throughout Western Europe. This dissension arose mainly from the fact that all the Emperors were haunted by their dream of owning and controlling Italy. It is true that the cause of the quarrel was over the right of Investiture; that is to say whether prelates could be nominated by laymen, such as a monarch, instead of by ecclesiastical authority. It is true also that, at different times, the right of Investiture was the source of disputes between the Papacy and the kings of France, and the kings of England, but their armies were not continually invading nor had they to start with the moral and physical support of a number of Italian towns and individual nobles.

The real initiator of this struggle was Hildebrand, a Benedictine monk of obscure birth who was trained at the monastery of Cluny and became Bishop of Ravenna. Imbued with a sense of his holy mission and having, in the words of Cardinal Newman, an "Imperial mind", he nearly achieved his ambition to make the Papacy the dominant political force in Europe, so that all monarchs should obey the dictates of the Pope and follow their counsels. In fact, he wished to realise more fully the conception of Christendom being guided by the Holy Pontiff as Vicar of Christ, and by the Emperor as wielder of the Sword of Justice under his sway.

In this scheme of things, all monarchs would owe a rather nebulous allegiance to the Emperor and, odd as it may seem, a
vague sentiment of this kind did already exist in the early Middle Ages. Thus, we might have had Europe united by the bonds of religion under a Germanic overlord swayed by the Pope. Since Latin was the common language of priests, lawyers and officials everywhere, it is conceivable that this plan might have been realised. In the words of Sismondi: "He proposed to himself the subjugation of the world to the sacerdotal power. In the universe he saw but God, the priest his sole minister, and mankind obedient. He designed that the whole priesthood should be moved by a single will. . . ."

To achieve his object, the Emperor arranged with the Lateran Council that the Cardinals should elect the Pope. Following upon this, it was decided that the nomination of prelates should be made by the ecclesiastical authorities, that is to say, by the Pope jointly with the Cardinals. Then, to detach the clergy from the laity, the marriage of priests was definitely forbidden. Lastly, Hildebrand taught the priests to consider the Pope as an unerring being who became holy on his election, who could alone appoint and dismiss prelates. As master of all princes, he could depose them at will by excommunication and by releasing their subjects from their oath of allegiance.

Before becoming Pope himself, Hildebrand appointed four other Popes in turn, each of whom acted under his guidance. Nicholas II, one of his nominees, made an alliance with the Normans, who had just occupied Southern Italy, investing Robert Guiscard, their leader, with the title of Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and giving the blessing of the Holy See to his projected invasion of Sicily. The election of Pope Alexander II, without the participation and approval of the Emperor Henry IV, caused tension, but the real struggle began when Hildebrand became Pope under the name of Gregory VII (1073–1085).

The Emperor had just triumphed over the Saxons, and he had begun to appoint prelates in Germany without any reference to the Pope. Angry at the remonstrances made by Gregory VII, Henry IV convened a synod of Worms, at which the former was declared deposed, and a German anti-Pope was proclaimed.

Pope Gregory riposted by excommunicating the Emperor, and by releasing his subjects from their allegiance. The effect of this decree was shattering: the Imperial vassals turned against their Emperor, many of them openly rebelling against him. In order to
keep his throne, Henry was obliged to abase himself and went to Italy to beg for forgiveness from the Pope who was staying in the Castle of Canossa, high up in the Apennines. Before pardoning him, Gregory made the Emperor wait for two days outside the gate in the deep snow. Before being admitted, Henry had to cast aside all marks of his rank and present himself in the white robe of a penitent (1077).

In spite of this humiliation, Henry IV succeeded in re-establishing himself in Germany and in dominating his rebel vassals. Invading Italy repeatedly in 1084, he stormed into Rome and was crowned Emperor by his anti-Pope, only to be driven out shortly afterwards by the Normans under Robert Guiscard.

Far from restoring Gregory to his former state of power, this victory was the cause of his undoing. The Normans plundered and ravaged the city, carrying off a number of the inhabitants to sell them into slavery, thus bringing their misfortunes to a climax, for Rome had already been besieged three times in the previous four years.

In their indignation at the conduct of the Normans, many of the Cardinals and most of the remaining Romans, turned against Pope Gregory who withdrew to Salerno where he remained as an exile until his death.

To all appearances, the career and mission of Gregory VII had ended in failure. His great enemy appeared to have triumphed over him, he had lost the support of the Cardinals and the esteem of the Italians, and more especially of the Romans. Nevertheless, many of his reforms endured. The spiritual influence of the Papacy was greater, and the question of the Investiture was partially solved by the Diet of Worms in 1122, when a compromise agreement was made with Germany, though the struggle between Pope and Emperor was to endure, and both England and France were to prove recalcitrant. As we shall see, the differences that arose with France later on led to the transference of the Holy See to Avignon: in England during the reign of Henry VIII, the dissension about the authority of the Pope led to the rift with the Papacy and the Catholic Church.

The Wars of Investiture continued intermittently until the Diet of Worms, and were waged with great savagery. Cities fought against other cities, the imperial armies descended upon the Lombard Plain, storming towns and sided with the Pope, lunging
southwards towards Rome, but retreating when the really
dangerous Normans advanced.

Although there was much destruction, cities like Florence and
Milan that backed Gregory VII and his successors, became
virtually independent. On the other hand, there were many
Lombard cities that remained hostile to the Pope, and these
retained in their midst, officials nominated by the Emperor, which
delayed their full emancipation though they were granted special
privileges as a reward for their loyalty. In any case, all cities were
beginning to break away from their feudal ties, though nominal
and theoretic allegiance to the Emperor remained and continued
for a long time.

In 1088, Urban II was elected to the Holy See. A Frenchman of
noble birth he followed the policy of Gregory VII and continued
to strive for the complete independence of the Papacy, stirring up
rebellions in Germany and inciting Henry IV’s son, Conrad, to
revolt against his father. The new Pontiff asserted his authority by
excommunicating the King of France for adultery. He became a
dominating figure in world affairs when he proclaimed the First
Crusade, and made a special appeal to the people of Europe rather
than to their Kings and Princes.

If the Crusades were to be a source of inspiration to many
Christians, they were destined also to have many other results.
Tens of thousands of Western Europeans were to come into con-
tact with the civilisations of Byzantium and the Arabs. There was
an increase of trade with the Middle East, particularly through
Italian ports, and the maritime republics such as Venice, Genoa
and Pisa grew rich by transporting armies to the Eastern Empire
and to Palestine.

After the death of Urban, the wrangles between the Popes and
the Emperors grew even more bitter. Henry V entered Rome and
forced Pope Pascal II to renounce his feudal rights, his control of
Investiture, and to crown him Holy Roman Emperor. No sooner
had the Emperor retired than the Pope claimed all the rights that
he had repudiated. A temporary solution came when the French
Pope, Calixtus II, arranged the compromise of the Concordat of
Worms (1122).
GUELF AND GHIABELLINE

The Communes, the Papacy and the Empire in the Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries

SUMMARY

1143 Arnold of Brescia’s brief rule over Rome.
1152–90 Frederick I—his campaign against the Lombard League (1154–55)—his defeat at Legnano (1176).
1190–97 Henry VI’s vain dream of recreating the Roman Empire.
1212–50 Frederick II strives with the Communes and the Popes.
1266 Charles of Anjou becomes King of Naples and Sicily.
1282 The Sicilian Vespers: Pedro the Aragonese becomes King of the Island.
1295–1303 Pope Boniface VIII—inaugurates the first Roman Jubilee.
1305 Pope Clement V leaves Rome for Avignon—beginning of the “Babylonian Captivity” (1305–78).
1347 Brief Roman dictatorship of Cola di Rienzi.

During the Middle Ages, most of the towns of Northern Italy achieved great prosperity in spite of wars between cities, wars between leagues of cities and incursions by the Emperors and by the Kings of France. From being under feudal rule, they had become communes with a large degree of independence which favoured the development of industry, commerce and banking. Later on, many of the communes began to exchange their democratic régime for a tyrant. The advent of the tyrants was due to a number of causes, the chief of which was the desire to end the constant rivalry and rioting between factions, between classes and between powerful families and their adherents.

In every town the circumstances were more or less the same:
fighting for domination were the borghesia and the nobility, for
the nobles returned to the cities when they found that there was
money to be made in trade or industry. Then there were the Guelfs
and the Ghibellines, and other factions based on family, class or
politics.

In every medieval Italian city, there were a number of towers,
originally strongholds of nobles, which served as fortresses or
refuges to the different factions.

In the present day it is hard for us to imagine how life could be
tolerable in the confined space of a walled city in which there were
ceaseless battles in the narrow streets. It is difficult for us also to
appreciate how great was the separation between factions. It was
said that a Guelf or a Ghibelline could be identified by his gestures,
by the way he peeled a peach, tied his sword knot or wore his
cloak. Even the castles, strongholds and ramparts had to be
different so that men knew where they could find a safe refuge:
the Guelfs favoured the conventional type of battlement, but the
Ghibelline fortifications were peculiarly noticeable because they
had deep triangular indentations.

All the cities of the Lombard plain had achieved great prosperity
in spite of the Wars of Investiture and, in spite of frequent fighting
between neighbouring towns, but Milan and Pavia surpassed
them all in wealth and power. Milan was Guelf, and Pavia was
Ghibelline, but each of them was supported by a number of towns
that fought and negotiated as leagues.

Nevertheless, in all these cities, there existed a spirit of inde-
pendence and a considerable degree of freedom for the individual,
but we must realise that this freedom was relative since it was
compared with the bondage of feudalism, and that it existed only
in Northern and Central Italy.

In Rome, where conditions were difficult, Arnold of Brescia,
a monk who had been a pupil of Abelard, in 1143 demanded a
return of the ancient liberties, preached against the abuses of the
Church, questioned the temporal authority of the Pope and
denounced the tyranny of the Emperor. He was banished, but in
his absence, the Romans revolted and set up a semblance of the old
Republic on the Capitoline Hill. After a time, Arnold returned.
A new Pope, Adrian IV, the Englishman Nicolas Breakspear,
attempted to expel the rebellious monk, but the Romans refused
to let him go. The Pope forced them to submit and placed the
ITALY in the MIDDLE AGES
whole city under an interdict, the fullest form of excommunication, which forbade all religious ceremonies. Completely subdued, the Romans banished Arnold and made an end of their republic.

Now it was at this time also that the splendid independence of the communes was threatened by Emperor Frederick I, known to us also as Barbarossa. The second of the Hohenstaufen emperors, his ambition was to restore the full glories of the Roman Empire and, consequently, he modelled himself as far as possible on Constantine and on Justinian. Having been highly successful in consolidating imperial power in Germany, he wanted to be crowned in Rome and to force the Guelf cities of Italy into submission. During his long reign (1152–1190), he invaded Italy six times, making frightful havoc, though he was unable to break down the resistance of the Lombard League which was formed to repel him.

On his first expedition, he lost so many men in besieging and storming the rebellious city of Tortona that he was obliged on his way to Rome to by-pass Guelf towns since his army was not powerful enough to take them by storm. On arriving near the Holy City, he was met by the Pope whom he treated with great arrogance, but the Emperor was forced to give way in order to be crowned. An added condition of his surrender was that he should capture Arnold of Brescia and hand him over to the Papal authorities, and the unfortunate monk was burnt alive in front of the Castel Sant’ Angelo, and his ashes were scattered in the Tiber, to prevent them being used as relics by the Roman populace.

During his second expedition to Italy, the Emperor called for the complete submission of the communes, but the people of Milan refused to obey, an example followed by a small number of cities. After a siege lasting two years the Milanese were forced to surrender, and their entire town was razed to the ground by the Imperialists, and the surviving inhabitants were scattered throughout Northern Italy.

However, the Emperor had to return to Germany, and the depredations of his troops had made them so unpopular that an increasing number of cities joined the Lombard League. From 1167, the town of Milan was rebuilt with the labour and the money supplied by neighbouring towns, and the Guelfs tended to become increasingly bold. Each time the Emperor came, his armies were depleted by lengthy sieges, and most of all by
disease that caused thousands of deaths, especially near Rome and on the Adriatic coast.

In other respects the Emperor had overplayed his hand, for the podestas appointed to represent him in Ghibelline cities, were tyrannical, so that these towns began to join the League which was now headed by Pope Alexander III and had therefore the blessing of the Church. In 1176, Frederick’s army was defeated and scattered by the infantry of the communes. A few years later, by the Treaty of Constance (1183), virtual autonomy was granted to the cities of the League, though in return, they had to acknowledge in rather vague terms the suzerainty of the Emperor, and to pay him tribute. On the other hand, they were free to choose their own officials, and there was to be no interference with the internal affairs of any commune.

Nevertheless, the Ghibellines did not disappear from the Italian scene, for opinion continued to be divided as to whether it were better for the country to be dominated by Pope or Emperor, and so Dante, for instance, was Ghibelline, and convinced that peace could only come with the Empire, an Empire that would include all Christendom.

Although Frederick Barbarossa’s designs on the communes appeared to have failed, he set out to assure the domination of Sicily and Southern Italy by marrying his son, the future Emperor Henry VI, to Constance, daughter of King Roger II of Sicily and heiress of William II, who was also King of Southern Italy.¹

After the death of his father, Frederick I, Henry VI was too busy establishing himself in Sicily to spend much time trying to subjugate the unruly communes of the North. Added to the old dream of reviving the Empire of the West, he had visions of annexing Byzantium by a dynastic marriage or by conquest, and of recreating the old Roman Empire.

His plans were thwarted by his early death, and by the continued rebelliousness of his subjects. His son, Frederick II,² was one of the most brilliant monarchs of the Middle Ages. Since he was brought up in Sicily, his deep love of the south kept him away from Germany where his uncle, Philip of Swabia, began a struggle against a Guelf claimant to the imperial crown. When Philip was assassinated, Frederick II continued the fight against the rivals of

¹ See Chapter 6 on Sicily and Southern Italy.
² Stupor Mundi; see Chapter 6.
his dynasty and was acclaimed Emperor in 1212. In 1220, he was
crowned by the Pope in Rome but, subject to agreements which
made strife between the Emperor and the Papacy inevitable, for
he had to promise to keep his two crowns separate, to give up his
claims to the right of Investiture and to control of the clergy in
his domains, and finally, most difficult of all because of his
rebellious subjects, he promised that he would go on a Crusade.

Like his grandfather Barbarossa, Frederick II attempted to
dominate the Italian communes, and though he had the support
of a number of Ghibelline cities and nobles, a second Lombard
League was formed to combat him. War in Northern Italy con-
tinued intermittently for twenty-two years, with varying success
for the imperial forces, but Frederick never relinquished his hold
on Northern Italy though he retired to the south after having
unsuccessfully tried to capture Parma. Frequently it seemed as if
he would achieve all his ambitions, but twice he was excommuni-
cated by the Pope who stirred up his subjects in Germany and in
Italy to rebellion.

Frederick's son, Conrad IV, reigned for only four years and was
succeeded as King of Sicily and Southern Italy by Charles of
Anjou, brother of Louis IX of France (St. Louis), to whom the
realm had been offered by Pope Urban.² By this manœuvre, the
Emperors could no longer threaten Papal territories from the
south and, for the time being, the Popes had gained an ally
against the Ghibellines. It is true that the illegitimate son of
Frederick II, Manfred, was acclaimed as King of the Sicilians, but
he was defeated and killed on the mainland at Benevento by the
Angevins (1266). Two years later, Conrad IV's young son,
Conradin, was invited by the Ghibellines to fight for his inheri-
tance, but he was defeated and captured at Tagliacozzo, and
shortly afterwards beheaded in Naples by his rival, Charles of
Anjou.

The new king soon lost his popularity because of the arrogant
behaviour of his French troops who so antagonised the people of
Palermo that they rebelled and massacred the army of occupation,²
and their example was followed by other garrison towns on the
island. Having expelled the Angevins, the Sicilians offered the
crown to Peter of Aragon, son-in-law of Manfred, but Charles

¹ See Chapter 6.
² The Sicilian Vespers (1282); see Chapter 6.
kept the Kingdom of Naples (Southern Italy). Thus began the domination of Sicily and, later, of Southern Italy by the Aragonese, a domination that was to be continued by the Spanish, and last, with some interruptions, until 1748.

Though the south was impoverished by frequent wars between Naples and Sicily, the communes of the north had been free from attacks by the imperial forces for twenty years (1254–1273).

The death of Conrad IV marked a new epoch in Germany, and the beginning of the long struggle between the princes who sought virtual independence, and the Emperors who wished to keep full authority over their German possessions. The Medieval conception of the Holy Roman Empire was at an end since the French kings were, at times, as powerful as the Emperors, the Kings of England could conquer half France, and the Italian communes were practically independent.

For two hundred years, there were no important invasions of Italy by the Emperors, and even the French did not attempt any expeditions on a large scale until 1494 when Charles VIII claimed the crown of Naples.

Left to themselves, the communes of Northern Italy attained a greater degree of prosperity than ever before, despite constant fighting between factions and between cities. As we shall explain more fully elsewhere, Florence, Venice, Genoa, Siena and Lucca became centres of trade, and later on, of finance. The expansion of imports and exports called for the use of credits which eventually stimulated the creation of banks. In the middle of the thirteenth century, gold currency was re-introduced, and this in itself facilitated commercial relations and helped to bring financial stability. The Florentines minted a gold coin which was circulated throughout the world, and was known in England as the florin. The ducat came from Venice though it originated in Sicily under the Normans.

The first banks are said to have been established in Venice in the twelfth century, but within a century and a quarter, the Italians of different cities had become the bankers of the whole of Europe, hence the origin of Lombard Street in London and the rue des Lombards in Paris.

The people of Milan had built up their wealth on the wool trade and, later, on the production of silk. Situated as it was in the fertile Lombard Plain, irrigation had made the soil even more
productive of the basic necessities of life. However, as we have noted, when the threat from the Emperors receded, the tyrants assumed full power over the majority of Italian cities, as in Milan where the Viscontis ruled from 1262 to 1447.

The greatest of this dynasty, Gian Galeazzo (1378–1402), became Duke of Milan with the Emperor's consent, but he sought nevertheless to subjugate the whole of Italy. In a short while he had not only occupied the greater part of the Province of Lombardy, but also Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Pisa and Siena. Having attained nearly royal prestige, he encouraged building, and the Cathedral of Milan and the Certosa of Pavia were begun in his reign. His death saved the centre of Italy from conquest and, during the subsequent years, all the cities annexed outside Lombardy regained their independence.

When the last male Visconti died in 1447, a republic was established, but three years later, General Francesco Sforza, husband of Bianca Visconti, became Duke of Milan by force of arms. As we shall see, the last Sforza died in 1535, and Milan became a dependency of the Spanish Crown until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1714.

Padua was ruled by the Carraras, Verona by the della scalas, Ferrara by the D'Estes, Bologna by the Bentivoglios, and Mantua by the Gonzagas whose court was among the most splendid in Italy. Many a small town or commune was ruled for a while by a tyrant, but they were gradually absorbed by the larger and more powerful states.

Just as the Duchy of Milan grew out of the city of Milan to the present limits of the Province of Lombardy, Florence expanded into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Venice annexed Vicenza, Verona, Brescia and Bergamo, spreading halfway across the North of Italy, and to the North-east as far as the frontiers of Austria. Last of all, the Duchy of Savoy not only bestrode the Alps, but swallowed up little by little its smaller neighbours to turn eventually into the kingdom of Piedmont.

Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Italian states and cities fought against each other very frequently, but their armies were composed usually of foreign mercenaries, French, German or English, led by condottieri who sold their services to the highest bidder. Some, like the Sforzas, succeeded in creating dynasties, whilst Giovanni delle Bande Nere, a member
of the junior branch of the Medici, was the father of Cosimo I of Florence and Tuscany. The Englishman, Sir John Hawkwood, probably saved Florence from being annexed by Gian Galeazzo Visconti. He built a splendid castle outside Florence and is commemorated by Ucello’s splendid equestrian portrait on the walls of Florence Cathedral. Colleoni and Gattamelata are immortalised by superb equestrian statues in Venice and Padua respectively.

Even before the Holy Roman Emperors ceased their invasions of Italy, several of the Popes set out to increase the political power of the Papacy and to assure themselves against military invasion. A great Pontiff, Innocent III (1198–1216) strove to attain these objectives, but also tried, with less success, to increase the spiritual influence of the Papacy. He asserted his authority over King John of England, induced a number of states to pay homage to him as vassals of the Holy See, and he launched the Fourth Crusade and the Crusade against the Albigensian Heretics in the South of France. In Italy he restored to the Papal States a number of cities, particularly in the Romagna.

If the Pope was preoccupied with many of the political problems of his office, there were during his lifetime two movements of world-wide importance and great spiritual significance. The first was the creation of the Order of the Franciscan Brothers by St. Francis of Assisi who, by precept and example, inspired a return to the humility, self-sacrifice, devotion and poverty of the early Christians. The other was the foundation of the Second Mendicant Order, the Dominicans, by the Spaniard, St. Dominic. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the Popes had to concentrate on curbing the rising power of the Kings of France, who insisted on controlling ecclesiastical investiture in their country.

Boniface VIII (1294–1303) had not only to survive in a Rome which was rent by factions and social disorders, but also to strive against the increasing nationalism of the Kings of England and of France (Edward I and Philip IV). The latter ended his rivalry with the Papacy by sending his officers to kidnap the Pope in his palace at Agnani in order to bring him to France for trial. Boniface was rescued by the people of the town, but he died shortly afterwards in Rome, poisoned perhaps by one of the Colonnas, a member of a family that had a long feud with his own, the Gaetani.

If Boniface did not succeed in holding back the rising tide of nationalism in Europe, he must at least be remembered as the
initiator of the celebrations of the Holy Year in Rome. The First Jubilee in 1300 is said to have attracted over two million pilgrims to the city, and their contributions proved to be a valuable source of income to the Papacy, but the spiritual inspiration of the journey was obviously fraught with far greater meaning.

After a brief interlude, when the state of anarchy in Rome led many of the cardinals to take refuge in France, the Conclave elected as Pope the Frenchman Clement V. Since Italy was in a state of turmoil, the Papal Court was established at Avignon, a possession of the Holy See, on the left bank of the Rhône and so, like Provence, not within the confines of the Kingdom of France at that time.

Thus began the “Babylonian Captivity”, a period during which seven Popes, all of them French, remained in Avignon, in danger of being dominated by the Kings of France, but unable to return to Rome because of the chaos that prevailed in the Holy City (1305–1378). In this last year, a Conclave in Rome elected an Italian Pope, whilst a second Conclave in Avignon chose a French Pope, creating in the Church what is known as the Great Schism which lasted until 1417. In that year the Council of Constance elected as Pope, Martin V (1417–1431) a member of the Roman family of Colonna. Since the nationalistic attitude of many European kings and princes reduced the political influence and the revenues of the Papacy, Martin V set out to recover the Papal States, a difficult matter as so many cities had become virtually independent of the Holy See and were governed by either a tyrant or a Republican Council. Many years passed before the Patrimony of St. Peter was reconquered, and never in its entirety.

During the absence of the Popes in Avignon, the misery and chaos in Rome was increased by the constant fighting between the Orsini and the Colonna, two noble families of great power and influence, the first of which claimed to be Guelf, and the second Ghibelline, though eventually these allegiances lost their significance. For a time, some of the bridges over the Tiber were held by the former, others by the latter, others again by the Savelli. In the medieval city the nobles used their towers as strongholds and bases from which to attack their rivals. Besides this, the countryside, and even the ruins of ancient Rome, were haunted by bandits and robbers, and many people abandoned the Holy City so that entire streets were deserted. In the words of
Gregorovius: "Family fought against family, the populace against nobility, the plebeians amongst themselves. A truce was occasionally agreed upon, then all sides rushed to arms. . . ."

Many citizens prayed for the return of the Popes so that this fearful state of anarchy should come to an end. The poet, Petrarch, the first great Humanist, went to Avignon and besought the Pope to go back to Rome. Later, he became a friend and admirer of Cola di Rienzi, a handsome young man who dreamed of restoring the vanished glories of ancient Rome. Gifted with astonishing oratory, he gained the support of the Romans by his eloquence, and by a curious electoral campaign which consisted of setting up symbolic pictures in different parts of the city. At the outset, he claimed to be the Tribune of the people, ready to defend them against the outrages of the nobles, and to bring about, as he said, the restoration of good estate. At first, Rienzi’s initiative was attended with great success: he did restore order and curb the nobles. Prosperity began to return to the city, and the Pope in Avignon watched this curious adventure with interest and approval. Rienzi’s ambassadors to different courts were received with respect, and he was even called upon to arbitrate in a quarrel between two princes.

However, like Mussolini many centuries later, he began to make himself ridiculous by his pretensions, but, unlike the Duce, he had to face an opposition which objected to the perfectly reasonable taxes that he wished to impose. Then, also, Rienzi was a physical coward—he allowed himself to be driven out of Rome by a handful of men (1348). After four years of wandering, the Romans who had forgotten his foolish posturings were prepared to welcome him back with the Papal benediction and the official title of Senator. Once again he overplayed his hand, sending insolent messages to sovereigns, parading with regal splendour, evoking the day when he had had himself crowned with seven different crowns, and giving banquets like those that the emperors of the decadence lavished on their minions. Soon after his return (1354), Rienzi was slaughtered in a popular uprising fomented by the Roman barons, and his body was desecrated and exposed by the mob.
### SICILY AND SOUTHERN ITALY
From the Byzantine Conquest to the Beginning of Spanish Rule (535–1516)

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In an earlier chapter we recorded how Justinian’s great general, Belisarius, conquered Italy and Sicily in 535, though only Sicily remained in complete Byzantine occupation by the end of the century. However, it is important to note that the Byzantines continued to hold on to certain portions of Southern Italy including Gaeta, Naples, Amalfi and the heel and the toe of the peninsula, which are now the provinces of Puglia and Calabria. Between these territories, stretched the Lombard Duchy of Benevento which took nearly four centuries to assimilate. Remote as these events may seem, they have their importance, because Sicily and Southern Italy remained associated in men’s minds as being linked together, even though they were destined to be
separated subsequently for long periods. Also it is well to remem-
ber that the Byzantines reintroduced Greek culture into Sicily,
and that much of this culture survived the Saracen Occupation,
and even blended with the culture that the latter acquired second-
hand from the Persians.

We know very little about the rule of the Byzantines in
Sicily, save that their artists, their craftsmen and their architects
were still flourishing after the Saracen domination had come to
an end.

In Southern Italy, the Byzantines and the Lombards continued
to hold provinces side by side. Sicily on the other hand was
slowly conquered by the Arabs of North Africa, for the most
part subjects of the Emir of Kairouan which is now in Tunisia
(827–902). The Byzantine garrisons resisted with great courage,
and years passed before all their strongholds were stormed. The
Saracen attacks on Southern Italy were far less successful, though
they did occupy Bari on the East coast for a while and in one of
their incursions they even laid waste the suburbs of Rome.

Eventually, the force of the aggression diminished, for the
Emirs of Kairouan had directed their ambitions towards Egypt
and they were no longer interested in Sicily.

However, it may well be said that the coming of the Moslems
inaugurated a Golden Age on the island, together with a pros-
perity that was even greater than in the days of Magna Graecia.
The new rulers were tolerant, for they granted freedom of
worship to the Christians of both sects, and allowed them to keep
their customs, their schools and their speech (which was Greek),
and they could be tried by their own courts which still used the
admirable code of Justinian. As in Spain, new methods of agri-
culture were introduced, and vast tracts of land were irrigated for
the cultivation of oranges, apricots, lemons, cotton and sugar
cane, all of which they had brought with them. Since the olive
and the vine had first been planted by the Greeks fourteen
centuries previously, there was a considerable export trade of
wine, oil and other products, as well as the steel and leather work
of the Arab craftsmen.

Palermo, their capital, delightfully situated in the centre of an
amphitheatre of mountains called the Golden Shell (Conca d’Oro),
was one of the finest cities in Europe. Within the walls, immense
palaces and mosques were erected, whilst on the quayside, the
newly developed maritime republics such as Amalfi, Gaeta and Pisa, built their warehouses. Then as now, the surrounding countryside was green with orchards whose trees were weighed down by golden oranges or pale yellow lemons. So despite religious differences, Christians did not fear to come to this Moslem land where the sciences flourished, for they had chemists, doctors, and astronomers, and the books of mathematics of the Greeks had been translated into Arabic, and were widely studied.

In 1038, Sicily was brusquely reoccupied by Byzantine forces in whose ranks fought Harold Hadrada, the future King of Norway, who was to die fighting King Harold of England at Stamford Bridge just before the battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest.

Like many other Vikings, he had crossed Russia to join the Eastern Emperor’s Varangian Guard which was composed entirely of Norsemen like himself. For the past two centuries, and in the two succeeding centuries, these Scandinavian adventurers went everywhere. They raided all parts of Western Europe and the Mediterranean; they sold their swords as mercenaries or installed themselves as lords of feudal fiefs in many countries; they occupied a province of France which became known as Normandy, and here they acquired the speech and the customs of the French, without however losing their native boldness and energy.

Soon, some of these Normans became restless and looked for fresh worlds to conquer. In Southern Italy, some of their bands intervened in a quarrel between the Lombards and the Greeks, but they robbed both their allies and those they fought against. Near Naples, a certain Rainulf seized the territory of Aversa, and this place became a sort of rallying ground for newcomers from Normandy who hastened across the seas to join in the plunder of an almost helpless land.

Chief among these adventurers were the six d’Hauteville brothers who took their name from a family estate in France. Leading small bands of from fifty to two hundred of their compatriots, they stormed city after city, compelling garrisons of anything up to ten or fifteen times their number to surrender through fear. Everywhere they built castles and strongholds from which they could dominate the people whom they had conquered.

One of the brothers, William Strongarm (Braccio di Ferro) became Count of Apulia (the heel of Italy and the territory above
it) and for this he did homage to the Holy Roman Emperor, and skilfully gained an ally against a possible attack from the Byzantines whom he had ejected. His brother, Robert Guiscard who succeeded him, went still further, for he was invested by the Pope with the title of Duke of Calabria and Apulia, together with the sanction to conquer Sicily with the blessing of his Holiness. Thus the Normans started by getting the support of Rome to annex the Southern lands, and bring their people into the fold and away from the sway of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople.

Soon the whole of Southern Italy was conquered, and Sicily was gradually occupied (1061-1091) by another d'Hauteville, Count Roger I, assisted by Robert Guiscard, whose ambition was boundless, and achievements incredible. As Gibbon wrote: "In less than three years he enjoyed the glory of delivering a Pope (Gregory VII from Henry IV, the Holy Roman Emperor, whom he drove out in 1083) and of compelling the two Emperors of the East and of the West, to fly before his victorious arms." Before his death, this adventurer signed his orders, dux imperator, and in 1081 he crossed the Ionian Sea, invaded Epirus, and defeated the Eastern Emperor in pitched battle. His sons then occupied the whole of Macedonia, but the feat of the Norman fleet, together with the death of Guiscard, put an end to the dream of a Norman on the throne of Byzantium. However the setback at sea was largely due to the intervention of the Venetian Fleet, and but for that the enterprise might well have succeeded.

In Sicily, Count Roger claimed the title of King of Sicily, Apulia and Amalfi, though this rank was only held officially by his second son, Roger II (1106-1154), who succeeded him and was crowned in the Cathedral of Palermo in 1130. He did in fact come into all the Norman territories in Southern Italy when the last of the Guiscard sons had died.

Though the d'Hauteville dynasty was destined to come to an end in 1194, the Norman kings brought with them even greater prosperity and happiness than the Saracens. They continued the policy of complete toleration, giving the Moslems and the Greeks absolute freedom of worship, allowing them to keep their schools, their customs and their language, so that French, Arabic and Greek were spoken in Sicily. On the mainland there were fewer Moslems, so Latin was the speech of the majority, except in
Calabria and Apulia where Greek still survived. Nevertheless, on the island, there were complete communities of Moslems, with bazaars, mosques and separate courts of law, for each racial group kept its own traditional system of jurisprudence.

The Norman kings soon became Easternised, acquiring the arts of Byzantium, the learning and the customs of Islam. These monarchs had harems guarded by eunuchs, contingents of pretty little page boys, and the ladies of the court were veiled and wore oriental costume.

Outside the town of Palermo, an immense park spread up the slopes of the Golden Shell. Oranges, lemons, peach trees and shady groves were planted, and all kinds of wild animals were brought to roam in this area, through which cool streams of clear water flowed between banks of flowers imported from Persia and Arabia. Palaces and villas were built on the edge of artificial lakes or amidst gardens in which the silvery music of fountains could be heard incessantly. Within the walls, there was yet another large artificial lake where noblemen with their wives, their concubines or their pages could row on hot summer evenings to enjoy the coolness and the tinkling strains of the lute.

It was in the reign of Roger II that Palermo became a city of such splendour, for it was then that Arab craftsmen, Byzantine artists and Norman architects combined to produce buildings of great beauty such as the cathedral where the Norman kings are buried. It was erected under the supervision of the Archbishop, an Englishman named Walter of the Mill, or in Italian, Gualtiero Offamilio, but the masterpieces of this period are the gleaming, glowing mosaics of the Palatine Chapel in the Royal Palace, the wonderful mosaics of the Cathedral of Monreale and of Cefalu. In a strange way the architecture of the Normans, the Byzantines and the Arabs often blended together to produce buildings like the wonderful palaces of Ravello and of Taormina. The Normans left churches, palaces and fortresses in many parts of Southern Italy and under their tolerant rule, the sciences and literature flourished. Thus, Greek works on optics which had been transcribed into Arabic were translated into Latin, and so were some of the works of Plato and Aristotle, and this was done without interference from higher authority, since the spreading of knowledge was not yet feared. Indeed one of the early Popes had studied philosophy in the Arab academies of Cordova,
and there were Jewish teachers trained by the Arabs who taught at the celebrated medical school of Salerno.

Unfortunately, not long after the d’Hautevilles came to this Grecian land, they were pursued by a fatality that resembled the remorseless anger of the gods so often portrayed in Greek tragedy.

At first everything seemed to augur well for these Norman kings. The reigns of William I the Bad, and William II the Good, passed without undue disturbance, except for a revolt against the first of these monarchs which was quelled with the severity that earned him his nickname, but this was on the mainland. When William II died without legitimate male issue, his throne was claimed by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa whose son Henry had married Constance, the daughter of the late king. The Sicilian notables however, elected as King, Tancred, an illegitimate grandson of Roger II, but his brief reign was disturbed by dissensions and he died leaving his kingdom open to the ravenous onslaught of the Hohenstaufen. Henry, now the Emperor Henry VI, easily conquered Southern Italy and Sicily, and swept away all possible opposition by carrying off the child William III to Germany, where he died in a mysterious manner, and by imprisoning Tancred’s wife Queen Sybilla.

The new ruler of the South was cordially disliked by his subjects, since he was cruel and showed no respect at all for their traditional privileges. Although he was still young, he died three years after his accession, just as he was mustering forces to attack the Byzantine Empire, and his wife Constance did not survive him long.

Their son Frederick, aged four, had been placed by his mother under the tutelage of Pope Innocent III, so that his education was a source of dispute between the representatives of the Holy See, and the German officials brought to Sicily by his father. To add to the confusion, the child was in contact with the Saracen members of the household and the Greek craftsmen of the court. Fortunately his various tutors were men of some ability, and so the child grew up speaking six languages with the greatest ease: German, Arabic, French, Latin, Italian and Greek, though it would seem that of the six he preferred Greek or Arabic.

Unfortunately for Sicily and the South, this essentially Mediterranean man became Holy Roman Emperor through the
strange circumstance that Otto of Brunswick, the elected successor to Henry VI, lost his throne because he was defeated by the French at the Battle of Bouvines in 1215.

Henceforth, Frederick’s chief preoccupation would be how to dominate the restless German princes, and how to find some means of joining up his possessions of Northern Italy with those of the South. Much of his time was spent in quarrels with the Pope or with one of his sons, and above all in fighting against the Guelf supporters of the Holy See in different parts of Italy.

In a sense, the long reign (1197–1250) of this remarkable man was entirely wasted, save for his contribution to the arts. He built many castles, and under his direction sculptors and architects launched what might have been a classical revival, as we can deduce from the friezes and the triumphal arch that can still be seen at Capua. Then there are the splendid churches and cathedrals of Apulia, a province which is seldom visited by foreigners. Lastly, he founded the University of Naples, and the Library, both of which were of inestimable value to the cause of learning in Southern Italy.

A philosopher with legal training, his Constitutions of Melfi are remembered as one of the most skilful codes of jurisprudence of the Middle Ages. He horrified his contemporaries by acquiring the city of Jerusalem through personal negotiations in Arabic with Saladin. He was all the more suspect in that he kept a private army of Saracen troops for whom he built the city of Lucera in Apulia, complete with mosques, bazaars and all the features of a Moslem city. Though the ladies of his harem accompanied him to the wars on camelback, Frederick was generally suspected of sodomy. One of his closest friends, Michael Scott, was reputed by later generations to have been one of the greatest magicians of all time, and his works on optics and his translations of Arabic books of sciences have survived to the present day.

Besides this, the Emperor was a poet in his own right, and the patron of the great German poet, Walter von der Vogelweide, as well as of a number of Italian men of letters, one of whom is credited with the creation or the revival of the sonnet.

When Frederick died, the Hohenstaufen disappeared from the Italian scene in much the same way as their Norman predecessors, for the fates still pursued the descendants of the d’Hautevilles. After a period of dispute between his legitimate son Conrad
IV and his illegitimate son Manfred, the Kingdom of the South passed into the hands of Conradin, and this time the Crown was seized by Charles of Anjou, brother of St. Louis of France. A year later, the Hohenstaufen child Conradin was executed in Naples after a gallant attempt to regain the throne of his forefathers.

So, in 1268, began the foreign occupation of Sicily which was to last for centuries. When the people of Palermo became infuriated with the French insolence and massacred the garrison in the "Sicilian Vespers", the Angevins were replaced on the island by Aragonese princes, but Charles and his descendants continued to hold the South of Italy, and the two dynasties were constantly at war with each other.

In 1409 the senior branch of the House of Aragon died out, and so Sicily was united to Aragon for nearly a century, and reunited to the South of Italy for sixteen years in 1442. Eventually Sicily became Spanish when Ferdinand of Aragon married Isabella of Castile, and the Kingdom of Spain was created. In this manner Sicily was held on and off by the Spanish until 1748, though Southern Italy did not become a possession of the Spanish Crown until 1504 when it was conquered by the famous Gonsalvo di Cordova.

As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the king of France, Charles VIII, had used his somewhat nebulous relationship to the Angevins as an excuse to claim Southern Italy. In 1495 he occupied the Kingdom of Naples without any difficulty, but was driven out a year later by a population exasperated by the excesses of his troops. His successor Louis XII returned in 1501 after having agreed with King Ferdinand of Spain to divide this unfortunate realm, but the allies soon fell out, the French were quickly and easily expelled and the Spanish remained in possession—from 1504 onwards, both Sicily and Southern Italy were administered by the viceroys of the Habsburgs.

As it is easy to become confused by the number of names involved in these dynastic wars, and by the frequent changes that took place as a result of intrigues for power, let us content ourselves with a general view of the evolution of the Two Sicilies.

The Sicilian Vespers may indeed have been a spontaneous popular rising, but the revolt had been fostered and prepared
by the enigmatic Neapolitan, John of Procida who invited Alfonso of Aragon to become King of Sicily. Nevertheless, this rebellion was a popular movement by people conscious and proud of their national rights, and tired of the oppression of the Germans of the Hohenstaufen, and the French of Charles of Anjou.

Somehow or another, the Sicilians had become welded into one race in the course of a single century. The Greek language had gradually died out, the handful of Normans had merged with the local nobility and had not continued to speak French. Little by little the Moslems had emigrated or had become converted by Catholicism, for the Orthodox church had been abandoned though some of its practices lingered.

Italian had become the official language, introduced by soldiers and civil servants brought from the mainland by the various monarchs, and also by the merchants who came to trade. Nevertheless, this dialect contained (and still contains) a number of words and expressions of Arabic origin, and its form is modified by the Latin patois which the common people continued to speak after the fall of the Roman Empire.

The frequent naval battles between the Aragonese and the Angevins contributed to the ruin of trade, and this was accelerated by high taxation, misrule and neglect. For like their predecessors, the Aragonese also distributed land among their followers, and like them, they kept taxation high.

In Sicily, just as in some other parts of Southern Italy, the land lost much of its fertility through the cutting down of the forests on the mountain slopes, and the devastation of young trees by goats. Gradually the climate changed, the rain washed away the soil on the hillsides, leaving the rocks bare, and later, the earth surface of the central plain also disappeared by erosion. So in certain regions inland, there are extremes of heat and cold, there is a lack of water in the summer and periods of torrential rain in the winter.

Both Sicily and Southern Italy suffered in this manner, but to add to this trouble, trees were cut down not only for their timber but also because it was generally believed that they caused malaria. In one sense the high taxation was of some help in Sicily, for to raise money the kings had to rely on the support of the Parliament, a kind of House of Lords resembling the
English model instituted by the Normans, but it grew increasingly aristocratic in character, and did not in any way represent the poor and oppressed, because there were no elected burgesses since there was no middle class.

In Southern Italy, the Angevins and their Aragonese successors brought splendour to Naples, their capital, and they derived the greater part of their revenue from the fertile agricultural region in its vicinity. In time, the nobles of the Southern and central provinces acquired vast estates, and they spent their wealth in the metropolis, though they attained a high degree of independence. These provinces were mountainous, increasingly unfertile, and had virtually no roads, and hence no trade or commerce.

Apulia, with its vast plains of arable land, its immense stretches of vineyard and olive groves, remained prosperous, and was virtually independent from 1324 to 1558.
In the eleventh century maritime republics were scattered along the shores of the Adriatic and of the Mediterranean. Many of these, like Monaco and Dubrovnik, were based on small peninsulas and easily defensible. Often these cities were of great antiquity, for such sites had been used in the remote past by the Greeks or the Phoenicians to establish trading stations. This was the case of Syracuse, Dubrovnik, and Gaeta. Gaeta, thirty or forty miles to the North of Naples, flourished as a maritime republic in the early Middle Ages, and like Amalfi, had close commercial and racial links with Constantinople, and in both cities, Greek was spoken until the eleventh century.

The influence and wealth of the small city state of Amalfi was
out of all proportion to its size, for it stretched only a few miles along a narrow strip of land hemmed in between the sea and the hills. The inhabitants within the walls of the city numbered only fifty thousand, but “no town was more abundantly provided with gold, silver and the objects of precious luxury”.

The people of Amalfi grew rich by supplying the Western world with the products of the East, for their trade extended as far as India, Africa and Arabia. Their merchants and warehouses in Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and other cities, and their settlements enjoyed special privileges.

Though the Amalfitans owed allegiance to Constantinople, they were governed, like Venice, by a Duke or a Doge, and they preserved the same high standard of learning as the Byzantines, since the Amalfitan Tables provided the first code of law governing conduct at sea, and served as a basis for subsequent codes. Flavio Gioia, a mariner of the city, is credited with having invented the compass. Salerno, seven miles away, was under Lombard rule until the coming of the Normans, but the Greek speaking inhabitants launched a school of medicine where the science of antiquity was amplified by the discoveries of Arab and Jewish doctors.

There remain few records of the Republic of Gaeta which was submerged like Amalfi by the Norman Conquest, but the latter city was also raided by Pisans who wished to take over its trade.

The origins of Pisa are inadequately recorded. Since Pisan ships transported imperial troops to Southern Italy in the ninth century, we can assume that by that date Pisa was already an important city. Obviously her situation near the mouth of the Arno was ideal as a base for the light ships of the period, but on the landward side the broad flat plain offered no kind of protection, and the Saracens did indeed, on two occasions, plunder the suburbs of the city.

The Pisans revenged themselves by trouncing Moslem fleets at Civita Vecchia (1003), and at Reggio in Calabria, whilst they came to the rescue of Pope John XVIII when the Saracens actually plundered and burned down churches within sight of the Leonine Wall, built around the Vatican by Leo IV after the Saracens had sacked and desecrated the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul in 846.
In the eleventh century, raiders from the Saracen colonies in Corsica, Sardinia and the Balearics harassed the merchant ships of Pisa and of Genoa. The two republics worked in concert and drove the Saracens out of Corsica and Sardinia and divided up both islands into fiefs which were distributed to illustrious soldiers of both states.

When the Venetians transported soldiers of the First Crusade to the Holy Land, the Pisans and the Genoese also engaged in this highly profitable trade, but on a far smaller scale. By now, the Pisans had achieved incredible wealth in commerce and by plundering the territories they conquered, in particular the Balearic Islands which they liberated from the Saracen yoke by a joint expedition with the Count of Barcelona (1113). The Pisans brought back two porphyry columns which they gave to the Florentines because they had refrained from attacking Pisa whilst her troops were campaigning abroad. These two columns still stand in front of the cathedral in Florence.

During an all too brief period of prosperity, the Pisans built the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower and the Campo Santo.

The funds for this ambitious plan came from the spoils captured from the Arabs after a naval victory in the Bay of Palermo.

The importance of Pisa in Italian history lies in the fact that she was the second of the maritime republics to carry on trade on a very large scale throughout the Mediterranean and with the East. After eliminating Amalfi, Pisa was then ruined by her great rival Genoa, and in the fourteenth century, Genoa was ousted by Venice as a result of the War of Chioggia.

The Pisans also provided a cultural link with the past by continuing and adapting the artistic traditions of the Lombards and the Byzantines of Italy, so in the Cathedral and Baptistery, we see features that embody the technique of these two different schools. Sculptors and architects of great talent abounded, as well as the scholars whose teaching was canalised with the founding of the University in the thirteenth century. One of these, a monk named Leonardo Fibonacci, translated Arab books of mathematics into Latin and rearranged their numerals which he introduced to Europe. Needless to say, it would be almost impossible to assess the influence of this innovation on the
development of learning and science throughout the world. Since Arab civilisation was at its apogee, the contacts of Pisans with the Moslems through their numerous agencies in Sicily and the Levant could not fail to be beneficial in the intervals of fighting between the two nations.

If the Pisans were for a while predominant at sea, they owed their expansion on land, partly to the toughness of their soldiers and largely to the support of the Emperors. Pisa was of necessity forced to be Ghibelline, partly because her rival, Florence, was Guelf, and partly because the open position of the city made it vulnerable to attack by land. For a while, the Pisan rule extended over the two hundred miles of coast from Portovenere near Spezia to Civita Vecchia.

Now Portovenere was already claimed as a frontier fortress by the Genoese whose interest at sea, in Corsica and in Sardinia, clashed with those of the Pisans. On these two islands, the Pisans were more popular than the Genoese whose rule was very harsh, but when fighting broke out at sea between the two states, neither side could claim a definite victory. Finally in the second battle of Meloria (1284), the Pisan fleet was completely destroyed and the Republic ceased to be a naval power, for nearly all her warships had been present at this encounter. This defeat was partially due to the treachery of the Guelf Count, Ugolino della Gherardesca, who hoped that his party could become predominant in the State. As a punishment he was shut up in a tower with his sons and allowed to die of hunger.

Since Pisa could no longer protect her merchant fleets and her settlements abroad, her trade gradually dwindled down and her colonial empire was annexed by her rivals. The Genoese were able to dominate Corsica and in 1327 Sardinia was occupied by the Aragonese.

On land there was a brief period of renewed power owing to the efficiency of the Pisan crossbowmen under a condottiere named Guido di Montefeltro who defeated the Florentines and occupied Lucca.

This city had been the capital of the Counts of Tuscany in the ninth and tenth centuries, and then had gained virtual autonomy through imperial support. Like the Florentines, the people of Lucca became prosperous through weaving wool and silk but the position of the city on the plain laid it open to attack in
spite of the formidable fortifications. The territory of this state comprised a small area of mountainous country to the North-east and to the North of her walls, and a few miles of coast including the small port of Viareggio.

For a few years in the beginning of the fourteenth century, Lucca prospered under the able administration of the condottiere Castruccio Castracane. After occupying Pisa, he defeated the Florentines at the battle of Altopascia (1325), and occupied the then important city of Pistoia. Created Imperial Vicar and Duke of Lucca, it seemed as if Castruccio would conquer the whole of Tuscany and create a dynasty like the Visconti of Milan. However in 1329, he died of malaria whilst he was advancing on Florence, where the Guelfs were disorganised and the Ghibellines were ready to welcome him. Had he lived, it is conceivable that Lucca would have been the capital of a fourteenth-century Duchy of Tuscany.

For the period of twenty-seven years (1365–1392) Pisa was admirably ruled by Pietro Gambacorti, but he was eventually assassinated by one of his own supporters, Jacopo d’Appiano. Having assumed power, this man sold Pisa to the Visconti of Milan, and they, in their turn, sold the city to Florence in 1406. As the Milanese were hard pressed by the Venetians, Pisa was able to regain her independence in time to put up a fierce resistance to the Florentine forces, but the Pisans were obliged to surrender through lack of food. Though the besiegers distributed ample supplies to the starving population, Pisa never recovered from this blow.

As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the Pisans enjoyed fifteen years of liberty when Charles VIII of France drove out the Florentines in 1494. When the French withdrew from Italy in 1509, the Florentines returned, and this was the end of the Pisan Republic.

The city had lost her prosperity for good for, after the battle of Meloria, the Genoese had blocked up the mouth of the Arno with slabs of granite to make navigation impossible. Though the Florentines did their best to conciliate the Pisans, many of the most distinguished citizens emigrated to Lucca, to Sicily, to the South of France or enlisted in the French armies. Of her former glories only her splendid monuments and her ancient university have survived. Even today, Pisa is enveloped in an
atmosphere of melancholy, whilst Lucca, which was destined to remain free for another three hundred years, looks relatively gay and prosperous.

The survival of Lucca was due to several different factors: in the first place, the protection of the Holy Roman Emperors; secondly, the city had no strategic importance since it is away from any main line of communication; thirdly, the land in the immediate vicinity of Lucca is fertile and productive. In the present day, Lucca olive oil is sold all over the world, but the hinterland of mountains is of no financial value whatsoever.

Genoa, like Venice, was from the outset destined to be a maritime state because of her situation at the junction of two important trade routes: the Via Aurelia, the road that follows the West coast of Italy to Nice and to Marseilles, and the road linking up the Mediterranean with the rich merchant cities of Burgundy and Champagne via the St. Bernard Pass. In theory and in practice, Genoa was the nearest seaport to this part of Europe and to the ports of the Levant.

The fighting spirit and seamanship of the Genoese was developed first of all in their wars against the Saracens. From driving the Moslems out of Corsica and Sardinia in conjunction with the Pisans, they then began to attack the Arab bases in Spain, capturing and holding Almeria and Tortosa, and even seizing a number of places in North Africa. The real opportunity of expansion came with the Crusades, when the Venetians, the Pisans and the Genoese grew wealthy by transporting Crusaders to the Holy Land or to Asia Minor. On these shores, the Genoese established trading stations, frequently building also very solid fortresses for their protection.

Their rivals for these highly profitable pursuits, the Venetians, had the initial advantage of having been a tributary of Byzantium. The trading posts, colonies of the “Serene Republic”, comprised not only a strip of territory along the coast of Dalmatia, the Ionian Islands, and a number of islands in the Aegean, but several towns in the Peloponnesus. In the Eastern Empire itself, the Venetians actually owned Gallipoli on the Northern shore of the Straits of the Dardanelles, and they had trading stations and settlements in Constantinople, Adrianople, Trebizond on the South-eastern shores of the Black Sea, Caffa in the Crimea, and Tana in the Northern extremity of the Sea of Azov. In the Levant,
they had warehouses, settlements and special commercial facilities in Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, Damascus and Cairo.

Since the Genoese enjoyed similar rights in many of these places, a clash between the two maritime republics was inevitable. After the defeat of the Pisans at Meloria, the Genoese caught up with the Venetians commercially and financially, whilst their fleets were at times even more powerful.¹

In North Africa the Genoese had "consulates" in Tripoli, Tunis and Ceuta (now part of North-eastern Morocco), for each of these places was a terminal to a caravan route across Africa.

When the relations between Venice and the Greeks grew embittered, the Genoese became the natural allies of the Greek Emperors. So, after the fall of the short-lived Latin Empire, the Genoese were actually allowed to build ramparts round their settlements in the suburb of Galata, and they held the monopoly of supplying Constantinople with fish, and with corn from the plains of Southern Russia, bringing also caviar from the mouths of the Black Sea rivers. At Caffa, they ousted their rivals, the Venetians and the Pisans, growing rich on the jewels and spices brought on camel-back to this port, and to Trebizond from India. In Alexandria their ships took on the cargoes carried over the Isthmus of Suez from the Red Sea port by her fleets which sailed to India, Persia and the coasts of Arabia and East Africa.

The arrogance of the Genoese became so great that finally the Greeks sought the help of the Venetians. In the naval engagements fought in different parts of the Mediterranean, the Genoese were for the most part victorious whilst their admiral (inevitably a Doria) defeated the Venetian, Pisani, in a battle under the walls of Constantinople itself (1352). The Emperor was forced to give way, and the Venetians and their allies, the Catalans, were compelled to evacuate their settlements.

For a while it seemed as if Byzantium was to become a province of Genoa, but the loss of the greater part of the Genoese fleet in the Chioggia War (1380) against Venice, put an end to her imperialist ambitions.² The long hundred and thirty years of war was settled by the triumph of the Venetians. In order to survive, and to put an end to their factions, the Genoese sought

1 See Chapter 8.
2 See Chapter 8.
the protection, first of all, of the French and then, later on, of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. The weakness of the Republic lay more in the constant warfare and rivalry between party factions than in the incapacity of her naval forces, for in 1420 and in 1435, the Genoese fleet defeated the Aragonese in two pitched battles. However, in that year, their settlements near Constantinople were captured by the Turks, at the same time as the Greek capital itself. In 1475, the Ottoman armies overran the Crimea and Caffa surrendered. Astonishingly enough, the Genoese commercial interests did not suffer as much as might have been expected, for trade continued in spite of defeats, civil disturbances, and even the occupation of the city by foreign powers.

In 1407, a number of the creditors of the State, associated themselves together and claimed successfully that their debts should be liquidated by the assignment of the revenues of certain territories or of certain taxes. In due time, this organisation, the Bank of St. George, became as powerful as the State itself, owning islands, colonies, trading-stations and ships, so that it was able to act quite independently of the Republic.

Admirable as it was in many ways, the Bank of St. George administered its colonies with great harshness, displaying the virtues and defects of the Genoese character; for if the Genoese are honest, reliable and truthful, in the days of their great prosperity, they were inclined to arrogance and to greed. Certainly the Genoese were hated as oppressors in Sardinia and in Corsica, for they exploited their subjects ruthlessly and they put down insurrections mercilessly and, unlike the Pisans who built splendid churches everywhere, they left no material traces of their occupation.

The city of Genoa itself was divided by the rivalries between the Fieschis and the Grimaldis on the one hand, and the Dorias and the Spinolas on the other. The former were Guelf in their sympathies, the latter Ghibelline. When the Dorias and the Spinolas were expelled, they established themselves in one of the coastal cities and raided Genoese merchant ships. When the Guelfs were unpopular, one of the Grimaldis seized the frontier fortress of Monaco which his descendants have held ever since. In 1339, a noble named Simone Boccanera was acclaimed to be the supreme ruler of the Republic instead of the two captains (or
consuls) who had until then been elected as administrators. In spite of many vicissitudes, as for instance when the State fell under the sway of France, Milan or the Emperor, the new system of administration, based more or less on the model of Venice, continued and did not collapse until Genoa was annexed by Napoleon during the Wars of the Revolution.
THE SERENE REPUBLIC
Venice from her Founding to her Zenith (Fifth to Fifteenth Centuries)

SUMMARY

5th, 6th and 7th centuries
Refugees from the Barbarian invasions take refuge on the islands of the Lagoon.

687
Election of a Doge on the Rialto (Venice).

810
Venice recognised as a Byzantine territory.

1063
The Church of St. Mark built. The Venetians begin to transport Crusaders and to establish trading posts in the Middle East.

1204
Doge Dandolo leads the Fourth Crusade. A number of Greek islands, parts of Thessaly, and the whole of Peloponnesus annexed.

1253–99
First War with Genoa.

1353–55
Second War with Genoa.

1378–81
Third War with Genoa—the Genoese are completely defeated and their naval power ceases to be a threat to Venice.

15th century
Venetians begin to expand on the mainland of Italy. Three wars fought against the Turks, causing relinquishment of several trading posts in the Middle East.

1489
Cyprus acquired.

It would be difficult to find a site less adapted for the development of a great city than the scattered sandbanks and mudbanks on which Venice now stands. The subsoil is of mud on which buildings could only be erected after driving in countless wooden piles. There is no drinking water, no land on which to grow fruit and corn, and on which to rear cattle. The city is, in fact, constructed on a group of 117 small islands, real or created, and
is two and a half miles from the mainland, in a lagoon, nearly thirty miles long, and about ten miles across at its broadest point. This stretch of water is cut off from the Adriatic by a number of long, narrow sandspits known as lidi (plural of lido), separated from each other by narrow channels or porti through which flows and ebbs a shallow tide. These porti are easy to defend, but the lagoon is the real protection of the city, for it is too shallow to allow for the movement of ships save by winding channels, the courses of which were a jealously guarded secret.

In these circumstances, Venice was practically impregnable until the invention of long-range artillery.

The first real migrations from the mainland were made to escape from the depredations of the Huns in the fifth century, and were continued to avoid the Lombards and their insistence on the Arian heresy. These refugees settled on various islands including Malomocco (one of the lidi), Chioggia (at the South-eastern extremity of the lagoon), Torcello, Murano, as well as Grado, Jesolo, Ceorle, and Aquileia.

In 697, they formed a naval confederation under an elected Dux, or Doge, a title applied by the Byzantines to their regional governors, for Venice remained connected with the Empire of the East, whilst the peoples of the mainland were subjected to the Lombards.

From the earliest times the islanders engaged in trade, transporting oil, wine and corn from Istria to Ravenna and other towns on the Adriatic coast. They also caught and sold fish, but their staple industry was the extraction and export of seawater salt, an important source of revenue for many centuries.

In 810, the outlying settlements of the lagoon were attacked by Pepin, son of Charlemagne, who wished to establish a base to transport troops and supplies to Dalmatia which he had recently annexed.

To find a safe refuge, the Venetians withdrew from Malomocco, their chief settlement, and from other exposed places to the Rialto (Rivoalto—high bank) in the centre of the lagoon (811), and in the heart of the present city. Though the Franks did succeed in occupying several of the lidi, their advance across the water on rafts and other craft was stopped by the determined resistance of the besieged in their small boats. Finally, threatened
by a Greek fleet on the open sea, Pepin had to withdraw and allow the Venetians to remain subjects of Byzantium.

After this victory, the Venetians began to build and fortify the town, constructing houses, churches, monasteries and bridges, and clearing out channels for the movements of boats and ships.

Situated at the North-western extremity of the Adriatic, linked with the Greek Empire commercially and administratively, it seems inevitable that Venice should have flourished. Inland there were the only broad and navigable rivers of Italy, whilst the Lombard Plain offered no obstacle to wheeled traffic on the old Roman roads. To the North, the Brenner Pass gave relatively easy access to the Tyrol and South Germany, and it was a route already used for many centuries.

Obviously the Venetian ships were plying to the most distant ports of the Mediterranean as early as the ninth century, for in 829 some sailors bought the body of St. Mark in Alexandria and brought it back to their native city. The lovely church of St. Mark was built as a shrine for this relic, and the Lion of St. Mark became the emblem of the Republic. The present structure of the Cathedral, still Byzantine in design and decoration, dates from the twelfth century.

Though Italian in speech and race, the Venetians were bound to be cosmopolitan in outlook, since their city was the natural meeting place of many nations: the Germans, the Hungarians, the Slavs and the Greeks first of all; later on the Saracens, and after them the Turks. To the natives of these countries, we must add the slaves of many lands purchased in North Africa and the Levant. Nubians, Ethiopians, coal black negroes, fair-haired Circassians from the Caucasus, Persians and wiry Slavs from the Crimea were put up for auction in the Campi (squares).

In the last years of the tenth century, Doge Pietro Orseolo II sent the Venetian fleet to the assistance of the Byzantines who were in the midst of a life and death struggle against the Saracens. He also cleared the Adriatic of Slav pirates and destroyed their bases. To dispose of this nuisance, permanent Venetian garrisons were established on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, and the Emperor of the East conferred upon the Doge the title of Duke of Dalmatia in return for this invaluable help.

In the eleventh century, the Rialto began to outstrip the other cities of the lagoon, for until then, trade with places like Torcello
had been very brisk, and the harbour of this now almost deserted island was always full of ships from Syria, Greece and the other maritime republics of the Adriatic such as Dubrovnik, Budva and Cattaro.

The merchants and shipowners of Venice grew rich quickly. To their trading stations in the Byzantine Empire, the Levant and the Black Sea they sent wool, cloth, raw materials and weapons. Their ships came back with valuable cargoes of spices, pepper, saffron, silks from India, indigo from Persia, the perfumes of Arabia, attar of roses from Thrace, rare porcelains, and richly-wrought metal objects from Damascus and Mosul.

Now the Genoese and the Pisans were thriving on trade of this kind, but the Venetians obtained in 1082 from the Emperor Alexis Comnenus the right of free transit and exemption of customs duty throughout the Byzantine Empire, save only for the ports of the Black Sea.

Three years later, Doge Vitale Falier rescued Byzantines hard-pressed by the Normans, by defeating an army led by Robert Guiscard on the mainland of Greece opposite Corfu. The Emperor rewarded this feat of arms by extending the trading privileges already granted, and by allowing the Venetians to have warehouses in many ports and by giving them the monopoly of trading in certain towns.

The Venetians certainly worked hard, but they grew very wealthy and lived luxuriously. The Doge’s Palace, planned in the eleventh century, and built in the twelfth, was a replica of a Byzantine mansion. Other palaces were erected in the Grand Canal, with windows of glass. The Venetians slept in real beds and used table forks four centuries before our ancestors thought of these refinements. They lived in spacious airy rooms hung with Eastern tapestries, whilst the peoples of the West shivered in stone cells strewn with dirty rushes.

Socially, the Republic was unlike any other state in Italy for, in theory at any rate, the people and the clergy were alike in the eyes of the law, and the restrictions of Feudalism were absent. Inequalities of rank developed when great fortunes were made, and an aristocracy was formed among the officials sent out to govern conquests overseas. Titles of nobility were granted to the heroes of the Chioggia war in 1389.

With the launching of the First Crusade, the real might of
Venice was displayed to the world for the first time. The Republic mobilised over two hundred ships for the transport (against payment) of warriors to the Holy Land, and this was done without undue strain on her resources.

A few years later, Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, appealed to the Venetians for help, in return for which they were granted special privileges in Palestine, such as a quarter of the land in captured cities, exemption from customs and taxes, the right to use their own weights and measures, and the right to be judged by their own magistrates according to their own laws.

The wave of prosperity that followed the Crusades blinded the eyes of the Venetian leaders to the perilous course they were following. The Eastern Emperors viewed the Crusades with mistrust for they considered that the Kingdom of Jerusalem had been carved out of their territory. Moreover the Crusaders passing through the Empire, plundered, robbed and slaughtered the population. Many of the special privileges granted to the Venetians were withdrawn and given instead to the Genoese. The Pisans, who were also rivals, fought one or two pitched battles with the fleets of the Republic, but were defeated. In the long run, the loss of Byzantine support and trade was to prove very costly, and the hostility between the Serene Republic and the Eastern Empire helped to precipitate the decline of Byzantium.

In the Adriatic, the Venetian lines of communication were threatened by the Hungarians and the Slavs who took possession of many of their strongholds on the Dalmatian coast and began to prey on the shipping of the Republic.

The break with Byzantium became final in 1171 when many of the Venetians living in Constantinople were arrested and their goods confiscated. There was worse to follow. In 1182 many of the 80,000 Italians in the Byzantine capital were massacred and real reconciliation became impossible.

The unsuccessful war that the Venetians waged against the Byzantines had two important consequences: the first was that to defray the expenses of the campaigns a public loan was raised that was to be the beginning of an early form of banking; the second, was that the leading citizens decided that henceforth the Doges were to be elected by a Council instead of being chosen by public acclamation in St. Mark’s Square.

Humbled, but not routed, the Venetians were not long in
finding means of revenge. When the Fourth Crusade was launched by Pope Innocent III as a means of uniting the nations of Europe, the 93-year-old Doge Dandolo offered to transport the armies of the French Barons to wherever their enterprise led them in return for a quarter of the territories conquered and 85,000 marks of silver. When the money was not forthcoming, the Venetians stipulated that the Crusaders should help to capture the Dalmatian town of Zara which was being used as a base by the Slavs and Pisans to attack their shipping. Having stormed and plundered this Christian city with great slaughter, the Crusaders advanced on Constantinople in order to restore Isaac II (Angelus) to the Imperial throne. This monarch had promised to help them with an army and to unite the two branches of the Catholic Church (the Greek and the Roman).

When it was discovered that he could not keep his undertakings, the Crusaders stormed and sacked Constantinople and installed a "Latin Empire" (1204) with Baldwin of Flanders as Emperor, and Morosini, a scion of a patrician Venetian family, as patriarch. Dandolo, who had led the assault from the sea, became "Doge of Venice and Dalmatia, Supreme Lord of a Quarter and a Half of the Empire of Romania".

The Venetians now dominated the Eastern shore of the Adriatic, the Ionian Islands, a number of strategically important islands in the Aegean, Crete, key fortresses in the Peloponnesus, Thrace and the Bosphorus, as well as Gallipoli, a city that commanded the passage of the Dardanelles. The plunder exceeded the greediest expectations of the Crusaders, whilst the share of the Venetians included the four bronze horses from the Hippodrome of Constantinople that now stand in front of the Church of St. Mark in Venice.

The Serene Republic had now become a world power, capable of battling with the Empires of the East or West, or with the Kingdom of France.

Unfortunately for the Venetians, the Latin Empire lasted only fifty-seven years. In 1261, the Greek Emperor, Michael Paleologus left Nicaea, the temporary capital of the Byzantines, captured Constantinople and restored the Greek Empire with the help of the Genoese who had lost all their privileges during the Venetian supremacy.

The Venetians therefore were now deprived of money and
their commercial privileges, but not of their colonies in the Peloponnesus and the Aegean. Inevitably, there were frequent clashes between the Genoese and the Venetians, but though the latter lost many battles, they did not lose any of the four wars waged in the course of a century and a quarter (1261–70, 1294–99, 1351–55, and 1377–81). Meanwhile, the Turks continued to advance towards Christendom, whilst the Byzantines, who frequently supported the Genoese, grew steadily weaker.

The Venetians, who had hoped to head a confederation of Christian states and to bring about a union of the two principal branches of the Christian Church, found themselves prevented from realising their ambitions by the toughness of the Genoese.

The battle of Curzola (or Korčula in Serbo-Croatian) was a resounding defeat for the Venetian fleet but had no real influence on the course of the Second War. Among the prisoners taken to Genoa was Marco Polo, a native of Curzola. During his captivity he wrote the account of his astonishing experiences at the Court of Genghis Khan and in China. His report of the wealth and luxury of these distant lands, as well as the riches he brought back, stimulated many of his fellow countrymen to emulate his example.

At times the Venetians were hard pressed, but the arrogance of the Genoese lost them the support of the Byzantines, and provoked also the enmity of the Aragonese.

On the other hand, the Venetians had to combat the Hungarians who threatened their possessions in Dalmatia, but a war of sixteen months ended in the complete triumph of the “Serene Republic” which regained the mastery of the Eastern shores of the Adriatic later on.

In the midst of all this turmoil, a plot by the Doge Marino Falier to become Prince of Venice was foiled by the Council of Ten, the body with supreme powers to watch over the security of the State.

The real climax came in 1379, when the Genoese fleet under Luciano Doria defeated the Venetians off Pola and was able to sail right up to Venice, as the bulk of the Venetian ships under Zeno were in the Eastern Mediterranean. On land, the Hungarians and the Paduans, led by the Prince of Padua, advanced on Chioggia.

Since the porti of the Lido were blocked, the Genoese sailed southward and besieged and eventually captured Chioggia where
they were blockaded in their turn when Zeno arrived providentially on 1st January, five months after the coming of the enemy fleet. In June (1380) the Genoese were forced to surrender.

This defeat put an end to Genoese expansion, for they had lost the greater part of their fleet, and were faced with the threat of absorption by the Viscontis of Milan who wished to dominate the whole of Italy. Though the menace of Genoa had greatly diminished, the Venetians were still preoccupied with problems of defence. Like most trading nations, their commerce had led them to become Imperialists and, like the British four centuries later, they found themselves involved in continental wars in order to protect their homeland.

The Turks, who had been threatening Constantinople and the Venetian possessions in the East, had had to cease their aggression in order to combat the attacks of Tamerlane (Timur), the great Mongol who set out from his capital, Samarkand, to conquer the world. His successors continued to exert pressure on the Turks until the middle of the fifteenth century.

The Venetians did, however, have to give up Salonica in their first real war against the Turks.

In Italy, Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan pursued a policy of expansion and for a while it seemed as if he would become supreme ruler and king of the North. Married to a daughter of the King of France, one of his daughters was married to a son of Edward III of England, and another to the Duke of Orleans, grandfather of Louis XII of France, who was to lay claim to the Duchy of Milan at his accession in 1498. Held in check for a while by Hawkwood who was in the service of Florence, Galeazzo died just as he was about to conquer the Tuscan city (1402). In 1405, the Venetians captured Padua and liquidated Francesco da Carrara and his two sons. They also annexed Verona and Vicenza, which the Viscontis had taken from their ruling Prince, Guglielmo della Scala. A few years later they took possession of Feltre, Belluno and Friuli to the east.

Despite the warnings of Doge Mocenigo, the Venetians persisted in their policy of expansion on the mainland of Italy profiting more especially by the break-up of conquests of Galeazzo Visconti. Thanks to the anarchy in Hungary, they were able to buy back the cities of Dalmatia lost in the previous century.
Strengthened by her new acquisitions, whose inhabitants were delighted to enjoy freedom as subjects of the Republic, the Venetians attacked the Visconti once more, adding Brescia and Bergamo to their territory. In a second war, they also acquired the city of Ravenna whose lord, Obizzo da Polenta, had made a secret treaty with Milan.

In 1482, the expansion of Venice came to an end when Rovigo was ceded to her after a war with Ferrara.

The strange feature of these wars on land was the absence of casualties. In one or two pitched battles no one was killed at all, presumably because the Condottieri took great care not to lose any of their private armies. Men such as Colleoni and Gattamelata changed sides with the greatest cynicism even though they were immortalised by the Venetians in splendid equestrian statues.

In spite of these triumphs the future looked black for Venice. In 1453, the Turks captured Constantinople and so all their overseas possessions were threatened. Inevitably war broke out, and though it lasted for thirteen years, the Venetians were forced to surrender Lemnos, Negropont and their strongholds on the coast of Albania. By way of compensation, they acquired Cyprus in 1480 from Catherine Cornaro, the Venetian widow of the last King, James of Lusignan. They also had to pay an annual tribute to the Turks, but they kept the privilege of trading in the Black Sea, and retained many of the commercial favours that they had had under the Byzantines.

In 1493, the Genoese Jew, Christopher Columbus, returned to Spain, announcing that he had discovered an outlying island of India. The highly efficient Venetian Secret Service bought from Columbus a copy of the confidential report about his discoveries, and they made every kind of attempt to stop the use of the new trade routes, for they fully realised the threat to their prosperity.

To the uncritical observer, the Adriatic Republic seemed to be still in the ascendant, but the wars on land and sea had been ruinously expensive. They had devastated the cities and the countryside. Then the expansion of the Venetians in Italy had aroused jealousy on every side. The territories of the Republic had now three and a half million inhabitants, as many as in the whole of England, and they were more prosperous despite the bankruptcy of the state. Every year, separate fleets still sailed to
the Black Sea, to Greece, to Alexandria, to Crete and to other regions, and came back laden with valuable goods. Despite wars and differences of race and religion, the Turks had their warehouse on the Grand Canal, and the brilliantly dressed merchants of eastern lands paraded in the Piazza San Marco. The sun of Venice was setting, but the sunset was not lacking in colour or radiance.
THE FLORENTINE GENIUS
The History of Tuscany and Florence to the Death of Cosimo the Great (1464)

SUMMARY

B.C.
c. 1000 Arrival of the Etruscans (see Chapter 1).
A.D.
6th century Tuscia (Tuscany) created into a Duchy by the Lombards.
11th century Florence begins to develop into an independent commune.
1177–80 War with the nobles; some of their strongholds destroyed.
13th century Rivalry between Guelfs and Ghibellines, the Guelfs generally dominating.
1293 The Ordinances of Justice. Dante exiled from Florence.
1342 Brief rule of the Duke of Athens.
1378 Revolt of the Ciompi (wooden clogs) with encouragement from the Medici—revolt soon suppressed.
1434–64 Domination of Cosimo de Medici (Pater Patriae).

Except for the Athens of the Ancients, no single city has contributed so much to the painting, the sculpture, the architecture, and the thought of the Western world as the Florence of the Renaissance. Indeed, the Florentines not only produced some of the greatest artists and architects ever known, but they helped to perpetuate the inheritance of Greece and of Byzantium.

For three hundred years, that is to say from 1260 when Cimabue reached maturity, to 1564 when Michelangelo died, the Florentines were supreme in all the arts; and the artists of this age are still supreme, and so, on a slightly lower plane, are the architects such as Arnolfo di Cambio who built the Cathedral, and Brunelleschi who completed it with an immense dome. Though he
achieved immortality as a painter and as a sculptor, Giotto also
designed the tower which brought him such great fame.

The genius of the Florentines was combined with great versa-
tility. Michelangelo could not only paint the frescoes of the
Sistine Chapel, plan the great Church of St. Peter's in Rome, and
carve the wonderful Medici tombs in the Chapel of San Lorenzo
in Florence, but he designed and supervised the building of the
walls that surround the city. Leonardo da Vinci painted The Last
Supper and The Virgin of the Rocks, but he was also a skilled
engineer and sculptor and the aeroplanes that he invented would
have flown if equipped with an internal combustion engine of
the present day.

Since Dante, Petrarch and Machiavelli also belong to this period,
not to speak of Boccaccio, we cannot cease to ask ourselves how
so much genius, achievement and creativeness could come from
a city which never numbered more than a hundred thousand
inhabitants during the three hundred years of its greatness and
splendour.

As we have already noted, the relative freedom enjoyed by
the citizens of the communes was favourable to self-expression
in all branches of the arts; in the Middle Ages it was the town
dweller rather than the aristocrat who found time for learning
and for culture. In the twelfth century, Pisa surpassed all other
cities of Italy in this domain. In the thirteenth century, the painters,
sculptors and architects of Siena were predominant, but, from
the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Florentines were
supreme.

Even if we allow for the natural genius of the Florentines,
there are other factors to explain this phenomenon. The decline
of Pisa began with the life and death struggle with Genoa,
culminating with the defeat of Meloria (1284). In the fourteenth
century, Siena was stricken first of all by famine and then by the
Black Death during which more than two-thirds of her citizens
perished. There were great painters and architects in Siena after
these two events, but the astonishing genius of the Sienese
Primitives had vanished by the second half of the century.

The Florentines succeeded the Sienese, because Florence was
the city of intelligence, and of trained intelligence, for when
there were no more than one hundred thousand inhabitants,
twelve thousand children were attending elementary schools and
high schools, and all craftsmen had to do the most exacting training and reach a very high standard of achievement before they could practise their trade. The people of Florence had the intense love of beauty which is essential to the highest expression of the arts.

Without Florence, Italy would have played a far smaller part in the history of Europe, and it is in Italy that the Renaissance began.

Now the Renaissance was far more than a revival of the forgotten arts and letters of the Ancients; it was a movement towards the liberation of the mind and of the spirit, and towards a scientific approach to all studies. In Florence, Dante not only gave Italy a literary language and a modern tongue, but he gave expression to thoughts and ideas that were free from the trammels and prejudices of medievalism. Petrarch turned men's minds to the ideals and culture of the Ancients. Boccaccio gave full vent to his belief in the joy of life—did he not write the Decameron whilst the plague was raging in his native city? Lastly Machiavelli was perhaps the first European to take an analytical view of history and of the lessons to be learnt from the past. What we cannot determine is whether he was himself a Machiavellian in the accepted meaning of the word, whether he did not write The Prince as a satire on the errors of the tyrants instead of as a paean in praise of Cesare Borgia—after all he had been put on the rack for expressing his ideas too freely, and he had served the Republic of Florence with great loyalty.

The fact that Florence outstripped her neighbours and rivals was due partly to accident, partly to the skilled diplomacy of her political chiefs, and mainly to the wealth accumulated by trade, industry and banking. Then, beside the profits acquired in commerce, the Florentines, like the French, could survive the most disastrous economic crises because of the fertility and productiveness of the Valley of the Arno which yielded not only staple food, wine and oil, but also silk, wool, and many other raw materials required for their particular industries.

In this respect, Florence was even more favoured than the neighbouring city states of Siena, Arezzo, Pistoia, Pisa, and even perhaps than Lucca. To the North, the great wall of the Apennines afforded protection from the bleak cold of the Northern plain, and also from surprise attacks by large armies. Since the
Arno is unnavigable, and the sea is over sixty miles away, one cannot help admiring the ingenuity and organising skill of a people who carried on a profitable export trade by packhorse. The fact remains that they did so, but they dealt in costly goods, and if the volume of merchandise was relatively small, payments were high.

Though the inhabitants of Tuscany are largely of Etruscan stock, the Florentines claimed that they were descended from Romans who settled near the river when the *Via Flaminia* was constructed in the time of the Republic.

Tuscany was a province of the Roman Empire, and then a Duchy under the Lombards, and eventually, a fief of Charlemagne who bestowed it on one of his officers.

In 1115, the daughter of the last Count, Countess Matilda, died and bequeathed her domains to the Holy See, but the validity of this bequest was disputed by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II. As a result of this dissension, the Communes achieved some degree of independence, since both parties were prepared to make concessions to them in order to gain their support. Florence sided with the Papacy and remained traditionally Guelph, whilst her neighbours Siena, Pisa, and Pistoia were Ghibelline. The nobles in the countryside were for the most part of German descent, and were referred to by the townsfolk as the Teutons, and they, of course, were also Ghibellines.

Under Countess Matilda, the people of Florence had been reasonably free, for as a supporter of the Papacy, she had protected them from the nobles and from the Emperor, and she had given leading citizens the authority to carry on administrative duties during her frequent absences. Later on, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa appointed a *podesta* to exercise the imperial authority over the city, but eventually this office was held by a nominee of the Commune.

By the twelfth century, the Florentines had annexed the nearby city of Fiesole which had been founded by the Etruscans, and is perched a thousand feet up above the valley of the Arno. The next step was to dominate the nobles in the vicinity of Florence and to destroy their castles; nevertheless some of these feudal lords left their estates and began to participate in the administration of the city by gaining the support of some of the lesser guilds.
However the strength of Florence lay in the fact that, like the other communes, it was free from the restraints and limitations of feudalism, and that the leadership of the administration was in the hands of the burgesses, and the burgesses had to be members of a guild or "art". Below them came the labourers and the unskilled workers who had no voice at all in the councils, but even so, the seven major "arts" had far more influence than the fourteen minor "arts", for the Gonfaloniere could not be chosen from among the lesser guilds, and their representatives were strictly limited in number.

In 1282, a law was passed by which the nobles could have no part at all in the administration unless they joined a guild. Ten years later, the Ordinances excluded from the guilds anyone who did not actively practise his profession, and this, in effect, precluded the nobles from all share in the government.

Unfortunately there were other causes of discord to disturb the harmony of life, for in Florence, as in every other Commune in Italy, the struggle between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines continued without ceasing and with ever-increasing bitterness. City fought against city, and in the case of Florence, the Ghibellines, being the weaker party, called in outsiders to help them to overcome their rivals. Thus, Frederick of Antioch, the illegitimate son of Frederick II, used his power as "Imperial Vicar" to drive the Guelfs out of Florence. The Ghibellines and the Imperialist troops wreaked vengeance on their rivals by demolishing the towers which they used as strongholds and refuges within the city, but their excesses were so great that they were soon ejected by the Florentines.

The year 1254 was one of triumph for the Guelfs of Florence, for they not only defeated the Ghibelline cities of Tuscany, but were able to force the port of Pisa to give free passage to the goods that they exported, though this sanction did not last.

Six years later the Florentines waged war on the Sienese because they were harbouring Ghibelline exiles. The Sienese moreover had the support of Manfred, the illegitimate son of Frederick II, who had made himself King of Naples, and aspired to become ruler of the whole of Italy. At the battle of Montaperti, the Florentines were routed and their carrochio, the symbol of their military power, was captured after desperate fighting.

Many of the Guelfs went into exile, and for a while, the
Ghibelline leaders thought of razing Florence to the ground. This destruction was averted because of the pleading of the Florentine Ghibelline, Farinata degli Uberti. For four years the city was ruled by the Imperial Podesta, Count Guido Novello of Poppi, and then, by a sudden twist of fate, the Guelfs returned.

Fearing to have German rulers to the South as well as to the North of Rome, the French Pope Clement IV invited Charles of Anjou to take over the kingdom of Naples. At the battle of Benevento, the Southern Ghibellines were routed, and their leader King Manfred was killed.

This victory marked the permanent return of the Guelfs, and the exile of the Ghibelline leaders whose property was sequestered. From now on the struggle within the city was destined to be first of all between the Bianchi (the Whites) and the Neri (the Blacks), the former being led by the rich merchants, and the latter by the impoverished nobility within the city, but in both parties there were Guelfs and Ghibellines. Thus when the Blacks came to power with the support of Pope Boniface VIII, the poet Dante was exiled, not so much because he was a Ghibelline as because he was a White (1302).

Now the fourteenth century could be considered as belonging to the first phase of the Renaissance, in Italy at any rate. In The Divine Comedy, Dante himself gives the year 1300 as the date of his descent into Purgatory with the poet Virgil. In the same year Giotto celebrated his twenty-fourth birthday, and the cathedral and the churches of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce were being built in Florence, whilst the cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto were in course of erection. In 1299, Arnolfo di Cambio, the architect of all these churches except Santa Maria Novella, had laid the foundation of the Palazzo Signoria, the wonderful Gothic palace of the city administration. Throughout the century, the building of churches and palaces continued, and the painters of Giotto's school executed religious pictures and frescoes, for, in spite of certain setbacks, the people of Florence grew steadily richer.

In the early years of the century, the fighting between the Neri and the Bianchi threatened the security of the city. In 1313, Henry of Luxemburg, the Holy Roman Emperor, died just as he was about to besiege Florence, but for the next two hundred years the Communes of Italy were to be free most of the time from the menace of raids by the German Imperialists. Since the
sixty-eight-year exile of the Popes to Avignon had begun in 1309, the Florentines were able to think of expanding their territory, after the timely death of the victorious Castruccio Castracane, ruler of Lucca, just as he was about to assail their city (1329).

Little by little, the Florentines stormed and annexed neighbouring cities, so that by 1375 they held San Gimignano, the textile manufacturing town of Prato, Pistoia, Volterra, and several other smaller places, whilst Pisa was to be conquered thirty years later.

The 1330s were a period of bad harvests, destructive floods and famine. The culminating point of the crisis was reached when the Florentines were defeated by the Republic of Lucca; there was rioting in the city, and the different parties could not agree about the policy to be followed. In despair, the City Fathers called in a Frenchman, Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, to restore order in the city (1342). Within a few weeks, he had begun to exert his power tyrannically and his French followers annoyed the ever critical Florentines by their colourful dress, and their over-elegant manners. In July 1343, he and his men were expelled by the infuriated populace. Two months later, the Medici led a rising of the Popolo Minuto against the burgesses, and palaces, mansions and towers, were plundered, burned down or demolished. In the end, the members of the minor “arts” (guilds) were admitted to a larger share of the government. Then, as previously, the nobles could usually count on the support of the Popolo Minuto and of the lesser guilds, since they feared the domination of the merchants even more than the arrogance of the aristocrats. Indeed, the eventual struggle for power was to be between the Popolo Grasso (the rich) and the Popolo Minuto, but, as we shall see, this rivalry was to disappear when the Medici became undisputed rulers of Florence.

Apart from a number of inconclusive wars, the principal events during the rest of the century were: the epidemic known as the Black Death in 1348, in course of which three-fifths of the population are supposed to have perished; the Revolt of Ciompi (the clogs) in 1378, when the wool carders, and other members of the Popolo Minuto, claimed a still larger share of the government, and the recognition of several new minor “arts”.

A “labour” administration in the Palazzo Signoria reformed
the constitution, but proved unable to prevent continued disorders, and so many of the popular leaders were executed, and the rest were forced to flee from the city.

In the next reaction, the direction of affairs was taken over by an oligarchy of men drawn from the major "arts", named the Ottimati and these were continued in power, with occasional lapses for the next forty years, at the end of which they were supplanted by Cosimo de' Medici. The virtue of the Ottimati lay in their capacity for directing wars at a time when the independence and continued existence of the republic was threatened by the powerful Visconti of Milan who had become masters of the greater part of the Lombard Plain.

The art of war had changed since the days when the levies of the Communes had been able to stand up against the Imperialist troops and defeat them quite frequently. Cavalrymen could break through the serried ranks of pike men, and their heavy armour could ward off the bolts of the crossbow. In any case, the townsfolk were more preoccupied with making money than with war, and their interest in politics was waning. Thus, for over a century and a half, all fighting in Italy was left to mercenaries, "the companies of adventure", led by Condottieri.

Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was probably one of the most prosperous cities of any age and this was due to the enterprise and intelligence of its citizens. As we have noted, the population never exceeded 100,000 inhabitants, and the maximum membership of the guilds was below 18,000. Some contemporary historians estimated the number of burghers to be as low as 3,300 towards the end of the fifteenth century, and this would explain the high importance attached to the individual voter.

Of the major "arts", the Calimala was one of the most important because it was not only productive, but highly ingenious. Since Tuscan wool was of only moderate quality, the Florentines imported from the Netherlands, and later from England, rough cloth, which they carded, treated and dyed, selling it in the countries of the Levant and the Black Sea for very high prices. The Arte de la Lana was also important, for at one time the workers of this guild and of the Calimala were producing cloth, largely for export, in no less than two hundred factories.

In course of time, the Flemings, the Dutch and, later on, the English, learned to make textiles more skilfully, but by then the
Florentines had turned their attention to the weaving of silk and gold thread. The Guild of Doctors and Druggists included not only the chemists and the physicians, but also the importers and exporters of drugs and spices, goods which were compact and easy to transport besides being very valuable—fines were frequently imposed in small portions of pepper in preference to gold. The Guild of the Furriers was also a major art, doubtless because the Florentine craftsmen were adepts at dyeing skins and furs, and making ribbons and braiding, goods very much in demand in the Middle Ages.

For many years the silk was woven with raw material imported from the Levant, and then mulberry trees were planted in Tuscany, and in many parts of the Lombard Plain. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, Francis I brought some silkworms back from Italy, and production began in Provence and in the region of Lyons.

Despite the fact that the Republic of Florence was cut off from the sea until the occupation of Pisa, the Florentines had houses, warehouses and banks in Lyons, Bruges, London, Geneva, Antwerp and other cities of the West to which they sent silks and goods imported from the East.

They had similar establishments in Naples, Sicily, Constantinople, the Morea and Salonica, for they sent wool to all these towns, and they exchanged it for spices and dyes in Caffa (on the Sea of Azov), in Constantinople, and ports such as Trebizond on the Black Sea. Besides being represented abroad by the accredited agents of the big merchants and manufacturers, the Florentines had consuls in all parts of the Western world. Indeed diplomacy had become a profession which they nearly succeeded in monopolising, since, on one occasion when seventeen ambassadors of different states paid their respects to the Pope, he remarked upon the fact that all of them were Florentine (I may add that in the seventeenth century most of them would have been Sicilians or Neapolitans).

Like the Venetians, the Florentines relied for the continued expansion of their trade, upon high powered salesmen who went out in search of business to the furthestmost parts of the earth. Some went to India, Persia and Arabia, but others even went to China, and the round trip for this journey could in no circumstance take less than three years.
When Pisa was occupied in 1406 the continuous wrangle over dues and tariffs for goods passing through Porto Pisano came to an end. A few years later, the neighbouring port of Leghorn was bought from Genoa, and the Florentines began to develop a merchant fleet of their own. They were so quick in learning seamanship that in 1497, the son of a Florentine notary, named Amerigo Vespucci, was the first to reach the mainland of America, and his Christian name was given to the newly discovered continent, which he reached seven days after the Genoese Cabot landed on the shores of Canada.

With all these activities, the most profitable of the "arts" was banking and exchange which developed first of all from the wool trade.

Though there were many banking houses in Florence in the Middle Ages, the financial markets of the city were eventually dominated by the Medici, a burgher family that had gradually grown in wealth and influence after somewhat obscure beginnings in the twelfth century. Whether, as their name suggests, they established themselves by trading in drugs is not known, but certainly drugs were from the earliest times one of the exports of the Republic. By the first years of the fourteenth century, the Medici had enriched themselves through money-lending, banking, and as merchants. In order to dominate their rivals they courted the support of the Popolo Minuto, and they encouraged the rebels during the Revolt of the Ciompi. Curiously enough, the Medici survived the downfall of this popular movement without great inconvenience, and they continued to court popularity by lavishing their immense wealth on public buildings and entertainments. In the meantime, they became still richer through their loans to monarchs and states and by acting as a clearing house.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, Giovanni de Medici followed the policy of his predecessor, Silvestro, who had backed the Ciompi, and defended the Popolo Minuto who were threatened with excessive taxation by dominant rulers of the city, the Albizzi. At his instigation, a law called the castato was passed, whereby the wealth of every citizen was to be assessed as a basis for taxation.

Cosimo, Giovanni's son, was exiled by his rivals, "for having tried to elevate himself above the level of the other citizens of
Florence. Since the Medici had agents and branches of their banks in all parts of Europe they were invulnerable financially. In any case, they took care to keep only a small proportion of their tangible capital in Florence so that they could not be impoverished by draconian taxation or confiscation. During the period of his exile in Padua and in Venice, Cosimo was treated like a ruling prince whilst the Florentine armies were being defeated in an unnecessary war against the Duke of Milan. Without the financial backing of the Medici, they had not the funds to carry on military operations, and so Cosimo was recalled, and was enthusiastically welcomed by the populace (1434). For the next thirty years he governed the destinies of the Republic, though he was in theory only a private citizen. However he was the real ruler of Florence, eliminating his rivals, and using his immense wealth in the service of the State. To counter the expansion of the Venetians on the mainland of Italy he gave financial support to Sforza, the usurper of Milan. His loans to Edward IV of England, and other monarchs were immense, and if they were profitable, they also furthered the interests of the Republic.

The previous Medici had gained the affections of the populace, by their modest ways and by their unostentatious manner of life. Cosimo, on the other hand, had the sumptuous manner of a great prince. He built the splendid Riccardi Palace in the Via Larga, and the gracious family villas at Careggi and at Fiesole, as well as the basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence, and the Convent of San Marco with its frescoes by Fra Angelico. He was a generous patron to Donatello, the sculptor, and to Brunelleschi the architect of the Cathedral, to Ghiberti famous for his Baptistery doors, and to Luca della Robbia. Not content with giving his support to the arts, he welcomed the Greek scholars who had fled from Constantinople after its capture by the Turks, and he collected Greek and Latin manuscripts which are now preserved in the Laurentian Library in Florence.

Cosimo’s greatest moment had been when the Council of the Eastern and Western Churches met at Ferrara, some years before the fall of Constantinople, and he had succeeded in persuading the delegates to transfer their activities to Florence. So the astonished citizens were to see parading through their streets, Arabs and Mongols in exotic costumes, camels ridden by eastern potentates, and even leopards led on leashes by coal black negroes. Even
though Cosimo could bring out his massive gold plate for his state banquets, his modest attire and bearing delighted the populace who were still more pleased with him because he found means of reducing their taxation. When the "Pater Patriae" died it was inevitable that he should be succeeded by one of his family, who were fated to guide the destinies of Florence for three hundred years, and marry their daughters to kings and princes.
THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE MEDICI
Florence in the High Renaissance (1464-1574)

SUMMARY

1464-69 Piero the Gouty, becomes head of the House of Medici.
1469-78 Joint rule of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Giuliano de Medici.
1478 The Pazzi Conspiracy. The Riairos and the Pazzi wound Lorenzo and kill Giuliano in the cathedral of Florence.
1478-92 Lorenzo rules alone.
1492-94 Piero de Medici rules until he is forced to leave Florence when Charles VIII occupies the city. Florence is ruled by a Grand Council but virtually dominated by Savonarola.
1498 Savonarola tried as a heretic and executed.
1502 Piero Soderini Gonfalonere for life.
1512 Return of the Medici. Lorenzo (1512-19); Giulio (1519-23); the future Clement VII, Cardinal Ippolito, absent in Rome, (1523-1527).
1527 The Medici expelled for alleged complicity with the Imperialists.
1530 Medici reinstated by the Imperialists. Alessandro becomes Hereditary Duke.
1534 Cosimo I inherits, is granted the title of Duke of Florence by the Emperor.
1559 Cosimo Grand Duke of Tuscany.

The death of Cosimo was held by most Florentines to be a disaster of the first magnitude—he had guided the destinies of the Republic with great skill, though his rule had tended to restrict the liberties of its citizens. However the poorer Florentines were grateful to him for lightening the burden of taxation and they had been delighted by the splendid buildings commissioned by
him. His policy of alliance with Naples and Venice had brought about the downfall of the ever dangerous Visconti of Milan. The alliance with France was to have disastrous results, but not for many years after his death.

However Cosimo had dealt most ruthlessly with his patrician rivals, and even Luca Pitti who had claimed to be one of his adherents during his lifetime was ready to turn against his son, Piero the Gouty. Piero died after a rule of five years, and was succeeded by his two sons Lorenzo and Giuliano who became jointly “Heads of the State”.

Lorenzo, the elder and more intelligent of the two brothers, took the lead in everything. By marrying into the princely family of the Orsini, he gained social prestige. By skilful negotiation, he obtained for the Medici Bank the privilege of handling the revenues of the Papal States and of acting as banker to the Pontifical Administration.

A quarrel with Pope Sixtus IV and King Ferrante of Naples led to a complete rift between the states of the North and those of the South at a time when unity was becoming essential to the welfare of the whole country (1474). The Pope’s nephews, the Riario, plotted the overthrow of the Medici in conjunction with the Pazzi, a wealthy Florentine family who were jealous of Lorenzo. During Easter Mass at the cathedral in Florence, the conspirators, including two priests, attacked the brothers—Giuliano was killed, but Lorenzo, though wounded, succeeded in making his escape. In the confusion that followed, the bulk of the rebels were slaughtered and their property confiscated. Tuscany was invaded by a Neapolitan army and Lorenzo was excommunicated by the Pope. A long and murderous war between the different Italian States was averted when Lorenzo risked his life by going to see Ferrante in Naples. He induced him to make peace by threatening to incite the Angevins to claim the throne of Southern Italy. As it was, the possibility of a federation of Italian states became still more remote, and Louis XI of France began to take an unhealthy interest in Italian affairs.

In the twelve years after the Pazzi Conspiracy, Florence enjoyed a period of peace and artistic creativeness. Like many of his contemporaries, Lorenzo was a great patron of the arts, but he was also a poet and a philosopher. He discovered Michelangelo, but Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Benozzo Gozzoli were also
Florentines who participated in the movement known as Humanism which was based on the full assimilation of classical culture and its adaptation to the art and learning of the times. The Humanists professed, in theory at any rate, belief in the natural goodness, dignity and intelligence of Man. Reason, logic and moderation were to replace the instinct and the fervour that guided the Middle Ages.

Petrarch, Boccaccio, and in a sense, the Emperor Frederick II, had been Humanists, but it was in Florence and in the age of Lorenzo that Humanism reached its highest expression, though the reaction against it set in shortly after his death through the preaching of Savonarola, and the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII of France.

In Rome, as we shall see, the full creativeness of the Renaissance came to an end after the sack of the city in 1527 by the Imperial troops of Charles V. By then barely a century had passed since the public teaching of Greek and Greek philosophy had been initiated in Florence, whilst the first printing press had been set up in 1472.

If the prestige of Lorenzo and of Florence was so great that ambassadors came to the city from many parts of the world, the real prosperity of the Florentines was beginning to decline. To maintain himself in power, Lorenzo curtailed the liberties of his subjects, and he kept an army of spies to watch against subversive activities. It is true that Florence was still phenomenally prosperous, that her citizens of all classes were better off than men of similar status elsewhere. It is true also to say that there appeared to be expansion in many directions. Florence now held the port of Leghorn as well as Pisa, and the Florentines could maintain warships as well as trading vessels. However, Lorenzo’s lavishness and the luxury of his court, brought trouble on the Florentines. The Magnificent ruler was the first Medici to help himself to public funds; his predecessors, on the contrary, had spent their own money for the benefit of the people. As time passed, taxation became unduly high. Lorenzo even debased the currency so as to satisfy his own needs as well as those of the State. Nevertheless, as one of his contemporaries remarked, “If Florence has to have a tyrant, she could never have found a better one nor a more agreeable one.”

Lorenzo left three sons—the younger one, Giovanni, was made a cardinal at the age of fourteen, so that he could look after the
interests of his family and of Florence in Rome; the second one, Piero, succeeded his father but was devoid of character and talent, whilst the third, Giuliano, became Duke of Nemours.

In 1492, two years before Lorenzo's death, the first reaction against Humanism was manifested when the Prior of San Marco, Savonarola, began to preach against the luxury and corruption of the times. According to his prophecies, the Church would be regenerated, and before this came to pass, a great scourge would afflict Italy as a punishment for her sins. Nevertheless Savonarola can in no way be counted as a precursor of the Reformation, for he desired a return of the authority of the Church in the medieval manner, and he believed that men should be guided, like himself, by the inspiration of God. As it happened, his prophecies seemed to be realised even sooner than he had expected.

In 1494, Charles VIII of France invaded Italy, after having asserted his claim to the Kingdom of Naples on the strength of his descent from Charles of Anjou. The French had been invited to come by Ludovico Sforza who wished to supplant his nephew Francesco as Duke of Milan, an ambition which was realised when the latter died mysteriously, soon after the arrival of Charles VIII. Ludovico, tyrant though he was, was a great patron of the arts, and employed Leonardo da Vinci for many years, during which the "Last Supper" was painted for Santa Maria della Grazia, and an immense equestrian statue of the Duke was begun.

The French army swept through Italy like a whirlwind, and this successful invasion was destined to open up a new age for the country. Just as the Communes had surrendered their liberties to the tyrants to ward off anarchy or attack from a neighbouring state, now survival of any kind could only be achieved by playing off Spain against France, and France against Spain. In the end, Italy was to fall under Spanish domination.

Instead of guarding the easily defended passes of Tuscany, Piero de Medici gave way and surrendered the principal Florentine fortresses to Charles VIII. For this he was driven out by the infuriated citizens, together with his brothers Giuliano, the future Duke of Nemours, and Cardinal Giovanni, the future Pope Leo X.

Savonarola's moment had arrived; the prophesied punishment had come, and the monk gained fresh prestige by going to the King and hailing him as the Avenger of Christ and warning him
to treat Florence with mercy, otherwise he would cease to be victorious. The stratagem worked. Florence was spared the worst indignities, though many works of art were carried away by the French. Thanks also to the courage of Pier Capponi who stood up to the King, the indemnity exacted was not as high as expected.

The French swept on through Italy, passing through Rome, and quickly occupying the Kingdom of Naples where they were welcomed by the population. The invaders behaved so badly that the Neapolitans soon revolted, and Charles was forced to retire. The need to do so became all the greater when he realised that the Milanese and the Venetians had also turned against him. Once again his path lay through Tuscany but Savonarola induced him to by-pass Florence, and, shortly afterwards, a victory over the Milanese and the Venetians at Fornova, allowed the King to withdraw his army to France in good order (1495).

For three years the monk ruled over Florence with an administration of his own creation based on that of the Republic, clinging, strangely enough, to the Alliance with France, and arousing the anger of the Borgia Pope Alexander VI. In the pulpit, Savonarola continued to fulminate against the sins of Florence, and the corruption of Rome.

The laxity and urbanity that prevailed under Lorenzo were replaced by a sombre and destructive puritanism: pictures with classical subjects, and licentious books, were burned in the Piazza Signoria by Savonarola’s followers, the Pignoni; children were encouraged to report cases of immorality in their families; gambling houses were closed down.

The opponents of the monk, the arrabiati (the angry men) were powerless for a time, but eventually Savonarola was excommunicated by the Pope for disobedience, and many Florentines turned against him. His popularity diminished still further when he failed to take part in an ordeal by fire to which he was challenged by the Franciscans, the rivals of his own order, the Dominicans. Eventually, the administration of the Republic agreed to his arrest and trial, the result of which was a foregone conclusion: Savonarola was hanged and burned at the stake with two of his monks.

After his death, the Grand Council of the Republic continued to govern Florence, with Niccolo Machiavelli as secretary, though
in 1502, Piero Soderini was appointed Gonfaloniere of the Republic for life.

During the brief interregnum which lasted until 1512, both Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci worked in Florence, executing frescoes in the Palazzo Signoria which were subsequently destroyed when the palace was used as barracks by invading troops.

In the meantime, Louis XII, Charles VIII's successor, had invaded Italy once more, as a member of the League of Cambrai, a general conspiracy to overwhelm the Republic of Venice. After initial successes, the French quarrelled with their allies, the Emperor Maximilian, the Neapolitans, and the Pope, with the result that the French troops were driven out of the greater part of Northern Italy. The Spanish, who had recently conquered the Kingdom of Naples, now advanced on Florence and restored the Medici. Soon afterwards, Cardinal Giovanni, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, became Pope Leo X.

The two nominal rulers of Florence were first of all Lorenzo, son of Pietro, and Giuliano, second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. When both of them died soon after their accession, the government of Florence was taken over by Cardinal Giulio, the son of the Giuliano who was killed in the Pazzi conspiracy. Lorenzo had been made Duke of Urbino, and left an infant daughter who was to be Queen of France and known in the annals of history as Catherine de Medici.

Leo X followed his father's advice to bind Florence more closely to Rome. To preserve the Patrimony of St. Peter, he pursued a policy of playing off the Spanish and the French against each other, a policy in which he was fairly successful during his lifetime, though the results were eventually disastrous for Italy. Incidentally, the Popes, like other Italian heads of state, were more hostile to Venice than to France or Spain, even when Charles V became Holy Roman Emperor as well as King of Spain. The truth was that Venice was the only well-organised state in Italy, and her continued expansion on the mainland was feared.

Anticipating the disasters that were to overwhelm his country, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote The Prince, a book in which he recommended that Italians should arm themselves and unite to ward off foreign domination. He believed that this was possible now that the Medici ruled both in Rome and in Florence, even
though he had suffered at their hands when they returned to power. Whom did he take as his ideal ruler? Lorenzo the Magnificent, Caesar Borgia, or even perhaps, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the young man of Medici blood, descended from a brother of Cosimo Pater Patriae? The latter, admittedly, was still almost a child when *The Prince* was written but he was to prove his worth later. In any case, Machiavelli was an astonishingly sound critic of the social and political problems of his country, and his Florentine contemporary historians, Guicciardini and Villani, were far in advance of the chroniclers of Western Europe.

Leo X died in 1521, and was succeeded by Julius II whose Pontificate lasted only two years, and then once again a Medici was elected to the Holy See when Cardinal Giulio became Supreme Pontiff under the name of Clement VII. The new Pope continued the policy of playing the French against the Spanish, but the balance of power was definitely upset by the rout and capture of Francis I of France by the Imperialists at the Battle of Pavia in 1525. In 1526, Giovanni delle Bande Nere was killed whilst fighting the invading troops of Charles V, and thus the only good Italian general was eliminated.

In 1527, the Imperialists under the renegade Frenchman, the Constable of Bourbon, attacked, captured and sacked Rome, and the people of Florence, infuriated with their rulers, expelled the Medici from their city.

Clement VII came to terms with Charles V who was ashamed of the excesses of his troops, for they had not only plundered the Holy City and massacred many of its inhabitants, but had expressed every intention of hanging the Pontiff. The Emperor was growing old and wished to pacify Italy, whilst the Pope sought his help for the suppression of the heretics who were becoming more numerous everywhere.

Alessandro, the bastard son of the Medici Duke of Urbino by a Turkish slave, was married off to the Emperor’s daughter Margaret, and installed as Duke of the Republic of Florence in 1530. Though the Florentines had courageously resisted the Imperial forces, their city was spared because, like many Northern Italian states, it was now held to be a fief of the Emperor. Alessandro soon made himself unpopular, particularly with the patricians because they felt that they were not only losing their
liberty, but also their privileges. The lower orders hated the new Duke, because of his extravagance and his vicious behaviour, for he did not spare the young of either sex and was relentless to his opponents. Eventually he was murdered by Lorenzino de Medici, a distant cousin who is also known as Lorenzaccio. The latter claimed that he had shared Alessandro’s debauches in order to “strike a blow for the cause of liberty”. However, because of this murder, he was not considered fit to succeed, and in any case, the Emperor had nominated Cosimo, son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, to be head of the state (1537). Nevertheless, the title of Duke did not yet have the full meaning of prince, nor was it, in theory at any rate, to be considered as hereditary.

From the first, Cosimo seemed to try to put into practice the theories of Machiavelli, being ready to suppress all forms of rebellion in a relentless manner, and yet, if expedient, he was prepared to show mercy. Completely unscrupulous in his foreign policy, he made none of the disastrous errors of judgment committed by the two Medici Popes and his immediate predecessors. To dominate his recalcitrant subjects, Cosimo had to seek the help of the Emperor, who was always short of money and had to be given subsidies, whilst the ambassadors of other states had to be bribed. The territories of the Republic were repeatedly invaded by exiled Florentines, who for their part received money and encouragement from the King of France. When the Florentine rebels had been beaten off, and the malcontents of the city had been executed, imprisoned or exiled, Cosimo began to think of expanding his territories, and to do this, he sought the help of the emperor. The Kingdom of Naples, completely pacified, was ably ruled by Cosimo’s father-in-law, the Duke of Toledo who was Spanish Viceroy. The Pope, Paul III (Alexander Farnese), was certainly preoccupied by his desire to provide for his family, but his time was also taken up with organising the Counter-Reformation and revising the doctrines of the Church.

When Siena rose against the Imperial garrison and achieved independence once more, Cosimo obtained leave from the Emperor to attack the city which was courageously defended by the population aided by Florentine exiles and by a certain number of French troops. The Sienese were eventually forced to surrender, and the number of citizens reduced from 40,000 to 8,000 by famine, disease, death and exile. Resistance continued until 1559
when Siena was formally annexed by Cosimo, but for a while remained under a separate administration from Florence.

Some years later Pope Pius V conferred on Cosimo the title and patent of Grand Duke of Tuscany, and in 1559, Philip II of Spain acknowledged his right to keep Siena, Portoferraio and the northern half of Elba (of which it is the capital), in return for the cancellation of a loan that Cosimo had made to his father Charles V. This last settlement occurred in 1559, the year of the signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis between the two Habsburg rulers (the Emperor Ferdinand I and Philip II of Spain who were the heirs of Charles V), and King Henri II of France. The French gave up all their conquests except Calais and a few minor territories, and they abandoned their claim to the Kingdom of Naples. Although, Henri IV, Louis XIII and Louis XIV were to send invading armies to Northern Italy, the Spanish had achieved the domination of the Italian peninsula where they were destined to be supreme until the war of the Spanish Succession.

During this period they held the Kingdom of Naples, and Sicily as well as Sardinia and Lombardy. Tuscany and most of the smaller states of Northern Italy remained under their influence, whilst Venice and Savoy (including Piedmont) alone kept a full measure of independence, though the latter was forced to play off the Spanish and the French in order to remain free.

Since the Genoese were considered to be unreliable, the Spanish kept five small ports on the coast of Tuscany to give them access to Northern Italy. These were Porto Ercole, Porto Santo Stefano, Talamone, Orbetello and Castiglione della Pescaia, all of them grouped under the name of the Presidii.
II

ROMAN HUMANISM

The Renaissance and the Popes (1417–1534)

SUMMARY

1417–31 Martin V (Odda Colonna). Return of unity to the Church. Martin V begins to rebuild Rome after the long absence of the Popes.

1431–47 Eugenius IV. Driven out of Rome by a revolt, flees to Florence where he comes into contact with the Humanists, and is influenced by their thought and ideas.

1447–55 Nicholas V. A Pope who was at the same time a great Christian and a Humanist.

1455–58 Calixtus III. The first Borgia Pope—tries to unite the countries of Europe against the threat of Turkish invasion.

1458–64 Pius II (Aeneas Piccolomini). Appears to anticipate the coming of the Reformation, strives to prevent it by spiritual means.

1464–71 Paul II—a Venetian named Pietro Barbo. Fears the “pagan” aspects of the Renaissance, but builds the splendid Palazzo Venezia in the centre of Rome.

1471–84 Sixtus IV—Francesco della Rovere of the Franciscan Order. Sets out to expand the Patrimony of St. Peter believing it would strengthen the influence of the Holy See.

1484–92 Innocent VIII (Cibo). Quarrels with Ferdinand of Naples.

1492–1503 Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia). The sins of the Borgia family appear to have been exaggerated by contemporary historians such as Guicciardini. Rodrigo’s son, the able Caesar Borgia sets out to conquer Italy, but is frustrated by his father’s death.
1503-13  Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere). A really great Pope, Humanist and statesman. Strives to prevent the French from dominating Italy.

1513-21  Leo X (Giovanni, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent). Successfully plays off the French and Spanish against each other, at the same time working for his native Florence.

1523-34  Clement VII (Giulio de Medici). In his efforts to effect a balance of power backs Francis I of France. As a result, after the defeat of the French at Pavia, Rome is sacked by Imperialist troops (1527). Alessandro de Medici is imposed upon the Florentines (1530). The Age of Humanism had come to an end; Spanish domination of Italy is about to begin.

Since no one agrees as to when the Renaissance began, I have chosen the year 1417 to mark the beginning of Humanism in Rome. It was on that date that Martin V became Pope and the Church was united once more. It is true that proposals had been made to establish the Holy See in France or Germany, but the new Pope elected to return to Rome, both on spiritual grounds and on personal grounds, for he was a Colonna, and his family had played an important part in the history of the city. In the relatively peaceful conditions of the last years of the century, Rome was rebuilt and repopulated, and became highly prosperous.

Martin V who had been elected in Constance in 1417, did not make his entry into the Holy City until three years later when he was given an enthusiastic welcome by what remained of the population. As it was, many of the streets were in ruins and deserted, and people were often attacked by wolves, or bandits. The nobility had been decimated by Rienzi, the wealthier citizens had fled to towns where they could ply their trade undisturbed, and there was constant fighting between different factions who used ancient towers or the ruins of antiquity as their strongholds. Most of the basilicas had fallen into disuse because of their dilapidation, whilst many of the finest monuments of
classical times had vanished or been wrecked because the marble and stone of which they were made had been taken as building material to construct palaces, fortresses or ordinary dwellings. This procedure continued until the middle of the eighteenth century when Benedict XIV took measures to protect the Colosseum and other structures from further devastation.

Martin V established order in Rome, restored many of the basilicas, re-established the Papacy on a firm basis and left the impression that he had inaugurated an age of relative happiness and prosperity. He sent for Florentine artists such as Masaccio, beginning the close artistic and intellectual link with Florence that was to last until the death of Michelangelo in 1564. The true age of Humanism in Rome was to end with the Sack of Rome in 1527. Despite much corruption, much cruelty, and even barbarism, seldom if ever had so much intellectual brilliance been manifested in so short a time, and in so small a town, for Rome had less than two hundred thousand inhabitants. In the words of John Addington Symonds: "The corruption of Italy was only matched by its culture. Its immorality was matched by its enthusiasm. It was not the decay of an old age dying so much as the ferment of a new age coming to life.

"Most of the popes of this age took the lead in the movement of the Renaissance that we call the emancipation of the human spirit, and if they were not always consistent in their practice, especially in matters of doctrine and dealing with people, it is impossible to underestimate the encouragement that they gave to the arts which were in themselves a liberation of expression, and a reasoned expression of the human mind."

The Papacy of Eugenius IV is notable mainly because of a new threat to the unity of the Church—the Pope was theoretically deposed at the Council of Basel, in 1439. In the same year, at the Synod of Florence, Eugenius came to an agreement for the reunion of the Roman Church with the Greek Church, but unfortunately this agreement was never put into practice. Had it been realised, it is just conceivable that Constantinople might have been saved from the Turks.

The short-lived Nicholas V (1447-1455) achieved miracles during the eight years in which he occupied the Chair of St. Peter. He planned to re-establish the glory and authority of the Holy See by the splendour of his court, by giving architectural
magnificence to Rome and by making it the centre of European culture. Although a Ligurian, he had been educated in Florence and profited by the intellectual and artistic training that he had received there. By a stroke of sheer genius, he inaugurated the first Roman Jubilee in 1450, attracting once more tens of thousands of pilgrims to gain spiritual inspiration, though they also brought great prosperity to the Holy City and to the Papacy. Thus, taxation was reduced to a minimum and the Pope could dispose of funds for the embellishment of Rome.

Nicholas V planned the rebuilding of the Leonine city, the Vatican and St. Peter's under the guidance of the Florentine architect Alberti, whose versatility and brilliance were typical of the Italian Renaissance. A poet, a philosopher and musician of note, he is considered to be one of the first architects to revive the style of the Ancients. In Rome he was responsible for the rebuilding and expansion of the Vatican Palace, and for the Fontana di Trevi, though the present decorations were made in the eighteenth century.

The Acqua Vergine, restored by Alberti, supply not only the Trevi but the fountains in the Piazza Navona, the Piazza di Spagna, and the Piazza Farnese, though in this case, again, the decorations belong to a later date. The point was that Rome was given a good water supply.

Although two bridges were built under the Pontificate of Nicholas V, and the Mausoleum of Hadrian was fortified under the name of Castel Sant' Angelo, the construction of the present St. Peter's was not started until the Pontificate of Julius II.

The pilgrims who attended the First Jubilee can have had little conception of the splendour that would be created by the Popes in the course of the next three centuries: more than half the monuments of antiquity were submerged under vineyards, gardens and pasturages where shepherds and goatherds watched their flocks. Within the area contained by the Aurelian walls, there were farms, woodland, and vast areas of waste land. The narrow streets of medieval Rome were huddled between the present site of the Corso and the Tiber and between the Forum and the Porta del Popolo. A few streets with towers and palaces lay to the North of the Forum and the Trastevere was inhabited, then as now, by a population that claimed direct descent from the citizens of Ancient Rome.
There were as yet no majestic squares; the existing fountains were still unadorned by voluptuous statuary and carvings; the old Church of St. Peter was in ruins and the foundation stone of the immense new structure was not to be laid until fifty-six years later.

For those of us who know Rome today it is difficult to imagine this lovely city without Bernini’s Colonnade in St. Peter’s Square, without the Spanish Steps and Michelangelo’s Capitoline Square of the Campidoglio, and perhaps, most of all without the immensity of the Piazza Navona and the glorious symmetry of the Piazza del Popolo. Some squares appear to have been constructed round existing fountains, and the fountains were subsequently decorated by the greatest artists of the day. Lastly, if many of the towers and fortalice of the Middle Ages were still standing, none of the immense and splendid palaces which are such a feature of Baroque Rome were in existence.

Calixtus III (1455–1458) is of importance mainly because he was a Borgia, and his accession to the Chair of St. Peter prepared the way for the eventual election to the Holy See of his nephew Roderigo Lenzuoli, who is better known to us as Alexander Borgia.

Pius II (1458–1464) was a Piccolomini from the Southern Sienese, and it is in this region that he built the enchanting little city of Pienza near the house where he was born—he intended to fill it with the most beautiful architectural work of the age, for he was a Humanist, a scholar and an orator, but he died in middle age, exhausted by his efforts to unite Christianity against the Turks, to stamp out heresy in Bohemia and its beginnings in Germany.

Paul II was a Venetian and a Humanist, but averse to many of the more pagan aspects of Humanism. He left as a monument the Palazzo Venezia, the immense castellated palace at the entrance of the Corso which was later used by Mussolini as his administrative headquarters. Paul II had started life as a merchant, but he became a priest when his uncle Eugenius IV was made Pope. A handsome man, he spent fortunes on personal adornment, for two hundred thousand gold florins were paid for his tiara which was studded with immense diamonds. Fearing that the debates of the Platonic Society might lead to heresy or atheism, and most of all, lack of respect for him, he ordered its
dissolution and persecuted the members. His enemies accused this Pope of indulging in all kinds of lusts.

Sixtus IV (1471–1484) took the name of della Rovere, and adopted members of this noble Piedmontese family as his own kin, so much so that he provided for his “nephews” by making one Duke of Imola, and another, Pietro, was made Cardinal and Archbishop of Florence, whilst a third, and by far the most able, was to become one of the greatest Popes of the age under the name of Julius II.

If this conduct has been criticised as nepotism, as it most certainly was, some authorities suggest that the Pope was seeking to strengthen the political force of the Papacy at a time when it was threatened from nearly all sides. So, as we have already noted Sixtus is believed to have encouraged the Pazzi Conspiracy, because the Medici were opposed to granting domains to his kinsmen, the Riarios and the della Rovere. To pay for the extravagance of these dependants all sorts of expedients were used to raise money; and it was this, among other things, that aroused the indignation of Savonarola and Luther, not so many years later.

On the other hand, Sixtus tried, but without success, to rally the Christian states against the Turkish menace, and, according to some authorities (but not all), he protested against the severity of the Inquisition which had just been revived in Spain.

In Rome, the Platonists were set free, the Vatican library was expanded and opened to the public, and the Sistine Chapel was built and decorated by Tuscan and Umbrian artists, including Botticelli, Signorelli and Ghirlandaio, and later by Michelangelo. Sixtus IV was also responsible for the reconstruction of Santa Maria del Popolo, the construction of the Ponte Sisto as well as a number of other buildings and monuments.

Innocent VIII (1484–1492) was the father of sixteen children, and developed the sale of “indulgences” on a very large scale. He also laid down the regulations for the trial of witches. Belief in witch-craft was universal, and there was a definite problem to be solved here, since the claimants to supernatural powers were numerous, and quite frequently harmful.

It seems highly probable that Alexander VI (1492–1503) (Rodrigo Borgia) did not commit all the crimes imputed to him. Since he was Spanish, Florentine historians such as Guicciardini
were undoubtedly biased against him, and they created the legend
of the Borgias as incestuous poisoners who would dispose of their
enemies by every possible means. It is certain that Alexander VI
was a far stronger character than his predecessor, and that he
reduced the violence and lawlessness that had characterised the
ten years that preceded his election to the Holy See. At the onset
Charles VIII had threatened to depose him in the course of the
triumphant French invasion of Italy, but the Pontiff came to
terms with the King who continued on his way to Naples. Then
he was attacked from a different quarter when Savonarola
demanded that he should be deposed by a special council, but
this threat was finally averted by the trial and execution of the
monk in Florence.

One of Alexander's greatest faults in the eyes of his contempo-
raries, was his obsession for three of his children, John the
Duke of Gandia who was murdered in mysterious circumstances,
Lucretia who was married off to three different husbands for
reasons of state, and Caesar, Duke of the Valentinois and the
Romagna, a Cardinal who gave up the Church on the death of
his brother.

The beautiful fair-haired Lucretia appears to have been a
victim, and guiltless of the crimes attributed to her. For the last
part of her life she was the model wife of the Duke of Ferrara,
and beloved of all who knew her, if Ariosto, his court poet, is to
be believed.

Caesar, young, handsome, ruthless and idolised by his father,
set out to carve for himself a realm in the Romagna and he
certainly disposed of several "tyrants" or princelings without too
much difficulty on the grounds that they owed allegiance to the
Pope. Imbued with qualities of statesmanship and determination,
he might well have become the master of the whole of Italy, if
his father had not died unexpectedly, to be succeeded after the
short reign of Paul III, by Giuliano della Rovere, the deadly
enemy of his family. Caesar fled to Spain and died, aged thirty,
in an obscure skirmish.

According to some historians, this Pope, Julius II (1503–1513),
was one of the greatest of Pontiffs. From the beginning, he set
out to strengthen the Papal State, and at the same time to drive
the French out of Italy—the trouble was, that like other Italian
rulers he was almost as afraid of the Venetians as of the French.
As we have noted in the previous chapter, the Papacy joined the League of Cambrai (composed of the French, the Imperialists and the Spanish) to curb the expansion of the Venetians in Northern Italy. After the defeat of the Venetians, the League broke up, and the Venetians regained some of their losses, but not all of their previous strength and drive.

The Pope then hired the Swiss to attack the French who were in due course driven back over the Alps, their superb young General, Gaston de Foix, having been killed at the battle of Fornova some time previously. Parma and Piacenza were annexed to the Patrimony of St. Peter, and the conquests of Caesar Borgia—Urbino, Forli, and Imola—were kept.

At first sight, the policy of the Pope seemed eminently successful, but if the French danger was averted, the way was now prepared for a Spanish domination of Italy. In any case, Julius had restored the power and the prestige of the Papal State and he had found time to do more for the embellishment of Rome than any of his predecessors. It was he who commissioned Bramante, Michelangelo and Raphael to make the plans for the new Church of St. Peter, though it was only completed one hundred and twenty years later. He also induced Michelangelo to paint the Story of the Creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and it was Michelangelo also who designed the attractive colourful uniforms of the Swiss Guard.

The majestic presence of the great Pope can be judged by Michelangelo’s monument on his tomb in San Pietro in Vincoli, and by the portrait executed by Raphael. During the Pontificate of Julius II, Martin Luther made his historic visit to Rome.

Giovanni de’ Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, became Pope Leo X in 1513, and died prematurely in 1523. Not surprisingly, Leo X was typical of his age and origin, and he patronised poets, artists and historians. Though he made no new discoveries, but continued to employ Raphael and Michelangelo, and it was believed that he supervised personally the execution of some, at least, of Raphael’s cartoons for tapestry which are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in Kensington.

On being elected, this Pope is reported to have said, “Let us enjoy the Papacy, since God has given it to us.” So there were pageants and banquets, and the prelates mingled with the revellers in masques and festivals. Leo was ambitious, and a fairly skilled
diplomat, for in the quarrel between the French and Charles V, he backed the former and succeeded in keeping on good terms with the latter.

Since the Medici controlled both Florence and Rome, it was at this time that Machiavelli began to wonder whether his dream of a united Italy could be realised, and it was with this end in view that he wrote *The Prince* for Leo X. Unfortunately the Pope was too preoccupied with his hobbies, his collection of paintings and curios, to be single-minded about this matter, but, in any case, it was too late: the troops of Charles V were established in the North and South of Italy, and even if they had been withdrawn, their place would have been taken by the French.

Adrian VI, Leo X’s successor, was a Dutchman, sponsored by Charles V, who had been elected because of a split vote. His intention was to mobilise the countries of the West against the Turks, and he set out to reform the Church, but he died in 1523, after less than a year of office.

Clement VII (1523–1534), previously known as Giulio de’ Medici, is associated with one of the most disastrous periods in the history of the Papacy and the Catholic Church. However, like his cousin Leo X, he must be given due credit for having begun the work of religious reform by founding several orders that were to have real influence on the spiritual life of Catholic countries; among these were the Theatines and the Capuchins.

On the other hand, the Reformation was spreading in the countries of North-western Europe, and the rupture with Henry VIII of England over the divorce of Catherine of Aragon was an added disaster. To quote the words of a contemporary historian: “From a powerful and respected Cardinal, he became a feeble and discredited Pope.” Having veered in his allegiance from Charles V to the French, his policy proved to be a complete failure when Francis I was routed and captured by the Imperialists at the battle of Pavia (1525).

Then, as we have already noted in the previous chapter, the one good Italian general, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, had been killed, and the Italian princes of the North made no attempt to guard the easily defended mountain passes. As a result an army of 30,000 Imperialists swept down on Rome. Among them were Spaniards, Germans and even Italians. They were led by the Constable of Bourbon, who most unfortunately was killed
during the assault on the city, or perhaps the Castel Sant'Angelo. Benvenuto Cellini claimed that he fired the lethal shot, but we only have his word for it.

The Pope and his court withdrew to Sant'Angelo by means of the secret underground passage that connected it to the Vatican. They escaped with their lives, but for nine months, Rome was given up to the brutalities, looting and violence of a cosmopolitan army of brigands. The great city never recovered from the Sack of Rome, she never became again "the gay licentious capital of arts and letters, the glittering, gilded Rome of Leo X".

Peace was patched up between the Pope and the Emperor, and the army that had captured Rome was used to re-establish the Medici in Florence (1530).

If the age of the Humanists was over in Rome, the Catholic Church was about to gain fresh spiritual inspiration and vigour under the guidance of subsequent Popes who would be less preoccupied with the arts and the expansion of the Patrimony of St. Peter. In any case the painters, the sculptors and the writers had abandoned Rome in 1527, and the Great Age of Humanism was at an end.
THE SPANISH GLOOM
The Counter-Reformation and Domination by Spain
(1534–1601)

SUMMARY

1534–49 Paul III (Alexander Farnese) though much concerned with his family, works for reform of the Church (Council of Trent, Jesuits, etc.).

1555–59 Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carrafa)—one of the chief organisers of the Counter-Reformation.

1556 Retirement of Emperor Charles V. Empire divided between his nephew Ferdinand I (1556–64) who becomes Holy Roman Emperor, and his son Philip II, King of Spain, Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, Franche-Comté, Lombardy, the Presidii and the Netherlands.

1559 Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis: French abandon all territories in Italy except a few cities of the north-west. The Spanish domination in Italy is firmly established.


1571 Battle of Lepanto—united fleets of Western Europe defeat and destroy a Turkish fleet.

1559–65 Pius IV. Council of Trent comes to an end.

1556–72 Pius V continues the work of the Counter-Reformation.

1573 Venice abandons Cyprus to the Turks.

1572–85 Gregory XIII introduces Gregorian Calendar, encourages the diffusion of the Faith by schools and seminaries.

1585–90 Sixtus V publishes new edition of Vulgate Bible, reforms administration of the
Vatican and of the Papal State, expands and beautifies Rome.

1598 Edict of Nantes conclusively ends Wars of Religion in France. Henry IV, thus liberated from civil strife, is now in a position to restore the balance of power in Europe.

1598 Clement VIII (1592–1605) intervenes to arrange peace between France and Spain.

It seems probable that the fate of Italy was decided by the defeat, rout and capture of Francis I at Pavia in 1525. Henry VIII might pursue a policy of balance of power, the Protestant princes of Germany did in fact prevent Charles V from overwhelming France, but the small states of Italy were helpless because their jealousies and rivalries prevented them from uniting.

The Venetians alone could escape this domination, because of their well-trained armies and because the approaches to Venice were guarded by three almost impregnable fortresses: Verona, Vicenza and Padua. To the south, there were the marshlands at the mouth of the Po. To the north, the Alps presented an insurmountable barrier. At sea, the Venetians could outmanoeuvre and beat the fleets of any European power in the Mediterranean.

In any case, the territories of the Republic stretched from the Eastern shores of Lake Como to the Southern end of the Dalmatian coast and still included, moreover, the Ionian islands, Crete, Cyprus, and some of the Aegean Islands.

This state had three and a half million inhabitants, considerably more than the whole of England in the reign of Henry VIII. If the Venetians retreated before the onslaughts of the Turks, they fought back bravely, and quite frequently reconquered lost territory. In the last years of the seventeenth century, they were even able to reoccupy the greater part of Greece, and to hold on to the Morea for many years.

The Duchy of Savoy, the second Italian state that preserved relative independence, was also assisted by its geographical position, but much credit must be given to the Dukes who consistently pursued their aim of expanding their territories, and were ready to make every sacrifice in order to do so. Their strength lay in the fact that Savoy stretched on both sides of the Alps, and that they could easily hold the three gateways into
Italy: the St. Bernard Pass, the Mont Cenis and the coast road through Nice, for the County of Nice was then a fief of the House of Savoy. The army of the Duchy of Savoy was well trained, highly disciplined and well led. From time to time, when they were allied to those doughty fighters, the Swiss, the Dukes of Savoy could be formidable, but as a rule, they followed a policy of playing off the various big states against each other, and as they fought in every war, they were able to participate in every deliberation for peace.

Since the French wanted to keep the passes into Italy open, and the Spanish needed to go through Savoy to reach Franche Comté and the Netherlands by land, and the Imperialists were similarly placed with regard to Alsace, and South-western Germany, the Dukes came out of nearly every peace quite profitably. "Italy is a huge artichoke which I will consume leaf by leaf" one of the House of Savoy declared in the nineteenth century. He might have added that his ancestors had pursued this objective without deviating for the past eight centuries. In 1530, the Marquisate of Montferrat was still independent, and near enough to the frontier to be protected by France, even when the Habsburgs were in the ascendant. The Duchy of Milan (or Lombardy as it would shortly be called) stretched much further to the west than it did later on, and the Republic of Genoa held a long strip of territory along the coast.

Thus Venice and Savoy were the only states in Italy that could remain free from Spanish domination, but even so the foothills of Savoy were nearly always overrun by one or both of the great rival powers in wartime. Nice fared even worse, for during the reign of Francis I, the Turks who were his allies, captured the city and carried off many of the inhabitants to the slave markets of the Near East.

However the Emperor Charles V seemed to realise that there was danger in over-expansion. Since he held in his direct possession the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia and Lombardy, the intervening states were obviously in his power, especially as the State of the Presidii on the West coast, between Leghorn and Rome, could provide ports of entry into Northern Italy in the event of Genoa being occupied by France, or becoming an ally of the French. This little state had been annexed for purely strategic reasons and could be held by quite a small garrison.
Nevertheless, when the Spanish took the Presidii, they felt more or less sure of the subservience of the Tuscans and of the Papal States. So after the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, Genoa, Parma, Modena, Mantua, Urbino and Lucca were all more or less in the position of satellite states, whilst Ferrara had been added as a fief to the Patrimony of St. Peter.

In Tuscany, Cosimo I owed his ducal throne to the intervention of the Spanish, even though Philip II rather reluctantly confirmed his title of Grand Duke some years later on. Much time would elapse before the Medici princes could think of acting independently of the King of Spain. Almost inevitably therefore, the Popes of the second half of the sixteenth century were bound to rely upon the support of Spain in launching the Counter-Reformation, though one of them, Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carrafa, 1555–1559), did oppose the Habsburgs with disastrous results.

Since the Emperor had compromised with the Protestant princes, the Wars of Religion had broken out in France; and so many of the other countries had accepted Protestantism, the Spanish domination of Italy was perforce uncontested.

Obviously Rome, and many of the other shattered cities of Italy as well as the ravaged countryside, benefited by a period of peace and absence of strife, but it seems clear that many of the defects of Counter-Reformation were due more to Spanish influence than to the Popes.

The Spanish brought with them a brand of austerity and Puritanism which has left its traces throughout the centuries. For instance, women no longer took part in the intellectual life of the country, and socially they were destined to play a secondary role, as they still do in some parts of provincial Italy in the present day. Freedom of intellectual expression and investigation was restricted, but that again is a Spanish peculiarity, just like the prudery that forbade the representation of nudity in religious sculpture and painting.

In a sense all this may be said to be part of the Spanish gloom, for the Spanish introduced also the fashion of men wearing black; until then, the Italians had been distinguished by their gay and colourful clothing. As it is, black is still worn by the older peasants and workmen in Sicily, Southern Italy and Sardinia, though the habit is disappearing.
One of the most harmful social influences of the Spanish was the creation of a titled aristocracy in the states of Central Italy where the landowning nobility had been practically abolished during the Communes. Now the granting of titles to patricians changed their attitude to work, and members of the banking and trading families in cities like Florence began to think that it was beneath their dignity to go in for business or industry. Since most of them had small estates, they preferred to live on their revenues however small, and they were forced in consequence to be more exacting with their tenants who were for the most part share croppers on the system known as the mezzadria. (By this tenure the landlord provides the stock, the land, the house, the seed and the agricultural implements and in theory makes an exact division of the produce with his tenants.) The creation of a titled bourgeois class (aristocrazia borghese) led to a degree of class distinction that had not existed previously. Indeed, until the advent of the Spanish, talent was the passport to promotion, and as good a social qualification as any. In the fifteenth century, any Italian might well aspire to be a cardinal, the "despot tyrant" of a state, or a general, and so for instance, in the Memoirs of Cellini, it is recorded how freely this able craftsman could talk with a Pope or a prelate.

Then, besides, the Italian princes introduced the formal ceremonial of Spanish royalty to their courts, and so the gap between rulers and subjects was widened still more.

It is difficult to say precisely to what extent the restrictions placed on freedom of speech, intellectual discussion, and scientific research were due to the obscurantism of the Spanish, rather than to the Counter-Reformation zeal of the Church. The Papacy feared heresy, and feared also very naturally, a return to the state of anarchy and licentiousness which had prevailed in Italy during the Age of Humanism. It was believed also with some reason that new scientific discoveries would undermine faith, and would prove dangerous to mankind. It may well be that those who tortured Galileo did so, not so much because they believed that he was wrong, but because they feared that he might be right, and that partial knowledge might be injurious to half-trained minds. This is not my own point of view, but I am trying to see these problems through the eyes of a conscientious sixteenth-century Churchman who was perplexed and troubled by the
threat to his faith, and to the established order. Now the Counter-Reformation was not merely an energetic reaction to prevent Protestantism and other forms of heresy from spreading, it was actually a long anticipated reform of the Catholic Church, the need for which had been recognised long before Luther began to preach his doctrines. The leaders of the Church were well aware that an affirmation and clarification of tenets and doctrines were essential in order to avoid the dissensions and misunderstandings which had occurred within the framework of the Catholic Church in the past.

After many false starts, and years of delay, the Council of Trent was convened, by the second Farnese Pope Paul III in 1542, and began its sessions in 1545. Trent was within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire and in territory belonging to the Habsburgs, but the population, then as now, was Italian speaking, and so the national pride of the Pope and of the Emperor was satisfied by the selection of this city for the assembly. Altogether there were twenty-five sessions of the Council under five different Popes, the final sitting coming to an end in 1563.

Though Paul III was accused of nepotism because he installed his nephew as Duke of Parma, a duchy over which several of his descendants were to rule, this Pope reformed the administration of the Vatican, appointed cardinals of ability and worth, and confirmed the creation of the Order of Jesuits. He was also responsible for the foundation of the Congregation of the Inquisition, but again he was only following the policy of affirming and stating the doctrines of the Church and which deviations were to be investigated by this organisation, for the Inquisition had already been in existence for four centuries in one form or other.

Several Italian states refused to accept the Inquisition, or at any rate took steps to mitigate the severity of the Holy Office. The Neapolitans rebelled successfully against its introduction in Southern Italy, the Venetians refused to allow the Inquisition to be re-established in their territory, but in the end, they had to give way, though within the confines of the Republic its activities were under the control of a lay council. In Rome and in the Papal States, the Inquisition did continue to exercise its powers but with diminishing severity until it was abolished by Napoleon.

However, the effectiveness of the Inquisition was proved by
the suppression of heresy in Lucca which had a Protestant Gon-
falionere, in Siena and in other regions where Protestants were
numerous. As a rule, the Protestant leaders fled from the country,
usually to England, and among these was Florio who translated
Montaigne's works into English. The followers of these Protestant
leaders conformed for the most part, either outwardly or in all
sincerity, for the religious fervour of the new Orders, and of the
old Orders too, was now very strong. As far as Italy is concerned,
it is true to say that heresy was completely eliminated except in
the Val d'Aosta, the highland region to the north of Turin, where
the Waldensians continued to practise their own form of Pro-
testantism and resisted all attempts at coercion.

The Inquisition established the Congregation of the Index
which was to determine which books were to be forbidden to
members of the Catholic Church.

However it is well to remember that the more austere aspects
of the Counter-Reformation tend to obscure the immense
impulse of religious fervour which inspired Catholic missionaries
to go to the remotest parts of the world to make converts, and
these succeeded in creating native Churches in India, China and
Japan, not to speak of all the Spanish colonies. In Europe the
Jesuits were particularly successful, and they and several of the
Orders consolidated their work with schools and seminaries for
both sexes.

Now, it is often suggested that the decadence of the arts in the
middle sixteenth century was due to the depressing effects of the
Counter-Reformation, but it is certain that the decadence had
started already because of the economic stress and confusion
caused by incessant warfare. The artists were scattered, the impulse
of creativeness was diminishing, rich patrons had vanished, the
population of towns such as Milan had fallen by two thirds, and
trade had been ruined. It is true that intellectual activities were
hampered by the Index and by the Inquisition and it is true also
that the austerity of the church architecture did not afford much
scope to artists.

The free Italian states were tied to Spain by a system of sub-
sidies known as the condotta, by which payments were made to
maintain armies and fortifications in the interests of Spain. The
Spanish colonies on the other hand were held by tenures of
different kinds but supervised by the "Council of Italy" in
Madrid. In Naples, the viceroys were assisted, in theory, by a parliament (like the French États Généraux) and there were embryonic forms of local administration on a democratic basis. More or less the same system prevailed in Sicily but the Parliament consisted mainly of nobles who did at times defend the national interests of Sicily, whilst at others they followed the dictates of the Spanish administrators. However the Sicilian Parliament had survived the Angevins and the Aragonese, and could vote taxes and introduce legislation. In Sardinia, just as in the other Spanish occupied regions, the administration was cumbersomous, restrictive and harsh.

The main purpose of these territories was to provide funds for Madrid, and to subsidise the satellite states. Taxation was farmed out, and the collectors were usually Genoese. But whatever their nationality, these gentlemen took care to feather their nests.

Milan was under a military régime, and held mainly for strategic reasons, since the past prosperity had been destroyed by ravaging armies, and by the absurd system of taxes, customs, and gabelle (salt tax).

The curious feature of the Spanish domination was that it was not unduly resented by the Italians, probably because of the national affinity between the two nations, the similarity of language, and common outlook on religious matters. In any case they were united by the threat of the Turks, the raids of the Barbary pirates, and the fear of the French who were much disliked because of the brutality and arrogance of their troops during their various invasions.

The satellite states fared quite well in the second half of the sixteenth century, mainly because of the relative state of peace, and because the Spanish subsidies did help to restore any adverse balance of trade. The building of the immense fortifications which are still to be seen in so many small Italian towns certainly did provide employment.

Tuscany and Lucca with their rich agriculture producing oil and wine could be self-sufficient. Parma and Modena depended on the export of their excellent wool, and the rice and corn harvested on the plain.

The Genoese had lost their political importance and their military and naval strength but were able to grow rich on banking, and on the carrying trade of the Western Mediterranean.
Venice, slightly diminished as a power, often came to terms with the Turks in order to be able to trade with the Levant, and the Venetians were rich enough to continue building and employing artists like Veronese to paint splendid frescoes on walls and ceilings, whilst Palladio not only constructed magnificent churches in Venice, superb villas on the Brenta, but, almost single-handed, created most of the palaces of Vicenza, as well as his unique Olympic theatre. Then also, in Venice, Sansovino completed one side of the Piazza San Marco whilst he was also responsible for the Old Library which is considered to be one of the finest structures of its kind in Italy.

However it is interesting to note that during this period, the Gonzagas of Mantua did build their two sumptuous palaces, the Palazzo del Te and the Reggio, and that the Farnese Duke of Parma did erect part of the immense Palazzo della Pilotta.

In Tuscany, Grand Duke Cosimo took up residence in the Pitti Palace (the model, it is said of the Luxembourg in Paris), and built for his administrators the superb Uffizi, the colonnaded building which now houses one of the world’s finest collections of pictures. Since he was a man of boundless energy, he planned and partially executed a new capital of Elba which was to be called Cosmopolis—it is now called Portoferaio—where Cosimo’s walls and gateway have survived. Then the Port of Leghorn (Livorno) was constructed, expanded and developed into a harbour of commercial importance under the supervision of Robert Dudley, son of Elizabeth’s Earl of Leicester. Since Leghorn was a free port and there was no religious persecution, Jews from Spain and North Africa settled in this city and contributed greatly to its prosperity.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Popes were increasingly preoccupied with their functions as spiritual heads of the Church, and the influence that they could exert on Catholicism.

Paul IV (1555–1559) was one of the most vigorous Pontiffs of the century and continued the work of reforming the Church, publishing the Index of forbidden books, and extending the scope of the Inquisition.

Pius V succeeded in uniting the Catholic powers of Europe against the expansion of the Turks with the result that the Christian fleet destroyed or captured two hundred and ten Moslem
galleys at the battle of Lepanto (1571). However, as the Sultan observed, "The Christians have only singed my whiskers, for I can rebuild my fleet, whilst I shall cut off one of their limbs"—meaning the capture of Cyprus from the Venetians which took place two years later. Pius V also pronounced a decree of anathema against Queen Elizabeth I and this was held in some circles to release Catholic Englishmen from their allegiance to her. He published the new catechism authorised by the Council of Trent, and also a revised edition of the Catholic breviary.

Sixtus V, 1585–1590, a Franciscan of outstanding talent and energy, continued the Reform of the Church, established order by an effective policing of the Papal State, and contributed to the prosperity of his subject by introducing the cultivation of silk. He had hopes of uniting the Christians once more against the Turks, but the defeat of the Spanish Armada which had received his blessing as a Crusade, put an end to this dream.

Sixtus V took a great interest in the expansion and the ornamenting of Rome. He built the Via Sistina, the Via delle Quattro Fontane, and other streets on the north side of Rome, whilst he was responsible for the restoration of the Columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, and the erection of the obelisks in St. Peter's Square and the Piazza del Popolo. The Sistine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore was built during his Pontificate, and it is here that he is buried. Lastly, he commissioned Domenico Fontana to rebuild the superb palace of St. John Lateran which had been destroyed by fire. Thus, this great Pontiff is commemorated in nearly every part of Rome.
THE DREAM OF SAVOY
French and Imperial Rivalry in the Seventeenth Century

SUMMARY
The seventeenth century was a period of relative calm in Italy as the Empire is torn by religious dissensions and ruined by the Thirty Years War. For the first sixty years of the century the French are also occupied with civil wars, and though later they fought against the Imperialists and Spanish, the fighting is mainly in Northern Italy.

Venice 1645 Turks land in Crete, and after twenty-two years’ siege Candia is taken and the whole of the island occupied. Peloponnesus seized by Venetians from the Turks.

Naples Relative quiet in Naples save for two popular rebellions against the Spanish.

Rome Splendid reconstruction of Rome by architects such as Bernini after the surge of the Reformation is checked.

Tuscany Medici continue their rule with declining energy.

Savoy Gradual expansion on the Italian side of the Alps with consequent gain in prestige for the Dukes.

By a stroke of skilful diplomacy the French King had exchanged the territory of Saluzzo for the province of Bresse with the Duke of Savoy. Now Bresse was French speaking and lies to the North of the Alps, whilst Saluzzo was Italian speaking and lies to the West of Turin and to the South of the Alps. As a result of this transfer a bulwark against Spanish aggression had been strengthened, and the ambitious Dukes of Savoy could make plans to extend their domains in Italy rather than in France.

The Venetians, whose independence was threatened by Spanish conspiracies, also relied on French support when it suited their convenience, but, like the Dukes of Savoy, they changed their
allegiance frequently in order to maintain a balance of power—it was in fact the only policy that could be followed by the Italian states in order to survive complete domination by the Habsburgs, or the Bourbons.

Thus, the Grand Dukes of Tuscany allied themselves with France after having expanded their territories with the help of the Spanish. Similarly the seventeenth-century Popes looked to France for support when the flood of the Reformation was stemmed. Both states lay between the Duchy of Milan, the Kingdom of Naples and the Presidio which were garrisoned by the Kings of Spain. Thus Tuscany and the Patrimony of St. Peter could easily have been overwhelmed by the Spanish if it had not been for the French.

The Tuscans consolidated their bonds with France by marrying Marie de Medici, daughter of Grand Duke Francesco, to Henry IV.

As for the Popes, while it is true that Paul V (Camillo Borghese) subsidised the Imperialists at the outset of the Thirty Years War, the Barberini Pope Urban VIII (1623–44) tried to maintain a neutral attitude that could not fail to help the Protestants and weaken the Habsburgs.

The people of Milan and Lombardy were too impoverished and too weak to put up any kind of resistance to the domination of the Kings of Spain who always maintained strong garrisons in Northern Italy. In any case, the Lombards preferred the Spanish to the French or the Germans, whereas the Piedmontese had a natural affinity for the French since Chambéry, the capital of Savoy, was geographically in France and French speaking. French was also spoken in many parts of North-western Italy until the latter half of the nineteenth century and it is still the current language in the Val d’Aosta.

For a while, the Duchy of Mantua was the source of conflict between the Italian states, France and Spain, the Italians being divided as to which claimant should occupy the vacant ducal throne; but the Venetians and the Popes supported the candidate of the French Duke of Nevers.

The War of the Mantuan Succession (1627–1631) came to an end when Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden invaded Germany, and distracted the attention of Imperialists and also of the Spanish who were anxious about the safety of their possessions in the
Netherlands. So the French candidate succeeded to this Duchy, but its importance dwindled until the death of the last Gonzaga in 1707 when it became a possession of the Holy Roman Empire and was turned into a fortress and strongly garrisoned.

For nearly three centuries (1319-1608) Mantua had been one of the most important centres of art and learning in Italy, mainly owing to the patronage of the Gonzagas who built superb palaces and gave employment to great painters and architects. The painter Mantegna was induced to come to this city from Padua, Alberti the architect of the façade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, was commissioned to build the Church of Sant' Andrea, whilst Petrarch, Ariosto and many other poets owed much to the encouragement and financial help of the Gonzagas. The sack of Mantua by the Imperialist troops in 1630 put an end to the golden age of culture, as well as to the prosperity of its inhabitants.

Ferrara, another of the great centres of the Renaissance, had lost its glory and prosperity when it was annexed to the Papal States upon the death of the last of the Estes in 1597.

Thus the little states and cities of Renaissance Italy vanished one by one. Mantua, it is true, survived for some time, but the Marquisate of Monferrato which had belonged to the Gonzagas, was handed over to the Dukes of Savoy, who had participated in this war in the name of Italian independence. The phrase is full of portent for it stresses the fact that the Dukes of Savoy were already dreaming of the day when they would rule the whole of the Italian peninsula.

The vicissitudes of the House of Savoy during the seventeenth century are so complicated that it would be unprofitable to enumerate them in detail. Whilst the Dukes continued to play off the French and the Habsburgs against each other, and unhesitatingly changed sides at the slightest provocation, throughout the seventeenth century they were more frequently allied to the French than to the Spanish.

In 1632, the reigning Duke assumed the rank of Royal Highness—thirty years later, one of his successors married a niece of Louis XIV, but she most unfortunately died in the following year. Nevertheless, under pressure from the King of France, Duke Victor Amadeus II began to wage war against his own subjects in the Val D'Aosta who were Waldensian Protestants
and French speaking. These highlanders resisted vigorously but they were eventually overcome and transported to the North of the Alps. Undaunted, they scaled high peaks and passes, and returned to their former homes.

In the present day the inhabitants of the Val d’Aosta still speak their traditional dialect of French, and the Waldensian pastors continue to preach in their churches. In this more liberal age, the people of Val d’Aosta have a considerable degree of autonomy, and, with the cutting of the road tunnel through the Mont Blanc in 1962 they are likely to enjoy increasing prosperity. Their survival is an astonishing example of courage and tenacity. The Waldensian heresy existed before the Reformation, but in the sixteenth century they assimilated many of the tenets of their Protestant neighbours in Geneva. In 1655, thirty years before the “War”, the massacres of the Waldensians aroused the indignation of Cromwell and of Milton: “Avenge O Lord Thy scattered Saints. . . .” In the early seventeenth century they received subsidies from Queen Anne of England.

During the long reign of Victor Amadeus II (1675–1730), Savoy suffered many invasions, changing sides as usual in the War of the League of Augsburg, and in the War of the Spanish Succession. In 1703, Victor Amadeus II broke off his alliance with France, and transferred his allegiance to the Habsburg claimant to the Holy Roman Empire. Though Savoy was occupied until the end of the War, and Piedmont was repeatedly overrun, the result of this volte-face was profitable. By the Treaty of Utrecht, all the Duke’s domains were restored to him, and he received, besides, all French territories to the South of the Alps. Though these were small in area, and quite unproductive, their strategic value was considerable. As a reward for his services to the Empire, Victor Amadeus II was made King of Sicily, and could now take his place among the monarchs of Europe.

Whilst Savoy was expanding progressively, the fortunes of the Republic of Venice continued the decline that had begun with the attacks by the League of Cambrai in the early part of the sixteenth century. However it would be an error to suggest that Venice was decadent, for the citizens of the Republic fought courageously against the incessant onslaughts of the Turks, although, for most of the time, the other states of Europe remained passive or even hostile. The Spanish, for instance, were
always trying to stir up trouble, and their agents, and even their ambassadors paid out large sums in bribes in order to suborn some of the leading Venetians.

In 1618, a conspiracy was discovered whereby a Spanish fleet was to make a surprise attack on the city of Venice, destroy the arsenal and capture the Doge and his Council together with all the nobles. Although this plot was discovered and frustrated, from henceforth, the Inquisitors of State, or the Council of Three as they were called, exercised increasing vigilance over the security of the Republic and arrests of alleged spies or traitors were frequent. The Inquisitors, who had nothing at all to do with the "Holy Inquisition", were the nominees of the Council of Ten, and they often prosecuted individuals as the result of anonymous denunciations placed in a special box on the walls of the Doge's Palace.

In 1645, war broke out with Turkey, and at the outset the Venetian fleet defeated the Ottoman fleet off the Dardanelles. However the Turks succeeded in landing in Crete, captured Canea, and soon after began the siege of Candia (Heraklion) which lasted for twenty-two years. The Venetians did receive some help from Tuscany, from the Pope, from the Knights of Malta and from Naples, but it was insignificant—in fact little more than a salving of conscience. The King of Spain and the Emperor, both of whom had every reason to want to stem the onslaught of the Turks, did nothing, whilst a French expeditionary force of only 4,000 men was sent too late in the day that it did not even delay the fall of the beleaguered city (1669).

Perhaps, after all, the courage of the Venetians had not been entirely useless. Though the Republic was impoverished and weakened and Crete was lost, the Turkish expansion in the Mediterranean was terminated, though their aggression on land continued. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire might well have come to an end, for in 1683, the Venetian Admiral Mocenigo had nearly forced the Dardanelles with a view to capturing and destroying Constantinople.

In 1685, war broke out again, but this time the Venetians had as allies the Russians, the Poles and the Empire. In a brilliant campaign, the Venetian Morosini occupied the Morea (Peloponnese) as well as much of Greece to the North of the Gulf of Corinth. When peace was concluded, the Venetians were given the whole of the Morea, though it was gradually reconquered
by the Turks in 1714, and completely surrendered to them by the Treaty of Passarovitz in 1718. (Incidentally, during the siege of Athens by Morosini, a Venetian shell landed on a Turkish powder magazine on the Acropolis and wrecked the Parthenon which had been almost intact until then.)

If the Venetian painters of the seventeenth century were undistinguished, architecture continued to flourish, for Baldassare Longhena built the wonderful Church of the Salute, completed the Procuratie Nuove in St. Mark’s Square, and was responsible for several fine palaces on the Grand Canal.

In Naples, economic conditions were a little better than in the Duchy of Milan, but the Spanish administration here was clumsy, corrupt and inefficient. Owing to an absurd system of taxation, farmed out to unscrupulous and overbearing Genoese bankers, life in the country was so difficult that peasants crowded into the cities and more especially into Naples.

At the outset of the seventeenth century, a revolt in Calabria was stamped out with great severity. In 1621, there were bread riots in Naples but these were suppressed without difficulty.

In 1647, an increase of taxation on fruit and vegetables exasperated the populace of Naples and a revolt broke out led by an Amalfi fisherman, Tommaso Aniello, nicknamed Masaniello. The rebels soon dominated the city of Naples, but Masaniello became so arrogant that he was murdered by one of his own partisans. A new leader, Amnese, invited the Duc de Guise, a co-lateral descendant of the House of Anjou, to become King, but the latter proved completely ineffective, even though he had the support of a French fleet. The revolt was ended by agreement with a new Spanish viceroy, who broke all his promises and executed many of the rebel leaders.

In 1670, there was a revolt against the Spanish in Messina, and here again the French were invited to intervene. Louis XIV’s troops garrisoned the city until the Treaty of Nijmegen, when they abandoned it to the fearful retributions of the Spanish.

If Italy in the seventeenth century was marked by lack of creativeness and imagination among painters and sculptors, there were compensations in other artistic fields. Italian actors who had achieved some fame in other countries in the previous century, were still held in high esteem, and travelling players from Italy were well received everywhere. In the early eighteenth century
most European capitals supported a company of "Italian Com-
medians". The characters of the "Commedia del' Arte" and
of the Italian masques have survived as Punch and Judy in
England and Polichinelle in France, and in the Harlequinades of
Victorian pantomimes.

Music also provided an escape from the austerity that prevailed
as a result of the Counter-Reformation, and we may perhaps
trace the beginnings of Opera to Galileo's father, and the Opera-
tic aria was developed by Scarlatti. Not much later, composers
like Stradella contributed still further to the evolution of Opera.
Then instrument-makers like Amati and Stradivarius produced
the finest string instruments which have served as models ever
since. Naples and Venice were not only cradles of comedy and
dancing, but the seats of two of the most important schools of
music of the age.

In a sense it is almost true to say the Italian influence on the arts
was greater in the seventeenth century than during the Renais-
sance, partly because several Italian princesses married European
monarchs, but largely because travellers flocked from all parts
of Europe to Italy.

Many came to study at the universities of Padua and Bologna
where no one interfered with Protestants provided that they
were not Italian. Others such as Milton, Evelyn and the President
des Brosses came out of intellectual curiosity. Artists like Poussin
and Claude came not only to learn but also to paint the landscapes
which helped to create the legend of a Romantic Italy, and paved
the way for the "Grand Tours" of the eighteenth century and
the immense colonies of foreigners in the nineteenth century.

The Popes of the seventeenth century were preoccupied by
their urgent desire to avoid being involved in the Thirty Years
War, in the wars between the French and the Habsburgs. The
latter, being nearer, appeared to present the greater peril. Then,
in spite of the epic struggle between the Protestants and the
Catholics in Germany, the Reformation had ceased to make any
advance since the signing of the Edict of Nantes which turned out
to be a victory for the moderate Catholics whilst giving the
Papacy a protector against the Holy Roman Emperors, for the
Sack of Rome was something more than a remote memory.

The Papal States were impoverished by bad administration,
but an ever-growing number of pilgrims brought prosperity to
the Holy City itself, and the Pontiffs, like Louis XIV, sought to increase their prestige and their influence by the splendour of their setting.

Paul V (Camillo Borghese, 1605–1621) commissioned Maderna to build the façade of St. Peter’s, and the Cappella Paolina in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini, 1623–1644) discovered Bernini, who may well be considered the creator of Baroque Rome. An architect and a sculptor of outstanding genius, he completed the building of St. Peter’s, and made the famous Baldachino of the High Altar out of the copper stripped from the roof of the Pantheon. Subsequently, he laid out the superb colonnade in St. Peter’s Square, and built the astonishing Scala Regia in the Vatican. With tireless energy Bernini and his pupils built palaces, churches and fountains, completing the Palazzo Barberini, adorning the principal squares such as the Piazza Navona, the Piazza di Spagna and the Piazza del Tritone with monumental fountains, and the churches with statuary.

By creating Baroque Rome, the Popes gave expression in artistic form to the ideals of the Counter-Reformation for this architectural style was a Christian interpretation of classical forms. Its sensuousness was an answer to the austerity of the Protestants, who were inclined to stress personal integrity, whilst the Catholics valued charity. It was in this century that men like St. Vincent de Paul founded orders for the relief of poverty, sickness and old age.
I4

THE PEACEFUL CENTURY

The Development of Austrian Influence during the Eighteenth Century

SUMMARY

1713 Treaty of Utrecht: Victor Amadeus II given Sicily, whilst Austria took over Sardinia, the Duchy of Milan and the Duchy of Mantua, which was joined to it. Kingdom of Naples also awarded to Austria.

1720 Victor Amadeus II exchanges Sicily for Sardinia and takes title of King of Sardinia.

1735 End of War of Polish Succession: Naples and Sicily allotted to Spanish Bourbons on condition that the new Kingdom never be joined to Spain.

When Charles III (1735–59) succeeds to the Throne of Spain, his son Ferdinand I (1759–1825) becomes King of Naples.

Ferdinand I of Naples marries Maria Carolina, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa.

Ferdinand, Duke of Parma, marries another daughter of Maria Theresa and falls under Austrian influence.

1737 Death of Gian Gastone, last of the Medici Grand-Dukes. Succeeded by Francis of Lorraine, husband of Maria Theresa.

In the eighteenth century (unlike the nineteenth century) Austrian influence in Italy is on the whole progressive. In the long run, the system of direct rule from Vienna was to be the cause of tyranny in the nineteenth century.

Although the War of the Spanish Succession raged for twelve years, a large part of Italy was untouched by invading armies or hostilities of any kind in the eighteenth century. There was indeed bitter fighting in the North-west, more especially in Piedmont and the Duchy of Milan, but this came to an end in
1706 after the unsuccessful siege of Turin by the French who withdrew from geographical Italy for the rest of the war, though they continued to occupy Savoy.

By the Treaty of Utrecht, the French handed back to Victor Amadeus II all the territories that they had taken from him, and there were some adjustments of the Franco-Italian frontier which were advantageous to him strategically. In Italy itself, Savoy gained Montferrat, Alexandria, and Vigerano, which meant an extension of Piedmont to the east.

The brief rule of the House of Savoy in Sicily (1713–17) was far from popular, for the Sicilians resented all the attempted reforms inaugurated by the newcomers. They did not oppose the Spanish armies which reoccupied the island without any difficulty and also drove the Austrians out of Sardinia just as easily. The fact was that the Sicilians had preserved some degree of home rule though the powers of their parliament were very limited, but it could exercise some measure of restraint on tyranny by the viceroys. Then, although their administration was often execrable, the Spanish had more affinity with the Sicilians and were, consequently, quite popular; and Sicilian nobles frequently achieved high rank in the Spanish armed forces and colonies or at the Court of Madrid.

On the other hand, the Sardinians loathed the Spanish because they were overbearing and had destroyed many of their democratic institutions. Indeed the Spanish had exploited and impoverished Sardinia, giving little or nothing in return. To this day, the descendants of the Catalans settled in Alghero in the North-west of the island are disliked by the Sardinians who have little contact with them, especially as they still speak the dialect of their homeland. The Austrians also were disliked, and have left no mark of their passage. On the other hand, the Savoyard and Piedmontese administrators of the new King were popular on the island, because they reformed the clumsy machinery of taxation, and all the public services. As Sardinia was poverty stricken owing to centuries of misrule, a slight improvement in economic conditions was also appreciated by the inhabitants of the handful of small cities, for in the absence of roads the population of the highlands was still more or less cut off from the outside world. So, in spite of some administrative reform, there was little real change in Sardinia during the eighteenth century.
The reign of Victor Amadeus II was noteworthy in Piedmont and Savoy because of numerous administrative reforms, among them a regulation by which French was made the official language of Savoy, thus paving the way for its annexation by France in 1860. In most of Piedmont, the dialects are halfway between French and the classical Italian of Tuscany, and French was the court language until it was gradually replaced by Italian in the first half of the nineteenth century. Even so, Cavour, the first Prime Minister of Italy after the Unification in 1860, spoke French in preference to Italian although he was the scion of a noble family of Turin.

This city which had become the capital of the Dukes in the mid-sixteenth century, gradually grew in importance, and tended to replace Chambéry which was still the capital of the province of Savoy. Until that time Turin had been little more than a border fortress, and so it has no monuments of importance built before the sixteenth century. Victor Amadeus II laid out the city with broad streets set at right angles to each other, and wide spacious squares, whilst his court architect, Guarini, built superb Baroque churches and palaces. After his death, the Sicilian, Juvara, took his place, designing the immense Superga Basilica as a monument to the victories of the War of the Spanish Succession, and to serve as a burial place for the Kings of the House of Savoy. Juvara was also responsible for the Palazzo Madama, and the huge Palazzo Stupinigi, two of the most remarkable pieces of architecture of the eighteenth century.

Charles Emanuel III (1730-1773) was another able King, whose reforms probably prevented Savoy and Piedmont from joining in the worst excesses of the French Revolution, for he abolished forced labour and many other relics of Feudalism, reduced taxation and insisted on more equitable methods of assessing and collecting. He backed the French in the War of the Polish Succession and the Imperialists in the War of the Austrian Succession. In this second war, Savoy was occupied for several years by the Spanish, who joined the French later on in driving through Northern Italy. After their defeat by the Austro-Sardinian Army, the frontiers of Piedmont were extended as far as the river Ticino, but the King of Sardinia was forced to recognise the right of the Empress Maria Theresa to the Duchy of Milan.

Victor Amadeus III (1773-1796) was quite unlike his father, for
ITALY after the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748
he was a reactionary, and his opposition to the French Revolutionary Government was to lead to the complete extinction of the rule of the House of Savoy on the mainland for nearly fifteen years.

However, the other states of Italy were to share the same fate although many of their princes had realised the need for progressive policies and had introduced many useful and humane reforms. There were three exceptions: Venice, the Papal States and Modena remained untouched by the enlightened ideas of the French philosophers and encyclopaedists.

The Venetian Government was quite naturally too obsessed by the fact that the Turks, the Emperors and the Popes were eagerly awaiting a pretext and opportunity to annex all the territories of the Republic as well as the city of Venice itself.

The Popes were too preoccupied with doctrinal quarrels to be able to think of drastic reforms. In any case, the ideas put forward by the French philosophers were associated with Atheism and anti-clericalism, and could only have been introduced with great circumspection.

Benedict XIV (1740–1758) was a friend of Voltaire and of Montesquieu, and his efforts to promote trade and agriculture met with some success, but his time was taken up with concluding concordats with the Kings of Naples and of Spain.

Clement XIII (1758–1769) a candidate of the pro-Jesuit party, called the Zelanti, was unable to save them from being expelled from France and Portugal, whilst his successor Clement XIV (1769–1774) was forced by the French to dissolve the Order of Jesuits.

Pius VI (1775–1799) tried to combat the anti-clerical tendencies of the age which were prevalent more especially in Austria and in the states governed by Habsburgs or Habsburg nominees, but he was destined to be overwhelmed by the French Revolutionary armies.

On the whole, the Duchy of Milan benefited by the transfer from the Spanish to the Austrians who were far better administrators, and were in many ways nearer in race and customs to the Lombards who have a strong Teutonic strain. The Spanish system of remote control was abolished, and the methods of assessing and levying taxation were gradually improved. Joseph II, Maria Theresa’s son, was a disciple of Voltaire and eager for
reform. Inspired by the works of two Lombard economists, the brothers Verri, the Emperor abolished the internal customs which were such a hindrance to trade and to the movement of goods, and encouraged agriculture and industry and, in particular, the production of silk. However, the Emperor’s Teutonic love of detail, his Austrian police, and above all his anti-clericalism made him unpopular. He did, in fact, introduce many of his reforms by force and before the people were ready to accept them.

Another major influence in Italy was the philosopher and economist, Cesare Beccaria, whose book on crime and punishment revolutionised the treatment of criminals throughout the greater part of Italy and was read in every country of the civilised world. Beccaria pleaded for the abolishment of torture and of the death penalty, save for those who betrayed their country. His ideas were put into practice in Tuscany and the Duchy of Milan, and partially adopted elsewhere in Italy, excepting only in the Papal States. The immediate reaction was an improvement in public order and less crime.

On the whole, the people of the Duchy of Milan flourished, and their growing prosperity was reflected in their lively social life which astonished the French when, under Bonaparte, they invaded Northern Italy.

In Tuscany, the reforms were even more thorough than in Milan, for the Grand Duke Leopold, brother of the Emperor Joseph II, identified himself with the interests of his adopted country, and governed with the help of Tuscans who replaced Austrians and other foreigners who had been brought in by his predecessor. Under his rule, Tuscany became one of the best governed states in Europe, and the result was an immediate and rapid improvement in economic conditions.

Inspired directly by the Encyclopaedists, all customs duties on exports and imports were abolished, a really equitable system of taxation was introduced, most of the army was disbanded and the ships of the navy were sold or broken up. Here, as in the Duchy of Milan, torture and the death penalty were abolished, prisons were improved, and the procedure of the courts was simplified, whilst criminals were no longer subjected to secret trials.

Though many of the reforms were due to the direct influence of the Encyclopaedists, much credit must be given to Freemasonry which had been introduced into Italy by English noblemen
doing the Grand Tour of Europe. Since Freemasonry was reputed to be anti-clerical, it was condemned by the Popes, and bitterly opposed by the Jesuits who attributed their persecution to its activities. Originally an aristocratic society, and including princes and even kings and queens among its members, in France and in Italy, it began to develop in an entirely different manner from English Freemasonry, since the members tended to pursue revolutionary ideas, and were for the most part middle class. Charles III (1735–1759) had been made King of Naples through the machinations of his ambitious mother, Elizabeth Farnese, Queen of Spain and heiress of the last Duke of Parma who had had no sons.

Charles had become, first of all, Duke of Parma, then when French and Spanish armies had attacked the Austrian possessions in Northern Italy, he had been the nominal commander-in-chief of a Spanish force that had occupied the Kingdom of Naples with the greatest of ease, since its arrival was welcomed by Neapolitans, and the Austrian garrison was very small. Sicily was also occupied without any difficulty, although the Austrian garrisons in three or four cities held out for a few months until forced to surrender by lack of food and water.

At the beginning of his reign, Charles III encountered some opposition from many of the nobles who were pro-Austrian because, under the former régime they had been able to govern their estates like feudal lords.

In 1737, the Emperor Philip V renounced all claims to the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily and the Tuscan Presidii on condition that these territories should never be united to the Kingdom of Spain. Parma and Piacenza were to be handed over to the Emperor, whilst the accession of Francis of Lorraine to the Grand-Duchy of Tuscany was to be approved by the Spanish and the Neapolitans.

Like true Bourbons, Charles III and his son Ferdinand IV were inveterate builders. Charles III commissioned the construction of the immense Palace of Caserta by Vanvitelli, and also the Palace of Capodimonte which was designed by the Sicilian Medrano. The latter was also responsible for the Teatro San Carlo which is one of the largest opera houses in the world. Within its precincts many of the most famous operas were first performed, and some of the greatest singers achieved celebrity on this stage.
Like his ancestor Louis XIV, Charles III succeeded in turning his nobles into courtiers, a policy which was profitable on short term since it put an end to their independent spirit, but in the long run it was harmful to the welfare of the countryside. The absentee landlords who swarmed to be near the King at Naples left their estates to be administered by rapacious bailiffs, whilst the rents were squandered on high living in the capital. Starving peasants left the land, and joined the ranks of the Lazzaroni in Naples, the thousands of unemployed whose nakedness shocked foreign visitors. These indigents slept in the open, lived on a handful of maize, revelled in an occasional glass of wine, and were firm supporters of the Bourbon kings, perhaps because these monarchs provided the pageantry to relieve the monotony of their existence.

Nevertheless Charles III was responsible for some useful reforms. The country had too many priests, too many monasteries and too many prelates for the extent of its population. The number of clergy was reduced slightly, some monastic houses were dissolved, and efforts which met with only small success, were made to curb the feudal rights and privileges of the great nobles. Economists and political philosophers were appointed to teach at the University of Naples, and their teaching helped to create an atmosphere of liberalism which prepared the way for the French Occupation in 1799, and consequently for the reactionary attitude of the Bourbons in the nineteenth century.

In 1759 Charles III became King of Spain, and so the throne of Naples was occupied by his son Ferdinand IV, but the able Tuscan Minister, Tannucci, continued to guide the destinies of the country. The new King was married off to Maria Carolina, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, and the “Austrian problem” was more or less solved. Ferdinand or Nasone (big nose), as he was nicknamed, was idle but good natured. His free and easy ways, his comic Neapolitan dialect, made him highly popular with the Neapolitans, but his determined wife took an increasing part in the administration of the Kingdom. However, until the coming of the French Revolutionary armies, foreigners of rank swarmed to Naples to enjoy the opera, the mild climate and the hospitality of the court. They found similar amenities in Florence and even Lucca.

In Venice the decline of the Republic was not without splendour,
There was gambling for high stakes at the Ridotto, the Carnival lasted for months—indeed, the Venetians were allowed to wear masks for four months a year. The painter, Tiepolo, decorated walls and ceilings of palaces, Canaletto and Guardi produced superb canvases of the Venetian scene, the realistic comedies of Goldoni, and the phantasies of his rival Gozzi, enraptured audiences of all nations in the Teatro Fenice.

By a strange paradox, the fame and influence of Italy grew as the fortunes of the individual states appeared to decline. Goldoni ended his days in Paris where his plays were performed; the poet, Alfieri, visited London. There were Italian painters, players, and decorators in every European capital, and people of culture prided themselves on a knowledge of Italian as well as of French. Italian opera as well as Italian music flourished, and the rich of every nation came to Italy to buy antiques or to visit the newly discovered ruins of Pompeii and Rome.

Lastly, Volta and Galvani made scientific discoveries that seemed to be of small practical worth at the time, but were of inestimable value to future generations.
NAPOLEON
Italy during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars (1791–1815)

SUMMARY

1791–92 French annex Savoy and Nice.
1796–97 Bonaparte drives the Austrians out of Northern Italy. Creation of the Cisalpine Republic to which the Cispadane Republic is joined (former Northern provinces of the Papal States). Venice under Austria.
1805 Création of the puppet Kingdom of Italy comprising Lombardy, Venetia and Istria. Piedmont, Genoa, Tuscany and Parma annexed by France.
1806 Joseph Bonaparte, King of Naples—is succeeded by his brother-in-law Joachim Murat in 1808.
1809 The States of the Church become part of the French Empire.
1814 Collapse of French rule in Italy.
1815 Murat driven out of Kingdom of Naples.

After something like three-quarters of a century of relative peace and gentle evolution under benevolent despots, the Italian states were to suffer a rude awakening through the French Revolution.

At first, some of the princes, including even the Queen of Naples, were not unsympathetic to this movement which appeared superficially to be a logical and arcanian fulfilment of the ideas of the French Encyclopaedists and of the Italian economists and political philosophers. However, the reaction soon came with the Reign of Terror, and the execution of Louis XVI and of Marie Antoinette, the sister of Queen Maria Carolina of Naples, the aunt of the Holy Roman Emperor and of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. As so often happened in the past, the North of Italy was destined to be the battleground of the French and of the
Imperialists. As usual, the King of Sardinia was the first victim of aggression, but this time from the West, because Victor Amadeus III was a reactionary and was not prepared to conclude an alliance with the Legislative Assembly, although he was offered Lombardy in exchange for Savoy (1791).

In this last province, some sympathisers with the Revolution had crossed the border, and returned the following year as volunteers in the French army. Owing to inefficient resistance, the whole of Savoy was occupied and became a department of France. The abolition of feudal dues, of the gabelle (salt tax), and of the French frontier made the new régime quite popular at first, though shortly afterwards, when elections were held, the Royalists were in the majority, and were suppressed by force. In every Italian city, there were Francophiles, liberals, and members of the middle classes or of the aristocracy whose revolutionary ideas had been developed in the Masonic lodges. So when the French armies occupied a region, they always found partisans ready to welcome them and to collaborate in the formation of a new administration.

This was more especially the case in Milan, where Bopanarte and his troops were welcomed as liberators from the Austrian rule as well as from the trammels of out-of-date legislation and economic restrictions. The Lombards even accepted with a fairly good grace the war indemnities imposed by the victors who plundered art treasures wherever they went, whilst professing the most arcadian and democratic political sentiments. Then, the fact that General Bonaparte was a Corsican and therefore of Italian stock, was a source of nationalistic pride, particularly in regions which had been recently under the Austrians. Masséna, another general, was not only of Italian race, but he was born in Nice, and therefore theoretically a subject of the King of Sardinia.

In Milan, the French officers were feted by the Lombard aristocracy, whilst the whole population was filled with pride when their city became the capital of the Cisalpine Republic, and later of the Kingdom of Italy. A short-lived Cispadane Republic was created out of the Northern Papal States which were annexed by the Cisalpine Government. The flag of the new Republic, red, white and green, embodied the red of the Papal States (represented in the former Cispadane Republics) with the green
and white of Lombardy which was the nucleus of the Cisalpine Republic. This flag was taken as a symbol of Italian unity, and has remained so ever since.

For its brief period of existence, the Cisalpine Republic had as chief statesmen, the Italian Duke, Melzi d'Eril, who was replaced by Napoleon’s stepson, Eugène Beauharnais, when the Kingdom of Italy was established.

Many liberals, like the poet Ugo Foscolo, had welcomed the arrival of the French. These Italians turned against them eventually when they realised that they had conquered Italy only to exploit it and use its inhabitants as cannon fodder. Foscolo protested to Napoleon against the handing over of Venice to the Austrians in 1797, for, like other Venetian liberals, he had hoped that the French would stay and bring many reforms. After serving for some years in the French army, Foscolo concluded that the salvation of Italy could not be attained through the agency of either the French or even of the Austrians who had considered for a while the perpetuation of the Kingdom of Italy after Napoleon’s first abdication.

In 1797, in the course of a riot fostered by the French Jacobins, General Duphot, the military attaché at Joseph Bonaparte’s embassy in Rome, was killed by a corporal in the Papal army. This was seized on as a pretext for the occupation (and plunder) of Rome whilst the unfortunate and aged Pius VI was removed to France. This arbitrary action roused the King of Naples, Ferdinand IV, to such indignation that he sent a Neapolitan army to liberate the Holy City. Badly led and commanded, the Neapolitan army was easily defeated, and the French general, Championnet, was able to advance on Naples. The entry was stoutly defended by the lazzaroni who had at the same time to combat the liberal elements in the city. These, though far less numerous, had the advantage of French assistance and so resistance was quelled. Championnet, a regular officer of the Ancien Régime, behaved in a reasonably humane manner, though he did impose heavy war indemnities.

Hastily a government of Neapolitan Liberals was formed to organise the “Parthenopean Republic”. Some sound reforms were introduced, but the newcomers had not the support of the majority of the country, and could only maintain themselves in power with the help of the invaders. A number of aristocrats from the
Masonic lodges rallied to the Republic, including also some former court officials and officers of the armed forces. Although the latter should have been bound by their oath of allegiance to the King, their action was partially justified by the fact that Ferdinand and Maria Carolina had fled to Sicily at the first sign of danger. Since the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, the Royal couple had discarded the mildly liberal ideas they had at times professed and even practised, and become complete reactionaries—an attitude that their successors were to maintain, with fatal results to their dynasty. Considering that they were haunted by the fear of assassination, and by the remote possibility of being guillotined, this change of attitude is scarcely surprising. Bewildered and frightened, they lacked a sense of direction, and, because of the unfortunate influence of Nelson's Lady Hamilton, who swayed the Queen, who in her turn dominated the King, they were often vindictive.

In 1799, there was a sudden reversal of the French fortunes whilst Bonaparte was away in Egypt. The Austrians defeated the French on the Rhine, and a combined army of Russians and Austrians drove them out of Northern Italy, overthrowing for the time being, the Cisalpine Republic, to the great joy of the majority of its citizens.

MacDonald, who now commanded the French forces in Naples, had hurried to the North, only to be defeated by the Russians. In the meantime, Cardinal Ruffo, a scion of a leading Calabrian aristocratic family, had landed in his native province alone. With incredible speed, he gathered round his standard of the “Holy Faith”, an army of peasants and outlaws, and advanced to the reconquest of his country. That his followers plundered and behaved at times with great savagery cannot be denied, but to do them justice, the Republicans had executed many of their opponents as traitors, and they had collaborated with the foreign invader who had carried off the Pope into exile.

Assisted by the action of the British fleet in the Bay of Naples, and by a small contingent of Turks and Russians, the Army of the Holy Faith disposed of the Republicans without undue difficulty, and the Monarchy was re-established.

When the Royalists entered Naples, some of the Republicans surrendered to Cardinal Ruffo on condition that they should be allowed to leave the country and join the French. Nelson not only
repudiated this agreement, but on his authority, the Republican Admiral Caracciolo was tried by court martial on a British ship, condemned and hanged from the yardarm. Although the Neapolitan had undoubtedly broken his oath of allegiance to his King, and taken up arms against him after having commanded the Neapolitan naval forces at Toulon, Nelson was held by many of his colleagues and superiors to have acted dishonourably and because of his infatuation for Lady Hamilton, to have allowed himself to be swayd into committing a judicial crime.

In the following year (1800), the French regained their supremacy when Bonaparte returned from Egypt. Boldly the young general led an army over the St. Bernard Pass and routed the Austrians at the Battle of Marengo. He reoccupied the whole of Northern Italy, re-establishing the Cisalpine Republic. However, the Kingdom of Naples remained independent save for a few French garrisons and the closing of the ports to British ships, whilst Pope Pius VII was allowed to rule what was left of the Papal States.

There were other changes too ephemeral to be recorded here, for the year after the creation of the French Empire (1804), Napoleon was crowned King of Italy, and the Ligurian Republic and the Presidii became an integral part of France, in the same way as Piedmont had done not long before.

After their defeat at Austerlitz (1805), the Austrians handed back Venice and Venetia to Napoleon together with the provinces of Istria and Dalmatia which had belonged to the Serene Republic. Having disposed of the Austrians and the Russians, Napoleon turned his attention once more to the Kingdom of Naples, which had joined the coalition against him.

Early in 1806, Joseph Bonaparte led an army into Southern Italy, and was shortly afterwards proclaimed King of Naples. Just as before, King Ferdinand and Queen Maria Carolina withdrew to Sicily, and remained there for the next eight years under the protection of the British forces, commanded at first by Sir John Moore of Corunna fame. In 1806, a small British force under Sir John Stuart defeated the French at the Battle of Maida in Calabria, and then withdrew to Sicily. But the Calabrian peasants rose against the invaders and were suppressed after singularly bloodthirsty partisan warfare. Nevertheless a French army had been defeated on level terms.
King Joseph, aided mainly by French advisers, introduced some useful reforms before he left to become King of Spain in 1808, when his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, took his place.

In the North of Italy, there was relative quiet under the rule of the viceroy, Eugène Beauharnais. After the King of the puppet state of Etruria died, his widow was quietly removed and Tuscany was added to the Empire of France, whilst in the same year (1808) a French column occupied Rome which was formally annexed together with what remained of the Papal States in 1809. Pope Pius VII, who had protested against this unwarranted aggression, was carried off to Tuscany, and was shortly afterwards installed at Fontainebleau in France.

These attacks upon the Papal States and upon the person of the Pope, the high taxation levied to pay for Napoleon's wars, the enforcement of conscription, and the crippling of trade by the continental blockade increased the unpopularity of the French. Out of the Italian contingent of 20,000 that marched to Russia in 1812, only 333 men returned, and it must be remembered that, besides these casualties, Italian conscripts were also serving in Spain and in other parts of Europe.

When the French Empire collapsed in 1814, the Kingdom of Italy was overrun, Eugène Beauharnais capitulated and his troops were allowed to return to France. Joachim Murat, anxious to save his own realm, had not come to his assistance and as a reward for actually fighting against his former countrymen he was allowed to keep his throne for the time being. Whilst the Austrians had descended on Italy from the north-east, an Anglo-Sicilian force had landed in Leghorn (Livorno) and "liberated" Genoa. Nevertheless, when the preliminary settlements were made, Genoa with her former territories was handed over to the King of Sardinia and annexed to Piedmont, and the County of Nice and Savoy returned to their former allegiance.

By the Congress of Vienna (June 1815) the Milanese and Venetia were formed into the Kingdom of Lombardo-Venetia and apportioned to the Emperor of Austria, who also gained Istria and Dalmatia which were placed under a separate administration. Tuscany welcomed back its former Duke, and Parma and Piacenza were given to Marie-Louise, the former wife of Napoleon. It was to revert at her death to the Bourbons of Parma, who were to have Lucca which was then to pass to
Tuscany. The Duchy of Modena was reserved for the last of the Estes and her husband, an Austrian Archduke.

No sooner had Murat learned that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and had landed in France, than he determined to try to make himself the first King of United Italy, thus perpetrating his second betrayal within twelve months. Curiously enough, if he had waited longer, it is just conceivable that he might have been successful. In a short space of time, the Austrians had made themselves very unpopular by their police methods. The Genoese resented being annexed by the King of Sardinia, who on his return used repressive methods even on his former subjects. In the Papal States, once more under the Holy See, many of the enlightened reforms of the French régime had been abolished. However the Austrians had no difficulty in defeating Murat whose Neapolitan soldiers had no enthusiasm for this adventure, especially as his rule had become increasingly unpopular.

Whilst Ferdinand and Maria Carolina returned in triumph to Naples, Murat fled first to France, where Napoleon refused to see him, and then on to Corsica. Refusing an offer of asylum from Metternich, he set out a few weeks later to attempt to reconquer this lost Kingdom, with about 250 adventurous soldiers of fortune. As his small flotilla was scattered by a storm, he landed at Pizzo in Calabria with only thirty men, expecting to be welcomed by his former subjects. After a short struggle, he was captured by the local gendarmerie, and six weeks later he was shot by order of a court martial.

In spite of his tragic end, Murat had been quite popular in Naples itself, for the Neapolitans were charmed by his dashing ways, his brilliant uniforms, and his reputation as a great cavalry general. By the beginning of his reign, the measures of reform introduced by his predecessor, King Joseph, were beginning to have good results, in particular, the abolition of feudal dues, and of local customs. King Joachim had ordered the construction of roads which were swiftly completed thanks to his energetic supervision. His greatest achievement, the highway from Naples to Calabria, was the first real road to be built through the Southern provinces. On the other hand, Murat had refused to give his subjects a Constitution, though he had started to provide a fairly liberal system of public education, including the founding of a university in Calabria. Certain Italians in the South and in the
central provinces of the peninsula had considered him as a potential king of United Italy, and so, even after his death, there was a small Muratist party in the Kingdom of Naples.

Generally speaking, the French occupation of Italy did prepare the way for the Risorgimento, the national awakening which led to unification. First of all there was the flag, the notable achievements of Italian soldiers in the Imperial armies, and the useful experience gained by civil servants in administration. Then Italy was divided up like France into departments with prefects, and was represented (in a rather limited way) by its own senators in Paris. The greatest benefit of all was the Code Napoléon, which was in all probability a century ahead of the legal system of any other country in the world—it is used, with many modifications, in Italy today.

Napoleon had signed a Concordat with the Pope, which was in fact an agreement regulating the relations between Church and State, and between the Holy See and the State. A similar Concordat was signed between the puppet Kingdom of Italy and the Pope.

The abolition of the frontiers of so many small states together with the introduction of the decimal system throughout the country proved to be a great incentive to trade, and would have brought real prosperity had it not been for the continental blockade, the rise in taxation, and the paralysing effect of conscription.

If French Imperialism had brought disillusionment, the reactionary attitude of the Austrians, the Papal administrators, the Bourbons of Naples, and the Kings of Sardinia induced Italians to remember the best aspects of the Napoleonic régime, and to forget its unpleasant elements. Nevertheless Italian liberals had come to the conclusion that to achieve freedom and unity, they would have to rely mainly on their own efforts.

Finally, Sicily, protected by British troops from invasion by the French, had remained unconquered. The British administrator, Lord William Bentinck, had been able to induce the King to give the Sicilians a constitution on the British model. Though it only lasted for a little over two years, it provided a taste of democratic rule, and this, together with the relatively good administration of the British Commission, made the Sicilians eager for reform and accounted largely for the welcome they gave Garibaldi when he landed in 1860.
THE A WAKENING OF ITALY
The Risorgimento: the Years of Preparation (1815–1849)

SUMMARY

The Carbonari and other secret societies prepare for the overthrow of tyranny.

1821 Revolution in Piedmont. Victor Emmanuel resigns in favour of his brother, Charles Felix. Their nephew Charles-Albert leads the constitutionalists into Lombardy. He deserts them and they are defeated at Novara.

1831 Charles-Albert King of Sardinia. Mazzini founds the Republican movement called "Young Italy," which is Christian in spirit.

1846 Pius IX (Pio Nono) elected.

1848 The Sardinians wage two unsuccessful wars against the Austrians.

1849 Proclamation of the Roman Republic. Rome then recaptured by the French, in spite of Garibaldi's resistance. The Austrians besiege and reoccupy Venice which had proclaimed a Republic in 1848.

By the Congress of Vienna the French were completely eliminated from all parts of Italy, with the sole exception of Corsica, which they had, after all, purchased from the Genoese Republic in 1768.

To all appearances it seemed as if the Austrian hold on Italy was far stronger than in the eighteenth century, for if the new Austrian "Kingdom of Lombardo-Venetia" did not include the former Venetian possessions of Istria and Dalmatia, they were now part of the Empire under a separate administration.

Ferdinand IV of Naples was henceforth to be styled Ferdinand I, King of the Two Sicilies, and his rule in Sicily was absolute, for he had brought to an abrupt end the constitution established by the British. Though Queen Maria Carolina had died in 1814, Ferdinand relied more than ever before on Austrians, for he had
ITALY after 1815
been reinstated by them. He had no confidence in his own armed forces, and was haunted by the fear of revolution.

With the ex-Empress of France established in Parma, a Habsburg Duke in Modena and another Austrian Grand-Duke in Tuscany, Sardinia (Piedmont) was the only state in Italy to be independent of Austria, and the only state to have an Italian hereditary ruler.

Although King Victor Emmanuel I was a reactionary who revived many of the feudal institutions and laws that had existed before the Revolution, his hatred and suspicion of Austria was in no way diminished. Nevertheless, in the years that immediately followed the Congress of Vienna, he was more or less bound to acquiesce in the policy of the Holy Alliance which had been formed at the instigation of the Austrian Prime Minister, Prince Metternich, in collaboration with the French Foreign Minister, Talleyrand.

This Alliance was styled Holy because the sovereigns concerned undertook to uphold the maxims of Christianity in their methods of government. It was actually intended to perpetuate the system of absolute rule by the ancient monarchies, to see that the clauses and conditions of the Treaty of Vienna were observed, and above all to combat the subversive doctrines of the French Revolution.

In Tuscany, Ferdinand III was far from being a tyrant, and his minister Fossombroni was responsible for some useful economic measures such as the draining of marshes, the improvement of roads and the easing of trade restrictions. His administration of justice and his reform of legal procedure, begun before the Revolution, were based partly on the theories of Beccaria, but also on the Code Napoléon. The régime in Tuscany was so liberal, that “patriotic” writers from the more autocratic states came to Florence as refugees.

Parma was ruled in a liberal manner by the ex-empress Maria Louise, who was far more preoccupied with her lover, Count Neiperg, than with politics. In Lucca also she was very popular with her subjects.

The return of the kindly Pius VII to Rome heralded, most unfortunately, the re-establishment of the Inquisition, the strict application of the Index, and the restoration of all the feudal trappings, imposed by an inefficient bureaucracy of Churchmen.
All the Papal States were restored to the Holy See, but Austrian garrisons were installed in some of the Northern cities (Piacenza, Ferrara and Comacchio) where the population had rebelled in favour of the French, before the creation of the Cispadane Republic.

Nevertheless, the only Italians who objected to the different restorations were some members of the aristocracy and of the middle classes and, of course, the Venetians and the Genoese whose states had been suppressed. The others were relieved at the disappearance of conscription, and of the French troops who had at times plundered and displayed arrogance.

Obviously, the intellectuals and the former supporters of the French régime were discontented, and the discontent spread because oppressive and restrictive regulations and laws were applied with increasing severity, and because of the growth of national feeling, inspired largely by the secret societies.

In the Romagna (at that time one of the Northern provinces of the Papal States) the Guelfia was a society that advocated the creation of a united Italy under a liberal Pope. In the North-east, the Federati were in favour of establishing a federation of the Italian States under a King or the Pope.

There were also counter-revolutionary societies, such as the Sanfedisti, and the Consistoriali in the Papal States and the Calderai in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. These organisations were fostered by the police and provided them with a useful service of informers.

However the Carbonari were the most important of all these societies, both in numbers and in influence and its members were patriotic and progressive. The name of this organisation was derived from the charcoal-burners (carbonari) of Southern Italy when they plied their trade in the mountain forests far away from the restrictions and policing of the cities, and they were among the first to resist the authority of the French troops of occupation. The movement soon spread all over the country and became a national one having as a main purpose the suppression of tyranny, and the independence and unity of Italy. Although, like the Freemasons, they had their lodges, their hierarchy and their ritual (based in this case on the trade of charcoal burning), the Carbonari had a definitely Christian bias, and their aims were national instead of being international. Their members
were drawn from all classes of society, including priests, landowners, aristocrats, peasants and tradesmen. Traitors, or members who broke their oaths of secrecy, could be punished by death.

A certain number of foreigners joined the Carbonari, including Lord Byron and Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and it would seem that the attempt at assassinating the latter by the Italian Orsini was a reprisal for turning against his former associates.

In the circumstances, the repression that increased year by year at the bidding of Metternich was inevitable, for the rule of Austria in Northern Italy, and for that matter in all her subject states, was bound to be threatened by any democratic or national movement.

In the early stages, the Carbonari thought only of their regional interests, and so there was no cohesion in the revolts that broke out in Italy a few years after the Congress of Vienna. For instance, the Neapolitan Revolution under General Peppe was so successful that King Ferdinand was forced to concede a constitution (July, 1820) for the rebels were supported by many units of the regular army. Shortly afterwards, the same troops were sent to suppress a movement for autonomy in Sicily.

Early in 1821, with the full approval of Ferdinand (IV of Naples and I of the Two Sicilies) Austrian troops marched into Naples, and the King unashamedly broke his oath, suppressed the new Constitution, and the Revolutionary Government. By mid-March, the movement in the South had collapsed, scarcely a week after the Carbonari in Piedmont had staged a revolt, buoyed up by the hope that Prince Charles-Albert, nephew of the King, would take over as constitutional monarch.

Victor Emmanuel abdicated, and invited his brother Charles Felix to come and take his place. The latter came to Turin, and ordered his nephew to leave the country and retire to Tuscany. Three weeks later, the revolt came to a definite end when the monarchists and the Austrians routed the constitutional rebels at the battle of Novara.

For some years, Charles-Albert was considered by the Carbonari to have betrayed their cause. Indeed, when he became King in 1831, he appeared to be in full sympathy with the policy of the Holy Alliance, but gradually he returned to the more liberal principles of his earlier years. First of all, he introduced a civil
code, based on the French Code Civil, and later a Penal Code of the same origin. Lastly, in 1840, the foundations of a system of elementary education were laid. Since the pattern of administration of the Kingdom of Sardinia was destined to be used for United Italy, these measures are worthy of note.

Risings in the Duchies of Parma and Modena in 1831, were followed by similar disturbances in the Papal States, and once again the Austrians intervened to restore order.

The result of these sporadic revolts was to prove that Italians would never be free unless these movements for liberty were on a national basis. Giuseppe Mazzini, who had until then taken a prominent part in the activities of the Carbonari, founded a society called Young Italy intended to give more definite objectives to Italian patriots. This movement was definitely republican and Christian in its ideals, whereas the political philosopher, Gioberti, believed in a federation of the Italian states presided over by a liberal Pope. Another writer, Cesare Balbo, crystallised his ideas in a more practical form, for he pinned his hopes on the eventual leadership of the House of Savoy throughout Italy.

The strangest feature of this period is that if the King of the Two Sicilies (Naples) had not been such a reactionary, he would have been the natural chief of a United Italy, since his state was the largest in the country, both in extent and in population.

Mazzini was regarded with some suspicion by many of the middle class Italians because they did not want universal suffrage, extensive social reforms or a Republic, and still less were they prepared to accept the possibility of what would have been in fact a form of Christian socialism based on the tenets of Saint-Simon.

Many of Mazzini’s activities were perforce secret, though he worked from different places of exile, and it is difficult to make a precise statement as to how he operated his conspiracies. It seemed as if he believed in keeping the problems of Italian patriots before the eyes of the outside world by revolts that would almost certainly be unsuccessful. In any case there were subversive movements in Genoa (1835), Sicily (1837), the Romagna (1842), Calabria (1844) and Rimini (1845), as well as in some other localities. In each case they were suppressed, and patriots were executed or condemned to long terms of imprisonment.

In the 1840s, opinion among patriots evolved towards national
unity under a monarch, as opposed to any other solution of the problem.

In 1846, the election of Pius IX (Pio Nono) aroused some enthusiasm since he began by introducing liberal measures, though he was to be attacked as reactionary later on in his life. In 1848, revolutions broke out in nearly every country in Europe, and as they feared similar troubles, the Pope, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II, King of the Two Sicilies (Bomba) and Charles-Albert granted constitutions to their subjects. This time, the Italian War of Independence might well have been successful if the different revolutionary movements had been synchronised and co-ordinated, as the Austrians were preoccupied with revolts in Bohemia, Hungary and in Vienna.

In Sicily, there was a revolt led by Ruggiero Settimo in January 1848. The rebels soon ejected the Neapolitan troops from the greater part of the island, and they claimed for themselves absolute autonomy with a constitution, though eventually they asserted their wish to be completely independent. Before the end of the year, Sicily was reconquered by the troops of the Neapolitan constitutional Government and they behaved with the greatest cruelty. Ruggiero Settimo and forty other patriots were executed. In the same year, the Neapolitan movement for reform had been quelled by the Royalist troops in co-operation with Swiss mercenaries, and the King, supported by the army and by the populace, was able to dispense with constitutional rule (15th March, 1848).

On 18th March, the people of Milan rose against the Austrians, and after five days of fighting, they succeeded in ejecting the garrison from their city. The Austrian general, Radetzky, withdrew his forces to the base formed by Mantua, Peschiera, Legnano and Verona, the quadrilateral of fortresses that guarded the entry to Venice and Austria. On 22nd March, the Venetians formed a provisional government under Daniele Manin, and an independent republic was proclaimed on the day that King Charles-Albert declared war on the Austrians.

Since the Sardinians were joined by contingents from Tuscany, the Papal States and Naples, there appeared to be for the first time, a truly national coalition of the liberation and unification of Italy.

In the first few weeks, the Italian troops occupied Lombardy
and parts of Venetia and captured some Austrian strongholds. Then there were threats of invasion by the French from the West; the Neapolitan troops were withdrawn when the revolutionary government in Naples collapsed, whilst the Papal troops received an order from Rome forbidding them to take part in the war.

On 24th July, Charles-Albert’s army was routed at Custoza and, soon after, an armistice was signed by which the Sardinians had to give up their claim to Lombardy.

Although great heroism had been displayed by the Italians, the people of Lombardy felt that they had been abandoned by Charles-Albert, and that the war had been lost through his bad generalship. Indeed, although he had regained his lost popularity in the first phases of the war, the King of Sardinia was execrated by many Italians, including the Venetians who felt that they too had been abandoned by him. He was disliked by the Sicilians because he had refused to allow his second son to accept their invitation to become their king, and he had refused also to give them any help.

However, the city of Venice remained independent owing to the protection of the lagoons, though the rest of Venetia was overrun by the Austrian armies.

In the autumn, the Pope was forced by a popular rising to appoint a liberal administration, and soon after, fearing for his personal safety, he fled to Gaeta, where he was joined by the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, whose subjects were also in a state of rebellion.

Early in 1849, a republican government was proclaimed in Rome, headed by a triumvirate of which Mazzini is the only one remembered now.

In the North, Charles-Albert had denounced the armistice with Austria and invaded Lombardy once more. Unfortunately this second campaign ended even more disastrously than the first, for the Sardinian forces were almost immediately routed at the battle of Novara (23rd March, 1849). This time, Charles-Albert abdicated in favour of his son Victor Emmanuel II, in the hope that his country would get more favourable terms from the victors. The Sardinian troops, badly trained and badly led, had also been subjected to ardent republican propaganda which had sapped their confidence in their King and in their officers. Indeed, it seems possible that without these ideological rivalries, the
Italians might have achieved freedom and national unity in this first War of Independence.

Thus amid much sacrifice, much bloodshed and much disillusionment, there appeared to be one man who was prepared to put the needs of his country before his political theories, and this was Giuseppe Garibaldi, the guerilla leader who had gained his experience of warfare in South America. Since he had served with distinction as a leader of a group of volunteers in Northern Italy, he was appointed commandant of the Roman army when the leaders of the newly formed Republic realised that the city was going to be attacked by a French expeditionary force sent by the Prince President Louis Napoleon in order to gain the support of the Catholics in his own country. After a siege lasting nearly a month, Rome was forced to capitulate, but Garibaldi and five thousand of his men were allowed to march away by the French General Oudinot. The Italian leader’s intention was to go to Venice which was quite obviously about to be attacked by the Austrians, since it was one of the few places in Lombardo-Venetia which they had not reoccupied. Harried on all sides by vastly superior forces of Austrians and Papalists, his little army melted away, thinned down by casualties, capture or fatigue. His wanderings ended in tragedy for his much loved wife Anita, who accompanied him, died in the marshes near Ravenna. Still relentlessly pursued by his enemies, he had to leave her to be buried by local patriots, and seek refuge, first of all in Piedmont, and then to go into exile since the Sardinian authorities were afraid to harbour him. On 20th July, the Austrians began to besiege Venice. After over six weeks of bombardments, shortage of food and cholera, the Venetians surrendered, though they had made a gallant resistance. Manin and a few of the leaders were allowed to go into exile. The First War of Independence was at an end, for Sicily had been reoccupied, the Grand Duke Leopold had returned to Florence, and a Council of Cardinals ruled Rome while awaiting the return of the Pope.
UNITY ACHIEVED
The Risorgimento: Garibaldi and "The Thousand" (1848–70)

SUMMARY

Failure of First War of Independence leads to complete reaction in every state in Italy except the Kingdom of Sardinia which kept its constitution.

1852 The Liberal Statesman, Camillo Cavour, becomes Prime Minister of Piedmont.

1855 Piedmontese participation in the Crimean War.

1856 Creation of the "National Party" (Societa Nazionale) by Manin and other former republicans and Neo-Guelfs.

1858 Attempted murder of Napoleon III (an ex-Carbonaro) by the patriot Orsini.

1859 The French and the Piedmontese at War with Austria. Peoples of Parma, Modena and the Romagna declare for union with Piedmont after the signature of the Peace of Villafranca by which Lombardy is annexed to Piedmont.

1860 Savoy and Nice ceded to France after a plebiscite. Garibaldi lands in Sicily with "The Thousand". On the mainland of Southern Italy he is joined by Victor Emmanuel and his army and the whole of the Kingdom of Naples is occupied.

1861 Victor Emmanuel proclaimed King of Italy. Province of Rome still held by the Pope; Venetia remains in the hands of the Austrians. National capital at Turin—later moved to Florence.

1866 Prussia and Italy declare war on Austria; Venetia (but not Istria or the Province of Trent) ceded to Italy.

1870 French troops withdrawn from Italy owing to Franco-Prussian War. Rome occupied by Italian troops; becomes capital of Italy.
THE failure of the First War of Independence appeared to be complete when the last resistance came to an end in Venetia in August 1849. Mazzini was in London, Garibaldi was a sea captain once more and wandering over the face of the globe. Manin and other prominent patriots were also in exile.

In Lombardo-Venetia, the rift between the Italians and the Austrians was such that the latter were treated as enemies with whom no social contact was possible. Repression was the order of the day, for although a general amnesty had been proclaimed, the bearing of arms or the possession or compiling of publications of nationalistic propaganda was punishable by death. Many patriots were hanged, imprisoned or flogged, and even women were beaten by the police of the occupying forces, whose Governor and Commander in Chief was Marshal Radetzky.

The same type of repression was exercised in Parma and in Modena, where, as in Rome, and in the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, all democratic concessions had been withdrawn, and this included not only parliamentary representation but the freedom of the press and the right of assembly. Some 13,000 liberals were arrested in the Papal States, and about 20,000 in Naples and elsewhere in the South. These persecutions turned public opinion in Britain, and to a lesser degree in France and in other countries, against the reactionary governments of Italy. Indignation in Britain grew when no less than nine patriots were hanged in Mantua, and there were other executions in Northern Italy.

In Tuscany, there was relative quiet under Grand Duke Leopold who was of a kindly disposition, but the people were exasperated by the presence of an Austrian garrison. Nevertheless a number of Tuscans took a leading part in the struggle for Italian liberty. So, despite the defeat of Novara and the abdication of Charles-Albert, Piedmont (Sardinia) retained—the only state in Italy to do so—its constitution; it was also the only state in Italy that was not under Austrian sway. Though impoverished by two wars, and the need to pay a heavy indemnity to the Austrians, the Piedmontese did not allow themselves to be discouraged. In the words of the statesman Cavour: “Piedmont was uniting within her all the vital forces of Italy, and would soon be able to lead the fatherland to the great destinies which awaited it.”

Camillo Benso di Cavour was a Piedmontese aristocrat who
had lived in France and Britain and had gained knowledge and experience of the workings of democratic government; and he was, besides, an able economist and administrator. As Minister for Agriculture first of all, and later as Prime Minister, he succeeded in giving an extraordinary impulse to the economic life of his country; he initiated works to drain and to irrigate farmland, he was responsible for the construction of railways and the enlarging and modernising of the port of Genoa, whilst able handling of customs tariffs and taxation soon helped to restore the financial position of Piedmont. Being a realist, he came to the conclusion that the only road to progress lay in uniting the moderate elements in the Piedmontese Parliament, avoiding, on the one hand the reactionaries, on the other, the republicans whose attitude was a threat to the Monarchy. Believing that Piedmont needed allies, Cavour sent an expeditionary force to fight with the French and the English against the Russians in the Crimea in 1855. The Piedmontese troops fought well, and their valour raised the prestige of the Italians in Europe.

It was therefore no accident that the National Society was founded in 1856. Its adherents believed that the unity of Italy should be achieved under King Victor Emmanuel, though many of them had been until then Neo-Guelfs, Republicans or Federalists. Among them were men like Garibaldi who still professed his faith in republicanism but was prepared to place his country before his political principles.

This organisation received Cavour’s secret backing, and he expressed many of its ideals at the Congress in Paris when he declared that Austria’s domination of Northern Italy, and the reactionary governments of Rome and of Naples constituted menaces to the peace of Europe.

Early in 1858, the carbonaro Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III. The Emperor was himself a former member of the Carbonari and was considered by them to be a traitor because he had sent French troops to overthrow the Roman Republic. Before he was executed, Orsini appealed to the Emperor to deliver Italy from bondage and apparently stirred him to action.

In July of the same year, there was a secret meeting between Napoleon III and Cavour at Plombières, a small spa in Eastern France. An agreement was reached by which France would send
two hundred thousand men to Italy in the event of an unprovoked war between Piedmont and Austria. In return for this help, Savoy and the County of Nice were to be handed over to the French. In theory, there was to be a Kingdom of Northern Italy under Victor Emmanuel II, a Kingdom of Central Italy to comprise Tuscany, Umbria and the Marches, which would presumably be ruled by a Bonaparte, whilst the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was to remain untouched. The Pope was to retain temporal power over the Province of Rome. During the state of tension that arose when the existence of this treaty became known, both the Piedmontese and the Austrians mobilised their armies, but the latter sent the ultimatum which gave the French an excuse to participate in the war that broke out in April 1859.

The Piedmontese successfully resisted invasion until the arrival of the French forces, when the allies invaded Lombardy after beating the Austrians at Montevello. The victory of Magenta three weeks later resulted in the liberation of Milan, and as usual, the Austrians retired to the "Quadrilateral", whilst Garibaldi and his three thousand volunteers had in the meantime cleared the foothills of the Alps and the lake district of the enemy. Their deeds on this occasion may have been exaggerated, but they had gained valuable experience for the future. Venturing out of their base, the Austrians were once again defeated by the French at Solferino, where the losses on both sides were very heavy.

To the dismay of the Piedmontese and of Italian patriots in general, hostilities ended and Napoleon III asked for an armistice, mainly because the Prussians threatened to join the Austrians, and he was afraid that he would have to fight on two fronts. Then also he had suddenly realised that instead of helping to create two dependent states, he might be launching a united Italy that would soon become sufficiently powerful to be a rival to France.

By the terms of the Treaty of Villafranca, the whole of Lombardy, except for Mantua and Peschiera, was to be ceded to France and the French would in turn hand this province over to Piedmont. This was a meaningless piece of face-saving that meant absolutely nothing, and was as futile as the clause by which the rulers of Modena, Parma and Tuscany were to be allowed to go back to their states.

Cavour was so overcome with anger when he realised that the full fruits of victory would be snatched from his country that he
resigned. For once, Victor Emmanuel was more philosophical, but on signing the treaty he added the comment: "Pour ce qui me concerne", thus asserting that he could accept no responsibility for what might happen in Italy outside his own state.

Cavour soon returned to power, and by his suggestion the peoples of the Duchies and the Northern provinces of the Papal States were to decide upon their fate by plebiscite; thus he solved the problem of the future of Central Italy. By an overwhelming majority the inhabitants of these regions expressed their desire to become the subjects of the King of Piedmont. By the end of 1860 the Kingdom of Italy comprised not only Piedmont, Genoa and Lombardy, but also Parma, Modena, Tuscany, Emilia (the Northern province of the Papal State), and the little principality of Massa e Carrara. The tiny Republic of San Marino remained independent, though it was surrounded on all sides by Italian territory.

Nevertheless, the aspirations of Italian patriots were far from satisfied. Venetia was still in Austrian hands, the Papal States, though reduced in area, included the Province of Rome (the Lazio), the Marches (Marche) and Umbria.

The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had taken no part in the Second War of Independence, though the liberals and patriots in Naples and Sicily were clamouring to be freed from the rule of the Bourbons. Southern Italy had had a succession of incompetent and tyrannical rulers. In 1825, King Ferdinand I and IV had died after a reign of sixty-four years. His son, Francis I (1825–1830), had been even more reactionary and repressive than his father, for he had enrolled Swiss Guards who would carry out his orders faithfully, and he treated revolutionaries and liberals with the greatest brutality.

Ferdinand II (1830–1859) left behind him a reputation for arbitrary rule and severity that may be partly due to the propaganda of the Italian liberals in Britain, France and the United States. In his fear of revolution, the King (Bomba) created a fearsome police state. He had gained his nickname because he had ordered the insurgent city of Messina to be bombarded, and was thus responsible for the deaths of many of his own subjects. After the reaction of 1849, liberals were imprisoned on the slightest of pretexts and without trial for expressing "advanced" opinions, reading foreign newspapers, or simply because of denunciation by a spiteful rival.
The accused were frequently tortured to extract "confessions", and if they were tried, they could expect neither mercy nor justice. The scandal of repression in Southern Italy was such that official protests were made by the French and the British, whilst the letters written by Gladstone to the British Prime Minister complaining about the Bourbon régime were published in the London Press and aroused widespread indignation.

Anxious to consolidate his gains, Victor Emmanuel had refused to invade Umbria where there had been revolts against Papal rule, because he was afraid of being left by the French to face up to the Austrians, without any allies. Then King Ferdinand had refused to participate in the recent war for the liberation of Italy, and might well be disposed to give help to the Pope, whilst the French garrison was definitely committed to defend the city of Rome.

In the circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that Garibaldi had been forbidden to invade Umbria with his red-shirted irregulars. Cavour still believed that Italy should have a Kingdom of the North and a more liberal Kingdom of the South, linked together under the presidency of the Pope. He feared Garibaldi's popularity, and distrusted his politics.

On the other hand, both he and the King were afraid of showing their opposition to Garibaldi too openly. However, single-minded as ever, the latter was meditating fresh adventures. To prepare for further expansion by force of arms, he launched an appeal known as the Million Rifle Fund. The response was world wide, but the authorities stipulated that the weapons should be under their control.

Crispi, a Sicilian who had been an officer in Garibaldi's volunteers in 1849 and 1859, went in disguise to his native island to test the feeling of the population, and returned with pressing invitations for succour. For a while Garibaldi hesitated, but he felt released from his obligations to Victor Emmanuel when the latter signed a treaty of Alliance with Francis II of Naples.

Early in May 1860, Garibaldi assembled a thousand volunteers from all parts of Italy in the grounds of the Villa Spinola at Quarto near Genoa. His men wore red shirts like South American cowboys and were drawn from every walk of life. Many of them had had no military training. Despite the Million Rifle Fund, they were armed only with old-fashioned muskets, and
had no supplies, no artillery and very little money. Although the local police turned a blind eye on the obvious preparations for the "Expedition of the Thousand" as it was to be called, great secrecy had to be observed.

On the night of 5th May, two small steamers were quietly seized and eased out of the harbour of Genoa, and early the next morning, the volunteers steamed slowly off to Italy. Garibaldi's luck held. His tiny fleet avoided, quite by chance, the ships sent by Cavour to arrest it. By sheer bluff, he extracted arms and ammunition from the Commander of the garrison at Orbetello, near the Southern frontier of Tuscany, and coal and food from Porto San Stefano a few miles away. Fumbling their way along the coast of Sicily, the Thousand made a landing at Marsala, shortly after the transfer of the garrison to Palermo and the departure of the Neapolitan guardship on a patrol. Though this ship returned, two British warships screened the invaders who were able to carry on their landing operations with little real trouble. Once in Marsala, Garibaldi proclaimed himself Dictator of Sicily in the name of Victor Emmanuel II, and declared that the Bourbons had ceased to reign.

Though the "Thousand" were joined by relatively few Sicilian volunteers, they defeated—more by sheer courage and luck than military skill—a regular Neapolitan force. The victory opened up the way to Palermo. The Sicilian capital was defended by 20,000 troops, but the population rose against the garrison when the Garibaldini infiltrated the centre of the city. After some days of savage street fighting, the Neapolitan commander capitulated and was allowed to leave Sicily with his garrison. On 20th July, after a short siege, the Bourbon garrison of Milazzo surrendered on precisely the same terms, and so, when Messina was captured a few days later, the whole of Sicily had been liberated.

Although both Cavour and Victor Emmanuel were afraid of the consequences of an invasion of the mainland of Italy, Garibaldi crossed the Straits of Messina on 22nd August, and captured Reggio (in Calabria) without much difficulty. In spite of the great odds against him, his courage never faltered. In fact the Neapolitan troops were only too ready to surrender, especially as Garibaldi sent all his prisoners home, though many of them actually joined his forces. On 7th September Garibaldi and his Redshirts made a triumphant entry into Naples where they
received a delirious welcome from the population. King Francis II had withdrawn to the formidable fortress of Gaeta with 50,000 good soldiers, in the hopes of being able to stage a counter-offensive as soon as the opportunity arose.

In some ways, everything seemed to favour a complete liberation of Italy, for the Austrians were preoccupied with the irredentist aspirations of the Hungarians, the Bohemians (Czechs) and the Croats who would rise against them at the slightest excuse. Napoleon III still nourished the hope of a Muratist restoration in Southern Italy, and was, in any case, about to commit himself to his Mexican adventure. Garibaldi seriously considered the possibility of overrunning the Papal States and of liberating Venice, and perhaps even some of the subject states of Austria.

Cavour and Victor Emmanuel were watching Garibaldi’s successful advance with some misgivings when revolts against the Papal rule broke out in Umbria and the Marches. Since Rome was garrisoned, not only by the French, but by volunteers of many nations, Cavour sent a message to Cardinal Antonelli, the Secretary of State of the Holy See, to disband his “foreign adventurers”. Another reason given by some authorities for the casus belli, was a demand to go through the Papal States in order to control Republican activities in the Kingdom of Naples.

The Pontifical forces resisted the advance of the Piedmontese troops, and were defeated. In the Marches and in Umbria, the invaders were met by numerous liberals who asked for annexation to the Kingdom of Victor-Emmanuel.

For the next three weeks, the future of Italy appeared to be uncertain, for Garibaldi was being pressed by many of his friends who were followers of Mazzini, to inaugurate a republic in Southern Italy. Since this coincided with his political views, the dictator hesitated for a while, and then, finally swayed by his desire for a united Italy, he set off to meet Victor Emmanuel at Teano in the Abruzzi.

Although the first impact was cordial, the King, his generals, and his ministers showed such manifest mistrust of the volunteers, that they were not even allowed to bring their campaign to a successful close, for the Piedmontese army replaced them in order to take the credit for the final victory. Capua was taken after a brief bombardment, and Gaeta was forced to surrender after a siege of three and a half months, though King Francis II
and his Queen were able to sail away and take refuge in Rome. Garibaldi, discouraged by the interference of the Piedmontese Government, withdrew to Caprera, his island retreat, after having refused estates, the title of Prince and the highest decoration.

On 17th March, 1861, the official creation of the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed in Turin by a Parliament formed of representatives from every province of the new state. Three years later, the capital was transferred to Florence, partly because of its central position, and partly to conciliate Napoleon III who was led to believe that by this move, the Italians abandoned their claim to Rome.

Three months later Cavour died, after having seen the greater part of his dreams realised. Italy was slowly but surely advancing to full liberation under the house of Savoy.

In 1862, Garibaldi and some of his volunteers landed in Calabria, proclaiming their intention of advancing on Rome. On the heights of Aspromonte, overlooking the Straits of Messina, his little army was attacked by Italian Government forces and both he and his Redshirts were forced to surrender. Owing to strong pressure from influential patriots, they were soon set free. Nevertheless, there continued to be two political trends in Italy. On the one hand, there was the official view that the whole of Italy would be liberated, little by little, either by diplomatic action, or by waiting for the right opportunity. This was the traditional policy of the House of Savoy.

Garibaldi, on the other hand, believed that boldness, courage and patriotism could surmount the worst of odds, and therefore he launched his Party of Action, consisting of men who were prepared to make every sacrifice to drive the foreigner out of Italy.

In 1864, Napoleon III signed a pact whereby he undertook to withdraw his troops from Rome, whilst the Italians were not only to abstain from attacking Papal territory, but also to prevent anyone else from doing so.

In 1866, the Prussians provoked the Austrians into a war, after having previously assured themselves of Italian support. On land, the Italians were defeated at the second battle of Custozza though they had fought with courage under poor leadership. At sea, Admiral Persano lost the battle of Lissa, though he had armoured ships and his opponents had only wooden ones. The widespread
indignation at the mismanagement of this campaign was stilled by the cession of Venice and Venetia by the Austrians who had been thoroughly beaten by the Prussians in a lightning campaign, culminating in the victory of Sadowa (Königgrätz).

In 1867, Garibaldi invaded the Papal States with a group of volunteers, fully expecting, since he was following an earlier unsuccessful revolt, the population to rise against the Pontifical administration and welcome him. No-one moved, and he advanced so slowly that Napoleon III was able to send a small expeditionary force back to Italy in order to protect Rome. Ill-armed, the Garibaldini were easily routed at Mentana by the French troops who were equipped with the modern rifle called chassepot. The unfortunate volunteers retreated into Italy, and once again Garibaldi withdrew to Caprera where he remained under a discreet supervision.

In the summer of 1870, a General Council of the Catholic Church asserted the Infallibility of the Pope in order to safeguard the Papal States. Almost immediately afterwards, the French garrison was withdrawn from Rome in order to try to ward off the further invasion of France after the disastrous battle of Sedan, when Napoleon III had been defeated and captured with a large number of his soldiers. Within a month, an Italian regular army was battering at the gates of Rome, and after a token resistance, the garrison surrendered. When they were afforded an opportunity to decide upon their fate by plebiscite, the Romans voted for annexation to Italy by an overwhelming majority.

In 1871, the Italian Parliament passed the Law of Guarantees by which the Pope was to be accorded royal status, free use of the Vatican and of his other palaces, with diplomatic rights and privileges, as well as an income equal to the one derived from the Papal States before the fall of Rome. The Pope and his successors refused to accept these terms, and so they considered themselves to be "Prisoners in the Vatican" until the creation of the Vatican State by the Concordat of 1929 with Mussolini.
THE KINGDOM OF ITALY
Problems of the New Nation: the First World War (1870–1918)

SUMMARY

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The first years of the new Kingdom of Italy were fraught with difficulties of every kind: "We have made Italy," said the Piedmontese statesman, Massimo D’Azeglio, "and now we must make the Italians." It is true that Rome was now the capital of Italy, but it was necessary to reconcile the interests of the different states which had recently been merged into one country, and,
ITALY in 1870
showing gains of 1918

The province of Giulia (with Istria) was lost in 1945 with the exception of a small area including the City of Trieste.
after the enthusiasm of victory had subsided, there were many who regretted unification.

Critics complained that the new Italy had been united to Piedmont, and Piedmont had not been united to the new Italy. Some of the Neapolitans declared that Southern Italy had been treated as a conquered country, because Piedmontese civil servants so frequently replaced the bureaucrats of the Bourbon administration. In Calabria and Lucania no less than sixty battalions were required to wage war against the Bourbon partisans or brigands, as they were termed by the Northerners. Many years passed before order was finally restored, and this was done by the most drastic methods including deportations, executions and long terms of imprisonment.

Despite the theoretical reforms in education of the past, seventy per cent of the Italians were illiterate, and this quite naturally placed the Piedmontese and the Tuscans in a position of superiority, since these two states had been more enlightened than the rest. In any case weights and measures had to be unified, local administration had to be reorganised, and as the legal codes, the constitution and the educational system of Piedmont were to be introduced everywhere, the obvious sponsors to these innovations were men who had served under the Government of Turin. Since all these institutions had evolved from the pattern of Napoleonic times they were still vaguely familiar in all parts of Italy except Sicily.

The worst troubles of all were of an economic order. As a result of so many wars and social disturbances, there was inflation, unemployment, high prices, shortage of raw materials, and there was not only a deficit in the National Budget, but also the Government was burdened with a heavy debt. Most unfortunately Cavour, the economic magician, was dead, and an Italy of twenty-four million inhabitants required to be governed by men of great skill and experience, or at any rate of great enthusiasm and energy. These two last qualities had been possessed in the highest degree by the men of the Risorgimento, but most of these had died or vanished from the political scene after the fall of Rome.

The first Cabinet of United Italy was a liberal one, that is to say in the tradition of Cavour, but by the change of circumstances it was in actual fact conservative, and the conservatives in contemporary Italy are still called Liberals. To oppose these Right-
wing Liberals, there were Left-wing Liberals, Radicals who claimed universal suffrage, and a few Socialists. Outside these groups there were the extremists of the Right who were either Jesuits or Clericalists, and the Anarchists, but the strength of the former was as a pressure group, whilst the latter operated frequently by violence.

The outstanding figure of the Right-wing Administration which lasted until 1876 was Quintino Sella, the Finance Minister who succeeded in balancing the budget by 1876, by a most draconian system of taxation which included a tax on the milling of flour. This last impost increased the price of bread to such an extent that there were revolts in several parts of the country. However in spite of these economies, the railway system was extended, new roads were built, harbours were modernised, and, in many cities, slums were replaced by monumental squares and streets such as those that are so noticeable in Florence, Palermo and the station quarter of Rome.

Just as in France, there were government monopolies such as salt, tobacco, matches, and other lesser products. Another link with France was the adoption of the decimal system of coinage whereby the lira was interchangeable with the French franc, and with coins of the same denomination among the members of the Latin Union (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Rumania, Switzerland and Belgium). This system broke down during the First World War because of the different degrees of devaluation in the belligerent countries.

In the field of foreign affairs, there were conflicting trends. Many Italians were Francophobes because they felt that Napoleon III had cheated them out of Venice by signing the Peace of Villafranca prematurely in 1860, that he had retarded the liberation of Rome, and that much Italian blood had been shed by the French forces of occupation in Rome. There was still greater exasperation when Tunis was made into a French Protectorate, for the Italians now claimed to rank as a first-class power and to be entitled to have a colonial empire like France, Britain, Spain and Portugal. Then there were the Irredentists who claimed that Italian-speaking regions such as the Trentino, Venezia Giulia (Istria and Trieste), the coast of Dalmatia, and certain Dalmatian Islands ought to be united to Italy, and to these some added Malta, Corsica and the County of Nice.
For some years before the creation of the French Protectorate in Tunis, the Italians had hoped to take over this country which is near to Sicily, and had moreover large colonies of Italians. So, in a sense, Tunisia was also considered to be irredentist territory which might one day become an Italian possession.

From 1876 to 1887, Italy was governed by a Left-wing administration under Agostino Depretis, a former supporter of Mazzini who had become a monarchist. The "Left" like the "Right" was a centre party committed to much the same financial and foreign policies, but ready to expand the franchise, and to introduce measures of social reform such as compulsory insurance against accidents, and old age pensions. Also the number of voters was increased from 600,000 to close on two million, and this in itself was enough to assure a leftist trend in politics.

The population of Italy was growing fast, and in the '70s and '80s, the economic expansion was not sufficient to relieve to any extent the dire poverty of depressed areas, even though 700,000 emigrants left Italy every year for North or South America, and thousands of workmen went to France and Germany to do seasonal jobs, whilst others crossed to North Africa where agricultural conditions were so much like those of Sicily. The Italian craving for living room was due to poverty and real hunger, and so, when the French took over Tunisia in 1881, after having given assurances that they had no thought of occupying any part of it, the Italian Government began to look round for allies.

In 1881 the Triple Alliance was concluded whereby Austria and Germany were to come to Italy's help if she were attacked by France, and likewise the Italians would have to support the Germans if war broke out in similar circumstances. Both the Germans and the Austrians feared that Russia and France might unite against them. The Triple Alliance lasted until the First World War when the Italians did not support her partners on the grounds that they were the aggressors.

Though the emigrants were so poor that they were herded across the Atlantic like cattle, their need for transport fostered the development of the Italian shipping lines which were destined to become one of the most important industries in the country. Before long the remittances of the emigrants to their relatives at home helped to redress the deficit in the balance of trade.

In 1869, a Genoese shipping company had bought land at
Assab, on the Red Sea coast, from the Egyptians, for the purpose of installing coal bunkers for the ships that passed through the newly-cut Suez Canal. Sixteen years later, Italian troops were sent to occupy both Assab and Massowa, as the Egyptian Government had withdrawn their garrisons from Eritrea owing to the revolt of the Mahdi in the Sudan.

Neither Eritrea nor Somaliland, which the Italians gradually annexed by purchase and infiltration, was of commercial value. Both had to be subsidised, though it is conceivable that the Italian genius for colonising lands such as these might have made them prosper in due time. Since the British, the French, the Germans, the Portuguese and the Belgians were developing colonial empires, the Italians quite naturally wished to do the same. Their intention was to expand into the Sudan which was in a state of anarchy, but they were prevented from doing so by the British. They also hoped to acquire the protectorate of Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

When Depretis died, his place as Prime Minister was filled by Crispi, a former Republican, and a leading member of Garibaldi’s “Thousand”. As a Sicilian, Crispi was only mildly interested in the irredentist aspirations of the Northern Italians, but he was a man of great energy and patriotism who wished to strengthen the prestige of his country and build up a colonial empire. In some ways, he could be considered a precursor of Mussolini, since he was for nearly ten years virtually a dictator, and he suppressed anarchists, socialists and labour agitators with great severity, though he introduced a number of useful social reforms.

Like Mussolini also, he eventually discouraged irredentist movements in order to be assured of the support of the Germanic powers against France. After having tried unsuccessfully to solve the problem of relations with the Papacy, he became violently anti-clerical, a fatal step since it aroused relentless opposition against him, and his enemies accused him of bigamy, though the charge was not fully proved.

In 1889, the Abyssinians appeared to agree to an Italian protectorate of their country. Later, when this project was obstructed by them, Crispi ordered troops to occupy Abyssinia by force without giving due consideration to the difficulties of such a campaign. The result was a succession of defeats culminating in the battle of Adua (Adowa) where 25,000 Italians were either
killed or captured (March 1896). This disaster put an end to Crispi's ministerial career, even though his Sicilian constituents never lost their faith in him.

The next fifteen years (1896–1911) were distinguished more especially by socialist agitations, strikes, and bread riots, which were ruthlessly suppressed by General Pelloux (1898–1900) who had been appointed Prime Minister by King Umberto I (Humbert I, 1878–1900) in order to restore order. In the first year of the new century, as a result of these harsh repressions, the unfortunate King was assassinated by an anarchist. He was succeeded by his son, Victor Emmanuel III (1900–1946). Just as this King is referred to as the second of his name to rule Italy, his father is styled Humbert I (of Italy) or Humbert II (of Savoy).

Though popular with many of his subjects, Humbert had been something of a reactionary, whilst his more progressive son was prepared to accept the Left-wing Liberal politics of Giolitti who was Prime Minister off and on from 1903 to 1914. Although he had a reputation for being shifty and inclined to deal with most problems by guile, Giolitti did initiate many of the public works which were completed under Fascism and attributed entirely to Mussolini. Though strikes and agitations on a large scale continued, the country grew more prosperous, as industries developed under a more liberal régime of freedom. Grievances could now be aired in the Chamber of Deputies, or in the press.

Owing to excesses of rioting and sabotage promoted by some of the Socialists, their representation in the Chamber diminished. In 1904 the Pope gave his sanction to Catholics who wished to enter political life under the banner of their religion, and so after the First World War there grew up the Christian Democratic Party which has played such a dominant part in Italian politics since 1944. Until the advent of Fascism, when it was dissolved, this Party was known as the Partito Popolare, and its tendencies were more socialistic than those of its successors in the present day. Among the progressive measures of this period were the nationalisation of the railways, the raising of school leaving-age from nine to twelve, the inauguration of Sunday as a day of rest for workers, the development of an embryonic form of pensions based on personal savings, for old age and infirmity.

It was also at this time that quinine was made a Government monopoly in order that it should be available everywhere at a
low price. Strangely enough, this may have been the most important reform of all, for in the space of eight years (1900–1908) the incidence of malaria was reduced from thirty-one per cent of the population to less than two per cent.

In foreign affairs, a commercial treaty with France resulted in a great improvement in trade, and the popular attitude towards the French became more cordial, especially when it was known that they would put no obstacles to Italian expansion in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. The Triple Alliance was renewed, but the Austrian annexation of Bosnia (now a province of Yugoslavia) in 1908 was viewed with some anxiety, whilst ill-treatment of the local population of Italians by individuals or gangs in Southern Austria and in Croatia aroused great resentment.

This circumstance, together with the feeling that Italy was entitled to take her place as a first-class power, led many Italians to accept with enthusiasm the nationalistic ideas of the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio. The latter not only claimed that the Mediterranean was an Italian sea (mare nostrum), but asserted the superiority of the Italians as a race, on the grounds that they were the descendants and heirs of the Romans. Such also was the point of view of the popular journalist Enrico Corradini, and of the Futurist Marinetti. They and their school certainly prepared the way for Fascism, and it was largely due to pressure from the Nationalists that the Italian Government declared war on Turkey in the autumn of 1911.

The pretext for this war was that Italian commercial interests in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were being obstructed, but the real reason was that the French were about to occupy Morocco, and that they might well decide to expand to the east as well as to the west. In the initial stages, the coastal towns of North Africa were occupied without too much difficulty, but with the vast desert spaces in which to manœuvre, the Turks and the Arabs were able to continue their resistance without heavy loss. At sea, though the Italians had manifest superiority, the Austrians and the French prevented them from attacking the mainland of Turkey which, until the end of the First World War, extended as far as the present southern frontier of Israel. In 1912, the Turks realised that the Balkan Alliance was about to attack them, and so they hastily patched up a peace with Italy, by which they gave up Tripoli and Cyrenaica. (Treaty of Lausanne, October
In the meantime, the Italians had occupied Rhodes and the Islands of the Dodecanese, which by the treaty they were to hold until the Turks had evacuated North Africa, though they were in fact Italian colonies until they were taken over by Greece at the end of the Second World War.

Even before peace had come, Giolitti introduced a measure granting practically universal suffrage, with the result that, in the general elections of 1913, the Socialist and Catholic representation had vastly increased, although the Liberals still disposed of a majority. In 1914, there was a general strike in protest against the high taxation to pay for the war against the Turks. This was followed a few weeks later by further strikes and riots, chiefly in Emilia, and instigated largely by an ardent Left-wing Socialist called Benito Mussolini, who was the editor of the Avanti, the organ of his party. At the general elections he had distinguished himself, by attacking imperialism, militarism, nationalism and clericalism.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the Italian Government declared that the Austrians had been the aggressors and that in consequence Italy could legitimately proclaim her neutrality without violating the terms of the Triple Alliance. Moreover, the Italians complained that when they occupied Bosnia, in 1908, the Austrians should have made them some concessions in accordance with the terms of the Triple Alliance. They now asked for the irredentist territories of the Trentino, and Venezia Giulia (Trieste and part of Istria), some Dalmatian islands and an Italian sphere of influence in Albania.

While Baron Sonnino, the Foreign Minister, was making these claims, he also contacted the British, and signed with the British and the French the secret Treaty of London to settle the terms of Italy’s eventual participation in the war. Giolitti, the Prime Minister, believed that Italy could extract the maximum without fighting at all.

Although some nationalists and some Catholics favoured the Germans and the Austrians, and hoped to get Corsica and perhaps Nice in return for Italian support, public opinion, particularly among Radicals and Left-wing Liberals, was veering rapidly towards intervention on the side of the Entente.

Mussolini, who had violently opposed the war in the Avanti, suddenly changed his views, and was expelled from the Socialist
Party. Now he preconized with even greater vehemence, the urgency of declaring war on the Germans in the *Popolo d'Italia*, a paper of socialistic outlook which he launched with funds supplied by the French Secret Service, so his socialist enemies declared.

The real turning point came with the arrival of the poet D'Annunzio from France. By impassioned speeches, by articles in the press, and particularly in the *Corriere della Sera*, he worked public opinion up to such a pitch of frenzy that, almost inevitably, war was declared on 23rd May, 1915, even though quite possibly a majority of the Italians would have preferred to remain neutral.

For the first two years of their participation in the war, the Italian troops waged a most difficult campaign in the mountains of the North-east where a swift advance was well nigh impossible. Badly equipped and clad, with barely sufficient rations, many of the soldiers had to spend weeks in the clefts of the peaks of the Dolomites where the snow lies nearly all the year round. Both sides attempted to break through in the incessant battles fought in the region of the Isonzo, and if there were temporary successes, the results were inconclusive until the late autumn of 1917.

Up to that time, the bulk of the Austrian forces were engaged in repelling Russian invasions, or in offensives intended to knock out the Muscovites altogether. In the summer of 1917, the demoralising effects of the Revolution were beginning to take effect, and it was thought that the Russians would give in. As soon as pressure on the Eastern front was relaxed, the Germans rushed reinforcements to the frontier of North-eastern Italy, and the Austro-Germans launched the Caporetto offensive.

Weakened by the heavy casualties of the past two years, insufficient rations and pacifist propaganda, the Italians made a disorganised retreat after having been driven out of the mountain zone. In a few days of fighting the Italian troops withdrew from forty to fifty miles and three hundred thousand of their soldiers had been taken prisoner; other casualties were even greater. A further disaster was averted by the stand made on the Piave river which checked the advance of the enemy altogether, although the attacks continued for another six weeks until snow prevented any further movement for the rest of the winter. Supported by some French and British divisions, the Italian
resistance in this second phase of the autumn campaign had been magnificent.

Early in the following year (1918) an Italian Army Corps was sent to France where the French and the British were being hard pressed by the Germans.

In June, the Austrians renewed their offensive on the Piave, but, in spite of some initial successes, they were held and driven back with heavy losses. The "Song of the Piave" written to commemorate this victory has become a kind of second national anthem which is played at patriotic manifestations.

Towards the end of October, 1918, the Italians took the offensive, forced their way across the Piave, and, after some days fighting, all resistance collapsed. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was now in a state of dissolution. An armistice was asked for, and granted, twelve days before the surrender of the Germans on the western front.
### SUMMARY

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<td>1919</td>
<td>Creation of the Fascist Movement by Benito Mussolini.</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>Many factories occupied by the workers, but the experiment proves to be a failure.</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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The rejoicings over the final victory of the war soon subsided and were succeeded by a wave of pessimism that affected most of the population.

The Nationalists and many others besides felt that they had been treated shabbily by their allies and cheated of the full rewards for their sacrifices. They had hoped to be assigned the protectorate of some of the former German colonies, the full protectorate of Albania, and of a greater number of Dalmatian islands where there were people of Italian race and speech as well as Slavs.

It is true that the Italians had gained the Trentino and the South Tyrol up to the Brenner Pass, as well as Venezia Giulia (Friuli, Trieste and the Peninsula of Istria) but by the Secret Treaty of
London they had also been promised the town of Fiume (now Rijeka) which had at that time a predominantly Italian population. This city was allotted to the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia, though Zara, much further down the eastern Adriatic coast, became Italian. The claim for the South Tyrol (now the Alto Adige) was based on strategic grounds, for more than two hundred thousand of the inhabitants were of German race and speech with traditional loyalty to Austria. In Trieste and Istria the coastal population was predominantly Italian, but the inhabitants of the hinterland were Slavs in race and speech.

Curiously enough, an extensive region round Izmir (Smyrna) in Asia Minor had been allocated to the Italians but was given up by them after a short period of occupation in order to satisfy the Greeks. One way and another, the Nationalists felt that their frustrations were due to the French, since the latter still held Tunisia, Corsica and Nice, and had taken over the mandate of Syria and supported the Greeks.

From 1919 onwards, the Nationalists tended to be Francophobes, and the extremists among them talked quite openly of attacking France as soon as the opportunity arose, although this was in direct contradiction to the attitude of the intellectuals who were for the most part Francophile.

In the general confusion of the post-war period, taxation was high, wages were low, the cost of living was exorbitant, and there was a shortage of food and consumer goods. Many workers considered that they had been led into a useless and unproductive war to satisfy the ambitions of the nationalists and generals, and so the country was swept by a wave of anti-militarists who called for the prosecution of war profiteers. Officers in uniform were frequently insulted, war memorials were desecrated, walls were covered with pro-Soviet inscriptions. Another alarming feature of this post-war period was the wholesale pilfering in factories, and the violence against blacklegs. Then, just as in most of the ex-belligerent countries, the deterioration of the public services was lamentable, and was aggravated by lightning strikes and continuous go-slow. Cars passing through industrial districts were apt to be stoned since any display of wealth was associated with unfair exploitation of the war effort.

The year 1919 was notable for the contrary trends that manifested themselves in Italy. Early in the spring, Benito Mussolini
formed the first *Fascio di Combattimento*, since he had served as a volunteer and was reputed to have been very courageous. The members were discontented ex-soldiers, socialists who disagreed with the official policy of the party, and even some nationalists who were attracted by some elements of the programme which included, among other features, the total annexation of Dalmatia and other irredentist lands, drastic taxation of war profits, the abolition of the Stock Exchange and the taking over of the factories by the workers. Thus Mussolini proclaimed ideas which were virtually communist as well as chauvinistic, but throughout his life he expressed contrary opinions almost in the same breath, and his opportunism was due mainly to his inveterate desire for power.

Certainly at this time, he was more or less unknown to the general public in Italy, whereas D'Annunzio was the idol of the nationalists. Not only had the poet proclaimed the greatness of the Italian people to the world at large, but he had practised what he preached. Although he was fifty-two when the First War broke out, he had learned to fly, and had made the most daring raids far into enemy territory; he had commanded fast motor boats in attacks on the Austrian fleet, gaining innumerable decorations for valour. In September 1919, this bald-headed little man led a number of volunteers (calling themselves *arditi* after the Italian commandos) into Fiume. He occupied this city easily since neither the Italian troops nor those of the allies dared to put up any resistance for fear of provoking international discord. Once installed, D'Annunzio established a kind of futurist city-state and defied the world. His rule was distinguished by an excessive eccentricity that could not endure for long. Indeed, when it was decided by the powers that Fiume should become autonomous, the poet's régime quickly collapsed under a short assault by Italian regular troops (27th December, 1920). However, the gesture had lasted well over a year, and proved to be a real encouragement to the nationalists at a time when they were sorely tried.

At the general elections of November 1919, the Socialists had had the largest number of votes of any individual party though they did not have an overall majority. Next after them, came the *Partito Popolare* (Christian-Democrats) with a fairly socialistic trend, and the remaining seats were held by more or less moderate or conservative members, though under the Liberal or Radical
label. The few Fascist candidates had polled scarcely any votes, thus proving to Mussolini that he would not attain power by a policy that combined advanced socialism and nationalism. It was at this point therefore that the Fascists became anti-socialist and anti-communist.

Mussolini could not have chosen a more favourable moment, for the bulk of Italians were growing tired of the frequent riots, the constant pilfering and the threats to private property. In August 1920, the menace of a general lockout in certain major industries led to the occupation of many factories by the workers, who were in many cases armed and often treated blacklegs and the faint hearted with great violence. The Italian Premier Giolitti took no action against the workers, for he believed quite rightly as it proved, that they would be unable to run the factories successfully, and that they would be forced to come to terms with their employers through shortage of funds. Giolitti and his successors also believed, quite wrongly, that the violence of the Fascists would abate when conditions became normal.

Whether or not Mussolini was bought by the industrialists and bankers of Milan, he encouraged his blackshirted followers to combat the Socialists by force of arms, using bludgeons, revolvers and even rifles in the street fighting that broke out first of all in 1920.

Since the Fascists used patriotic slogans, they attracted to their ranks not only the nationalists and unemployed ex-officers and soldiers, but also thousands of men who were tired of the apathy of the Government, and exasperated by the anarchy and disorder that threatened to ruin the country. Both sides were guilty of violence, but the Fascists were better led, better organised, and had the support of the majority of Italians who believed that if order were re-established there would be a return to normal conditions. The Blackshirts beat up their opponents, dosed them with castor oil and even slaughtered them, but these were considered to be the normal hazards of civil war by many observers, though others began to feel some disgust with the movement.

It is just conceivable that D’Annunzio might have induced the Fascists to more chivalrous behaviour, but exhausted and disillusioned by the fiasco of Fiume, he remained more or less inactive, and was gradually replaced as the leader of reaction by Mussolini.
Little by little, the Fascists achieved a kind of supremacy when their squads broke up socialist clubs, ejected socialist administrations from town and village councils, and in places did, in fact, establish order where confusion had prevailed. In the General Election of 1921, the Liberals and Moderate Radicals gained an overall majority over the left-wing parties, whilst the Fascists were represented by twenty-two deputies.

By now conditions were rapidly becoming normal, but the fury of the Blackshirts continued, even though they had gained the upper hand in most parts of Italy. It is true that Mussolini had attempted to come to terms with the Socialists, but his followers were not prepared to support him since anything that savoured of "communism" was anathema to them.

In October 1922, some fifty thousand Fascists assembled for a party congress in Naples, summoned not only for deliberation but in preparation for the seizure of power. When he was refused a full participation in the direction and choice of the Cabinet, Mussolini ordered his Blackshirts to march on Rome under the direction of a quadrumvirate composed of General de Bono, Dino Grandi, Italo Balbo and Michele Bianchi. Since the King refused to proclaim martial law, Signor Facta, the Prime Minister, resigned, and the Fascist squads entered the capital without difficulty as the troops and the police were without orders and direction.

Though the officers of the armed forces were for the most part sympathetic to Fascism, they would have undoubtedly checked the march on Rome if ordered to do so. The whole operation was directed by Mussolini from Milan, a city conveniently situated, his enemies suggested, for a swift retreat to Switzerland if things went wrong. As it was, he was summoned by Victor Emmanuel to form a Cabinet, possibly because the King was afraid that the Fascists might install in his place his cousin, the Duke of Aosta who was notoriously pro-Fascist. Though Mussolini had only a handful of his party in the Chamber, he was well received by the majority of deputies who were tired of the perpetual industrial and social disturbances. Since the Prime Minister began by carrying out his functions in a constitutional manner, and promised a return to "normalcy" as soon as circumstances permitted, most Italians were satisfied with the new régime.

Fortunately for the Fascists, the first three years of their rule
were prosperous ones, largely because there was a revival of world trade, and harvests were good. Consequently, Italians were apt to overlook the measures taken by the Fascists to create a totalitarian state.

First of all, Mussolini was granted dictatorial power from the King in order to restore order and bring in some necessary reforms, though the future Duce declared his intention of ruling constitutionally. In spite of this, prefects and sub-prefects of Fascist tendencies were appointed all over Italy, and the Black-shirts were turned into a highly paid militia to ensure their support for the régime.

Mussolini's next move was to create a Fascist Grand Council which was to prove the beginnings of a "state within a state". Still using his emergency powers, the Duce introduced an electoral reform by which the party registering the greatest number of votes (but not necessarily a majority) would be automatically granted two thirds of the seats in the Chamber. The remaining seats were to be distributed by proportional representation among the other parties.

In the 1924 elections, voting papers were tampered with, noted anti-Fascists were beaten up, with the result that Mussolini was assured of his majority.

To do him justice, some useful reforms had been introduced, beginning with a clean-up of the Civil Service, and a vast improvement in public services. Then the countless strikes and disturbances of the past had ceased, much to the satisfaction of the public.

Having routed the Socialists, the Fascists began to attack the Christian Democrats and to raid their clubs and offices, beating up the Catholics, in just the same way as they had assaulted "Communists" in the past. When the Christian Democrats had been quelled, and some of their right-wing members absorbed into the Party, the Fascists attacked anti-Fascist Liberals and Radicals, by introducing measures restricting their activities, and also by violence and intimidation. In June 1924, the Italians were horrified to learn that the highly respected Socialist deputy, Matteotti, had been brutally murdered by Fascists. The murdered man had published a book detailing the acts of violence committed by the Fascists, and he had been a fearless critic of the Fascists in the Chamber. A few days before his assassination, Mussolini had quite openly threatened him in the course of a
heated debate, and so he was believed to be directly responsible for the crime, although he denied all connection with it.

If the opposition parties had been well organised, the Fascist régime would have been dissolved, for out of the six accused, four were leading members of the hierarchy, one of them being the Secretary of the Party, another, Cesare Rossi, the head of the Fascist Press Office, and a third was editor of a Fascist newspaper. These men were allowed to escape arrest by leaving the country whilst the smaller fry were tried and condemned to long sentences, though they were spirited out of prison a few years later.

To silence Press criticism, strict censorship was introduced, and a number of leading newspapers were taken over. Somehow or another, the tension passed, mainly because of the fear of the middle classes that the anarchy of pre-Fascist days might return.

As it was, Mussolini determined to "Fascisticise" every branch of Italian life. Henceforth, towns and villages were to be administered by podestas, officials appointed for their loyalty to the party. Schoolmasters, university professors, and journalists were to be dismissed if they did not agree to support the régime. Men who expressed anti-Fascist opinions or criticised Mussolini were sent to enforced residence in remote districts, whilst the more hardened cases were interned in concentration camps. The entire machinery of justice was changed, for judges who refused to condemn men for expressing their political opinions, were dismissed.

Children of both sexes were regimented into the Fascist youth organisation called the Balilla, and boys were drilled like soldiers at a very early age.

On the credit side, the introduction of physical training in schools was beneficial to the children who were also sent to holiday camps at the seaside or in the mountains. Similarly workers all over Italy were provided with social clubs and were given special facilities for mass excursions in the summer and at weekends. During the first eight years of Fascism, shipbuilding, the transport of passengers by land and sea, metalworks, the manufacturing of textiles and chemicals, and the tourist industry expanded. Though the level of wages fluctuated, prices were fairly stable and there was full employment.

Whilst these conditions lasted, the enforced arbitration of industrial disputes by special courts worked reasonably well, especially as the workers were still in fear of the "squads", and
they did not even resist the compulsory increase in hours of work.

In spite of obvious defects, there were many Italians who believed that the national character of the country could be regenerated through Fascism which they considered to be a movement of youth, industry and energy. This opinion was shared obviously by the philosopher Gentile, and to a lesser extent by the world famous historian and philosopher Benedetto Croce, both of whom helped to shape some of the cultural activities of Fascism in its early years, but Croce changed his attitude later.

Though Mussolini was as erratic in his conduct of foreign policy as he was in the direction of home affairs, he raised the prestige of Italy by his vigorous defence of Italian interests in a period when every government in the world was out for appeasement and ready to yield at the slightest threat of force.

In 1923 the Duce had ordered the fleet to bombard and occupy Corfu after the murder of an Italian general in the Boundary Commission in Albania, because the Greeks would not agree to his claim for compensation. On this occasion the great powers had obliged the Italians to withdraw, but from then until the rise of the Nazis, Mussolini’s assertiveness usually prevailed in international affairs.

In his prime, the Duce had moments of great lucidity, and a capacity for swift and surgical action, though at other time he was little more than an opportunist and often waivered in his decisions.

The Treaty of the Lateran signed in 1929, led to the creation of the Vatican State (of some one hundred and ten acres) and closer relations between the Italian Government and the Papacy. The new state had sovereign rights, immunity from outside interference, its own broadcasting station, post office and diplomatic corps. In theory the Pope was no longer the “Prisoner of the Vatican”, but the Fascists continued to attack the Catholic Youth Clubs.

Later in 1929, the National Council of Corporations was created, not only to arbitrate in industrial disputes, but also, in theory, to replace the former Chamber of Deputies. The Council was composed of representatives of the different trade unions and professional syndicates, as well as nominees of the Government. The country continued to be administered by the Duce and the Ministers appointed by him, so there was little change.

Like D’Annunzio, Mussolini wished to revive the trappings and
manner of Imperial Rome. Fascists greeted each other with the outstretched arm of the Roman salute. The Blackshirt Militia was regimented into legions; Mussolini would address thousands of supporters from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, and there were constant military displays.

The public buildings and monuments of the age are certainly impressive. In Rome, a whole quarter of medieval houses was swept away to make room for the Viale del Impero (dei Fori Imperiali), the broad avenue that runs from the Forum of Trajan to the Colosseum. Other fine boulevards were laid out to the South-east of the Roman Forum, and the wide Via della Conciliazione was carved out to join the Castel Sant' Angelo to the Piazza of St. Peter. The motor road to the seaside resort of Ostia was an innovation greatly appreciated by the Romans. The Italians were also pleased at the vast improvements to the railways, and they were proud of the splendid marble stations built in Florence, Milan and elsewhere. In many cities, impressive administrative buildings were erected in a rather ponderous neoclassical style that is not lacking in dignity. Mussolini was also the first statesman to initiate the construction of motor roads, though the Italian autostrada were destined to be surpassed in extent and efficiency by the German autobahn.

If the credit for the draining of the Pontine Marshes was claimed by the Fascists, they did in fact only implement and complete a scheme planned and initiated by Giolitti, but they were responsible for the building of the new towns and villages in which peasants from all parts of the country were settled.

In Rome itself, the spacious Foro Mussolini lined with marble statues, and the University city are enduring monuments to the dictator whose virtues, defects, sense of pity, and vanity, pettiness and greatness were all on such a large scale.

In 1930, Italy was affected by the economic depression which had already afflicted Britain and the United States. To combat this “recession” a great effort was made to increase the production of wheat and other foodstuffs, whilst hydroelectrical potentialities were developed. Wages were cut, and the export of currency was forbidden. Gradually there evolved the system of economic and financial control known as autarchy which was developed to a greater degree by the Nazis.

Since emigration to the United States and to many other
countries was reduced by quotas and financial depression, the problem of over-population became more severe than ever. It was this factor, as much as anything else, that led Mussolini to face the disapproval of the democratic countries and to invade Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935. Despite threats from the British, Mussolini persisted, and his bluster succeeded in daunting them, though as events proved later his boasts were empty ones.

Ethiopia was easily overrun by an army under Marshal Badoglio. The King of Italy assumed the title of Emperor of the newly conquered country, and the economic sanctions feebly applied by the democratic states were abandoned (1936).

Nevertheless, since relations with these countries continued to be strained, Mussolini sought other allies, beginning first by sending men and war material to General Franco who was waging civil war to overthrow the established Republican Government of Spain. The Italian fleet was strengthened, and in North Africa Mussolini proclaimed himself Protector of the Moslems, and inaugurated the Imperial Highway, a motor road running the full length of the Libyan coast to the frontier of Egypt which, up to 1936, still had a British army of occupation.

In the autumn of 1937, Italy joined Germany and Japan in the anti-Communist Pact, and so from that time Mussolini was committed to a spiritual and political alliance with the Nazis.

When the Germans marched into Austria in the spring of 1938, Mussolini remained passive. Indeed he had already begun to ape Hitler, and soon afterwards he introduced racial laws against the Jews, which were applied in a far from stringent manner.

In September, Mussolini intervened in the Munich crisis, and it was largely by his arbitration that the democratic Powers agreed to Germany taking over part of Czechoslovakia, though six months later Hitler annexed the whole country.

In Italy the last months of 1938 were marked by an ever increasing clamour for the annexation of Corsica and Tunisia, leading to ever worsening relations with France.

Profiting by the confusion brought about by the seizure of the remaining territories of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis, the Fascist forces made a lightning invasion of Albania which they annexed to the Crown of Italy.

Although by now Mussolini was clearly overshadowed by Hitler, the Fascist régime appeared to be at the height of its power.
The Duce had been acclaimed by the populace because they believed that he had prevented a European war at the time of the Munich Crisis. Frightened by the decay of democracy in France, and the futile appeasements of the British Premier, Neville Chamberlain, and his Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, many liberal-minded Italians rallied to Fascism since they believed that the system would endure. Yet most people disliked the Nazis and their ways, and so there was much criticism of the Government.

When the Second World War broke out, Mussolini surprised the world by remaining neutral—it has since transpired that he had planned aggression for 1943, and was not yet ready for hostilities. For a few more months Italy was to preserve a semblance of independence, but her declaration of war against Britain and France in June 1940 was to bring about her complete domination by Germany and the virtual end of Fascism.
## ITALY TODAY

The Downfall of Fascism and the Fulfilment of the Italian Nation

### SUMMARY

**1940-41** Initial British successes in North Africa come to an end when their forces are weakened to succour the Greeks, whose country is being invaded by the Germans. Ethiopia and Eritrea occupied by the British.

**1942** (Spring) British driven back across the Egyptian frontier by the Italo-Germans under Rommel.


**1943** Last of Italian and German forces surrender at Tunis.

(July) Anglo-Americans land in Sicily. Shortly afterwards, Mussolini is forced to resign.

(Autumn) New Fascist Republic formed in the North, whilst the Allies begin advance on mainland of Italy. A pro-Ally and anti-Fascist Government formed in the South.

**1944** Allies continue to advance slowly until halted by the Gothic Line just North of Florence.

**1945** (May) Collapse of German resistance in Italy. Mussolini shot by Partisans.

**1946** (June 20th) Italy becomes a Republic.

 Mussolini’s declaration of war against France and Britain in June 1940 aroused but little enthusiasm in Italy except among the young hotheads of the militia, and the handful of Germano-
phile members of the Fascist Grand Council. Others such as Mussolini’s son-in-law, Ciano, as well as Grandi and Balbo, two of the leaders of the March on Rome, were pro-British and anti-German. However, both Mussolini and the King believed that Britain was decadent and would not be able to continue resistance after the fall of France. The Duce cynically considered that if France was to be partitioned, the Italians might just as well gain some irredentist territories in return for a last minute participation. He felt certain that the army would be called upon to do little or no fighting.

As it was, the British were victorious in three naval engagements in the summer of 1940, and in December they launched an offensive in North Africa, capturing 114,000 prisoners, and had advanced many hundreds of miles into Italian territory by the end of March 1941. The same year, Italian East Africa was occupied.

In the autumn of 1940, after an unprovoked attack on Greece, the failure of the Fascists to invade Greece from Albania was equally depressing, for the Italian forces were not only held, but actually driven back, though the terrain was so mountainous that neither side moved very far. In the early spring, the Germans overran Greece, and the British forces in North Africa were depleted of 60,000 men in a vain attempt to hold the Nazi onslaught.

In the meantime, the German General Rommel had landed in Tripolitania and under his leadership the Germans and Italians drove back the British to the Egyptian frontier (May 1941).

After frequent fluctuations, the issue of the campaign was decided when General Montgomery routed Rommel at El Alamein, only seventy miles from Alexandria, driving the Italo-German army back towards Tunis which the Germans had occupied after the landing of the Allies under General Eisenhower in Algeria in November 1942.

In May 1943, the armies of the Allies converged on Tunis from East and West and forced all the German and Italian troops remaining in Africa to surrender. In July, British, American and Canadian forces under General Eisenhower invaded Sicily, and after some resistance by the Germans, occupied the whole of the island by the middle of August.

In this campaign, as in North Africa, Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Italian soldiers had surrendered in tens of thousands, mainly
because they did not wish to fight the democracies, and also, as time went on, because of their increasing dislike of their German allies. In the autumn of 1942, Mussolini had sent an expeditionary force of two hundred thousand men to participate in the Nazi Campaign in Russia. The stories of the atrocities committed by the Germans in this sector helped to increase the hatred of the Italians whose forces had been welcomed as liberators by the inhabitants of the Ukraine.

One way and another the Italians were profoundly depressed and discontented, for they felt that they had been launched into a war for which they were ill-prepared and ill-disposed. Even when the troops fought bravely, they had not the tanks, the transport or the planes to combat the fine technical equipment of the British, whom they regarded anyway as natural allies.

On 25th July, 1943, Mussolini was forced to resign by the Fascist Grand Council, and his place as head of the Government was taken by Marshal Badoglio. Almost immediately afterwards, the Duce was arrested by order of the King, and the Fascist Party was dissolved. On 3rd September, the new Government concluded an armistice with the Allies, the day after Anglo-American troops had landed in Calabria. Taking advantage of the state of confusion that prevailed, the Germans occupied all the principal towns in the country, though the Americans and British were already in the South-east of the peninsula, where the King and his ministers took refuge. On 12th September, a German air commando made a dramatic raid and rescued Mussolini from the mountain eyrie in the Abruzzi where he had been interned. Three days later, in a broadcast from Vienna, the Duce proclaimed the creation of a Social Fascist Republic, the restoration of Fascist Militia, and his intention to punish all traitors and to maintain full collaboration with Germany. Since he was in the hands of the Nazis, it was manifest that he was acting on Hitler's orders. In his diary he declared that his policy in this last phase of his career had been dictated by the need to protect his country from German reprisals and the sufferings entailed by military occupation.

Since Mussolini was closely watched by the Germans, and as their armies held the greater part of the peninsula, his "Republic" did little to avert the troubles that he wished to avoid. Though the greater part of the Italian fleet had gone over to the Allies,
the officers of the army were without instructions as to what to do, and many of the soldiers left the forces and made their way home as best they could. As no provision had been made by the terms of the Armistice as to what was to be done with allied prisoners, the unfortunate internees found themselves suddenly let loose with no resources in a country under hostile occupation. Though thousands of these ex-prisoners escaped, and made their way to the allied lines with the help of the Italian countryfolk, a number of these fugitives were hunted down and captured or shot by the Germans.

In September 1943, the Allies landed at Salerno, and soon after captured Naples, but their advance to Rome was checked by the Germans ranged on the hilltops, and more particularly at the ancient monastery of Monte Cassino which dominated the principal road from the South to the capital. In the Spring of 1944, after much hesitation, the Allies blew up Monte Cassino, and after eight weeks of incessant fighting, the Germans were forced to retire. Shortly afterwards they retreated northwards, so that Rome was liberated without opposition.

The Nazis withdrew in good order, making a stand in Florence which was captured after heavy fighting and a good deal of destruction, including the blowing up of all the bridges save the Ponte Vecchio. Eventually the Allies were forced to halt before the Gothic Line which stretched along the Apennines from the hills to the north of Lucca to the marshes near Rimini.

Since many of the Anglo-American forces had been detached to take part in the invasion of Southern France and Normandy in the summer of 1944, the hostile forces in Italy remained almost inactive opposite each other throughout the winter.

In the territory of the Fascist Republic, partisan groups were formed and were increasingly successful in their strife against the Germans and Fascist Republicans. They cut off supply columns, attacked small detachments, and even liberated a number of remote valleys in the North-east of Italy.

On the other hand, the newly established Fascist Militia behaved with great brutality, and the atrocities they committed were on a par with those of the Germans in Poland, Russia and France.

Mussolini spent most of his time in a villa at Gargnano on the Lake of Garda and remained inactive save for periods of sporadic interest in journalism. At the outset of the new régime, he had
ordered the trial of six members of the Fascist Grand Council who had voted against him at the fateful session in July—the others had fled to other countries or were in hiding. Since the members of the court had been specially selected, the result was never in doubt; five of the accused were condemned to be shot, and the sixth was given a sentence of thirty years imprisonment. The men executed were tried comrades of Mussolini, and included the aged General de Bono, one of the leaders of the March on Rome, and Ciano, the Duce’s son-in-law, who had been for some years his Foreign Minister.

In the spring of 1944, the German resistance in Italy collapsed, and their remaining forces withdrew over the frontier into Austria.

Bewildered by the sudden end of the world that he had helped to create, Mussolini attempted to escape to Switzerland, but together with his lovely young mistress, Clara Petacci, was captured and shot without trial by partisans (29th April, 1945).

The economic reconstruction of Italy and her political rehabilitation can be considered as one of the most astonishing features of this century.

The Allies had mercilessly bombed industrial towns such as Milan and Turin, and the same process had been applied to ports such as Palermo, Naples, Cagliari and Leghorn, where, in each case, harbour installations had been completely destroyed. Similarly towns and villages situated on strategic roads or railways had been pulverised with great loss of life and immense damage to property. Then, the retreating Germans had systematically blown up railway stations and bridges, and removed the permanent way so that public transport was at a standstill.

Even before the allied invasion of 1943, the rationing system had broken down. Farms had been devastated, stock had been slaughtered and factories were either destroyed or short of raw material. As a result, the shortage of food and other necessities of life was appalling.

Surprisingly enough, local administration continued to function very well considering the circumstances, though notorious Fascists were replaced, and the reorganisation and transfer of power were carried out in the short transition period under the rule of an Allied military organisation.
In the meantime, the caretaker Government under Marshal Badoglio gradually expanded, by taking in representatives of the different anti-Fascist political groups, among which the Communists and the Party of Action were the most energetic, though the latter was destined to disappear after the end of the war since it had been created outside Italy to overthrow Mussolini’s régime.

With the exception of the Liberals, who were traditionally attached to the House of Savoy, most active politicians tended to be Republican. In 1946, King Victor Emmanuel II abdicated in favour of his son, vainly hoping that this move would save the Monarchy, since Humbert had had little to do with Fascism. However, in the plebiscite held later on in the year, there was a solid Republican majority, and so the new King went into exile, without accepting officially the result of this decision, as many of his supporters asserted that the elections had been rigged.

After the fate of the Monarchy had been settled, the recently elected National Assembly drew up a new constitution, which follows approximately the pattern favoured by most democratic countries. The members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are elected by the people, but the President of the Republic is chosen by the joint vote of the two Chambers. His powers are about the same as those of the Sovereign in Britain, and he is assisted by a Council of Ministers who are responsible to him. He has nothing like the authority of the President of the United States, for his main function is to guide the choice of Prime Minister whenever a change of administration is required.

In this period the principal political parties were the Christian Democrats, the Communists, the Left-wing Socialists, the Social Democrats (Right-wing Socialists) and the Liberals who still adhere in theory to the principle of the Monarchy. There have also been splinter groups of Neo-Fascist deputies.

Immediately after the war, the Communists were very strong and well-organised, largely because of the part that they had taken in the activities of the Partisans. Their numbers have tended to diminish, as well as those of their allies, the Left-wing Socialists. For most of the time the administration has been in the hands of the Christian Democrats who have maintained themselves by alliances with other centre parties.

In theory, there has been an attempt to counter the highly centralised system of the Fascists, but in practice the only really
autonomous regions are Sicily, Sardinia, and Val d’Aosta (where the population is French speaking), and the Trentino-Alto Adige, the former Austrian territory which still has a large Germanic population.

The entire colonial empire was lost, so that the North African territories have become the Republic of Libya. Ethiopia has not only become independent once more but has annexed Eritrea, whilst Italian Somaliland has been joined up with French and British Somaliland to form one state.

In Europe, Rhodes and the Islands of the Dodecanese reverted to Greece, whilst the former Italian islands of Dalmatia, with Zara, Fiume and Istria, have been allotted to Yugoslavia. After years of dispute between the Italians and the Yugoslavs, Trieste is now definitely Italian, though almost surrounded by Yugoslav territory.

As a result of these changes, thousands of Italians came back to Italy, rather than submit to alien domination, and this influx quite naturally added to the problem of unemployment and the housing shortage.

Thanks largely to American aid under the Marshall Plan and also to the help of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.), the industries of Northern Italy were functioning effectively within a few years of the end of the war. Nevertheless even more credit must be given to the unremitting toil and energy of the workers, the initiative and enterprise of the employers, though clearly little could have been done without financial support.

Unemployment soon disappeared in the industrial North, but in Southern Italy, in Sicily, and Sardinia, the poverty, unemployment and low wages resulted in terrible distress. At one time, the problem of rehabilitating these provinces seemed insoluble. Owing mainly to deforestation of past centuries, the surface soil of the slopes and mountains has been washed away, so that vast areas produce nothing, or so little as to be unprofitable. The natural resources of the South are so limited that raw material for industries would have to be brought down from the North or imported from abroad at prohibitive cost. Then finally, there was the human problem: a rapidly growing population, with a lack of skilled workers, together with the fact that many of the inhabitants were debilitated by years of poverty, poor housing,
and the effects of centuries of malaria on their parents and ancestors. Added to this, in Sicily, the West of the island, was, and is still to some extent, in the paralysing grip of the Mafia, the widespread and secret organisation whose activities have been so publicised that they need not be elaborated here.

In the first years of the post-war period, old age pensions and unemployment benefits were far below subsistence level, though the contributions by employer and employee amounted to something like thirty-six per cent of wages or salaries paid. By 1962, benefits had been stepped up to a reasonable level, with a consequent reduction of destitution. To relieve the depressed areas, an organisation called the Cassa del Mezzogiorno was created to use the ample funds allocated for land reclamation and irrigation, reafforestation and the development of mountainous zones, the building of roads, aqueducts, railways and hotels.

Though critics declared that the Cassa was merely a palliative, public works did provide employment and bring money into circulation, even though there was no immediate stimulus to creating industries. In the agricultural field there were more definite results, especially as a number of large estates were carved up by a general land reform, and peasants were installed in small farms which they could buy by instalments on very generous terms.

Strange to say, by 1962, observers came to the conclusion that the economic problems of Southern Italy seemed to be approaching a solution in spite of all the gloomy predictions of the past. By then, the unparalleled prosperity of the industries in Northern Italy and in the countries of Western Europe created such a shortage of labour that employers have been delving into the large reserve of manpower in Southern Italy. Since hydro-electrical plants now make up for the shortage of coal, capital is flowing Southwards to create new industries in regions where it is easy to recruit and train staff, and land and labour are cheaper.

In Southern Sicily, the oil wells of Ragusa are bringing real prosperity, and will bring still more when they have been fully exploited. Nevertheless, at the time of writing these lines, the North and West of the island are still distressed areas, though measures are being taken to counter the crippling rule of the Mafia, with its levies, blackmail, and control and restrictions of all kinds.
In a sense, it is true to say that though Italy was defeated in the Second World War, she was victorious in the period that followed it. The immense consortiums of trade and of industry created by the Fascists in the 1930's were revived and continued, not only recapturing lost trade but expanding their markets as never before. The entire system of levying taxation was overhauled and brought up to date, producing much better returns for less expenditure. It was an unsensational reform but one of vast importance to the economy of the country, almost as important perhaps as the excellent new methods of marketing Italian fruit and agricultural produce to foreign lands.

As the Italians had been hampered in the past by their lack of raw materials, and of coal in particular, the exploitation of natural gas (metano) in the Northern province has greatly helped to remedy this deficiency, for it effected a saving of over £300 million in 1961, and the full resources of this carburant have yet to be exploited.

One steadily increasing source of income to the national economy has been provided by tourism. In some years no less than eighteen million visitors have crossed the frontiers, though if we eliminate day trippers, cruise passengers, and transients we are left with a real movement of about ten million holidaymakers. These people not only spend money during their stay, but they acquire a taste for all kinds of Italian products, such as wines, cheeses, fashions, cars, and films, and as everyone knows, Rome has become the centre of the world's film industry.

Fortunately for the Italians and the world at large, the total destruction of monuments and treasures of art during the Second World War was not as large as might have been expected. The immense and wide-spread damage has been compensated by skilful restoration and reconstruction by artists, craftsmen and architects. So, for instance, as we have already noted, the historic Monastery of Monte Cassino has been rebuilt to present inside and out, exactly as it was before, whilst an astonishing number of books and incunabulae were salvaged from the ruins. In Florence, the beautiful Ponte Trinita, loveliest of all bridges, has been reconstructed, largely out of the original blocks of marble found on the river bed of the Arno.

The wonderful frescoes of the Camposanto in Pisa have been pieced together and partially restored after years of unremitting
toil, though originally no-one could have believed in the possibility of such a miracle. Results of this kind have been achieved to a lesser degree, on a large scale throughout the country, so that cities, monuments, palaces and churches that appeared to have gone for ever, are still with us.

If we can judge by the past, the Renaissance of architecture in the second half of the twentieth century should be a presage of a similar renaissance in painting and in sculpture. Already in the nineteen fifties, the Italians had acquired a reputation for creativeness and originality in most domains. To many who have studied her history, Italy seems to have achieved political maturity after a period of great suffering and turmoil. Since she appears to be solving her economic problems, her greatest perils are in the realm of the spirit. Her real industrial revolution came after the Second World War, and with it a prosperity that may lead to excessive materialism and a loss of moral values.

Tens of thousands of people are being transplanted from rural settings to industrial suburbs which have sprung up like mushrooms around quickly expanding cities. Just as the Romans worshipped their household gods, their descendants gave precedence to loyalty and love of their families. It was the bond that helped the Italians to survive wars, pestilences, famine and tyranny. The strength of this sentiment is akin to religious fervour, and that is why, perhaps, Italy has had so many great saints as well as so many sinners.

One of the most encouraging features of our age, has been the urge for religious unity among the Christian Churches and they have been able to gather round the Papacy more easily because of the harmony that has prevailed between Church and State since the Second World War.
APPENDIX I

HOLY ROMAN EMPERORS

(German Line)

911–918 Conrad I (Franconian); never crowned at Rome
918–936 Henry I, the Fowler (Saxon); never crowned at Rome
936–973 Otto I, the Great; crowned 962
973–983 Otto II
983–1002 Otto III; crowned 996
1002–1024 Henry II, the Saint (Bavarian); crowned 1014
1024–1039 Conrad II, the Salian (Franconian); crowned 1027
1039–1056 Henry III, the Black; crowned 1046
1056–1106 Henry IV; crowned 1084

Rivals:
1077–1080 Rudolf of Swabia
1081–1093 Hermann of Luxemburg
1093–1101 Conrad of Franconia

1106–1123 Henry V; crowned 1113
1125–1137 Lothar II (Saxon); crowned 1133
1138–1152 Conrad III (Swabian); never crowned at Rome
1152–1190 Frederick I, Barbarossa; crowned 1155
1190–1197 Henry VI; crowned 1191
1198–1212 Otto IV (Brunswick); crowned 1209

Rival:
1198–1208 Philip II of Swabia; never crowned

1212–1250 Frederick II; crowned 1220

Rivals:
1246–1247 Henry Raspe; never crowned
1247–1256 William of Holland; never crowned

1250–1254 Conrad IV; never crowned
1254–1273 The Great Interregnum

Competitors:
1257–1273 Richard of Cornwall; never crowned
1257–1272 Alfonso X of Castile; never crowned
1273–1291 Rudolf I (Habsburg); never crowned, but recognised by the Pope, 1274

1292–1298 Adolf I (Nassau); never crowned
APPENDIX I

1298–1308 Albert I (Habsburg); never crowned
1308–1313 Henry VII (Luxemburg); crowned 1312
1314–1347 Louis IV (Bavaria); crowned 1328
   Rival:
   1325–1330 Frederick of Habsburg, co-regent
1347–1378 Charles IV (Luxemburg); crowned 1355
   Rival:
   1347–1349 Gunther of Schwarzburg
1378–1400 Wenzel or Wenceslas (Luxemburg); crowned 1376
1400–1410 Rupert or Rupprecht (Palatinate); never crowned
1410–1437 Sigismund (Luxemburg); crowned 1433
   Rival:
   1410–1411 Jobst of Moravia
1438–1439 Albert II (Habsburg); never crowned
1440–1493 Frederick III; last emperor crowned in Rome
1493–1519 Maximilian I; never crowned
1519–1556 Charles V; last emperor crowned by the Pope (at Bologna)
1558–1564 Ferdinand I
1564–1576 Maximilian II
1576–1612 Rudolf II
1612–1619 Matthias
1619–1637 Ferdinand II
1637–1657 Ferdinand III
1658–1705 Leopold I
1705–1711 Joseph I
1711–1740 Charles VI
1742–1745 Charles VII (Bavaria)
1745–1765 Francis I (Lorraine)
1765–1790 Joseph II
1790–1792 Leopold II
1792–1806 Francis II
## APPENDIX II

### POPES

*(from 1281)*

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¹ Given in cases where the Pope was a member of a family distinguished for its political or other influence.
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<td>Lambertini</td>
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<td>Clement XIII</td>
<td>1758-1769</td>
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<td>Pius VI</td>
<td>1775-1799</td>
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<td>1800-1823</td>
<td>Chiaramonti</td>
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<td>Leo XII</td>
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<td>Gregory XVI</td>
<td>1831-1846</td>
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<td>Pius X</td>
<td>1904–1914</td>
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<td>Benedict XV</td>
<td>1914–1922</td>
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<td>Pius XI</td>
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<td>Pius XII</td>
<td>1939–1958</td>
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<td>John XXIII</td>
<td>1958–1963</td>
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<td>Paul VI</td>
<td>1963–</td>
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APPENDIX III

ITALIAN ARTISTS

ABBREVIATIONS: A. Architect; Bol. Bolognese; Flem.
Flemish; Flor. Florentine; Lom. Lombard; Mil.
Milanese; Neap. Neapolitan; P. Painter; Pis. Pisan;
Rom. Roman; S. Sculptor; Sien. Sienese; Umbr.
Umbrian; Ven. Venetian.

Bartolomeo (della Porta), Fra, Flor. P., 1475–1517.
Botticelli, Allessandro or Sandro, Flor. P., 1444–1510.
Buonarroti, see Michelangelo.
Cambio, Arnolfo di, Pis., Rom., & Flor. A. & S., assistant of
Niccolò Pisano, 1232–c. 1301.
——, Lodovico, Bol. P., 1555–1619.
Castiglione, Benedetto, Gen. P., 1616–70.
Cellini, Benvenuto, Flor. S. and goldsmith, 1500–71.
Cima (Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano), Ven. P., 1459-
1517.
Cimabue, Giovanni, Flor. P., 1240?—after 1302.
Civitali, Matteo, of Lucca, S., 1436–1501.
Conegliano, G. B. da, see Cima
Cosmati, The, Rom. stone-masons and mosaicultists, 12–13th
centuries.
Dolci, Carlo, Flor. P., 1616–86.
Domenichino (Domenico Zampieri), Bol., Rom., & Neap. P.
& A., 1582–1641.
Donatello (Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi), Flor. S., 1386–
1466.
Fabriano, Gentile da, Umbr., P., before 1370–1427.
Francesca, Pietro della (dei Franceschi), Umbr. & Flor. P., c. 1416–
1492.
Francia, Francesco (Francesco Raibolini), Bol. P. & S., 1450–1517.
Ghiberti, Lorenzo (di Cione), Flor. S., 1378–1455.
Ghirlandaio, Domenico (Domenico Bigordi), Flor. P., 1449–94.
Giorgione (Giorgio da Castelfranco; Giorgio Barbarelli?), Ven.
P., c. 1478–1510.
Guercino, il (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), Bol. & Rom. P.,
1591–1666.
Longhena, Baldassare, Ven. A., 1604–75.
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Mantegna, Andrea, Paduan and Mantuan P., 1430–1506.
Margaritone, of Arezzo, P. & S., 1236?–1313.
Martini, Simone (Simone di Martino), Sien. P., 1283–1344.
Moroni, Giovanni Battista, Bergamese & Brescian P., d. 1577.
Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola), Parma P., 1503–40.
Pinturicchio (Bernardino Betti), Umbr. P., 1455–1513.
Pisano, Andrea (Andrea di Ugolino Nini), Pis. S., 1270–1348.
——, Giovanni, Pis. S. & A., son of Niccolò, c. 1250–c. 1331.
Pisano, Niccolò, Pis. S. & A., c. 1206–c. 1280.
Primaticcio, Francesco, Bol. & Mantuan P., 1504–70.
Quercia, Iacopo della (or Iacopo della Fonte), Sien., Lucchese, & Bol. S., 1374–1438.
Raphael, see Raffaello Santi.
René, Guido, Bol. P., 1574–1642.
Robbia, Andrea della, Flor. S., nephew of Luca, 1435–1525.
——, Giovanni della, son of Andrea, Flor. S., 1469–1529?
——, Luca della, Flor. S., 1400–82.
Romano, Giulio (Giulio Pippi), Rom. & Mantuan P. & A., 1492–1546.
Sangallo, Antonio da, the Elder, Flor. A., 1455?–1534.
Sarto, Andrea del (Andrea d’Agnolo), Flor. P., 1486–1531.
Settignano, Desiderio da, Flor. S., 1428–64.
Signorelli, Luca, Tuscan & Umbr. P., c. 1441 or 1450–1523.
Tintoretto, Domenico (Domenico Robusti), Ven. P., 1562–1637.
Tura, Cosimo, Ferrarese P., 1432–96.
Uccello, Paolo (Paolo di Dono), Flor. P., 1397–1475.
Vecelli, Tiziano, see Titian.
Vignola (Giácomo Barozzi), Bol. & Rom. A., 1507–73.
Vinci, Leonardo da, see Leonardo.
APPENDIX IV—Genealogical Tables

THE MEDICI FAMILY

Giovanni de' Medici
1360–1429

Cosimo
1389–1464

Piero
1414–69

Lorenzo the Magnificent
1449–92

Giuliano
1453–78

Lorenzo
1395–1440

Giovanni delle Bande Nere
(Pope Leo X)
1475–1521

Giulio
(Pope Clement VII)
1478–1534

Piero
1471–1503

Lorenzo
1492–1519

Catherine de' Medici
1519–89
m. Henry II of France

Dates are of birth and death

1st Grand Duke of Tuscany

2nd Duke of Florence

Cosimo
1519–74

1498–1526
RULERS OF MILAN

Matteo I (Visconti)  
(1312–22)

Galeazzo I  
Lucchino  
Giovanni  
Stefano  
Azzo

Matteo  
Berabo  
Galeazzo II

Leopold of Habsburg  
Virida

Catherine = Gian Galeazzo Violante  
(1378–1402)

Ernest

Frederick III  
emperor  
(1440–93)

Maximilian I  
emperor  
(1493–1519)

Bona of Savoy  
(1466–76)

Gian Galeazzo  
Isabella

Bianca = Francesco (Sforza)  
(1450–66)

Ippolita = Alfonso II  
of Naples  
(1479–1500)

Ludovico

Ascario

Maximilian

Francesco Maria

Dates are dates of reign
THE NEAPOLITAN BOURBONS

Charles III of Naples = Maria Amelia of Saxony
1734–59

Ferdinand I = Caroline
1795–1825 | (d. of Maria Theresa)

Maria Theresa
m. Francis I
of Austria

Louisa Amalia
m. Ferdinand III
of Tuscany

Francis I
1815–30

Maria Amalia
m. Louis Philippe
King of the French

Christina
m. Charles Felix
of Sardinia

Maria Antonia
m. Ferdinand VII
of Spain

Caroline
m. Charles
D. of Berri

Maria Antonia
m. Leopold II
of Tuscany

Christina
m. Ferdinand VII
of Spain

Christina (r) = Ferdinand II = (2) Theresa
1830–59
of Austria

Theresa
m. Pedro II
of Brazil

Francis II
1859–60

Dates are dates of reign
HOUSE OF SAVOY

Victor Amadeus III = Marie Antoinette of Spain
1773–96

Charles Emmanuel IV
1796–1802
m. Marie Adelaide of Bourbon

Louise Benedicta
m. Louis XVIII of France

Maria Theresa
m. Charles X of France

Victor Emmanuel I = Theresa of Modena
1802–21

Caroline

Charles Felix
1821–31

Beatrice
m. Francis of Modena

Theresa
m. Charles II of Parma

Maria Anna
m. Ferdinand I of Austria

Christina
m. Ferdinand II of Naples
COLLATERALS OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY

Charles-Albert = Maria Theresa
King of Sardinia of Tuscany
1831-49

Victor Emmanuel II = Adelaide
of Austria

Ferdinand = Elizabeth
of Saxony

Margaret = Humbert I
his cousin 1878-1900

Clotilde
m. Prince Napoleon

Helen = Victor Emmanuel
of Montenegro 1900-47

Laetitia

Yolanda
m. Boris I
of Bulgaria

Mafalda
m. Phillip
of Hesse

Humbert II = Marie José
b. 1904
of Belgium
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